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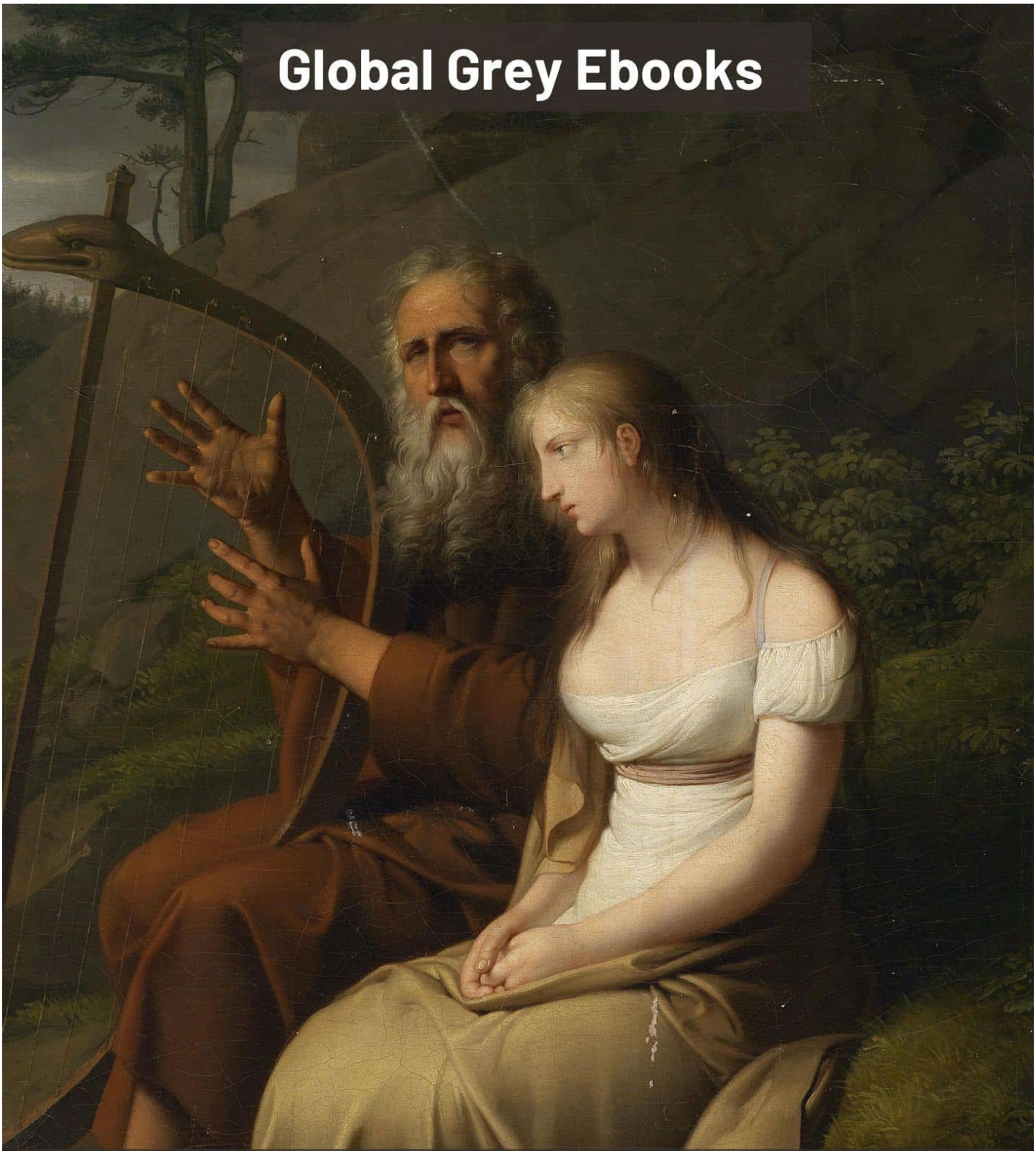

POPULAR TALES OF THE WEST HIGHLANDS

J. F. CAMPBELL

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Dedication

MY DEAR LORNE,

I dedicate this collection of West Country Stories to you as the son of my Chief, in the hope that it may add too the interest which you already feel in a people, of whom a large number look with respect on “Mac Callen Mor” as the head of their tribe. I know that the poorest Highlanders still feel an honest pride whenever their chiefs, or men of their name, earn distinction; and many of “Clan Dhiarmaid” take a warm interest in you.

Amidst curious rubbish you will find sound sense if you look for it. You will find the creed of the people, as shewn in their stories, to be, that wisdom and courage, though weak, may overcome strength, and ignorance, and pride; that the most despised is often the most worthy; that small beginnings lead to great results.

You will find perseverance, frugality, and filial piety rewarded; pride, greed, and laziness punished. You will find much which tells of barbarous times; I hope you will meet nothing that can hurt, or should offend.

If you follow any study, even that of a popular tale, far enough, it will lead you to a closed door, beyond which you cannot pass till you have searched and found the key, and every study will lead the wisest to a fast locked door at last; but knowledge lies beyond these doors, and one key may open the way to many a store which can be reached, and may be turned to evil or to good.

That you may go on acquiring knowledge, selecting the good, and rejecting the evil; that you, like Conal in the story, may gather gold, and escape unharmed from the giant’s land, is the earnest wish of your affectionate kinsman,

J. F. CAMPBELL.

SEPTEMBER, 1860.

Introduction

THE FAIRY EGG, AND WHAT CAME OUT OF IT.

ON the stormy coasts of the Hebrides, amongst seaweed and shells, fishermen and kelp-burners often find certain hard, light, floating objects, somewhat like flat chestnuts, of various colours--grey, black, and brown, which they call sea-nuts, strand-nuts, and fairy-eggs. Where they are most common, they are used as snuffboxes, but they are also worn and preserved as amulets, with a firm or sceptical belief in their mysterious virtues. Old Martin, who wrote of the Western Isles in 1703, calls them “Molluka beans,” and tells how they were then found, and worn, and used as medicine; how they preserved men from the evil eye, and cured sick cattle by a process as incomprehensible as mesmerism. Practical Highlandmen of the present day call the nuts trash, and brand those who wear them, like their ancestors a hundred and fifty years ago, as ignorant and superstitious; but learned botanists, too wise to overlook trifles, set themselves to study even fairy-eggs; and believing them to be West Indian weeds, stranded in Europe, they planted them, and some (from the Azores) grew. Philosophers, having discovered what they were, used them to demonstrate the existence of the Gulf Stream, and it is even said that they formed a part of one link in that chain of reasoning which led Columbus to the New World.

So within this century, men have gathered nursery tales. They set themselves earnestly to learn all that they could concerning them; they found similar tales common to many languages; they traced them back for centuries; they planted them in books, and at last the Brothers Grimm, their predecessors and their followers, have raised up a pastime for children to be “a study fit for the energies of grown men and to all the dignity of a science.”

So at least says the learned author of the translation of “Norse Tales,” and there are many who agree with him.

Men have now collected stories from most parts of the world. They have taken them from the dictation of American Indians, South Sea Islanders, Lapps and Samoydes, Germans and Russians. Missionaries have published the fables of African savages; learned men have translated Arabic, Sanscrit, and Chinese manuscripts; even Egyptian papyri have been dug up, and forced to yield their meaning, and all alike have furnished tales, very similar to stories now told by word of mouth. But as some of these are common to races whose languages have been traced to a common origin, it is now held that nursery stories and popular tales have been handed down together with the languages in which they are told; and they are used in striving to trace out the origin of races, as philologists use words to trace language, as geologists class rocks by the shells and bones which they contain, and as natural philosophers used fairy-eggs in tracing the Gulf Stream.

The following collection is intended to be a contribution to this new science of “Storyology.” It is a museum of curious rubbish about to perish, given as it was gathered in the rough, for it seemed to me as barbarous to “polish” a genuine popular tale, as it would be to adorn the bones of a Megatherium with tinsel, or gild a rare old copper coin. On this, however, opinions vary, but I hold my own, that stories orally collected can only be valuable if given unaltered; besides, where is the model story to be found?

Practical men may despise the tales, earnest men condemn them as lies, some even consider them wicked; one refused to write any more for a whole estate; my best friend says they are

all “blethers.” But one man’s rubbish may be another’s treasure; and what is the standard of value in such a pursuit as this?

“And what are you going to do with them stories, Mr. Carnal?” said a friend of mine, as he stood amongst the brown sea-weed, at the end of a pier, on a fine summer’s evening, and watched my departure in a tiny boat.

“Print them, man, to be sure.”

My friend is famous for his good stories, though they are of another kind, and be uses tobacco; be eyed me steadily for a moment, and then he disposed of the whole matter monosyllabically, but forcibly,

“Huch!!”

It seemed to come from his heart.

Said a Highland coachman to me one day, “The luggage is very heavy. I will not believe but there is stones in the portmanteaus! They will be pickin’ them up off the road, and takin’ them away with them; I have seen them myself;” and then, having disposed of geology, he took a sapient pinch of snuff.

So a benighted Englishman, years ago in Australia, took up his quarters in a settler’s hut, as he told me. Other travellers came in, and one had found a stone in a dry river-course which he maintained to be partly gold. The rest jeered at him till he threw away his prize in a pet; and then they all devoured mutton chops and damper, and slept like sensible men.

So these tales may be gold or dross according to taste. Many will despise them, but some may take an interest in the pastime of their humble countrymen; some may be amused; those who would learn Gaelic will find the language of the people who told the stories; and those who would compare popular tales of different races, may rest assured that I have altered nothing; that these really are what they purport to be-stories orally collected in the West Highlands since the beginning of 1859. I have but carried drift rubbish from the place where I found it to a place where it may be seen and studied by those who care to take the trouble.

The resemblance which the collection bears to others already made, is a strong argument for the common origin of the stories, and of the people who tell them. But, as a foundation for argument, I am bound to give the evidence on which I have formed my belief in their antiquity, for the stories would be rubbish indeed if they were not genuine traditions.

This is the account given by Mr. Hector MacLean, parish schoolmaster at Ballygrant in Islay, whom I have known from his boyhood, and who, at my request, collected stories last summer in the Long Island:--

“In the Islands of Barra, the recitation of tales during the long winter nights is still very common. The people gather in crowds to the houses of those whom they consider good reciters to listen to their stories. They appear to be fondest of those tales which describe exceedingly rapid changes of place in very short portions of time, and have evidently no respect for the unities. During the recitation of these tales, the emotions of the reciters are occasionally very strongly excited, and so also are those of the listeners, almost shedding tears at one time, and giving way to loud laughter at another. A good many of them firmly believe in all the extravagance of these stories.

“They speak of the Ossianic heroes with as much feeling, sympathy, and belief in their existence and reality as the readers of the newspapers do of the exploits of the British army in the Crimea or in India; and whatever be the extravagance of the legends they recite respecting them, it is exceedingly remarkable that the same character is always ascribed to the same hero

in almost every story and by almost every reciter. Fingal, or rather Fionn, is never called the king of any country or territory, but the king of the Finn, a body of men who were raised, according to the traditions current in the Long Island and other parts of the Highlands, in Ireland and in the Highlands, to defend both countries against foreign invaders, more especially against the Scandinavians. The origin these illiterate people assign to them, according to the traditions handed down to them, is, that the largest and strongest bodied young men and women were selected and married together in order to produce a brave and powerful race capable of withstanding and repelling the incursions of foreign foes. Any hero that came west, east, north, or south, and 'Cothrom na Finne' (the chance of the Finne), is the term still used for fair-play in the Highlands.

"In no tale or tradition related to me regarding these heroes have I heard the name, 'Righ Mhòr-bbeinn' (king of Morven), ascribed to Fionn; nor have I heard him described as the king of any territory or country-always 'Righ na Finne or Fēinne.' Fēinn or Fìnn is the plural of Fiann, which is probably derived from Fiadh dhuine; either a wild man, from his strength and bravery, or else the man of deer, from their maintaining themselves by bunting deer, extensive tracts of land being allotted to them for that purpose. The last etymology I believe myself to be the correct one.

"The most of the people in Barra and South Uist are Roman Catholics, can neither read nor write, and hardly know any English. From these circumstances it is extremely improbable that they have borrowed much from the literature of other nations. In North Uist and Harris these tales are nearly gone, and this, I believe, to be owing partly to reading, which in a manner supplies a substitute for them, partly to bigoted religious ideas, and partly to narrow utilitarian views."

This clear statement is accompanied by a description of each of the men who contributed, from which it appears in detail that the greater number speak Gaelic only, that many of them can neither read nor write, and that they are clever though uneducated; and this account I know to be correct in some cases, from my own personal knowledge of the men. Hector Urquhart, now gamekeeper at Ardkinglas, whom I have known for many years, agrees with MacLean in his account of the telling of these stories in other districts in former times.

This is his account:--

"In my native place, Pool-Ewe, Ross-shire, when I was a boy, it was the custom for the young to assemble together on the long winter nights to hear the old people recite the tales or sgeulachd, which they had learned from their fathers before them. In these days tailors and shoemakers went from house to house, making our clothes and shoes. When one of them came to the village we were greatly delighted, whilst getting new kilts at the same time. I knew an old tailor who used to tell a new tale every night during his stay in the village; and another, an old shoemaker, who, with his large stock of stories about ghosts and fairies, used to frighten us so much that we scarcely dared pass the neighbouring churchyard on our way home. It was also the custom when an *aoidh*, or stranger, celebrated for his store of tales, came on a visit to the village, for us, young and old, to make a rush to the house where be passed the night, and choose our seats, some on beds, some on forms, and others on three-legged stools, etc., and listen in silence to the new tales; just as I have myself seen since, when a far-famed actor came to perform in the Glasgow theatre. The goodman of the house usually opened with the tale of *Famhair Mor* (great giant) or some other favourite tale, and then the stranger carried on. after that. It was a common saying, 'The first tale by the goodman, and tales to daylight by the *aoidh*,' or guest. It was also the custom to put riddles, in the solving of which all in the house had to tax their ingenuity. If one of the party put a riddle which was not solved that night, he went home with the title of King of Riddles.

Besides this, there was usually in such gatherings a discussion about the *Fein*, which comes from FIANTAIDH, giant; the Fiantaidh were a body of men who volunteered to defend their country from the invasions and inroads of the Danes and Norwegians, or Lochlinnich. FIUNN, who was always called King of the Fein, was the strongest man amongst them, and no person was admitted into the company who was less in height than he, however much taller. I remember the old black shoemaker telling us one night that FIUNN had a tooth which he consulted as an oracle upon all important occasions. He had but to touch this tooth, and whatever he wanted to know was at once revealed to him.

"The above is all I can at present readily call to mind of the way in which the evenings were spent in the Highlands thirty or forty years ago. The minister came to the village in 1830, and the schoolmaster soon followed, who put a stop in our village to such gatherings; and in their place we were supplied with heavier tasks than listening to the old shoemaker's fairy tales. From that period till I collected the few in this collection, I have not heard a tale recited. On going to visit my friends last summer, I expected that I would get some old tales among them, but I found that the most of the old men who used to relate them in my young days had died, and the few who were then alive of them were so old that they had lost their memories, so that I only got but a trifle to what I expected.

March 1860.

"HECTOR URQUHART."

John Dewar, a labourer, whom I never saw, but who has written and sent me many stories, agrees with the others. These men have never met, and have acted independently; and yet, in many cases, I have received versions of the same story from each and from other sources, and I have myself heard the same incidents repeated by their authorities, and by others whom they had never seen; sometimes even the very words.

The name of every narrator is given with his story, and I am satisfied on direct evidence that most of these were known in the Highlands at least forty years ago. Now, for the benefit of those who know as little of the subject as I did, let me give the theory of the distribution of popular tales, as I have gathered it from the able introduction to the Norse Tales and other sources, and then let me point out the bearing of this, collection on that theory.

It is supposed that the races known as Indo-European came from Central Asia at some very early period, and passed over Europe, separating and settling down as nations; retaining words of their original language, and leaving the traces of their religion and history everywhere as popular tales; and that they found the land occupied. Each wave, it is said, "pushed onwards those who went before," but, as it seems to me, each in turn must have stopped as it arrived at the great sea, and there the waves of this stream of men must have mingled and stagnated.

As the flotsam and jetsam of American rivers and of the Gulf Stream is constantly drifting northwards and eastwards, and finds a resting-place on some western shore, so the traces of the great human stream, which is supposed to have flowed westwards, should be found in greatest abundance stranded at the western sea. If this be correct, and if the plains of Asia sent migratory hordes eastwards as well as westwards, the tales and languages of the far East and West should most resemble each other, and should also resemble more than others the oldest forms of the myths and languages of those from whom they sprang. Brittany, Scandinavia, Ireland, and the west of Scotland, from their geographical position, should contain more of this light mental *debris* than Central Europe; for the same reason that more of the floating rubbish of American rivers is found on the shores of Europe than anywhere on the great ocean; and if mankind had a common origin, and started from the plains of Asia,

and if popular tales really are old traditions, then the tales of Ceylon should resemble those of Barra, and those of Japan should resemble the others, because men travelling eastwards and arrived at Japan, could not easily advance further. Mr. Oliphant tells us that both in China and in Japan groups are commonly seen listening to professional story-tellers in the streets, and it is to be hoped that some one will enable us to judge of their talents.

Be that as it may, fairy-eggs are not the only foreign products found on the shores of the Hebrides, and the people who dwell there know stories of larger growth than mere nursery tales. Great logs of driftwood find their way to shore, and are turned to use. Such a log I once found, and used myself, long ago. It was half buried in the sand; it had been long tossed by the sea, and battered against rocks, for it was heavy with water, splintered and ground. No tree like it grew anywhere near. There was no mark of a tool on it. The stumps of its roots and branches remained, and it seemed as if it had been torn up and wafted to its resting-place by winds and waves alone. I have now no doubt that it came from America. Had it been insignificant and useless, like a fairy-egg, we might have left it, or preserved it as a, curiosity; but it was a useful log, and we were a party of chilled otter hunters, so, after a few speculations, we hoisted the prize on our shoulders, carried it to our dwelling, a neighbouring cave, and there we burned it. I see it often, hissing and spluttering, and lighting up the bivouac with its red glare. Its ashes may be there still, but that tree is a tree no longer; its origin and wanderings cannot now be traced; it has shared the fate of many a popular tale. It was found and used up.

Such a log I lately saw in South Uist. No tool mark was on it; it had lost its own foliage, but it was covered with a brown and white marine foliage of seaweed and dead barnacles, and it was drilled in all directions by these curious sea-shells, which are supposed by the people to be embryo geese. It was sound, though battered, and a worthy Celtic smith was about to add it to the roof of a cottage, which he was making of boulders and turf. It was about to share the fate of many popular tales, and become a part of something else. It may be recognised as an American production hereafter, and its history is deeply marked on it, though it forms part of a house by this time. So a genuine popular tale may be recognised in a play or a romance.

Another such tree I saw in Benbecula, with bark still on the roots, and close to it lay a squared log, and near that a mast with white paint and iron bindings, blocks and crosstrees, still attached to it. A few miles off was a stranded ship, with her cargo and fittings, a wreck about to be sold, and turned to any use that the new owners might think fit. All these were about to be changed, and as it was with driftwood in the Highlands, so, as I imagine, it has been with popular tales everywhere. They are as old as the races who tell them, but the original ideas, like the trees from which logs, masts, and ships are made, have been broken up, cut, carved, and ornamented--lost and found--wrecked, destroyed, broken, and put together again; and though the original shape is hard to find, the fragments may be recognized in books, and wherever else they may now be found.

But as there are quiet spots in the world where drift-wood accumulates undisturbed, so there are quiet spots where popular tales flourish in peace, because no man has interfered with them. In Spitzbergen, according to the accounts given me by Norwegian bear hunters and adventurous English nobles, trees, such as those occasionally found in Scotland, are piled in heaps. Trees, logs, broken spars, and wreck, gather and bleach and decay together, because there are no men on that wild shore to use them. So in the islands where the western “wanderers,” “Albanich,” settled down, and where they have remained for centuries, old men and women are still found who have hardly stirred from their native islands, who speak only Gaelic, and cannot read or write, and yet their minds are filled with a mass of popular lore, as various as the wreck piled on the shores of Spitzbergen. If such as these get hold of the

contents of a story book, they seem unconsciously to extract the incidents, and reject all the rest,--to select the true wood, and throw away foreign ornament, just as they chip off the paint of a stranded mast, or scrape the sea-weed off a log when they build it into a roof. I have given one specimen of a story, which I believe to be derived from the “Arabian Nights,” though it is quite impossible that the man who told it to Hector MacLean, and who told it to me also, in nearly the same words, can have got it directly from any book; for he cannot read at all, and he does not understand English.

I have found very little notice of these West Highland prose tales in books, but they are referred to. In 1703, Martin says that his countrymen then told long tales about Fin MacCoul, but he adds that he will not trouble the reader with them.

In 1780, Dr. Smith, in his book on Gaelic poetry, says, that prosaic tales should be preserved in the same manner may seem strange, but so it is. He condemns the “urskels” as “later tales,” unworthy of notice, probably because they were different from the poetry of which he collected so much.

Gaelic dictionaries mention “legends” as sources from which words have been taken. Amongst the Gaelic MSS. now in the Advocates’ Library, there are several which contain tales similar to those now told in the Highlands. One passage about the sailing of a boat, which I have got, with variations, from a great many people living in various parts of the Highlands, I find in a MS. which was lent to me by the secretary of the Celtic Society of London. It is dated 23d December 1808, signed Alexander Stewart, A.M., and marked, Poems of Ossian. It contains 7721 lines of Gaelic, mostly poetry, which by the references seem to have been copied from something else. The passage to which I refer, occurs in a “Fragment of a Tale,” p. 17, which occupies thirty-seven folio pages, and treats of carrying off a lady from an island, and her recovery by her husband.

Dr. MacLeod, the best of living Gaelic scholars, printed one old tale, somewhat altered, with a moral added, in his “Leabhar nan Cnoc,” in 1834, but even his efforts to persevere and use this old lore were unsuccessful.

Those, then, who understood Gaelic, thought popular tales unworthy of notice; those who did not understand Gaelic, could know nothing about them; and there are many now living in the Highlands, who speak Gaelic and yet believed, till they searched at my request, that stories had become extinct in their districts. One good Highlander, who has helped me much, Mr. James Robertson, living at Inveraray, so believed, till he heard his own nursemaid repeat No. 17, and a neighbouring fisherman tell No. 6. In the Highlands, as elsewhere, society is arranged in layers, like the climates of the world. The dweller on an Indian plain little dreams that there is a region of perpetual frost in the air above him; the Esquimaux does not suspect the slumbering volcano under his feet; and the dwellers in the upper and lower strata of society, everywhere, know as little of each other’s ways of life as the men of the plain know of the mountaineers in the snow.

Highland stories then, have been despised by educated men, and they are as yet unchanged popular tales. It so happened that a piper was the instructor of my babyhood. He was a stalwart, kindly, gentle man, whose face is often before me, though he has long since gone to his rest. From him I first heard a few of the tales in this collection. They had almost faded from my memory, but I remembered their existence, and I knew where to search, so I began at the beginning of 1859 by writing to my Highland friends, of all degrees, for stories of all kinds, true stories excepted; and here let me thank them cordially for the trouble which they have taken, for they are too numerous to thank in detail.

I begged for the very words used by the people who told the stories, with nothing added, or omitted, or altered. Those who could wrote Gaelic, those who could not did their best in English,--translated, at first or second-hand, from Gaelic; and when I had so gathered many versions of a story, I thought I might safely conclude that it had been known in the country for many years, and was essentially a popular tale.

My next step was to go at Easter to a Highland district, near the lowlands, where a gamekeeper had marked down a lot of tale-tellers, and I was soon convinced that there was plenty of game, though hard to get.

This difficulty may be worth some explanation, for it exists elsewhere, and bears on the collection of tales everywhere. Highland peasants and fishermen, especially those dwelling near the lowlands, are shy and proud, and even more peculiarly sensitive to ridicule than peasants elsewhere. Many have a lurking belief in the truth of the stories which they tell, and a rooted conviction that any one with a better education will laugh at the belief, and the story, and the narrator and his language, if he should be weak enough to venture on English, and betray his knowledge of Sgeultachd and his creed. He cannot imagine that any one out of his own class can possibly be amused by his frivolous pastimes. No one ever has hitherto. He sees every year a summer flood of tourists of all nations pouring through his lochs and glens, but he knows as little of them as they know of him. The shoals of herrings that enter Loch Fyne know as much of the dun deer on the hill-side, as Londoners and Highland peasants know of each other. Each gets an occasional peep at the other as the deer may see the herrings capering in the loch--each affects the other slowly but surely, as the herrings do drive away the wild deer by attracting men to catch them; but the want of a common language here as elsewhere, keeps Highlands and Lowlands, Celt and Saxon, as clearly separate as oil and water in the same glass.

The first step, then, towards the acquisition of a story is to establish confidence. It may be that the would-be collector sees before him a strapping lad dressed in the garb of a west country fisherman--a rough blue bonnet, jacket, and trousers. He steps out and ranges up alongside. The Highlander glances from under his bushy eyebrows, and sees with his sharp grey eyes that the new comer is a stranger. He looks rather like a Saxon; Highland curiosity is strong, and he longs to ask whence he comes; but politeness is stronger, and it would be uncivil to begin questioning at once. So with a nervous kick of one foot, and a quick shy glance, the fisherman jerks out, “It’s a fine day.” “Tha n’ latha briagh” (the day is fine), replies the stranger; and as he speaks, the whole face and manner of his companion change as if by magic; doubt and hesitation, suspicion and curiosity, become simple wonder; his eyes and his heart open wide at the sound of his native tongue, and he exclaims, “You have Gaelic! You will take my excuse by your leave, but what part of the Gaeldom are you from?” And then having found out all that is to be discovered, the ice being broken, and confidence established, it oozes out gradually that the fisherman knows a story, and after much persuasion he tells it, while he rows the gentleman who can talk Gaelic across a Highland loch. At parting, he adds that he has only told it to please a “Gael,” and that he would not have said one word to a Gall (stranger). But the man who is fluent in his boat, is shy and backward when set down to repeat his story for transcribing, and it is only when set with one of his neighbours whom he knows, that his story is got on paper.

Or it may be an old dame in a tall white mutch with a broad black silk band, a red cloak, and clean white apron. She is 70, and can walk ten miles; she has known all the neighbouring families for generations. If you can claim cousinship with any, she is your friend; but she *will* praise the ancestors and tell of the adventures of Rob Roy the Gregorach, the last of the freebooters. “But, Mary, can you say Murachag and Mionachag?” Huch! my dear, that is

an ursgeul that is nonsense. The Good Being bless you, I knew your grandmother," etc., etc. So one must rest contented with the fact, that old Mary knows one tale, and probably many more, which a week's persuasion might perhaps extract.

Or it may be a pretty lass, whose eye twinkles with intelligence at every catch-word, thrown out as a bait, but whom nothing will induce to confess that she knows the foolish tales which the minister has condemned.

Or it is an old wandering vagabond of a tinker, who has no roof but the tattered covering of his tent. He has pitched it in a quarry under a giant fir, the knarled roots, half bare, hardly support the tree on the edge of a red clay bank, and form a kind of hollow, a "cos," in which the tinker and his tribe have nestled at odd times for years. A thin blue smoke is curling amongst the blackened roots, and winding itself about the noble tree. A stately mansion and a wide domain, and a blue highland loch, with a shoal of brown herring boats, can be seen through the wood from the door of the, tinker's tent; and there he lies, an old man past eighty, who has been a soldier, and "has never seen a school"; too proud to beg, too old to work; surrounded by boxes and horn spoons, with shaggy hair and naked feet, as perfect a nomad as the wildest Lapp or Arab in the whole world. It is easy to make friends with such men. A kind word in their native language is all that is required, but to get their stories is another affair. "Donald, did you ever see the like of *this*?" Up starts the old man on his elbow,--"Och! och! that's a fairy arrow, I have seen that; och! och! no fairy arrow will ever hit the man who has that--no fire will ever burn the house where that is. That's lucky, well! well!" and the old man sinks down on his bed of fern. But the elf shot has hit the mark, and started a train of thought, which leads at last to a wild weird story; but before that story can be written, the whole tribe decamp, and are lost for a time.

The first difficulty, then, was the nature of the people who knew the stories; and the second, the want of men able and willing to write Gaelic. It was easy to write English versions of tales heard in Gaelic, but I wanted the Gaelic as it was told, and I had neither time nor ability to write it down myself. I therefore sought out two men on whom I could rely, to collect and write for me, and the largest share of this book has been collected and written by them. One is Mr. Hector Urquhart, gamekeeper at Ardkinglas on Loch Fyne; the other, Mr. Hector MacLean, schoolmaster at Ballygrant in Islay, who has superintended the printing of the Gaelic. They entered into the spirit of the work at once, and they have executed their share of it with the greatest fidelity. But while these are my chief aids, I am largely indebted to many others for written Gaelic; for example, to one of my earliest friends, Mrs. MacTavish; to the Rev. Mr. MacLauchlan of Edinburgh; to Alexander Fraser, Esq., of Mauld, near Beauly, to many of the schoolmasters on the estate of Sir Kenneth MacKenzie; to Mr. Donald Torrie, Benbecula; and to many others, including John Dewar, a self-educated man of advanced age, whose contribution does him the greatest credit.

The next step was to spend a summer holiday in studying the actual condition of this popular lore, where I had found that it existed in the greatest profusion. I landed at Lochmaddy in North Uist, and walked with a knapsack to the sound of Barra, and back to Stornoway; crossing the sound of Harris in a fishing boat. I found a population differing from that of the mainland, perhaps the least changed from their old ways of any people in the kingdom. Gaelic is their usual, often their only language. Every English word which has crept in has a Gaelic head and tail. Many, I know not how many, "have no English" at all, and have never been taught to read. In many islands the people are living undisturbed, where their ancestors have lived time out of mind. They are a small, active, intelligent race, with dark hair and eyelashes, and grey eyes; quick, clever, and pugnacious. I had expected to find traces of Norwegian occupation in the people and their language. I watched carefully for Norwegian

words and features; and I found the people a complete contrast to Norwegian peasants, whom I know well, who are large, bony, light-haired fair men, sagacious rather than quick; and generally slow to anger.

I could find nothing Scandinavian, except certain names of places, and certain ruins, which it is the fashion to attribute to the Lochliners. Even the houses and the old agricultural implements, where they are still used, are peculiar. For example, the old crooked spade still used in islands in the sound of Barra, and elsewhere, has no resemblance to any agricultural implement that I have ever seen anywhere out of the West Highlands. It is in fact a foot plough used without horses. It is remarkable that a steam plough should be at work at the same time, on the east coast of Cromarty at Tarbert. Every horse I met on the road stopped of his own accord. Every man asked my news, "whence I took the walking," where I lived, and why I came? Saddles were often sacks, stirrups a loop of twisted bent, bridles the same, and bits occasionally wood. Dresses were coarse, but good; but there was an air of kindly politeness over all, that is not to be found in homespun dresses in any other country that I know. When I was questioned, I answered, and told my errand, and prospered. "I was not a drover come to buy cattle at the fair;" "Neither was I a merchant though I carried a pack." "I was the gentleman who was after Sgialachdan." My collector had made my name known. I spoke Gaelic, and answered questions. I am one of themselves, so I got on famously.

Men and women of all ages could and did tell me stories, children of all sizes listened to them; and it was self-evident that people generally knew and enjoyed them. Elsewhere I had been told, that thirty or forty years ago, men used to congregate and tell stories; here, I was told, that they now spend whole winter nights about the fire listening to these old world tales. The clergy, in some places, had condemned the practice, and there it had fallen into disuse; stories seemed to be almost exterminated in some islands, though I believe they were only buried alive; but in other places this harmless amusement is not forbidden and there, in every cluster of houses, is some one man famed as "good at sgialachdan," whose house is a winter evening's resort. I visited these, and listened, often with wonder, at the extraordinary power of memory shown by untaught old men.

It is perhaps beyond the province of a mere collector of old tales to be serious; but surely Gaelic books containing sound information would be a vast boon to such a people. The young would read them, and the old would understand them. All would take a warmer interest in Canada and Australia, where strong arms and bold spirits are wanted, if they knew what these countries really are. If they heard more of European battles, and knew what a ship of war is now, there would be more soldiers and sailors from the Isles in the service of their country, At all events, the old spirit of popular romance is surely not an evil spirit to be exercised, but rather a good genius to be controlled and directed. Surely stories in which a mother's blessing, well earned, leads to success; in which the poor rise to be princes, and the weak and courageous overcome giants; in which wisdom excels brute force,--surely even such frivolities are better pastime than a solitary whisky bottle, or sleep, or grim silence; for that seems the choice of amusements if tales are forbidden and Gaelic books are not provided for men who know no other language; and who, as men, must be amused now and then.

I have never heard a story, whose point was obscenity, publicly told in a Highland cottage; and I believe that such are rare. I *have* heard them where the rough polish of more modern ways has replaced the polished roughness of "wild" Highlanders; and that where even the bagpipes have been almost abolished as profane.

I have heard the music of the "Cider Cellars" in a parlour, even in polished England, when I had failed to extract anything else from a group of comfortably dressed villagers. A half-

polished human gem is but a spoiled crystal anywhere; and I prefer the rough diamond or the finished jewel.

But this is foreign to my work; my visits were to the tellers of old stories, and had nothing to do with political economy and public morals. I paid my visits, and heard the stories; and a goodly audience often gathered to share the treat, and all seemed marvellously to enjoy it. If there was an occasional coarse word spoken, it was not coarsely meant.

Let me describe one of these old story men as a type of his kind. I trust he will not be offended, for he was very polite to me. His name is MacPhie; he lives at the north end of South Uist, where the road ends at a sound, which has to be forded at the ebb to get to Benbecula. The house is built of a double wall of loose boulders, with a layer of peat three feet thick between the walls. The ends are round, and the roof rests on the inner wall, leaving room for a crop of yellow gowans. A man might walk round the roof on the top of the wall. There is but one room, with two low doors, one on each side of the houses. The fire is on the floor; the chimney is a hole above it; and the rafters are hung with pendants and festoons of shining black peat reek. They are of birch from the mainland, American drift wood, or broken wreck. They support a covering of turf and straw, and stones, and heather ropes, which keep out the rain well enough.

The house stands on a green bank, with grey rocks protruding through the turf; and the whole neighbourhood is pervaded by cockle shells, which indicate the food of the people and their fishing pursuits. In a neighbouring kiln there were many cart-loads about to be burned, to make that lime which is so durable in the old castles. The owner of the house, whom I visited twice, is seventy-nine. He told me nine stories, and like all the others, declared that there was no man in the islands who knew them so well. “He could not say how many he knew;” he seemed to know versions of nearly everything I had got; and he told me plainly that my versions were good for nothing. “Huch! Thou hast not got them right at all.” “They came into his mind,” he said, “sometimes at night when he could not sleep,--old tales that he had not heard for threescore years.”

He had the manner of a practised narrator, and it is quite evident he is one; he chuckled at the interesting parts, and laid his withered finger on my knee as he gave out the terrible bits with due solemnity. A small boy in a kilt, with large round glittering eyes, was standing mute at his knee, gazing at his wrinkled face, and devouring every word. The boy’s mother first boiled, and then mashed, potatoes; and his father, a well grown man in tartan breeks, ate them. Ducks and ducklings, a cat and a. kitten, some hens and a baby, all tumbled about on the clay floor together, and expressed their delight at the savoury prospect, each in his own fashion; and three wayfarers dropped in and listened for a spell, and passed their remarks till the ford was shallow. The light came streaming down the chimney, and through a single pane of glass, lighting up a tract in the blue mist of the peat smoke, and fell on the white hair and brown withered face of the old man, as he sat on a low stool with his feet to the fire; and the rest of the dwelling, with all its plenishing of boxes and boxbeds, dishes and dresser, and gear of all sorts, faded away through shades of deepening brown, to the black darkness of the smoked roof and the “peat corner.” There we sat, and smoked and talked for hours, till the tide ebbed; and then I crossed the ford by wading up to the waist, and dried my clothes in the wind in Benbecula.

Another man of the same stamp, Patrick Smith, lives near the sound of Barra; and a third, “Donald MacDonald MacCharles MacIntyre,” in Benbecula; and I heard of plenty more, whom I had not time to visit. I found them to be men with clear heads and wonderful memories, generally very poor and old, living in remote corners of remote islands, and

speaking only Gaelic; in short, those who have lived most at home, furthest from the world, and who have no source of mental relaxation beyond themselves and their neighbours.

At Gearrloch on the mainland, some old namesakes of mine are of the same stamp, but in these regions the schoolmaster has made himself at home. Tales have been forbidden, but other lore has been provided. There are many well attended English schools, so old men have access to books and newspapers through their children. Tradition is out of fashion and books are in.

Farther east stories are still rarer, and seem to be told rather by women than by men. The long romances of the west give place to stories about ghosts and fairies, apparitions, and dreams-stories which would be told in a few words, if at all, in the islands. Fairy belief is becoming a fairy tale. In another generation it will grow into a romance, as it has in the hands of poets elsewhere, and then the whole will either be forgotten or carried from people who must work to "gentles" who can afford to be idle and read books. Railways, roads, newspapers, and tourists, are slowly but surely doing their accustomed work. They are driving out romance; but they are not driving out the popular creed as to supernaturals. That creed will survive when the last remnant of romance has been banished, for superstition seems to belong to no one period in the history of civilization, but to all. It is as rife in towns as it is amongst the hills, and it not confined to the ignorant.

I have wandered amongst the peasantry of many countries, and this trip but confirmed my old impression. There are few peasants that I think so highly of, none that I like so well. Scotch Highlanders have faults in plenty, but they have the bearing of Nature's own gentlemen--the delicate, natural tact which discovers, and the good taste which avoids, all that would hurt or offend a guest. The poorest is ever the readiest to share the best he has with the stranger. A kind word kindly meant is never thrown away, and whatever may be the faults of this people, I have never found a boor or a churl in a Highland bothy.

Celts have played their part in history, and they have a part to play still in Canada and Australia, where their language and character will leave a trace, if they do not influence the destiny of these new worlds. There are hundreds in those distant lands whose language is still Gaelic, and to whom these stories are familiar, and if this book should ever remind any of them of the old country, I shall not have worked in vain in the land which they call "Tir nam Beann, 's nan Gleann, s nan Gaisgeach."

So much, then, for the manner of collecting the tales, and the people who told them. The popular lore which I found current in the west, and known all over the Highlands in a greater or less degree amongst the poorer classes, consists of:--

1st. That which is called Seanachas na Finne, or Feinnie, or Fiann, that is, the tradition or old history of the Feene.

This is now the rarest of any, and is commonest, so far as I know, in Barra and South Uist. There are first fragments of poems which may have been taken from the printed book, which goes by the name of the History of the Finne in the Highlands, and the Poems of Ossian elsewhere. I never asked for these, but I was told that the words were "sharper and deeper" than those in the printed book.

There are, secondly, poetical fragments about the same persons, which, to the best of my knowledge, are not in any printed book. I heard some of these repeated by three different men.

Patrick Smith, in South Uist, *intoned* a long fragment; I should guess, about 200 lines. He recited it rapidly to a kind of chant. The subject was a fight with a Norway witch, and Fionn,

Diarmaid, Oscar and Conan, were named as Irish heroes. There were “ships fastened with silver chains, and kings holding them;” swords, spears, helmets, shields, and battles, were mentioned; in short, the fragment was the same in style and machinery as the famous Poems; and it was attributed to Ossian. The repetition began with a short prose account of what was to follow. Smith is sixty, and says that he cannot read. He does not understand English. He says that such poems used to be so chanted commonly when he was young. The same account of the manner of reciting similar poems was given me by a clergyman in Argyllshire, who said that, within his recollection, the “death of Cuchullin” used to be so recited by an old man at the head of Loch Awe.

Donald Macintyre, in Benbecula, recited a similar fragment, which has since been written and sent to me. The subject is a dialogue between a lady and a messenger returning from battle, with a number of heads on a withy; the lady asks their story, and the messenger tells whose heads they were, and how the heroes fell. It sounded better than it reads, but the transcriber had never written Gaelic before.

John Campbell, generally known as “Yellow John,” living in Strath Gearrloch, about twelve miles west of Flowerdale, repeated a similar fragment, which lasted for a quarter of an hour. He said he had known it for half a century. He is a very old man, and it is difficult to follow him, and the poetry was mingled with prose, and with “said he,” “said she.” It was the last remnant of something which the old man could only remember imperfectly, and which he gave in broken sentences; but here again the combat was with a Norway witch, and the scene, Ireland. Fionn, Diarmaid and other such names appeared. Diarmaid had “his golden helm on his head;” his “two spears on his shoulder;” his “narrow-pointed shield on his left arm;” his “small shield on his right;” his sword was “leafy,” (?) leaf-shaped. And the old man believed that Diarmaid, the Irish hero, was his ancestor, and his own real name O’Duine. He spoke of “his chief MacCalain,” and treated me with extra kindness, as a kinsman. “Will you not take some more” (milk and potatoes). “Perhaps we may never see each other again. Are we not both Campbells?”

I heard of other men who could repeat such poems, and I have heard of such men all my life; but as I did not set out to gather poems, I took no trouble to get them.

Two chiefs, I think one was MacLeod, sent their two fools to gather bait on the shore; and to settle a bet which fool was the best, they strewed gold on the path. One fool stopped to gather it, but the other said, “When we are at ‘golding,’ let us be ‘golding,’ and when we are at bait-making, let us be bait-making,” and he stuck to his business. My business was prose, but it may not be out of place to state my own opinion about the Ossian controversy, for I have been asked more than once if I had found any trace of such poems.

I believe that there were poems of very old date, of which a few fragments still exist in Scotland as pure traditions. That these related to Celtic worthies who were popular heroes before the Celts came from Ireland, and answer to Arthur and his knights elsewhere. That the same personages have figured in poems composed, or altered, or improved, or spoilt by bards who lived in Scotland, and by Irish bards of all periods; and that these personages have been mythical heroes amongst Celts from the earliest of times. That “the poems” were orally collected by Macpherson, and by men before him, by Dr. Smith, by the committee of the Highland Society, and by others, and that the printed Gaelic is old poetry, mended and patched, and pieced together, and altered, but on the whole a genuine work. Manuscript evidence of the antiquity of similar Gaelic poems exists. Some were printed in 1807, under the authority of the Highland Society of London, with a Latin translation, notes, etc., and were reprinted in 1818. MacPherson’s “translation” appeared between 1760 and 1762, and the controversy raged from the beginning, and is growling still; but the dispute now is,

whether the poems were originally *Scotch* or *Irish*, and how much MacPherson altered them. It is like the quarrel about the chameleon, for the languages spoken in Islay and Rathlin are identical, and the language of the poems is difficult for me, though I have *spoken* Gaelic from my childhood. There is no doubt at all that Gaelic poems on such subjects existed long before MacPherson was born; and it is equally certain that there is no composition in the Gaelic language which bears the smallest resemblance in style to the peculiar kind of prose in which it pleased MacPherson to translate. The poems have a peculiar rhythm, and a style of their own which is altogether lost in his English translation. But what concerns me is the popular belief, and it seems to be this--"MacPherson must have been a very dishonest person when he allowed himself to pass as the author of Ossian's poems." So said a lady, one of my earliest friends, whose age has not impaired her memory, and so say those who are best informed, and understand the language.

The illiterate seem to have no opinion on the subject. So far as I could ascertain, few had heard of the controversy, but they had all heard scraps of poems and stories about the Finne, all their lives; and they are content to believe that "Ossian, the last of the Finne," composed the poems, wrote them, and burned his book in a pet, when be was old and blind, because St. Patrick, or St. Paul, or some other saint, would not believe his wonderful stories.

Those who would study "the controversy," will find plenty of discussion; but the report of the Highland Society appears to settle the question on evidence. I cannot do better than quote from Johnson's Poets the opinion of a great author, who was a great translator, who, in speaking of his own work, says:--

"What must the world think . . . After such a judgment passed by so great a critick, the world who decides so often, and who examines so seldom; the world who, even in matters of literature, is almost always the slave of authority? Who will suspect that so much learning should mistake, that so much accuracy should be misled, or that so much candour should be biassed? . . . I think that no translation ought to be the ground of criticism, because no man ought to be condemned upon another man's explanation of his meaning. . . . ." (Postscript to the Odyssey, Pope's Homer, Johnson's Poets, pp. 279, 280).

And to that quotation let me add this manuscript note, which I found in a copy of the Report of the Highland Society on the poems of Ossian; which I purchased in December 1859; and which came from the library of Colonel Hamilton Smith, at Plymouth.

"The Reverend Dr. Campbell, of Halfway Tree, Lisuana, in Jamaica, often repeated to me in the year 1709, 1801, and 1802, parts of Ossian in Gaelic; and assured me that he had possessed a manuscript, long the property of his family, in which Gaelic poems, and in particular, whole pieces of Ossian's compositions were contained. This he took out with him on his first voyage to the West Indies in 1780, when his ship was captured by a boat from the Santissima Trinidata, flagship of the whole Spanish fleet; and he, together with all the other passengers, lost nearly the whole of their baggage, among which was the volume in question. In 1814, when I was on the staff of General Sir Thomas Graham, now Lord Lyndoch, I understood that Mr. MacPherson had been at one time his tutor; and, therefore, I asked his opinion respecting the authenticity of the Poems. His lordship replied that he never had any doubts on the subject, he having seen in Mr. MacPherson's possession several manuscripts in the Gaelic language, and heard him speak of them repeatedly; he told me some stronger particulars, which I cannot now note down, for the conversation took place during the action of our winter campaign.

(Signed) "CHARLES HAM^{N}. SMITH, Lt.--Col."

The Colonel had the reputation of being a great antiquary, and had a valuable library. James MacPherson, a "modest young man, who was master of Greek and Latin," was "procured" to be a preceptor to "the boy Tommy," who was afterwards Lord Lyndoch (according to a letter in a book printed for private circulation). As it appears to me, those who are ignorant of Gaelic, and now-a-days maintain that "MacPherson composed Ossian's Poems," are like critics who, being ignorant of Greek, should maintain that Pope wrote the Odyssey, and was the father of Homer; or, being ignorant of English, should declare that Tennyson was the father of King Arthur and all his knights, because he has published one of many poems which treat of them. It was different when Highlanders were "rebels;" and it was petty treason to deny that they were savages.

A glance at "Johnson's Tour in the Hebrides," will show the feeling of the day. He heard Gaelic songs in plenty, but would not believe in Gaelic poems. He appreciated the kindness and hospitality with which he was treated; he praised the politeness of all ranks, and yet maintained that their language was "the rude speech of a barbarous people, who had few thoughts to express, and were content, as they conceived grossly, to be grossly understood."

He could see no beauty in the mountains which men now flock to see. He saw no fish in fording northern rivers, and explains how the winter torrents sweep them away; the stags were "perhaps not bigger than our fallow-deer;" the waves were not larger than those on the coast of Sussex; and yet, though the Doctor would not believe in Gaelic poems, he did believe that peat grew as it was cut, and that the vegetable part of it probably caused a glowing redness in the earth of which it is mainly composed; and he came away willing to believe in the second sight, though not quite convinced.

That sturdy old Briton, the great lexicographer, who is an honour to his country, was not wholly free from national prejudice; he erred in some things; he may have erred in a matter of which he could not well judge; he did not understand Gaelic; he did not believe in traditions; he would not believe in the translations; and MacPherson seems to have ended by encouraging the public belief that he was the author of poems which had gained so wide a celebrity.

Matters have changed for the better since those days; Celt and Saxon are no longer deadly foes. There still exists, as I am informed, an anti-Celtic society, whose president, on state occasions, wears three pairs of trousers; but it is no longer penal to dispense with these garments; and there are Southerns who discard them altogether, when they go north to pursue the little stags on the ugly hills, and catch fish in the torrents.

There are Celtic names in high places, in India, and at home; and an English Duke is turning the Gaelic of Ossian's poems into English verse.

This, however, is foreign to my subject, though it bears somewhat on the rest of the traditions of the Finne. I have stated my own opinion because I hold it, not because I wish to influence those who differ from me. I have no wish to stir up the embers of an expiring controversy, which was besprinkled with peculiarly acrid ink, and obscured by acid fumes. I neither believe that MacPherson composed Ossian, nor that Ossian composed all the poems which bear his name. I am quite content to believe Ossian to have been an Irishman, or a Scotsman, or a myth, on sufficient evidence.

Besides these few remnants of poetry which still survive, I find a great many prose tales relating to the heroes of the poems; and as these personages certainly were popular heroes in Ireland and in Scotland centuries ago, I give what I have gathered concerning them, with the conviction that it is purely Celtic tradition.

The Seannachas of the Fine consists, then, of poetry already printed; fragments which are not in print, so far as I know, and which are now very rare; and prose tales which are tolerably common, but rapidly disappearing.

In all these, according to tradition, Fionn, Diarmaid, and the rest, are generally represented as Irish worthies. The scene is often laid in Ireland; but there are hundreds of places in Scotland in which some of the exploits are said to have been performed. I know not how many cairns are supposed to contain the bones of the wild boar, whose bristles wounded the feet of Diarmaid when he paced his length against the hair; Kyle Reay, in Skye, is named after a giant warrior who leaped the strait. There are endless mountains bearing Ossianic names in all parts of Scotland, and even in the Isle of Man the same names are to be found mixed up with legends. In April 1860, I met a peasant near Ramsey who knew the name of Fin MacCoul, though he would not say a word about him to me. In Train's history of the Island, published by Mary Quiggin, 1845, at page 359, is this note:--

"In a letter, dated 20th September, 1844, from a highly respected correspondent in the Isle of Man, he says--'Are you aware that the septennial appearance of the island, said to be submerged in the sea by enchantment near Port Soderick, is expected about the end of this month?' Though the spell by which this fancified island has been bound to the bottom of the ocean since the days of the great Fin MacCoul, and its inhabitants transformed in blocks of granite, might, according to popular belief, be broke by placing a bible on any part of the enchanted land when at its original altitude above the waters of the deep, where it is permitted to remain only for the short space of thirty minutes. No person has yet had the hardihood to make the attempt, lest, in case of failure, the enchanter, in revenge, might cast his club over Mona also."

And in Cregeen's Manks dictionary, by the same publisher, 1835, is this Manks proverb--

Ny three geayghn s'feayrey dennee Fion M'Cooil,
Geay henneu, as geay huill,
As geay fo ny shiauill."

Which I understand to mean-

The three coldest winds that came to Fion M'Cooil,
Wind from a thaw, wind from a hole,
And wind from under the sails.

In short, I believe that the heroes of Ossian belong to the race, not to any one set of poems, or to any single branch of the Celtic language.

2d. There are tales, not necessarily about the Fin, consisting partly of plain narrative and dialogue, which vary with every narrator, and probably more or less every time the story is told; and partly of a kind of measured prose, which is unlike anything I know in any other language. I suspect that these have been compositions at some time, but at what time I cannot even guess.

These almost always relate to Ireland and Scandinavia; to boats, knights, swords, and shields. There are adventures under ground, much battle, generally an island with fire about it (perhaps Iceland), and a lady to be carried off. There is often an old woman who has some mysterious vessel of balsam which brings the dead to life, and a despised character who turns out to be the real hero, sometimes a boaster who is held up to ridicule. I believe these to be bardic recitations fast disappearing and changing into prose; for the older the narrator is, the less educated, and the farther removed from the rest of the world, the more his stories are garnished with these passages. "Fin MacCumhal goes go Graffee," published in 1857, from

Mayo, is evidently a translation of a tale of this kind. In all these, the scene is laid in Eirinn and Lochlan, now Ireland and Scandinavia; and these would seem to have been border countries. Perhaps the stories relate to the time when the Scandinavians occupied part of the Western Isles.

3d. There is popular history of events which really happened within the last few centuries: of this, I have gathered none, but I heard a great deal in a very short time, and I have heard it all my life. It is a history devoid of dates, but with clear starting points. The event happened at the time of Shamas (James) at the battle of Shirra Muir; at Inverlochy; after Culloden. The battle was between MacNeill and MacLeod. MacLeod came from *that* castle. They met on *that* strand. The dead are buried *there*. Their descendants now live in such a place. He was the last man hanged in Harris. *That* is called the slab of lamentation, from which the MacLeans embarked for Ireland when the MacDonalds had conquered them, and taken the land. MacLean exposed his wife on the Lady Rock because she had made his servant blow up one of the ships of the Spanish Armada, for jealousy of the Spanish lady who was on board. The history is minute and circumstantial, and might be very interesting if faithfully collected, but it is rather local than national, and is not within the scope of my work. It is by far the most abundant popular lore, and has still a great hold on the people. The decision of a magistrate in a late case of "Sapaid" (broken heads) was very effective, because he appealed to this feeling. It was thus described to me: "Ah! he gave it to them. He leant back in his chair, and spoke grandly for half an hour. He said you are as wild men fighting together in the days of King Shamas."

4th. There are tales which relate to men and women only, and to events that might have happened anywhere at any time. They might possibly be true, and equally true, whether the incidents happened to an Eastern sage or a wise old Highlander. Such tales as Nos. 19 and 20. These are plentiful, and their characteristic is sagacity and hidden meaning.

5th. There are children's tales, of which some are given. They are in poetry and prose as elsewhere, and bear a general resemblance to such tales all over the world. The cat and the mouse play parts in the nursery drama of the Western Isles, as well as; in "Contes et Apologues Indiens inconnus jusqu' a ce jour," etc.; a translation into French, by Mr. Stanislaus Julien, in 1860, of Chinese books, which were translated into that language from Sanscrit in 1565, by a Chinese doctor, and President of the Ministry of Justice, who composed "The Forest of Comparisons," in twenty-four volumes, divided into 20 classes, and subdivided into 508 sections, after twenty years of hard labour, during which he abstracted about 400 works. This is the name of one; Fo-choue-kiun-nieou-pi-king.

Let those who call Gaelic hard, try that; or this Tchong-king-siouen-tsi-pi-yu-king.

Let those who contemn nursery rhymes, think of the French savant, and the Chinese cabinet minister, and the learning which they have bestowed on the conversations of cats and mice.

6th. Riddles and puzzles, of which there are a very great number. They are generally descriptive, such as, "No bigger than a barley corn, it covers the king's board"--(the eye). I have given a few. If any despise riddles, let them bear in mind that the Queen of Sheba is believed to have propounded riddles to Solomon, and that Samson certainly proposed a riddle to the Philistines. I am told that riddles are common in India now.

7th. Proverbs, in prose and in verse, of which 1515 were printed in 1819, and many more are still to be got. Many are evidently very old from their construction, and some are explained by the stories, for example, "Blackberries in February" has no very evident meaning, but a long story explains that difficulties may by vanquished. A king's son was sent by a stepmother to get "that which grew, and is neither crooked nor straight"--(sawdust);

“Blackberries in February,” which be found growing in a charnel-house; and a third thing, equally easy to find when the way was known.

8th. There are songs, of which there are a vast number, published and unpublished, of all sorts and kinds, sung to wild and peculiar tunes. They are condemned and forbidden in some districts, and are vanishing rapidly from all. These used to be sung continually within my recollection, and many of them are wild, and, to my ear, beautiful. There are songs composed in a particular rhythm for rowing, for washing clothes by dancing on them; songs whose rhythm resembles a piobroch; love songs; war songs; songs which are nearly all chorus, and which are composed as they are sung. The composer gives out a single line applicable to anything then present, and the chorus fills up the time by singing and clapping hands, till the second line is prepared. I have known such lines fired at a sportsman by a bevy of girls who were waulking blankets in a byre, and who made the gun and the dog the theme of several stanzas. Reid’s Bibliotheca Scoto-Celtica, 1832, gives a list of eighty-one Gaelic books of poetry printed since 1785. There are hymn books, song books, and poetry composed by known and unknown bards, male and female. Of the former, Mackenzie, in his Beauties of Gaelic poetry, gives a list of thirty-two, with specimens of their works and a short biography. Of the latter class, the unknown poets, there are many at the present day; and who is to guess their number in times when men did nothing but fight and sing about their battles? A very few of these bards have become known to the world by name, and, in all probability their merits never will be known. Let any one translate Sir Patrick Spens or Annie Laurie into French or Greek, or read a French translation of Waverley, and the effect of translation on such compositions will be evident.

9th. The romantic popular tales of which this collection mainly consists.

I presume that I have said enough as to their collection, and that I may now point out what seems to me to be their bearing on the scientific part of the subject; that I may take them as tradition, and argue from them as from established facts. I have endeavoured to show how, when, and where I got the stories; each has its own separate pedigree, and I have given the original Gaelic, with the closest translation which I was able to make.

Now, let me mention the works in which I have found similar tales, and which are within the reach of all who can read English. First--Tales from the Norse, translated by G. W. Dasent, published 1859. Many of the Gaelic tales collected in 1859 resemble these very closely. The likeness is pointed out in the notes.

It is impossible that the book could have become known to the people who told the stories within the time, but if it were, a manuscript which has been lent to me by the translator, proves that the stories were known in Scotland before the translation from the Norse was made public.

It is a verbatim copy made by a clergyman from a collection of fourteen tales, gathered by “Peter Buchan, editor of the Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland.” It is dated 1848, Glasgow; and signed, Alexander B. Grosart. The tales are written in English, and versions of all except three, had previously come to me in Gaelic. For example, (No. 2), The Battle of the Birds closely resembles “The Master Maid” from Norway, but it still more resembles Mr. Peter Buchan’s “Greensleeves,” found in Scotland thirteen years before the Norse tales were translated. The manuscript was sent by Mr. Grosart, after he had read the Norse tales, and it seems to be clearly proved that these stories are common to Norway and Scotland.

I have found very few stories of the kind amongst the peasantry of the low country, though I have sought them. I find such names as Fingal in Mr. Buchan’s stories, and I know them to

be common in the islands where the scene is often laid. The language is not that of any peasantry, and I have come to the conclusion that this collection is mostly derived from Gaelic, directly or indirectly, perhaps from the shoals of West Highlanders and Irishmen who used to come down as shearers every harvest, and who are now scattered all over Scotland as farm-servants and drovers, and settled in Edinburgh and Glasgow as porters. I know from one of these, a drover, who goes every year to the south with cattle, that he has often entertained lowland farm-servants by telling in English the stories which he learned as child in South Uist. I know of men in Paisley, Greenock, and Edinburgh, who are noted for their knowledge of sgeulachd. But while I hold that this particular collection was not told in this form by lowland Scotch peasants, I know that they still do tell such stories occasionally, and I also know that Englishmen of the lower ranks do the same. I met two tinkers in St. James's Street in February with black faces and a pan of burning coals each. They were followed by a wife, and preceded by a mangy terrier with a stiff tail. I joined the party, and one told me a version of "the man who travelled to learn what shivering meant," while we walked together through the park to Westminster. It was clearly the popular tale which exist in Norse, and German, and Gaelic, and it bore the stamp of the mind of the class, and of the man, who told it in his own peculiar dialect, and who dressed the actors in his own ideas. A cutler and a tinker travel together, and sleep in an empty haunted house for a reward. They are beset by ghosts and spirits of murdered ladies and gentlemen, and the inferior, the tinker, shows most courage, and is the hero. "He went into the cellar to draw beer, and there be found a little chap a-sittin' on a barrel with a red cap on 'is 'ed; and sez he, sez he, 'Buzz.' 'Wot's buzz?' sez the tinker. 'Never you mind wot's buzz,' sez he. 'That's mine; don't you go for to touch it,'" etc., etc., etc.

In a less degree many are like the German stories of the brothers Grimm. That collection has been translated, and a book so well known may possibly have found its way into the Highlands. It is impossible to speak with certainty; but when all the narrators agree in saying that they have known their stories all their lives, and when the variation is so marked, the resemblance is rather to be attributed to common origin than to books. I only once heard of such a book in the Highlands. It was given to a gamekeeper in Sutherland for his children, and was condemned, and put out of the way as trash.

The Gaelic stories resemble in some few cases the well-known tales of Hans Andersen, founded on popular tales told in Denmark.

And they resemble sundry other books which are avowedly founded on popular tales collected in various countries.

Some are like the French tales of the Countess D'Aulnoy which have been translated. One is like part of Shakespeare, but it is still more like the Italian story in Boccaccio, from which part of Cymbeline is supposed to be taken. Perhaps Shakespeare may have founded Cymbeline on a popular tale then current in England and as well as in Italy.

A few resemble the Arabian Nights, and in some cases I believe that the stories have been derived from early English translations of that well-known book. I used myself to read an edition of 1815 to my piper guardian, in return for his uregeuls, but he seemed more inclined to blame the tyranny of the kings than to admire the Eastern stories.

MacLean has himself told the story of Aladdin in Gaelic as his share of a winter night's entertainment, and I have beard of several people of the poorer class who know the Arabian Nights well. But such stories are easily known after a little experience has been gained. The whole of a volume is run together, the incidents follow in their order, or in something like it. The difference in style is as marked as the contrast between a drift tree and a wrecked vessel,

but as it is curious to trace the change from Eastern ways as seen through an English translation of a French view of the original Arabic, I give specimens. These contain the incidents embodied in stories in the Arabian Nights, but the whole machinery and decoration, manners and customs, are now as completely West Highland as if the tales had grown there. But for a camel which appears, I would almost give up my opinion, and adopt that of MacLean, who holds that even these are pure traditions.

In support of his view it may be said that there are hundreds of other books as well known in England as those mentioned above, of which neither I nor my collectors have ever found a trace. Jack and the Bean-stalk, and Jack the Giant-killer, Beauty and the Beast, and the Sleeping Beauty in the Woods, as known in England, are unknown in the Highlands. None of the adventures of Mr. Pickwick, or Sam Weller, or Jack Shepherd, or Gulliver, or Robinson Crusoe, are mixed up with the prose tales. No part of the story of Wallace, as told in the "Scottish Chiefs," or of "Waverley," is to be found in popular history. There is nothing like "The Mysteries of London." There are none of the modern horrors of which ballads have been made, such as "Sad was the day when James Greenacre first got acquainted with Sarah Gale." There are no gorgeous palaces, and elegant fairies; there are no enchanters flying in chariots drawn by winged griffins; there are no gentle knights and noble dames; no spruce cavaliers and well-dressed ladies; no heroes and heroines of fashionable novels; but, on the contrary, everything is popular. Heroes are as wild, and unkempt, and savage as they probably were in fact, and kings are men as they appear in Lane's translations of the Arabian Nights.

Eastern tale tellers knew what Haroun al Raschid must have suffered when he put on the fisherman's clothes, and Mr. Lane has not scrupled to follow the original Arabic.

If the people of the West Highlands have added book stories to their traditions, they have selected those only which were taken from peasants like themselves in other countries, and they have stripped off all that was foreign to their own manners. The people have but taken back their own.

Besides books accessible to all English readers, I find similar stories in books beyond the reach of the people. I have pointed out in the notes all that were within my reach, and came under my notice, but this part of the subject is a study, and requires time to acquire knowledge which I do not possess.

Such, then, is the evidence which bears on the immediate origin of the stories. I believe them to be pure traditions, very little affected by modern books, and, if at all, only by those which are avowedly taken from popular tales. A trip of five days in the Isle of Man in April 1860 has but confirmed this opinion.

That island, in spite of its numerous rulers, is still peculiarly Celtic. It has belonged to Norwegians. English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish have fought for it. It has a Law Court with a Norwegian name held on a mound; half the names in the island are Norse, such as Laxey (Salmon isthmus), Langness, Snafell; but these names are not understood by the people who live at the places. Peel has a descriptive Gaelic name, which means island port; a Salmon is Braddan, not Lax; and of the poorer classes living in the mountain farms, and on the points and distant corners of the island, there are still many who can hardly speak anything but Manks. Their hair is dark; the sound of their voices, even their houses, are Celtic. I know one turf dwelling which might be a house in North Uist. There was the fire on the floor, the children seated around it, the black haired Celtic mother on a low stool in front,--the hens quarrelling about a nest under the table, in which several wanted to lay eggs at once.

“Get out, Polly! Drive her out, John!” And then John, the son, drove out Polly, the hen, with a stick; and the hen said “Gurr-r-m;” and ran in under the table again and said, “Cluck, cluck,” and laid the egg then and there. There was the same kindly hospitable manner in the poorest cottage; and I soon found that a Scotch Highlander could speak Manks as soon as he could acquire the art of mispronouncing his own language to the right amount, and learn where to introduce the proper English word. “La fine”--fine day--was the salutation everywhere; and the reply, “Fine, fine.” But though nouns are almost the same, and the language is but a dialect of Gaelic, the foreigner was incomprehensible, because he could not pronounce as they did; and I was reduced to English. Now this island is visited every summer by shoals of visitors from the mainland; steam-boats bring them from Liverpool, a thousand at a time, and they sweep over the whole country. If visitors import stories, here there are plenty of strangers, and I was a stranger myself. If stories are imported in books, here are the books also. The first picture I saw on landing was a magnificent Bluebeard in a shop window. He was dressed as an Eastern potentate, and about to slice off his wife’s head with a crooked scimitar, while the two brothers rode up to the gate on prancing steeds, with horror on their faces and swords in their hands. But there was not a trace of any of that kind of story to be found amongst the peasants with whom I spoke in the Isle of Man.

I found them willing to talk, eager to question, kindly, homely folk, with whom it was easy to begin an acquaintance. I heard everywhere that it *used* to be common to hear old men telling stories about the fire in Manks; but any attempt to extract a story, or search out a queer old custom, or a half-forgotten belief, seemed to act as a pinch of snuff does on a snail.

The Manksman would not trust the foreigner with his secrets; his eye twinkled suspiciously, and his hand seemed unconsciously to grasp his mouth, as if to keep all fast. After getting quite at ease with one old fellow over a pipe, and having learned that a neighbour’s cow had born a calf to the “Taroo ustey,” water bull, I thought I might fish for a story, and told one as a bait.

“That man, if he had two pints, would tell you stories by the hour,” said a boy. “Oh, yes, they used to tell plenty of stories,” said the old man, “Skyll, as we call them.”

Here was the very word mispronounced, “sgeul,” so my hopes rose. “Will you tell me a story now?” “Have you any churches in your country?” “Yes, and chapels; but will you tell me a story?” “What you got to sell in your bag?” “What a shame now, for you, an old Mananach, not to tell me a story when I have told you one, and filled your pipe and all.” “What do you pay for the tobacco?” “Oh, will you not tell the man a story?” said the boy. “I must go and saw now,” said the old man; and so we parted.

But though this was the usual thing, it was not always so; and it soon became evident that the stories given in Train’s history of the Isle of Man, are nearly all known to the people now; and these are of the same nature as some known in the Highlands of Scotland; some are almost identical; and nearly all the Manks customs are common to the Western Isles.

Thus I heard of Fairies, “Ferish,” who live in green mounds, and are heard at times dressing mill-stones in haunted mills; of Taroo Ustey, the water bull; of Dinny Mara, the sea man, and of the Mermaid; of Caval Ustey, the water horse; of Fion MacCooil; of a city under the waves; of a magic island seen in the far west. I heard of giants. No one would tell about them; but in a book I found how Goddard Crovan threw a vast boulder at his scolding wife, and how a Norman baron, named “Kitter” and his cook; “Eaoch,” and his magic sword, “Macabuin,” made by “Loan Maclibhuin, the dark smith of Drontheim;” and “Hiallus-nan-urd, the one-legged hammerman,”--are all woven into a story, and mixed up with such

Norwegian names as Olave and Emergaid, exactly as a story is jumbled together in the Western Isles of Scotland.

I got some stories which I have not found in the Manks books, so I give them here, in the hope that some Manksman may be induced to gather the popular lore of his own country. This from a woman who lives near the Calf of Man.

“Did you ever hear tell of the Glashan?”

“No; tell me about the Glashan.”

“Well, you see, in the old times they used to be keeping the sheep in the folds; and one night an old man forgot to put them in, and he sent out his son, and he came back and said the sheep were all folded, but there was a year-old lamb, oasht, playing the mischief with them; and that was the glashan.

You see they were very strong, and when they wanted a stack threshed, though it was a whole stack, the glashan would have it threshed for them in one night.

“And they were running after the women. There was one of them once caught a girl, and had a hould of her by the dress, and he sat down and he fell asleep; and then she cut away all the dress, you see, round about this way, and left it in his fist and ran away; and when he awoke, he threw what he had over his shoulder, this way; and he said (something in Manks which I could not catch).

“Well, you see, one night the ould fellow sent all the women to bed, and he put on a cap and a woman’s dress, and he sat down by the fire and he began to spin; and the young glashans, they came in, and they began saying something in Manks that means ‘Are you turning the wheel? are you trying the reel?’ Well, the ould glashan, he was outside, and he knew better than the young ones; be knew it was the ould fellow himself, and he was telling them, but they did not mind him; and so the ould man threw a lot of hot turf, you see, it was turf they burned then, over them and burned them; and the ould one said (something in Manks). ‘You’ll not understand that, now?’ ‘Yes, I do, pretty nearly.’ ‘Ah, well.’ And so the glashans went away and never came back any more.”

“Have you many stories like that, guidwife?” “Ay,” said she, “there were plenty of people that could tell these stories once. When I was a little girl, I used to hear them telling them in Manks over the fire at night; but people is so changed with pride now that they care for nothing.”

Now here is a story which is all over the Highlands in various shapes. Sometimes it is a Brollichan son of the Fuath, or a young water horse transformed into the likeness of a man, which attacks a lonely woman, and gets burned or scalded, and goes away to his friends outside. In the islands, the woman generally says her name is Myself; and the goblin answers, when asked who burned him, “Myself.” This Manks story is manifestly the same, though this incident is left out. I have beard it in Lewis, and in many places besides, and part of it is best omitted.

The Glashan, as I found out afterwards, frequented neighbouring farms till within a very late period. He wore no clothes, and was hairy; and, according, to Train’s history, Phynodderee, which means something hairy, was frightened away by a gift of clothes--exactly as the Skipness long-haired Gruagach was frightened away by the offer of a coat and a cap. The Manks brownie and the Argyllshire one each repeated a rhyme over the clothes; but the rhymes are not the same, though they amount to the same thing.

Here, then, is a Gaelic popular tale and belief in Man; and close to it I found a story which has a counterpart in Grimm. I heard it from my landlady at Port Erin, and I met two Manksmen afterwards who know it--

“The fish all gathered once to choose a king; and the fluke, him that has the red spots on him, stayed at home to make himself pretty, putting on his red spots, to see if he would be king, and he was too late, for when he came the herring was king of the sea. So the fluke curled his mouth on one side, and said, ‘A simple fish like the herring, king of the sea!’ and his mouth has been to one side ever since.”

It seems, too, that the Manks version of “Jack the Giant Killer” varies from the English; for

“Jack the Giant Killer,
Varv a Vuchd in the river,”

killed a pig in the river; and the English hero did nothing of the sort. In short, the Isle of Man has its own legends, which have their own peculiarities; they resemble others, and do not seem to be taken from books. The same class of people tell them there as elsewhere; the difficulty of getting at them is the same; and the key to the secret is the native language. From what I gleaned in a five days’ walk, I am sure that a good Manksman might yet gather a large harvest within a very narrow space. And now to return to my own subject.

I find that men of all ranks resemble each other; that each branch of popular lore has its own special votaries, as branches of literature have amongst the learned; that one man is the peasant historian and tells of the battles of the clans; another, a walking peerage, who knows the descent of most of the families in Scotland, and all about his neighbours and their origin; others are romancers, and tell about the giants; others are moralists, and prefer the sagacious prose tales, which have a meaning, and might have a moral; a few know the history of the Feni, and are antiquarians. Many despise the whole as frivolities; they are practical moderns, and answer to practical men in other ranks of society.

But though each prefers his own subject, the best Highland story-tellers know specimens of all kinds. Start them, and it seems as if they would never stop. I timed one, and he spoke for an hour without pause or hesitation, or verbal repetition. His story was Connall Gulban, and he said he could repeat fourscore. He recited a poem, but despised “Bardism”; and he followed me six miles in the dark to my inn, to tell me numbers 19 and 20, which I have condensed; for the very same thing can be shortly told when it is not a composition. For example.

In telling a story, narrative and dialogue are mixed what the characters have told each other to do is repeated as narrative. The people in the story tell it to each other, and branch off into discussions about their horses and houses and crops, or anything that happens to turn up. One story grows out of another, and the tree is almost hidden by a foliage of the speaker’s invention. Here and there comes a passage repeated by rote, and common to many stories, and to every good narrator. It seems to act as a rest for the memory. Now and then, an observation from the audience starts an argument. In short, one good story in the mouth of a good narrator, with a good audience, might easily go rambling on for a whole winter’s night, as it is said to do.

The “Slim Swarthy Champion used to last for four hours.” Connall Gulban “used to last for three evenings. Those that wanted to hear the end had to come back.” One of my collectors said it would take him a month to write it down, but I am bound to add that he has since done it in a very much shorter time. I have heard of a man who fell asleep by the fire, and found a story going on when he awoke next morning. I have one fragment on which (as I am told) an old man in Ross-shire used to found twenty-four stories, all of which died with him.

There are varieties in public speakers amongst the people as amongst their representatives, for some are eloquent, some terse, some prosy.

But though a tale may be spun out to any extent, the very same incidents can be, and often are, told in a few words, and those tales which have been written for me are fair representations of them as they are usually told. They are like a good condensed report of a rambling speech, with extraneous matter left out. One narrator said of the longest story which I had then got--" It is but the contents;" but I have more than once asked a narrator to tell me the story which he had previously told to one of my collectors, and a collector to write down a story which I had previously heard, and I have always found the pith, often the very words. In no instance have I found anything added by those whom I employed, when their work was subjected to this severe test.

This is the account which one of my collectors gives of the old customs of his class--he is a workman employed by the Duke of Argyll; he tells me that he is self-educated; and as he repeats some of the stories which he has written, from memory, his account of the way in which he acquired them is valuable.

I remember, upwards of fifty years ago, when I was a boy, my father lived in the farest north house, in the valley called Glen-na Callanach. I also used to be with my granfather; he lived near Terbert, Lochlomond side. I remember, in the winter nights, when a few old people would be togather, they would pass the time with telling each other stories, which they had by tradition. I used to listen attentively, and hear them telling about the ceatharnaich, or freebooters, which used to come to plunder the country, and take away cattle; and how their ancestors would gather themselves togather to fight for their property, the battles they fought, and the kind of weapons they used to fight with; the manners of their ancestors, the dress they used to wear, and different hardships they had to endure.

I was also sometimes amused, listening to some people telling Gaelic romances, which we called sgeulachds. It was customary for a few youngsters to gather into one house, and whither idle or at some work, such as knitting stockings or spinning, they would amuse each other with some innocent diversion, or telling sgeulachds. Us that was children was very fond of listening to them, and the servant maid that was in my father's house would often tell us a sgeulachd to keep us queit.

In those days, when people killed their Marte cow they keept the hide, and tanned it for leather to themselves. In those days every house was furnished with a wheel and a reel; the women spun, and got their webs woven by a neighbouring weaver; also, the women was dyers for themselves, so that the working class had their leather, their linen, and their cloth of their own manufacturing; and when they required the help of a shoemaker, or of a tailor, they would send for them. The tailors and shoemakers went from house to house, to work wherever they were required, and by travelling the country so much, got acquaint with a great maney of the traditionary tales, and divulged them through the country; and as the country people made the telling of these tales, and listening to hear them, their winter night's amusement, scarcely aney part of them would be lost. Some of these romances is supposed to be of great antiquity, on account of some of the Gaelic words being out of use now. I remember, about forty years ago, of being in company with a man that was watching at night; he wished me to stop with him, and he told me a (sgeulachd) romance; and last year I heard a man telling the same story, about therty miles distante from where I had heard it told forty years before that; and the man which told me the tale could not tell me the meaning of some of the old Gaelic words that was in it. At first I thought they were foreign words, but at last I recollected to have heard some of them repeated in Ossian's poems, and it was by the words that was before, and after them, that I understood the meaning of them. The same man told

me another story, which he said he learned from his granfather, and Denmark, Swedden, and Noraway was named in it in Gaelic, but he forgot the name of the two last-named places.

It appears likely to me, that some of these tales was invented by the Druids, and told to the people as sermons; and by these tales the people was caused to believe that there was fairies which lived in little conical hills, and that the fairies had the power of being either visible or invisible, as they thought proper, and that they had the power of enchanting people, and of taking them away and make fairies of them; and that the Druids had charms which would prevent that; and they would give these charms to the people for payment; and maney stories would be told about people being taken away by the fairies, and the charms which had to be used to break the spell, and get them back again; and others, on account of some neglidgeance, never got back aney more.

Also that there was witches; people which had communication with an evil spirit, from which they got the power of changing themselves into aney shape they pleased; that these witches often put themselves in the shape of beasts, and when they were in the shape of beasts, that they had some evil design in view, and that it was dangerous to meet them. Also that they could, and did, sometimes take away the produce of people's dairy, and sometimes of the whole farm. The Druidical priests pretended that they had charms that would prevent the witches from doing aney harm, and they would give a charm for payment. When the first day of summer came, the people was taught to put the fire out of their houses, and to place it on some emince near the house for to keep away the witches, and that it was not safe for them to kindle a fire in their house aney more, until they bought it from beil's druide. That fire was called beil-teine (beils-fire), and the first day of summer was called beil-fires day; and also when the first night of winter came, the people would gather fuel and make blazing fire for to keep away the witches, or at least to deprive them of the power of taking away the produce of the farm, and then they would go to the Druid and buy a kindling of what was called the holy fire. The Druids also caused the people to believe that some families had been enchanted and changed into beasts, and as the proper means had not been used, the spell was never broken; and that swans, seals, and marmaids had been different beings, familys that had been enchanted.

Beil or Beul was the name which the Druids gave their god, and the Druids of Beil pretended to be the friends of the people; they pretended to have charms to cure different kinds of diseases, and also charms to prevent fairies, ghosts, and witches, from annoying or harming people. It is a well-known fact, that the superstitions of the Druids has been handed down from generation to generation for a great maney ages, and is not wholy extinct yet; and we have reason to believe that some of the tales, which was invented in those days for to fright the people, has been told and kept in remembrance in the self and same manner. The priests of Beil was the men that was called Druids, the miracles which they pretended to perform was called meur-bheileachd (beil-fingering), and their magic which they pretended to perform was called druichd (druidisem), and we have plenty of reason to believe superstitious tales as well as superstition, originated among the Druids.

JOHN DEWAR.

"J. Campbell, Esq.

"SIR--I hope you will correct aney errors that you may find on this piece which I wrote."

I have corrected only two or three errors in spelling, and the writing is remarkably clear, but I have left some words which express the Gaelic pronunciation of English.

The derivation Of MIORBHUIL, *a marvel*, from the finger of Bel, was suggested by Dr. Smith (see Armstrong's Die.) J.F.C.

Now let me return to the cottage of old Macphie, where I heard a version of the Sea-Maiden, and let me suppose that one of the rafters is the drift log which I saw about to be added to a roof in the same island.

The whole roof is covered with peat soot, but that may be scraped away, and the rough wood appears. There are the holes of boring sea shells, filled with sand and marine products. It is evident that the log came by sea, that it did not come in a ship, and that it was long enough in warm salt water for the barnacles to live and die, and for their dwellings to be filled with sea rubbish; that it floated through latitudes where barnacles live. The fairy eggs, which are picked up on the same shore, point to the West Indies as a stage on the way. Maps of ocean currents shew the gulf-stream flowing from the Gulf of Mexico past the Hebrides, but the tree is a fir, for there is a bit of bark which proves the fact, and it appears that pines grow between 40° and 60° in America. It is therefore possible that the rafter was once an American fir tree, growing in the Rocky Mountains; that it was swept into the Mississippi, and carried to the Gulf of Mexico; drifted by the gulf-stream past the West India Islands to the Hebrides, and stranded by a western gale on its voyage; to Spitzbergen. But all this must have happened long ago, for it is now a rafter covered with the soot of generations. That rafter is a strange fact, it is one of a series, and has to be accounted for. There it is, and a probable account of its journey is, that it came from East to West without the help of man, in obedience to laws which govern the world.

That smoked rafter certainly was once a seed in a fir-cone, somewhere abroad. It grew to be a pine tree; it must have been white with snow in winter, and green in summer, and glittering with rain drops and hoar-frost in bright sunshine at various times and seasons. The number of years it stood in the forest can be counted by the rings in the wood. It is certain that it was torn up by the roots, for the roots are there still. It may have formed a part of one of these wonderful natural rafts of the Mississippi, of which one in 1816 was “no less than ten miles in length, two hundred and twenty yards wide, and eight feet deep.” It has been to warm seas, and has worn a marine dress of green and brown since it lost its own natural dress of green branches. Birds must have sat on it in the forest,--crabs and shells have lived on it at sea, and fish must have swam about it; and yet it is now a rafter, hung with black pendants of peat smoke. A tree that grew beside it may now be in Spitzbergen amongst walrusses. Another may be a snag in the Mississippi amongst alligators, destined to become a fossil tree in a coal field. Part of another may be a Yankee rocking chair, or it may be part of a ship in any part of the World, or the tram of a cart, or bit of a carriage, or a wheel-barrow, or a gate post, or anything that can be made of fir wood anywhere; and the fate of stories may be as various as that of fir trees, but their course may be guessed at by running a back scent overland, as I have endeavoured to follow the voyage of a drift log over sea.

Macphie’s story began thus:--”There was a poor old fisher in Skye, and his name was Duncan;” and every version of the story which I have found in the Highlands, and I have found many, is as highland as the peat-reek on the rafters. The same story is known in many districts in Scotland, and it is evident, that it has. been known there for many years. It is a curious fact. It is worth the trouble of looking under what is purely highland, to see if its origin can be discovered.

First, then, the incidents are generally strung, together in a particular order in the Highlands, but, either separately or together, every incident in the story is to be found in some shape in other languages. Norse has it as “Shortshanks.” Irish has it. German has it. It is in the Italian of Straparola as “Fortunio.” In the French of le Cabinet des Feés, 1785. It is in every language in Europe as “St. George and the Dragon.” It is in Mr. Peter Buchan’s English of 1847 as part of “Greensleeves.” It is in “Perseus and Andromeda.” The scene of that story is

placed in Syria, and it is connected with Persia. There is something in Sanscrit about Indra, a god who recovered the stolen cattle of the gods, but here the scent is very cold, and the hound at fault, though it seems that the Sanscrit hero was the sun personified, and that he had horses of many colours, including red and white, which were always feminine, as the horses in Gaelic stories are, and which had wings and flew through the air. These were “Svankas,” with beautiful steps. “Robitas,” red or brown; Gaelic horses are often described as “Seang,” “Ruadh”; and here seems to be a clue which is worth the attention of Eastern scholars.

There is a mermaid in the story, and mermaids are mentioned in Irish, and in Arabic, and in Manks, and Italian: men even assert that they have seen mermaids in the sea within the last few years, amongst the Hebrides and off Plymouth.

There are creatures, Falcon, Wolf and Lion. Two of them were natives within historic times, one is still; but the third is a foreigner. There is an Otter, and a Sea Monster, and in other tales, there are Bears and Doves, and other animals; but every one of them, except the monster, is to be found on the road to the land where Sanscrit was spoken, and all these, and many more, played their part in popular tales elsewhere, while no real animal is ever mentioned which is peculiar to lands out of the road which leads overland to India.

Nearly all these have Gaelic names, and most of them are still living within a few days’ journey of the Hebrides under other names. I saw a live wolf from a diligence one fine morning in Brittany, and I have seen bears in Scandinavia and in Germany. The only far-fetched animal is the Lion, and in another story a similar creature appears as “Cu Seang.” Here is a fresh scent--for Sing is Lion in India--and *may* once have meant Lion in Gaelic; for though Leomban is the word now used, Seang is applied to anything slender and active. Shune is a dog in Sanscrit, Siunnach a fox in Gaelic, and there are many other Gaelic words which point to the “eastern origin of Celtic nations.” The story cannot have crossed the sea from the West. It is therefore probable that it came from the East, for it is not of home growth, and the question is, how did it get to Barra?

It seems to have been known along a certain track for many ages. It is possible that it came from the far East with the. people, and that it has survived ever since. It is hard to account for it otherwise. Those who have most studied the subject so account for popular tales elsewhere, and therefore, Donald Macphie’s story of the Sea-Maiden acquires an interest not all its own.

Much has been written, and said, and discovered about the popular migrations which have poured from East to West, and which are moving on still. Philology has mapped out the course of the human stream, and here, in the mind of an old fisherman, unable to read, or to speak any language but his own, is the end of a clue which seems to join Iran and Eirinn; as a rafter in his hut may link him with the Rocky Mountains.

Admit that this so-called fiction, and others like it, may be traditions, which have existed from the earliest of times, and every word and incident acquires an interest, for it may lead to something else.

The story certainly grew in the mind of man, as a tree grows from a seed, but when or where? It has certainly been told in many languages. It is worth inquiring how many races have told it.

The incidents, like drift trees, have been associated with people and events, as various as birds, fish, alligators, walrusses, and men; mountain ranges, and ocean currents. They have passed through the minds of Ovid and Donald Macphie. They have been adorned by poets, painted by artists, consecrated by priests,--for St. George is the patron saint of England; and now we find that which may have sprung from some quarrel about a cow, and which has passed through so many changes, dropping into forgetfulness in the mind of an old fisherman,

and surrounded with the ideas which belong to his every-day life. Ideas differing from those of the people who first invented the story, as the snow of the Rocky Mountains differs from peat-reek.

Now, to look forwards, and follow in imagination the shoals of emigrants from Germany, Scandinavia, France, Ireland, and Scotland, who are settled in clumps, or scattered over America and Australia; to think of the stories which have been gathered in Europe from these people alone, and which they have most certainly carried with them, and will tell their children; and then the route of popular tales hereafter, and their spread in former ages, can be traced and may be guessed.

I have inquired, and find that several Islanders, who used to tell the stories in Gaelic, are now settled in Australia and Canada. One of my relatives was nearly overwhelmed with hospitality in an Australian village, by a colony of Argyllshire Celts, who had found out that he was a countryman.

I was lately told of a party of men who landed in South America, and addressed a woman whom they found in a hut, in seven different languages; but in vain. At last, one of them spoke Gaelic, which he had not done for many years, and she answered, “Well, it is to thyself I would give the speech,” for she was a native of Strathglas.

There is a Gaelic population in Upper Canada: there are Highland regiments in India: many of the Arctic explorers were Highlanders, and most of the servants of the Hudson’s Bay Company still are: Dr. Livingstone is in South Africa; and what is true of Highlanders is equally true of Germans and Scandinavians, they are spread over the world. In short, the “migration of races,” and “the diffusion of popular tales,” is still going on, the whole human race is mingling together, and it is fair to argue from such facts, and to try to discover that which is Unknown from that which is proved.

What is true of one Gaelic story is true of nearly all; they contain within themselves evidence that they have been domesticated in the country for a long time, and that they came from the East, but they belong to the people now, wherever they came from; and they seem also to belong to the language.

Poems and compositions clearly do. In the prose tales, when animals speak, they talk in their natural key, so long as they speak Gaelic, and for that reason, among others, I believe them to be old traditions. The little birds speak in the key of all little birds (ee); they say, “beeg, beeg.” The crow croaks his own music when he says, “gawrag, gawrag.” When driven to say, “silly, silly,” he no longer speaks the language of nature. Grimm’s German frog says, “warte, warte,” he sings, “mach mir auf,” and talks his own language. So does his Gaelic relative, in No. 33, when he says,--

“A chaomhag, a chaomhag,
An cuimhneach leat
An gealladh beag
A thug thu aig
An tobar dhomh,
A ghaoil, a ghaoil?”

He then imitates the quarking and gurgling of real frogs in a pond in spring, in sounds which no Saxon letters can express; but when he sings,--

“Open the door, my hinney, my heart,
Open the door, my ain wee thing,

And mind the words that you and I spak',
Down in the meadow, at the well spring,"

he is speaking in a foreign tongue, though the story, has been domesticated in the Lowlands of Scotland for many a long day, and is commonly told there still. The Scotch story has probably been found and polished by some one long ago, but when the frog comes "loup, louping," he is at home in Low Country Scotch, and these words are probably as old as the story and the language.

If Motherwell's beautiful nursery songs were to be collected from oral recitation anywhere, they would prove themselves Scotch by this test: The watch-dog says, "wouff, wouff;" the hen is "chuckie;" the chickens, "wheetle, wheeties;" the cock is "cockie-leerie-law;" the pigeon, "croodle-doo;" the cow says, "moo." And so also the wood-pigeon who said, "Take two sheep, Taffy take two," spoke English; but the blackcock, and cuckoo, and cock, in the Norse tales, who quarrelled about a cow, are easily known to be foreigners when they speak English, for the original Norse alone gives their true note. The Gaelic stories, tried by this test, certainly belong to the language as they do to the people; and now let us see if they can teach us anything about the people, their origin, and their habits, past and present.

First, the manners are generally those of the day. The tales are like the feasts of the pauper maniac, Emperor of the world, who confided to his doctor that all his rich food tasted of oatmeal brose. Kings live in cottages, and sit on low stools. When they have coaches, they open the door themselves. The queen saddles the king's horse. The king goes to his own stable when he hears a noise those. Sportsmen use guns. The fire is on the floor. Supernatural old women are found spinning "beyound" it, in the warm place of honour, in all primitive dwellings, even in a Lapland tent. The king's mother puts on the fire and sleeps in the common room, as a peasant does. The cock sleeps on the rafters, the sheep on the floor, the bull behind the door. A ladder is a pole, with pegs stuck through it. Horses put their noses "into" bridles. When all Ireland passes in review before the princess, they go in at the front door and out at the back, as they would through a bothy; and even the unexplained personage, the daughter of the king of the skies, has maids who chatter to her as freely as maids do to Highland mistresses. When the prince is at death's door for love of the beautiful lady in the swan's down robe, and the queen mother is in despair, she goes to the kitchen to talk over the matter.

The tales represent the actual, every-day life of those who tell them, with general fidelity. They have done the same, in all likelihood, time out of mind, and that which is not true of the present is, in all probability, true of the past; and therefore something may be learned of forgotten ways of life.

If much is of home growth, if the fight with the dragon takes place at the end of a dark, quiet Highland loch, where real whales actually blow and splash, there are landscapes which are not painted from nature, as she is seen in the Isles, and these may be real pictures seen long ago by our ancestors. Men ride for days through forests, though the men who tell of them live in small islands, where there are only drift trees and bog pine. There are traces of foreign or forgotten laws or customs. A man buys a wife as he would a cow, and acquires a right to shoot her, which is acknowledged as good law.

Cæsar tells of the Gauls, that "men have the power of life and death over their wives, as well as their children." It appears that an Iceland betrothal was little more than the purchase of a wife; and in this the story may be a true picture of the past.

Men are bound with the binding of the three smalls--waist, ankles, and wrists--tightened and tortured The conqueror almost invariably asks the conquered what is his "eirig," an old law

term for the price of men's blood, which varied with the rank of the injured man; and when the vanquished has revealed his riches, the victor takes his life, and the spoil; his arms, combs, basins, dresses, horses, gold and silver; and such deeds may have been done. The tales which treat of the wars of Eirinn and Lochlann, and are full of metrical prose, describe arms and boats, helmet, spears, shields, and other gear; ships that are drawn on shore, as Icelandic ships really were; boats and arms similar to those which are figured on old stones in Iona and elsewhere, and are sometimes dug out of old graves and peat mosses. I believe them to be descriptions of real arms, and dresses, manners, and events.

For example, the warriors always abuse each other before they fight. So do the heroes of Ossian; so do the heroes of Homer; so do soldiers now. In the Times of the 29th of December 1859, in a letter from the camp at Ceuta in this passage:--

"While fighting, even when only exchanging long shots, the Moors keep up a most hideous howling and shrieking, vituperating their enemies in bad Spanish, and making the mountains resound with the often-repeated epithet of 'perros' (dogs). To this the Spaniards condescend not to reply, except with bullets, although in the civil war it was no unusual thing to hear Carlist and Christina skirmishers abusing each other, and especially indulging in unhandsome reflections upon each others' Sovereign."

Again, the fights are single combats, in which individuals attack masses and conquer. So were the Homeric combats. What will be the story told in Africa by the grandson of the Moor here described, when be sits on his flat roof or in his central court in Tetuan, as I have done with one of the Jews now ruined; he will surely tell of his ancestor's deeds, repeat the words in which Achmed abused the unbeliever, and tell how he shot some mystical number of them with a single ball.

"Upon the whole they stood their ground very stoutly, and some of them gave proof of great courage, advancing singly along the ridge until they caught sight of the first Spaniards posted below it, when they discharged their *espingardas* and retreated."

"Stories" had begun in Morocco, by the 9th of January 1860, when the next letter appeared:--

"The Moors have been giving out fantastical histories of their victories over the Spaniards, of their having taken redoubts, which they might have held had they thought it worth while, and in which they would have captured guns if the Christians had not been so prudent as to remove them beforehand. These are mere fables."

It may be so, but Moors seem to have fought as wild, brave, undisciplined troops have always fought as Homer's Greeks fought, as Highlanders fought, and as Fionn and his heroes fought, according to tradition. Omit the magic of Maghach Colgar, forget that, Moors are dark men, and this might be an account of Diarmid and Conan in the story, or of their descendants as they were described in 1745 by those who were opposed to them:--

"The Moors are generally tall powerful men, of ferocious aspect and great agility, and their mode of coming on, like so many howling savages, is not calculated to encourage and give confidence to lads who for the first time find themselves in action. It seems nearly impossible to make them prisoners. In one encounter (most of these little actions are made up of a number of small fights between a few companies of Spaniards and detached bodies of the Moors, who seem to have no idea of attacking in battalion or otherwise than irregularly), in which a number of Moors were killed, one of them was surrounded by four Cazadores, who came down upon him with fixed bayonets, shouting and signing to him not to fire, and that they would give him quarter. The Moor took no heed of their overtures, levelled his long gun, and shot one of them, whereupon he was, of course, put to death by the others."

So, looking to facts now occurring, and to history, “traditional fictions” look very true, for battles are still a succession of single combats, in which both sides abuse each other, and after which they boast. War is rapine and cruel bloodshed, as described by old fishermen in Barra, and by the *Times’* correspondent at Tetuan; and it is not altogether the chivalrous pastime which poets have sung.

In another class of tales, told generally as plain narrative, and which seem to belong to savage times, a period appears to be shadowed out when iron weapons were scarce, and therefore magical; perhaps before the wars of Eirinn and Lochlann began; when combs were inventions sufficiently new and wonderful to be magical also; when horses were sacred, birds sooth-sayers; apples, oak trees, wells, and swine, sacred or magical. In these the touch of the cold steel breaks all spells; to relieve an enchanted prince it was but necessary to cut off his head; the touch of the cold sword froze the marrow when the giant’s heads leaped on again. So Hercules finished the Hydra with iron, though it was hot. The white sword of light which shone so that the giant’s red-haired servant used it as a torch when he went to draw water by night, was surely once a rare bright steel sword, when most swords were of bronze, as they were in early times, unless it is still older, and a mythological flash of lightning.

This CLAIDHEAMH GEAL SOLUIS is almost always mentioned as the property of giants, or of other supernatural beings, and is one of the magic gifts for which men contend with them, and fight with each other; and in this the Gaelic tradition agrees with other popular lore.

Fionn had a magic sword forged by a fairy smith, according to a story sent me from Islay, by Mr. Carmichael. King Arthur had a magic sword. The Manks hero, “Olave” of Norway, had a sword with a Celtic name, “Macabuin,” made by a smith who was surely a Celt,--”Loan Maclibhuin,” though he was “The dark Smith of Drontheim” in the story. King Arthur and his sword belong to the Bretons and to many other languages, besides Welsh; and the Bretons have a wild war song, “The wine of the Gauls, and the dance of the sword,” which is given in Barzaz Breiz (1846).[1]

There is a magic sword in the Volsung tale, called “Gram,” which was the gift of Odin; I and a famous sword in the Niebelungen lied; and there are famous swords in many popular tales; but an iron sword was a god long ago amongst the Scythians. ”An antique iron sword” was placed on a vast pile of brushwood as a temple in every district, at the seat of government, and served as the image of Mars. Sacrifices of cattle and of horses were made to it, and “more victims were offered thus than to all the rest of their gods.” Even men were sacrificed; and it is said that the weapons found in Scythian tombs are usually of bronze, “but the sword at the great tomb at Kertch was of iron.” It seems, then, that an iron sword really was once worshipped by a people with whom iron was rare. Iron is rare, while stone and bronze weapons are common in British tombs, and the sword of these stories is a personage. It shines, it cries out--the lives of men are bound up in it. In one story a fox changes himself into the sword of light, and the edge of the real sword being turned towards a wicked “muime,” turned all her spells back upon herself, and she fell a withered fagot.

[1] The Gaelic word for a sword proves that English, French, Breton, and Gaelic have much in common--(Eng.) glave, (Fr.) glaive, (Breton) korol ar c’ hleze--dance of the sword, (Gaelic) claidheamh--pronounced, glaive, the first letter being a soft “c,” or hard “g,” the word usually spelt, *clay*more. Languages said to be derived from Latin do not follow their model so closely as these words do one another--(Lat.) gladius, (Spanish) espada, (Italian) spada; and the northern tongues seem to have preferred some original which resembles the English word, sword. If “spada” belongs to the language from which all these are supposed to have started, these seem to have used it for a more peaceful iron weapon, a spade.

And so this mystic sword may, perhaps, have been a god amongst the Celts, or the god of the people with whom Celts contended somewhere on their long journey to the west. It is a fiction now, but it may be founded on fact, and that fact probably was the first use of iron.

Amongst the stories described in the index to the Gaelic MSS. in Edinburgh is one in which the hero goes to Scythia and to Greece, and ends his adventures in Ireland. And in the "Chronicles of the Eri," 1822, by O'Connor, chief of the prostrated people of his nation, Irish is usually called "the Phoenician dialect of the Scythian language." On such questions I will not venture. Celts may or may not be Scythians, but as a collector of curiosities, I may fairly compare my museum with other curious things; and the worship of the Scimitar, 2200 years ago, by a people who are classed with the Indo-European races, appears to have some bearing on all magic swords from the time of Herodotus down to the White Sword of Light of the West Highlands.

If iron weapons, to which supernatural virtues are ascribed, acquired their virtue when iron was rare, and when its qualities were sufficiently new to excite wonder--then other things made of iron should have like virtues ascribed to them, and the magic should be transferred from the sword to other new inventions; and such is the case.

In all popular tales of which I know anything, some mysterious virtue is attributed to iron; and in many of them a gun is the weapon which breaks the spells. In the West it is the same.

A keeper told me that he was once called into a house by an old woman to cure her cow, which was "bewitched," and which was really sick. The ceremony was performed, according to the directions of the old woman, with becoming gravity. The cow was led out, and the gun loaded, and then it was solemnly fired off over the cow's back, and the cure was supposed to be complete.

In the story of the hunter, when the widow's son aims at the enchanted deer, he sees through the spell, only when he looks over the sight, and while the gun is cocked, but when he has aimed three times, the spell is broken and the lady is free.

So in a story (I think Irish) which I have read somewhere, a man shoots from his hip at a deer, which seems to be an old man whenever he looks over the sight. He aims well, and when he comes up finds only the body of a very old man, which crumbles into dust, and is carried away by the wind, bit by bit, as he looks at it. An iron weapon is one of the guards which the man takes into the fairy hill in the story of the Smith, No. 28. A sharpshooter fires off his gun to frighten the troll in "the Old Dame and her Hen;" the boy throws the steel from his tinder box over the magic horse, and tames him at once in the Princess on the Glass Hill. And so on throughout, iron is invested with magic power in popular tales and mythology; the last iron weapon invented, and the first, the gun and the sword, are alike magical; a "bit of a rusty reaping hook" does equally good service, and an old horse shoe is as patent a spell against the powers of evil as any known; for one will be found on most stable doors in England.

Now comes the question, Who were these powers of evil who cannot resist iron? These fairies who shoot *stone* arrows, and are of the foes to the human race? Is all this but a dim, hazy recollection of war between a people who had iron weapons and a race who had not? the race whose remains are found all over Europe?

If these were wandering tribes they had leaders, if they were warlike they had weapons. There is a Smith in the pantheon of many nations. Vulcan was a smith; Thor wielded a hammer; even Fionn had a hammer, which was heard in Lochlann when struck in Eirinn, according to the story found midway in Barra. Fionn may have borrowed his hammer from Thor long ago, or both may have got theirs from Vulcan, or all three may have brought hammers with them from the land where some primeval smith wielded the first sledge

hammer, but may not all these smith gods be the smiths who made iron weapons for those who fought with the skin-clad warriors who shot flint arrows, and who are now bogles, fairies, and demons?

In any case, tales about smiths seem to belong to mythology, and to be common property. Thus the Norse smith, who cheated the evil one, has an Irish equivalent in the Three Wishes, and a Gaelic story, "The Soldier," is of the same class, and has a Norse equivalent in the Lad and the Deil. There are many of the same class in Grimm; and the same ideas pervade them all. There is war between the smiths and soldiers, and the devil; iron, and horses' hoofs, hammers, swords, and guns come into play; the fiend is a fool, and he has got the worst of the fight; according to the people, at all events, ever since St. Dunstan took him by the nose with a pair of tongs. In all probability the fiend of popular tales is own brother to the Gruagach and Glashan, and was once a skin-clad savage, or the god of a savage race.

If this theory be correct, if these are dim recollections of savage times and savage people, then other magic gear, the property of giants, fairies, and bogles, should resemble things which are precious now amongst savage or half civilized tribes, or which really have been prized amongst the old inhabitants of these islands, or of other parts of the world; and such is often the me.

The work of art which is most sought after in Gaelic tales, next to the white glave of light, is a pair of combs.

CIR MHIN OIR AGUS CIR GHARBH AIRGIOD, a fine golden comb and a coarse comb of silver, are worth a deadly fight with the giants in many a story.

The enchanted prince, when he ceases to be a raven, is found as a yellow ringletted beautiful man, with a golden comb in the one hand and a silver comb in the other. Maol a' Chliobain invades the giant's house to steal the same things for the king. When the coarse comb is forgotten the king's coach falls as a withered faggot. In another story which I have, it is said of a herd who had killed a giant and taken his castle, "He went in and he opened the first room and there was not a thing in it. He opened another, and it was full of gold and silver and the treasures of the world. Then he opened a drawer, and he took a comb out of it, and when he would give a sweep with it on the one side of his head, a shower of gold would fall out of that side; and when he would give a sweep on the other side, a shower of silver would fall from that side. Then he opened another room, and it was full of every sort of food that a man might think there had ever been."

And so in many other instances the comb is a treasure for which men contend with giants. It is associated with gold, silver, dresses, arms, meat, and drink, and it is magical.

It is not so precious in other collections of popular tales, but the same idea is to be traced in them all. There is a water-spirit in Grimm which catches two children, and when they escape they throw behind them a brush, a comb, and a mirror, which replace the stone, the twig, and the bladder of water, which the Gaelic prince finds in the ear of the filly, and throws behind him to arrest the giant who is in pursuit. In the nix of the mill pond an old woman gives a golden comb to a lady, and she combs her black hair by the light of the moon at the edge of a pond, and the water-spirit shews the husband's head. So also in Snow White the wicked queen combs the hair of the beautiful princess with a poisoned comb, and throws her into a deadly magic sleep. That princess is black, white, and red, like the giant in No. 2, and like the lady in Conal; and like a lady in a Breton story; and generally foreign stories in which combs are mentioned as magical, have equivalents in Gaelic. For example, the incidents in the French story of Prince Cherie, in which gifted children comb jewels from their hair, bear a general resemblance to many Gaelic and German stories. Now there is a reason for

everything, though it is not always easy to find it out; and the importance of the comb in these stories may have a reason also.

In the first place, though every civilized man and woman now owns a comb, it is a work of art which necessarily implies the use of tools, and considerable mechanical skill. A man who had nothing but a knife could hardly make a comb; and a savage with flint weapons would have to do without. A man with a comb, then, implies a man who has made some progress in civilization; and a man without a comb, a savage, who, if he had learned its use, might well covet such a possession. If a black-haired savage, living in the cold north, were to comb his hair on a frosty night, it is to be presumed that the same thing would happen which now takes place when fair ladies or civilized men comb their hair. Crackling sparks of electricity were surely produced when men first combed their hair with a bone comb; and it seems to need but a little fancy and a long time to change the bright sparks into brilliant jewels, or glittering gold and silver and bright stars, and to invest the rare and costly thing which produced such marvels with magic power.

There is evidence throughout all popular tales that combs were needed. Translations are vague, because translators are bashful; but those who have travelled amongst half civilized people, understand what is meant when the knight lays his head on the lady's knee, and she "dresses his hair." In German, Norse, Breton, and Gaelic, it is the same.

From the mention of the magic comb, then, it appears that these legends date from an early, rude period, for the time when combs were so highly prized, and so little used, is remote.

In Wilson's "Prehistoric Annals of Scotland," page 424, is a drawing of an old bone comb of very rude workmanship, found in a burgh in Orkney, together with part of a deer's horn and a human skeleton; another was found in a burgh in Caithness; a third is mentioned; and I believe that such combs are commonly found in old British graves.

At page 554, another drawing is given of one of a pair of combs found in a grave in Orkney. The teeth of the comb were fastened between plates of bone, rivetted together with copper nails, and the comb was decorated with ornamental carvings. With these, brooches of a peculiar form were discovered. Similar brooches are commonly found in Denmark. I have seen many of them in museums at Bergen and Copenhagen; and I own a pair which were found in an old grave in Islay, together with an amber bead and some fragments of rusted iron.

A bronze comb is also mentioned at page 300, as having been found in Queen Mary's Mount, a great cairn near the battlefield of Langside, which was pulled to pieces to build stone dykes, and which was found to contain rude arms, bones, rings of bituminous shale, and other things which are, referred to very early prehistoric ages.

At page 500 Mr. Wilson mentions a great number of monuments in Scotland on which combs are represented, together with two-handed mirrors and symbols, for which deep explanations and hidden meanings have been sought and found. Combs, mirrors, and shears are also represented on early Roman tombs, and hidden meanings have been assigned to them; but Mr. Wilson holds that these are but indications of the sex of the buried person. Joining all this together, and placing it besides the *magic* attributed to combs in these Highland stories, this view appears to be the most reasonable. The sword of the warrior is very commonly sculptured on the old gravestones in the Western Isles. It is often twisted into a cross, and woven with those endless knots which resemble certain eastern designs. Strange nondescript animals are often figured about the sword, with tails which curl, and twist, and sprout into leaves, and weave themselves into patterns. Those again resemble illuminations in old Irish and Gaelic manuscripts, and when the most prized of the warrior's possessions is thus figured

on his tomb, and is buried with him, it is but reasonable to suppose that the comb, which was so valued as to be buried with its owner, was figured on the monument for the same reason; and that sword and comb were, in fact, very highly prized at some period by those who are buried in the tombs, as the stories now represent that they were by men and giants.

So here again the popular fictions seem to have a foundation of fact.

Another magical possession is the apple. It is mentioned more frequently in Gaelic tales than in any collection which I know, but the apple plays its part in Italian, German, and Norse also. When the hero wishes to pass from Islay to Ireland he pulls sixteen apples and throws them into the sea, one by one, and he steps from one to the other. When the giant's daughter runs away with the king's son, she cuts an apple into a mystical number of small bits, and each bit talks. When she kills the giant she puts an apple under the hoof of the magic filly and he dies, for his life is in the apple, and it is crushed. When the byre is cleansed, it is so clean that a golden apple would run from end to end and never raise a stain. There is a gruagach who has a golden apple, which is thrown at all comers, and unless they are able to catch it they die; when it is caught and thrown back by the hero, Gruagach an Ubhail dies. There is a game called cluich an ubhail, the apple play, which seems to have been a deadly game whatever it was. When the king's daughter transports the soldier to the green island on the magic tablecloth, he finds magic apples which transform him, and others which cure him, and by which he transforms the cruel princess and recovers his magic treasures. In German a cabbage does the same thing.

When the two eldest idle king's sons go out to herd the giant's cattle, they find an apple tree whose fruit moves up and down as they vainly strive to pluck it.

And so on throughout, whenever an apple is mentioned in Gaelic stories it has something marvellous about it.

So in German, in the Man of Iron, a princess throws a golden apple as a prize, which the hero catches three times and carries off and wins.

In Snow White, where the poisoned comb occurs, there is a poisoned magic apple also.

In the Old Griffin, the sick princess is cured by rosy-cheeked apples.

In the Giant with the Three Golden Hairs, one of the questions to be solved is, why a tree which used to bear golden apples does not now bear leaves? and the next question is about a well.

So in the White Snake, a servant who acquires the knowledge of the speech of birds by tasting a white snake, helps creatures in distress, gets their aid, and procures a golden apple from three ravens, which "flew over the sea even to the end of the world, where stands the tree of life." When he had got the apple he and the princess ate it, and married and lived happily ever after.

So in Wolf's collection, in the story of the Wonderful Hares, a golden apple is the gift for which the finder is to gain a princess; and that apple grew on a sort of tree of which there was but one in the whole world.

In Norse it is the same; the princess on the Glass Hill held three golden apples in her lap, and he who could ride up the hill and carry off the apples was to win the prize; and the princess rolled them down to the hero, and they rolled into his shoe.

The good girl plucked the apples from the tree which spoke to her when she went down the well to the underground world; but the ill-tempered step-sister thrashed down the fruit; and when the time of trial came, the apple tree played its part and protected the good girl.

So in French, a singing apple is one of the marvels which the Princess Belle Etoile, and her brothers and her cousin, bring from the end of the world, after all manner of adventures; and in that story the comb, the stars and jewels in the hair, the talking soothsaying bird, the magic water, the, horse, the wicked step-mother, and the dragon, all appear; and there is a Gaelic version of that story. In short, that French story agrees with Gaelic stories, and with a certain class of German tales; and contains within itself much of the machinery and incident which is scattered elsewhere, in collections of tales gathered in modern times amongst the people of various countries.

So again in books of tales of older date, and in other languages, apples and marvels are associated.

In Straparola is an Italian story remarkably like the Gaelic Sea Maiden, and clearly the same in groundwork as Princess Belle Etoile. A lady, when she has lost her husband, goes off to the Atlantic Ocean with three golden apples; and the mermaid who had swallowed the husband, shews first his head, then his body to the waist, and then to the knees; each time for a golden apple; and the incidents of that story are all to be found elsewhere, and most of them are in Gaelic.

So again, in the Arabian Nights, there is a long story, The Three Apples, which turns upon the stealing of one, which was a thing of great price, though it was not magical in the story.

So in classical times, an apple of discord was the prize of the fairest; and the small beginning from which so much of all that is most famous in ancient lore takes its rise; three golden apples were the prize of one of the labours of Hercules, and these grew in a garden which fable has placed far to the westwards, and learned commentators have placed in the Cape Verde Islands.

So then it appears that apples have been mysterious and magical from the earliest of times; that they were sought for in the west, and valued in the east; and now when the popular tales of the far west are examined, apples are the most important of natural productions, and invested with the magic which belongs to that which is old and rare, and which may once have been sacred.

It is curious that the forbidden fruit is almost always mentioned in English as an apple; and this notion prevails in France to such a degree, that when that mad play, La Propriete c’est le Vol, was acted in Paris in 1846, the first scene represented the Garden of Eden with a tree, and a board. on which was written “il est défendu de manger de ces pommes.”

And it is stated in grave histories that the Celtic priests held apples sacred; so here again popular tales hold their own.

Again, supposing tales to be old traditions, something may be gleaned from them of the past. Horses, for example, must once have been strange and rare, or sacred, amongst the Celts, as among other races.

The horses of the Vedas, which drew the chariot of the sun, appear to have been confused with the sun-god of Indian mythology. Horses decided the fate of kingdoms in Persia, according to Herodotus. They were sacred when Phaeton drove the chariot of the sun. The Scandinavian gods had horses, according to the Edda. They are generally supernatural in Grimm’s German stories, in Norse tales, in French, and in many other collections. They are wonderful in Breton tales.

When the followers of Columbus first took horses to America, they struck terror into the Indians, and they and their riders were demigods; because strange and terrible.

Horses were surely feared, or worshipped, or prized, by Celts, for places are named after them. Penmarch in Brittany, means horse-head or hill. Ardincaple in Scotland means the mare's height, and there are many other places with similar names.

In Gaelic tales, horses are frequently mentioned, and more magic properties are attributed to them than elsewhere in popular lore.

In No. 1, horses play a very prominent part; and in some versions of that tale, the heroine is a lady transformed into a grey mare. It is to be hoped, for the hero's sake, that she did not prove herself the better horse when she resumed her human form.

In No. 3, there is a horse race. In No. 4, there axe mythical horses; and in an Irish version of that story, told me in August 1860, by an Irish blind fiddler on board the Lochgoilhead boat, horses again play their part, with hounds and hawks. In No. 14, there are horses; in one version there is a magic "powney." In 22, a horse again appears, and gives the foundation for the riddle on which the story turns. In 40, a horse is one of the prizes to be gained. In 41, the horse plays the part of bluebeard. In 48, a horse is to be hanged as a thief. In 51, the hero assumes the form of a horse. In many other tales which I have in manuscript, men appear as horses, and reappear as men; and horses are marvellous. In one tale, a man's son is sent to a warlock and become a horse, and all sorts of creatures besides. In another, a man gets a wishing grey filly from the wind, in return for some meal which the wind had blown away; and there is a whole series of tales which relate to water-horses, and which seem, more than all the rest, to shew the horse as a degraded god, and as it would seem, a water-god, and a destroyer.

I had intended to group all these stories together, as an illustration of this part of the subject, but time and space are wanting. These shew that in the Isle of Man, and in the Highlands of Scotland, people still firmly believe in the existence of a water-horse. In Sutherland and elsewhere, many believe that they have seen these fancied animals. I have been told of English sportsmen who went in pursuit of them, so circumstantial were the accounts of those who believed that they had seen them. The witnesses are so numerous, and their testimony agrees so well, that there must be some old deeply-rooted Celtic belief which clothes every dark object with the dreaded form of the EACH UISGE. The legends of the doings of the water kelpie all point to some river god reduced to be a fuath or bogle. The bay or grey horse grazes at the lake-side, and when he is mounted, rushes into the loch and devours his rider. His back lengthens to suit any number; men's hands stick to his skin; he is harnessed to a plough, and drags the team and the plough into the loch, and tears the horses to bits; he is killed, and nothing remains but a pool of water; he falls in love with a lady, and when he appears as a man and lays his head on her knee to be dressed, the frightened lady finds him out by the sand amongst his hair. "Tha gainmheach ann." There is sand in it, she says, and when he sleeps she makes her escape. He appears as an old woman, and is put to bed with a bevy of damsels in a mountain shealing, and he sucks the blood of all, save one, who escapes over a burn, which, water-horse as he is, he dare not cross. In short, these tales and beliefs have led me to think that the old Celts must have had a destroying water-god, to whom the horse was sacred, or who had the form of a horse.

Unless there is some such foundation for the stories, it is strange to find the romances of boatmen and fishermen inhabiting small islands, filled with incidents which seem rather to belong to a wandering, horse-riding tribe. But the tales of Norwegian sailors are similar in this respect; and the Celtic character has in fact much which savours of a tribe who are boatmen by compulsion, and would be horsemen if they could. Though the Western islanders are fearless boatmen, and brave a terrible sea in very frail boats, very few of them are in the royal navy, and there are not many who are professed sailors. On the other hand, they are

bold huntsmen in the far north of America. I do not think that they are successful farmers anywhere, though they cling fondly to a spot of land, but they are famous herdsmen at home and abroad. On the misty hills of old Scotland or the dry plains of Australia, they still retain the qualities which made a race of hunters, and warriors, and herdsmen, such as are represented in the poems of Ossian, and described in history; and even within the small bounds which now contain the Celtic race in Europe, their national tastes appear in strong relief. Every deer-stalker will bear witness to the eagerness of Highlanders in pursuit of their old favourite game, the dun deer; the mountaineer shews what he is when his eye kindles and his nostril dilates at the sight of a noble stag; when the gillie forgets his master in his keenness, and the southern lags behind; when it is "bellows to mend," and London dinners are remembered with regret. Tyree is famous for its breed of ponies: it is a common bit of Highland "chaff" to neigh at a Tyree man, and other islands have famous breeds also. It is said that men almost starving rode to ask for meal in a certain place, and would not sell their ponies; and though this is surely a fiction, it rests on the fact that the islanders are fond of horses. At fairs and markets all over the Highlands ponies abound. Nothing seems to amaze a Highlander more than to see any one walk who can afford to ride; and he will chase a pony over a hill, and sit in misery on a packsaddle when he catches the beast, and endure discomfort, that he may ride in state along a level road for a short distance.

Irish Celts, who have more room for locomotion, cultivate their national taste for horse flesh in a higher degree. An Irish hunter is valued by many an English Nimrod; all novels which purport to represent Irish character paint Irishmen as bold riders, and Irish peasants as men who take a keen interest in all that belongs to hunting and racing. There is not, so far as I know, a single novel founded on the adventures, of an Irish or Highland sailor or farmer, though there are plenty of fictitious warriors and sportsmen in prose and in verse. There are endless novels about English sailors, and sportsmen, and farmers, and though novels are fictions, they too rest on facts. The Celts, and Saxons, and Normans, and Danes, and Romans, who help to form the English race, are at home on shore and afloat, whether their steeds are of flesh and blood, or, as the Gaelic poet says, of brine. The Celtic race are most at home amongst their cattle and on the hills, and I believe it to be strictly in accordance with the Celtic character to find horses and chariots playing a part in their national traditions and poems of all ages.

I do not know enough of our Welsh cousins to be able to speak of their tastes in this respect; but I know that horse racing excites a keen interest in Brittany, though the French navy is chiefly manned by Breton and Norman sailors, and Breton ballads and old Welsh romances are full of equestrian adventures. And all this supports the theory that Celts came from the east, and came overland; for horses would be prized by a wandering race.

So bounds would be prized by the race of hunters who chased the Caledonian boars as well as the stags; and here again tradition is in accordance with probability, and supported by other testimony. In No. 4 there are mystical dogs; a hound, GADHAR is one, of the links in No. 8; a dog appears in No. 11; a dog, who is an enchanted man, in No. 12; there is a phantom dog in No. 23; there was a "spectre hound in Man;" and there are similar ghostly dogs in England, and in many European countries besides.

In 19, 20, 31, 38, and a great many other tales which I have in manuscript, the hound plays an important part. Sometimes he befriends his master, at other times he appears to have something diabolical about him; it seems as if his real honest nature had overcome a deeply-rooted prejudice, for there is much which savours of detestation as well as of strong affection. Dog, or son of the dog, is a term of abuse in Gaelic as elsewhere, though cuilein is a form of endearment, and the hound is figured beside his master, or at his feet, on many a tombstone in

the Western Isles. Hounds are mentioned in Gaelic poetry and in Gaelic tales, and in the earliest accounts of the Western Isles; and one breed still survives in these long-legged, rough, wiry-haired stag-hounds, which Landseer so loves to paint.

In one story, for which I have no room, but which is well worthy of preservation, a step-mother sends two step-children, a brother and sister, out into the world to seek their fortune. They live in a cottage with three bare yellow porkers, which belong to the sister. The brother sells one to a man for a dog with a green string, and so gets three dogs, whose names are Knowledge, FIOS; Swift, LUATH; Weighty, TROM. The sister is enraged, and allies herself with a giant who has a hot coal in his mouth. Knowledge tells his master the danger which awaits him: how the giant and his sister had set a venomous dart over the door. Swiftness runs in first, and saves his master at the expense of his own tail, and then the three dogs upset a caldron of boiling water over the giant, who is hid in a hole in the floor, and so at the third time the giant is killed, and the only loss is a bit of the tail of Luath.

Then the king's son goes to dwell with a beautiful lady; and after a time he goes back to visit his sister, armed with three magic apples. The sister sets three venomous porkers at him, and he, by throwing the apples behind him, hinders them with woods, and moors, and lakes, which grow up from the apples; but they follow. The three dogs come out and beat the three pigs, and kill them, and then the king's son gets his sister to come with him, and she was as a servant-maid to the prince and the fine woman with whom he lived. Then the sister put GATH NIMH, a poisonous sting or thorn, into the bed, and the prince was as though he were dead for three days, and he was buried. But Knowledge told the other two dogs what to do, and they scraped up the prince, and took out the thorn; and he came alive again and went home, and set on a fire of grey oak, and burned his sister. And John Crawfurd, fisherman at Lochlong-head, told John Dewar "that he left the man, and the woman, and the dogs all happy and well pleased together." This curious story seems to shew the hog and the dog as foes. Perhaps they were but the emblems of rival tribes, perhaps they were sacred amongst rival races; at all events, they were both important personages at some time or other, for there is a great deal about them in Gaelic lore.

The boar was the animal which Diarmid slew, and which caused his death when he paced his length against the bristles,--the venomous bristles pierced a mole in his foot. It was a boar which was sent out to find the body of the thief in that curious story, an gillie currach; and in a great many other stories, boars appear as animals of the chase. The Fiantaichean or Feen, whomsoever they were, are always represented as hunting wild boars, as tearing a boar to bits by main force, or eating a whole boar. Cairns, said to have been raised over boars, are shewn in many parts of Scotland still. I myself once found a boar's tusk in a grave accidentally discovered, close to the bridge at Pool-Ewe. There were many other bones, and a rough flint, and a lot of charcoal, in what seemed to be a shallow human grave, a kind of stone coffin built up with loose slabs.

"Little pigs" play their part in the nursery lore of England. Everybody who has been young and has toes, must know how

"This little pig went to market,
And this little pig staid at home--
This little pig got roast beef,
And this little pig got none;
And this little pig went wee, wee, wee, all the way home."

There is a long and tragic story which has been current amongst at least three generations of my own family regarding a lot of little pigs who had a wise mother, who told them where

they were to build their houses, and how, so as to avoid the fox. Some of the little pigs would not follow their mother's counsel, and built houses of leaves, and the fox got in and said, "I will gallop, and I'll trample, and I'll knock down your house," and he ate the foolish, little, proud pigs; but the youngest was a wise little pig, and, after many adventures, she put an end to the wicked fox when she was almost vanquished, bidding him look into the caldron to see if the dinner was ready, and then tilting him in headforemost. In short, pigs are very important personages in the popular lore of Great Britain.

We are told by history that they were sacred amongst the Gauls, and fed on acorns in the sacred oak groves of the Druids, and there is a strong prejudice now amongst Highlanders against eating pig's flesh.

So oak trees are mythical. Whenever a man is to be burned for some evil deed, and men are always going to be roasted, fagots of "grey," probably green oak, are fetched. There is a curious story which the Rev. Mr. MacLachlan took down from the recitation of an old man in Edinburgh, in which a mythical old man is shut up in an oak tree, which grows in the court of the king's palace; and when the king's son lets his ball roll into a split in the tree by chance, the old man tells the boy to fetch an axe and he will give him the ball, and so he gets out, and endows the Prince with power and valour. He sets out on his journey with a red-headed cook, who personates him, and he goes to lodge with a swine-heard; but by the help of the old man of the great tree, BODACH NA CRAOIBHE MOIRE, he overcomes a boar, a bull, and a stallion, and marries the king's daughter, and the red-headed cook is burnt.

So then, in these traditions, swine and oak trees are associated together with mythical old men and deeds of valour, such as a race of hunters might perform, and admire, and remember. Is it too much to suppose that these are dim recollections of pagan times? DRUIDH is the name for magician, DRAOCHD for magic. It is surely not too much to suppose that the magicians were the Druids, and the magic their mysteries; that my peasant collectors are right, when they maintain that GRUAGACH, the long-haired one, was a "professor" or "master of arts," or "one that taught feats of arms;" that the learned Gruagach, who is so often mentioned, was a Druid in his glory, and the other, who, in the days of Johnson, haunted the island of Troda as "Greogaca," who haunted the small island of Inch, near Easdale, in the girlhood of Mrs. Mactavish, who is remembered still, and is still supposed to haunt many a desolate island in the far west, is the phantom of the same Druid, fallen from his high estate, skulking from his pursuers, and really living on milk left for him by those whose priest he had once been.

"The small island of Inch, near Easdale, is inhabited by a brownie, which has followed the Macdougalls of Ardincaple for ages, and takes a great interest in them. He takes care of their cattle in that island night and day, unless the dairymaid, when there in summer with the milk cattle, neglects to leave warm milk for him at night in a knocking-stone in the cave, where she and the herd live during their stay in the island. Should this perquisite be for a night forgot, they will be sure in the morning to find one of the cattle fallen over the rocks with which the place abounds. It is a question whether the brownie has not a friend with whom he shares the contents of the stone, which will, I daresay, hold from two to three Scotch pints."

Mrs. MacTavish, 1859, Islay.

If the manners and customs of druids are described as correctly as modern manners really are, then something may be gathered concerning druidical worship; but without knowledge, which I have no time to acquire, the full bearing of traditions on such a subject cannot be estimated.

The horse and the boar, the oak tree and the apple, then, are often referred to. Of mistletoe I have found no trace, unless it be the sour herb which brings men to life, but that might be the "soma," which plays such a part in the mythology of the Vedas, or the shamrock, which was sacred in Ireland.

Wells are indicated as mysterious in a great many tales--poison wells and healing wells--and some are still frequented, with a half belief in their virtue; but such wells now often have the name of some saint affixed to them.

Birds are very often referred to as soothsayers--in No. 39 especially; the man catches a bird and says it is a diviner, and a gentleman buys it as such. It was a bird of prey, for it lit on a hide, and birds of prey are continually appearing as bringing aid to men, such as the raven, the hoodie, and the falcon. The little birds especially are frequently mentioned. I should therefore gather from the stories that the ancient Celts drew augury from birds as other nations did, and as it is asserted by historians that the Gauls really did. I should be inclined to think that they possessed the domestic fowl before they became acquainted with the country of the wild grouse, and that the cock may have been sacred, for he is a foe and a terror to uncanny beings, and the hero of many a story; while the grouse and similar birds peculiar to this country are barely mentioned. The cat plays a considerable part, and appears as a transformed princess; and the cat may also have been sacred to some power, for cats are the companions of Highland witches, and of bags all the world over, and they were sacred to gods in other lands; they ware made into mummies in Egypt, together with hawks and other creatures which appear in Highland tales. Ravens were Odin's messengers; they may have been pages to some Celtic divinity also. Foxes, and otters, and wolves, and bears all appear in mythical characters. Serpents were probably held in abhorrence, as they have been by other races, but the serpent gave wisdom, and is very mythical.

Old Macdonald, travelling tinker, told me a long story, of which one scene represented an incantation more vividly to me than anything I have ever read or heard. "There was a king and a knight, as there was and will be, and as grows the fir tree, some of it crooked and some of it straight, and he was a king of Eirinn," said the old tinker, and then came a wicked stepmother, who was incited to evil by a wicked henwife. The son of the first queen was at school with twelve comrades, and they used to play at shinny every day with silver shinnies and a golden ball. The henwife, for certain curious rewards, gave the stepdame a magic shirt, and she sent it to her step-son, "Sheen Billy," and persuaded him to put it on; he refused at first, but complied at last, and the shirt was a BEITHIR (great snake) about his neck. Then he was enchanted and under spells, and all manner of adventures followed; but at last he came to the house of a wise woman who had a beautiful daughter, who fell in love with the enchanted prince, and said she must and would have him.

"It will cost thee much sorrow," said the mother.

"I care not," said the girl, "I must have him."

"It will cost thee thy hair."

"I care not."

"It will cost thee thy right breast."

"I care not if it should cost me my life," said the girl.

And the old woman agreed to help her to her will. A caldron was prepared and filled with plants; and the king's son was put into it stripped to the magic shirt, and the girl was stripped to the waist. And the mother stood by with a great knife, which she gave to her daughter.

Then the king's son was put down in the caldron, and the great serpent, which appeared to be a shirt about his neck, changed into its own form, and sprang on the girl and fastened on her; and she cut away the hold, and the king's son was freed from the spells. Then they were married, and a golden breast was made for the lady. And then they went through more adventures, which I do not well remember, and which the old tinker's son vainly strove to repeat in August, 1860, for he is far behind his father in the telling of old Highland tales.

The serpent, then, would seem to be an emblem of evil and wisdom in Celtic popular mythology.

There is something mysterious about rushes. The fairies are found in a bush of rushes; the great caldron of the Feen is hid under a bush of rushes; and in a great many other instances TOM LUACHARACH appears. I do not know that the plant is mentioned in foreign tales, but it occurs several times in border minstrelay.

If the Druids worshipped the sun and moon, there is very little direct reference to such worship in highland stories now. There are many highland customs which point to solar worship, but these have been treated of by abler pens, and I have nothing to add on that head.

There is yet another animal which is mythical--the water-bull. He certainly belongs to Celtic mythology, as the water-horse does, for he is known in the Isle of Man and all over the islands.

There are numerous lakes where the water-bulls are supposed to exist, and their progeny are supposed to be easily known by their short ears. When the water-bull appears in a story he is generally represented as friendly to man. I have a great many accounts of him, and his name in Skye is Tarbh Eithre.

There is a gigantic water bird, called the Boobrie, which is supposed to inhabit the fresh water and sea lochs of Argyllshire. I have heard of him nowhere else; but I have heard of him from several people.

He is ravenous and gigantic, gobbles up sheep and cows, has webbed feet, a very loud hoarse voice, and is somewhat like a cormorant. He is reported to have terrified a minister out of his propriety, and it is therefore to be assumed that he is of the powers of evil. And there are a vast number of other fancied inhabitants of earth, air, and water, enough to form a volume of supernatural history, and all or any of these may have figured in Celtic mythology; for it is hard to suppose that men living at opposite ends of Scotland, and peasants in the Isle of Man, should invent the same fancies unless their ideas had some common foundation.

Besides these animals, there is a whole supernatural world with superhuman gigantic inhabitants.

There are continual fights with these giants, which are often carried on without arms at all--mere wrestling matches, which seem to have had certain rules. It is somewhere told of the Germans that they in their forests fought with clubs, and the Celtic giants may once have been real men. Hercules fought with a club. Irishmen use shillelahs still, and my west country friends, when they fight now-a-days, use barrel staves instead of swords, and use them well, if not wisely; but whether giants were men or myths, they are always represented as strange, lubberly beings, whose dealings with men invariably end in their discomfiture. There are giants in Herodotus and, I believe, in every popular mythology known. There are giants in Holy Writ. They spoke an unknown tongue everywhere. They said "Fee fo fum" in Cornwall. They say "Fiaw fiaw foaghrich" in Argyll, and these sounds may possibly be corruptions of the language of real big burly savages, now magnified into giants.

The last word might be the vocative of the Gaelic for stranger, ill pronounced, and the intention may be to mimic the dialect of a foreigner speaking Gaelic.

An Italian organ-grinder once found his way to the west, and sang “Fideli, fidela, fidelin-lin-la.” The boys caught the tune, and sang it to the words, “Deese creepe Signaveete ha,” words with as much meaning as “Fee fo fum,” but which retain a certain resemblance to an Italian sound.

If the giants were once real savages, they had the sense of smell peculiarly sharp, according to the Gaelic tales, as they had in all others which treat of them, and they ate their captives, as it is asserted that the early inhabitants of Scotland did, as Herodotus says that Scyths did in his time, and as the Feejee islanders did very lately, and still do. A relative of mine once offered me a tooth as a relic of such a feast; it had been presented to him in the Feejee islands by a charming dark young lady, who had just left the banquet, but had not shared in it. The Highland giants were not so big but that their conquerors wore their clothes; they were not so strong that men could not beat them, even by wrestling. They were not quite savages; for though some lived in caves, others had houses and cattle, and boards of spoil. They had slaves, as we are told that Scotch proprietors had within historic times. In “Scotland in the Middle Ages,” p. 141, we learn that Earl Waldev of Dunbar made over a whole tribe to the Abbot of Kelso in 1170, and in the next page it is implied that these slaves were mostly Celts. Perhaps those Celts who were not enslaved had their own mountain view of the matter, and looked down on the Gall as intrusive, savage, uncultivated, slave-owning giants.

Perhaps the mountain mists in like manner impeded the view of the dwellers on the mountain and the plain, for Fin MacCoul was a “God in Ireland,” as they say, and is a “rawhead and bloody bones” in the Scottish lowlands now.

Whatever the giants were they knew some magic arts, but they were always beaten in the end by men.

The combats with them are a Gaelic proverb in action:--

“Theid seoltachd thar spionnaidh.”

Skill goes over might, and probably, as it seems to me, giants are simply the nearest savage race at war with the race who tell the tales. If they performed impossible feats of strength, they did no more than Rob Roy, whose “putting stone” is now shewn to Saxon tourists by a Celtic coachman, near Bunawe, in the shape of a boulder of many tons, though Rob Ruadh lived only a hundred years ago, near Inverary, in a cottage which is now standing, and which was lately inhabited by a shepherd.

The Gaelic giants are very like those of Norse and German tales, but they are much nearer to real men than the giants of Germany and Scandinavia, and Greece and Rome, who are almost, if not quite, equal to the gods. Famhairan are little more than very strong men, but some have only one eye like the Cyclops.

Their world is generally, but not always, under ground; it has castles, and parks, and pasture, and all that is to be found above the earth. Gold, and silver, and copper, abound in the giant’s land; jewels are seldom mentioned, but cattle, and horses, and spoil of dresses, and arms, and armour, combs, and basins, apples, shields, bows, spears, and horses, are all to be gained by a fight with the giants. Still, now and then a giant does some feat quite beyond the power of man; such as a giant in Barra, who fished up a hero, boat and all, with his fishing-rod, from a rock, and threw him over his head, as little boys do “cuddies” from a pier-end. So the giants may be degraded gods after all.

But besides “popular tales,” there are fairy tales, which are not told as stories, but facts. At all events, the creed is too *recent* to be lightly spoken of.

Men do believe in fairies, though they will not readily confess the fact. And though I do not myself believe that fairies are, in spite of the strong evidence offered, I believe there once was a small race of people in these islands, who are remembered as fairies, for the fairy belief is not confined to the Highlanders of Scotland. I have given a few of the tales which have come to me as illustrations in No. 27.

“*They*” are always represented as living in green mounds. They pop up their heads when disturbed by people treading on their houses. They steal children. They seem to live on familiar terms with the people about them when they treat them well, to punish them when they ill treat them. If giants are magnified, these are but men seen through the other end of the telescope, and there are such people now. A Lapp is such a man--he is a little, flesh-eating mortal--having control over the beasts, and living in a green mound--when he is not living in a tent, or sleeping out of doors, wrapped in his deer-skin shirt. I have lived amongst them and know them and their dwellings pretty well. I know one which would answer to the description of a fairy mound exactly. It is on the most northern peninsula in Europe, to the east of the North Cape, close to the sea, in a sandy hollow near a burn. It is round--say, twelve feet in diameter--and it is sunk three feet in the sand; the roof is made of sticks and covered with turf. The whole structure, at a short distance, looks exactly like a conical green mound about four feet high. There was a famous crop of grass on it when I was there, and the children and dogs ran out at the door and up to the top when we approached, as ants run on an ant hill when disturbed. Their fire was in the middle of the floor, and the pot hung over it from the roof. I lately saw a house in South Uist found in the sand hills close to the sea. It was built of loose boulders, it was circular, and had recesses in the sides, it was covered when found, and it was full of sand; when that was removed, stone querns and combs of bone were found, together with ashes, and near the level of the top there was a stratum of bones and teeth of large grass-eating animals. I know not what they were, but the bones were splintered and broken, and mingled with ashes and shells, oysters, cockles, and wilks (periwinkles), shewing clearly the original level of the ground, and proving that this was a dwelling almost the same as a Lapp “Gam” at Hopseidet.

Now, let us see what the people of the Hebrides say of the fairies. There was a woman benighted with a pair of calves, “and she went for shelter to a knoll, and she began driving the peg of the tether into it. The hill opened, and she heard as though there was a pot book ‘gleegashing,’ on the side of the pot. A woman put up her head, and as much as was above her waist, and said, ‘What business hast thou to disturb this tulman, in which I make my dwelling.’” This might be a description of one of my Lapp friends, and probably is a description of such a dwelling as I saw in South Uist. If the people slept as Lapps sleep, with their feet to the fire, a woman outside might have driven a peg very near one of the sleepers, and she might have stood on a seat and poked her head out of the chimney.

The magic about the beasts is but the mist of antiquity; and the fairy was probably a Pict. Who will say who the Pict may have been? Probably the great Clibric hag was one, and of the same tribe.

“In the early morning she was busy milking the hinds; they were standing all about the door of the hut, till one of them ate a hank of *blue* worsted hanging from a nail in it.” So says the “fiction,” which it is considered a sin to relate. Let me place some facts from my own journal beside it.

“Wednesday, August 22, 1850. Quickjok, Swedish Lapland.--In the evening the effect of the sunlight through the mist and showers was most beautiful. I was sketching, when a small man made his appearance on the opposite side of the river and began to shout for a boat. The priest exclaimed that the Lapps had come down, and accordingly the diminutive human specimen was fetched, and proved to be a Lapp who had established his camp about seven miles off, near Vallespik. He was about twenty-five years old, and with his high blue cap on could stand upright under my arm.”

I had been wandering about Quickjok for a week, out on Vallespik frequently, searching for the Lapps, with the very glass which I had previously used to find deer close to Clibric, which is but a small copy of the Lapland mountain.

“Thursday, 23rd.--Started to see the deer, with the priest and the Clockar, and Marcus, and the Lapp. The Lapp walked like a deer himself, aided by a very long birch pole, which he took from its hiding place in a fir tree. I had hard work to keep up with him. Marcus and the priest were left behind. Once up through the forest, it was cutting cold, and we walked up to the ‘cota’ in two hours and a quarter. The deer was seen in the distance, like a brown speck on the shoulder of Vallespik; and with the glass I could make out that a small mortal and two dogs were driving them home. The cota is a permanent one, made in the shape of a sugar loaf, with birch sticks, and long flat stones and turf. There are two exactly alike, and each has a door, a mere narrow slit, opening to the west, and a hole in the roof to let out the smoke. I crept in, and found a girl of about fifteen, with very pretty eyes, sitting crouched up in a corner, and looking as seared as one of her own fawns. The priest said, that if we had come without our attendant genius, the small Lapp, she would have fainted, or run away to the hills. I began to sketch her, as she sat looking modest in her dark corner, and was rejoicing in the extreme stillness of my sitter, when, on looking up from some careful touch, I found that she had vanished through the door-way. I had to bribe her with bread and butter before she could be coaxed back. A tremendous row of shouting and barking outside now announced the arrival of the deer, so I let my sitter go, and off she ran as fast as she could. I followed more leisurely to the spot where the deer were gathered, on a stony hillside. There were only about 200; the rest had run off up wind on the way from the mountains, and all the other Lapps were off after them, leaving only my pretty sitter, the boy, and a small woman with bleared eyes, as ugly as sin, his sister.

“How I wished for Landseer’s pencil as I looked at that scene! Most of the deer were huddled close together; hinds and calves chewing the cud with the greatest placidity, but here and there some grand old fellows, with wide antlers, stood up against the sky line, looking magnificent. I tried to draw, but it was hopeless; so I sat down, and watched the proceedings of my hosts.

“First, each of the girls took a coil of rope from about her neck, and in a twinkling it was pitched over the horns of a hind. The noose was then slipped round the neck, and a couple of turns of rope round the nose, and then the wild milkmaid set her foot on the halter and proceeded TO MILK THE HIND, into a round birch bowl with a handle. Sometimes she sat at others she leant her head on the deer’s dark side, and knelt beside her. I never saw such a succession of beautiful groups.

“Every now and then some half-dozen deer would break out of the herd and set off to the mountain, and then came a general skurry. The small Lapp, man, with his long birch pole, would rush screaming after the stragglers; and his two gaunt, black, rough, half-starved dogs would scour off, yelping, in pursuit. It generally ended in the hasty return of the truants, with well-bitten houghs for their pains; but some fairly made off, at a determined long trot, and vanished over the hill. It was very curious to be thus in the midst of a whole herd of creatures

so like our own wild deer, to have them treading on my feet and poking their horns against my sketch-book as I vainly tried to draw them, and to think that they who had the power to bid defiance to the fleetest hound in Sweden should be so perfectly tame as to let the small beings who herded them so thump, and bully, and tease them. The milking, in the meantime, had been progressing rapidly; and after about an hour the pretty girl, who had been dipping her fingers in the milk-pail and licking up the milk all the time, took her piece of bread and butter, and departed with her charge, munching as she went.

"The blear-eyed one, and the boy, and our party, went into the cota, and dined on cold roast reiper and reindeer milk. The boy poured the milk from a small keg, which contained the whole product of the flock; and having given us our share, he carefully licked up all that remained on the outside of the keg, and set it down in a corner. It was sweet and delicious, like thick cream. Dinner over, we desired the Lapp to be ready in the morning (to accompany me), and with the clocker's dog, 'Gueppe,' went reiper-shooting. The clocker himself, with a newly-slaughtered reindeer calf on his shoulders, followed; and so we went home."

A few days afterwards, I was at another camp, on another hill, where the same scene was going on. "In a tent I found a fine-looking Lapp woman sitting on a heap of skins, serving out coffee, and banding reindeer cream to the clocker with a silver spoon. She had silver bracelets, and a couple of silver rings; and altogether, with her black hair, and dark brown eyes glittering in the fire-light, she looked eastern and magnificent." Her husband had many trinkets, and they had, amongst other articles, a comb, which the rest seemed much to need.

Her dress was blue, so were most of the dresses, and one of her possessions was a bone contrivance for weaving the bands which all wore round their ankles. She must have had blue yarn somewhere, for her garters were partly blue.

I spent the whole of the next day in the camp, and watched the whole operations of the day.

"After dinner, the children cracked the bones with stones and a knife, after they had polished the outside, and sucked up the marrow; and then the dogs, which did not dare to steal, were called in their turn, and got the remains of the food in wooden bowls, set apart for their especial use."

The bones in the hut in South Uist might have been the remains of such a feast by their appearance.

"The cota was a pyramid of sods and birch sticks, about seven feet high, and twelve or fourteen in diameter. There were three children, five dogs, an old woman, Marcus, and myself, inside; and all day long the handsome lady from the tent next door, with her husband, and a couple of quaint-looking old fellows in deerskin shirts, kept popping in to see how I got on. It was impossible to sit upright for the slope of the walls, as I sat cross-legged on the ground."

This might be a description of the Uist hut itself, and its inhabitants, as I can fancy them.

"The three dogs (in the tent), at the smallest symptom of a disturbance, plunged out, barking, to add to the row; they popped in by the same way under the canvas, so they had no need of a door."

So did the dogs in the story of Seantraigh; they ran after the stranger, and stopped to eat the bones. And it is remarkable that all civilized dogs fall upon and worry the half-savage black Lapp dogs, and bark at their masters whenever they descend from their mountains, as the town dogs did at the fairy dogs. In short, these extracts might be a fair description of the people, and the dwellings, and the food, and the dogs described as fairies, and the hag, and the tulman, in stories which I have grouped together; told in Scotland within this year by

persons who can have no knowledge of what is called the “Finn theory,” and given in the very words in which they came to me, from various sources.

Lord Reay’s forester must surely have passed the night in a Lapp cota on Ben Gilbric, in Sutherland, when Lapps were Picts; but when was that? Perhaps in the youth of the fairy of whom the following story was told by a Sutherland gamekeeper of my acquaintance.

THE HERDS OF GLEN ODHAR.--A wild romantic glen in Strath Carron is called Glen Garaig, and it was through this that a woman was passing carrying an infant wrapped in her plaid. Below the path, overhung with weeping birches, and nearly opposite, run a very deep ravine, known as Glen Odhar, the dun glen. The child, not yet a year old, and which had not spoken or attempted speech, suddenly addressed his mother thus:--

S lionmhor bo mhaol odhar,
Le laogh na gobhal
Chunnaic mise ga’m bleoghan
Anns a’ghleann odhar ud thall,
Gun chu, gun duine,
Gun bhean, gun ghille,
Ach aon duine,
‘S e liath.

Many a dun hummel cow,
With a calf below he,
Have I seen milking
In that dun glen yonder,
Without dog, without man,
Without woman, without gillie,
But one man,
And he hoary.

The good woman flung down the child and plaid and ran home, where, to her great joy, her baby boy lay smiling in its cradle.

Fairies then milked deer, as Lapps do. They lived under ground, like them. They worked at trades especially smith work and weaving. They had hammers and anvils, and excelled in their use, but though good weavers, they had to steal wool and borrow looms. Lapps do work in metal on their own account; they make their own skin dresses, but buy their summer clothes. A race of wanderers could not be weavers on a large scale, but they can and do weave small bands very neatly on hand-looms; and they alone make these. There are savages now in South Africa, who are smiths and miners, though they neither weave nor wear clothes. Fairies had hoards of treasure--so have Lapps. A man died shortly before one of my Tana trips, and the whole country side had been out searching for his buried wealth in vain. Some years ago the old silver shops of Bergen and Trondhjem overflowed with queer cups and spoons, and rings, silver plates for waist belts, old plate that had been hidden amongst the mountains, black old silver coins that had not seen the light for years. I saw the plate and bought some, and was told that, in consequence of a religious movement, the Lapps had dug up and sold their hoards. Fairies are supposed to shoot flint arrows, and arrows of other kinds, at people now. Men have told me several times that they had been shot at: one man had found the flint arrow in an ash tree; another had heard it whiz past his ear; a third had pulled a slender arrow from a friend’s head. If that be so, my argument fails, and fairies are *not* of the past; but Californian Indians now use arrow-heads which closely resemble those dug up in Scotland, in Denmark, and, I believe, all over Europe. Fairies are conquered by Christian

symbols. They were probably Pagans, and, if so, they may have existed when Christianity was introduced. They steal men, women, and children, and keep them in their haunts. They are not the only slave owners in the world. They are supernatural, and objects of a sort of respect and wonder. So are gipsies where they are rare, as in Sweden and Norway; so are the Lapps themselves, for they are professed wizards. I have known a terrified Swedish lassie whip her horse and gallop away in her cart from a band of gipsies, and I have had the advantage of living in the same house with a Lapp wizard at Quickjok, who had prophesied the arrival of many strangers, of whom I was one. Spaniards were gods amongst the Indians till they taught them to know better. Horses were supernatural when they came, and on the whole, as it appears, there is much more reason to believe that fairies were a real people, like the Lapps, who are still remembered, than that they are "creatures of imagination" or "spirits in prison," or "fallen angels;" and the evidence of their actual existence is very much more direct and substantial than that which has driven, and seems still to be driving, people to the very verge, of insanity, if not beyond it, in the matter of those palpable-impalpable, visible-invisible spirits who rap double knocks upon dancing deal boards.

I am inclined to believe in the former existence of fairies in this sense, and if for no other reason, because all the nations of Europe have had some such belief, and they cannot all have invented the same fancy. The habitation of Highland fairies are green mounds, they therefore, like the giants, resemble the "under jordiske" of the north, and they too may be degraded divinities.

It seems then, that Gaelic tales attribute supernatural qualities to things which are mentioned in popular tales elsewhere, and that Gaelic superstitions are common to other races; and it seems worth inquiry whether there was anything in the known customs of Celtic tribes to make these things valuable, and whether tradition is supported by history.

In the first place, then, who are Celts now? Who were their ancestors? Who are their relations? and where have Gaelic tribes appeared in history.

I believe that little is really known about the Gael; and in particular, the origin of the West Highlanders has been very keenly disputed. One thing is clear, they speak a language which is almost identical with the Irish of the north of Ireland, and they are the same people. The dialect of Irish, which varies most from Scotch Gaelic, is clearly but another form of the same tongue. Manks is another; and these three are closely related to Welsh and Breton, though the difference is very much greater. Gaelic, Irish, and Manks vary from each other about as much as Norse, Swedish, and Danish. Welsh and Breton vary from the rest about as much as German and Dutch do from the Scandinavian languages. There are variations in Gaelic, and I believe there are in all the five surviving Celtic dialects, as there are in the languages of different counties in England, of every valley in Norway and Sweden, of every German district, and of every part of France, Spain, and Italy. But one who knows Gaelic well, can make himself understood throughout the Highlands, as freely as an Englishman can in England, though he may speak with a Northumbrian burr, or a west country twang, or like a true Cockney.

These, then, form the Celtic clan, the people of the west of Scotland, the Irish, the Manks, the Welsh, and the Breton. Who their relations are, and who their ancestors, are questions not easily answered, though much has been written on the subject. The following is a brief outline of what is given as Celtic history by modern writers whose works I have consulted lately:--

According to Henri Martin, the French historian, the whole of Central Europe, France, and Spain, were once overrun by a race calling themselves Gael, and best known as Gauls. This

people is generally admitted to have been of the same stock as Germans, Latins, Greeks, and Slavonians, and to have started from Central Asia at some unknown epoch. They are supposed to have been warlike, to have been tatooed like modern New Zealanders, and painted like North American Indians, to have been armed with stone weapons like the South Sea Islanders and Californian Indians; but shepherd, as well as hunters, and acquainted with the use of wheat and rye, which they are supposed to have brought with them from Asia. One great confederation of tribes of this race was known to ancient historians, as Κελτοι. They were represented as fair and rosy-cheeked, large-chested, active, and brave, and they found the Euskes settled in the south of France, who were dark-complexioned, whose descendants are supposed to be the Euscualdonec or Basques of the Pyrennees, and who are classed with the Lapps of the north of Europe, and with tribes now dwelling in the far north of Asia. I have seen faces in Barra very like faces which I had seen shortly before at St. Sebastian in Spain. A tribe of Gauls made their way into Italy, and have left traces of their language there, in the names of mountain chains and great rivers. These are named "Amhra," or "Ombres," and Amhra is translated Valliant. This invasion is calculated to have taken place about 1500 B.C.

The Gael were followed by Kimri or Cimbri, a kindred people of a darker complexion, speaking a kindred language, and their descendants are supposed to be the Welsh and Bretons. These in turn occupied the interior of eastern Europe, and were followed by the Scyths, and these, says the French historian, were Teutons.

According to the learned author of the essay on the Cimmerians, in the third volume of Rawlinson's Herodotus, p. 184, it is almost beyond doubt that a people known to their neighbours as Cimmerii, Gimiri, or probably Gomerini, attained a considerable power in Western Asia and Eastern Europe within the period indicated by the dates B.C. 800, 600, or even earlier.

These people are traced to the inhabitants of Wales, and Gael and Cymri are admitted by all to be Κελτοι; and still keep up their old character for pugnacity by quarrelling over their pedigrees.

Celts were undoubtedly the primitive inhabitants of Gaul, Belgium, and the British Islands, possibly also of Spain and Portugal; but no word of the language spoken by these ancient Cimbri has been preserved by ancient authors, except the name, "and perhaps the name Cimmerii may have included many Celtic tribes not of the Cymric branch." These Gauls appeared everywhere in Europe; and, in particular, they who had probably been driven out by the Scythians invaded Scythia, intermixed with the people, and formed the people known in history as Celto-Scythians; who the Scyths were (according to the author) appears to be uncertain. All that remains of their language is a list of words, picked out of the works of ancient authors; and known what modern authors make of words which they pick up by ear, such a list is but a narrow foundation on which to build. Still on that list it has been decided that Scyths spoke a language which has affinity with Sanscrit, and in that list, as it seems to me, there are several words which resemble Gaelic more closely than the Sanscrit words given with them. And so, according to this theory, the Basques were found in Europe by the first Gael, and these were driven westwards by Kimri, and these again by Scythians, and these by Teutons, and all these still occupy their respective positions. The Basques and Lapps pushed aside; the Gael in Scotland and Ireland, driven far to the westwards; the Kimri driven westwards into Wales and Brittany; the Scyths lost or absorbed; and the Teutons occupying their old possessions, as Germans, Saxons, English, Scandinavians, and all their kindred tribes; and of all these the Basques and their relatives alone speak a language which cannot be traced to a common unknown origin, from which Sanscrit also came.

Whatever then throws light on the traditions of the first invaders of Europe is of interest to all the rest, for, according to this theory, they are all of the same clan. They are all branches of the same old stock which grew in Central Asia, and which has spread over great part of the world, and whatever is told of Gauls is of interest to all branches of Celts.

Rome was taken by Gauls about 390 B.C.; Greece was invaded by Gauls about 297 B.C., and they are then described as armed with great swords and lances, and wearing golden collars, and fighting savagely. At the end of the third century B.C., according to the French historian, Gaul might have been a common name for the greatest part of Europe, for Gauls were everywhere.

Now, what manner of men were these Gauls, when men saw them who could describe them?

All the Gauls kept their hair untouched by iron, and raised it like a mane towards the top of the head. As to the beard, some shaved it, others wore it of a moderate length. The chiefs and the nobles shaved the cheeks and the chin, and let their mustache grow to all their length. (Histoire de France, page 33.)

Their eyes were blue or sea-green, and shone under this thick mass of hair, of which the blond hue had been changed by lime-water to a flaming tint.

Their mustaches were “Rousses,” which is the only word I know which will translate ruadh.

The warrior was armed with an enormous sabre on his left thigh; he had two darts in his hand, or a long lance; he carried a four-cornered shield, painted of various brilliant colours, with bosses representing birds or wild animals; and on his head was a helmet topped with eagles’ wings, floating hair, or horns of wild animals; his clothes were particoloured and he wore “brighis;” he was always fighting at home or abroad; he was a curious inquiring mortal, always asking questions; and truly he must have been a formidable savage that old French Gaul. Men’s heads were nailed at the gates of his towns and his houses, beside trophies of the chase, much as modern Gael now hang up the trophies of their destructive skill, in the shape of pole-cats and crows.

The chiefs kept human heads embalmed and preserved, like archives of family prowess, as the Dyaks of Borneo and the New Zealanders still do, or did very lately. The father had the power of life and death over his wife and children, and exercised it too by burning the guilty wife; and, though some chiefs had several wives, and there are some scandalous stories of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the islands; women were consulted together with men by the chiefs on matters of moment, and held a high place amongst the Gauls of France.

Now, this short description of the Gauls, rapidly gleaned from the pages of two modern books of high authority and great research, after my Gaelic stories were collected, agrees with the picture which the Gaelic tales give of their mythical heroes in many particulars. They have long beautiful yellow hair, Leadanach, Buidh, Boidheach. They are Ruadh, Rousses. They have large swords, claidheamh, sometimes duileagach, leaf-shaped. They cast spears and darts, Sleadh. They are always asking questions, and their descendants have not lost the habit yet. Their dwellings are surrounded by heads stuck on staves, stob. They have larders of dead enemies. When a man is described as ragged and out of order, it is almost always added that his beard had grown over his face; and though beards are coming into fashion now, it is not a highland fashion to wear a beard; and many a stinging joke have I heard aimed at a bearded man by modern Highlanders. The shields of the warriors are Bucaideach, bossed; Balla-bhreachd, dotted and variegated; Bara-chaol, with slender point; “with many a picture to be seen on it, a lion, a cremhinach, and a deadly snake;” and such shields are figured on the Iona tombs. The ancient Gauls wore helmets which represented beasts. The enchanted king’s sons, when they came home to their dwellings, put off cochal, the husk, and become men;

and when they go out, they resume the cochal and become animals of various kinds. May this not mean that they put on their armour. They marry a plurality of wives in many stories. In short, the enchanted warriors are, as I verily believe, nothing but real men, and their manners real manners, seen through a haze of centuries, and seen in the same light as they are seen in other popular tales, but, mayhap, a trifle clearer, because the men who tell of them are the descendants of the men described, and have mixed less with other men.

I do not mean that the tales date from any particular period, but that traces of all periods may be found in them-that various actors have played the same parts time out of mind, and that their manners and customs are all mixed together, and truly, though confusedly, represented--that giants and fairies, and enchanted princes were men; that Rob Roy may yet wear many heads in Australia, and be a god or an ogre, according to taste--that tales are but garbled popular history, of a long journey through forests and wilds, inhabited by savages and wild beasts: of events that occurred on the way from east to west, in the year of grace, once upon a time.

Tales certainly are historical in this sense when they treat of Eirinn and Lochlann, for the islands were the battlefield of the Celts and Scandinavians, and though they lack the precision of more modern popular history, they are very precise as to Irish names and geography. "They went to Cnoc Seannan in Ireland." Conall was called Gulbanach from Beinn Gulbain in Ireland. There is the "king of Newry," and many other places are named according to their Gaelic names, never as they are named in English. The same is true of the manuscript tales in the Advocates' Library. Places about Loch Awe are named, and the characters pass backwards and forwards between Ireland and Argyll, as we are told they really did when the Irish Celts invaded and possessed that part of the west of Scotland, and that invasion is clearly referred to in more than one popular tradition still current. When Lochlann is mentioned, it is further off, and all is uncertain. The king's son, not the king himself, is usually the hero. Breacan *Mac*Righ Lochlainn is named, or the son of the king of Lochlann, without a name at all, but the Irish kings often have a whole pedigree; thus Connall Gulbanach MacIulin MacArt Mac some one else, king of Ireland, and I lately heard a long story about "Magnus."

This again is like distorted, undated popular history of true events. They are clearly seen at home, the very spot where the action took place is pointed to; less clearly in Ireland, though people and places are named; they are dimly seen in Lochlann, and beyond that everything is enlarged, and magical, and mysterious and grotesque. Real events are distorted into fables and magnified into supernatural occurrences, for the Gaelic proverbs truly say, "There are long horns on cattle in mist" or "in Ireland," and "Far away fowls have fine feathers."

But whether the stories are history or mythology, it is quite clear that they are very old, that they belong to a class which is very widely spread, and that they were not made by living men.

All story-tellers agree in saying that they learned them as traditions long ago; and if all those whose names are given had been inclined to tell "stories" in another sense, they could not have made and told the same stories at opposite ends of Scotland, almost simultaneously, to different people. James Wilson could not have told Connall Cra-bhuidhe to Hector MacLean in Islay, about the same time that Neil Gillies was telling Conal Crobhi to me at Inverary, and a very short time before Hector Urquhart got No. 8 from Kenneth MacLean in Gairloch. An old fisherman and an old porter could not have combined to tell a "story" which was in Straparola, in Italian, in 1567, to Hector MacLean in Barra, in 1859, and to the Rev. Mr. MacLauchlan in Edinburgh, in 1860, unless these stories were popular facts, though despised as fictions; and they are curious facts too, for the frame of Conal is common to old German

manuscripts, and some of the adventures are versions of those of Ulysses. There are many proverbs which are only explained when the story is known; for example, “blackberries in February” means nothing; but when explained by the story, the meaning is clearly the idea which an acquaintance of mine once embodied in a French toast, as “les impossibilités accomplies.” The stories do not change rapidly, for I have gone back to a reciter after the lapse of a year, and I have heard him again repeat in Gaelic, what I had translated from his dictation, with hardly a change (vol. 1, p. 93).

I have now no doubt that the popular tales are very old; that they are old “Allabanaich,” Highlanders and wanderers; that they have wandered, settled, and changed, with those who still tell them; and call themselves “Albannaich,” men whose wandering spirit is not yet extinct, though they were settled in their present abodes “before the memory of man.”

There was and is, a wandering spirit in the whole race, if Celts are Indo-Europeans. In the people who delighted in the adventures of Ulysses and Æneas, a longing spirit of western adventure, which was shewn in the fabled Atlantis, and the Island of the Seven Cities and St. Brandon--the spirit which drove the hordes of Asia to Europe, and urged Columbus to discover America, and which still survives in “the Green Isle of the great deep,” “Eilan uaine an iomal torra domhain,” of which so much is told, which Highland fancy still sees on the far western horizon, and which as “FLATHINNIS,” the Isle of Heroes, has now been raised from an earthly paradise to mean Heaven.

Much has been said about highland superstitions, and highlanders of the east and west, like their southern neighbours, have many, but they are at least respectable from their age; and because they are so widely spread over the world, I believe them to be nearly all fictions founded on facts.

Thirteen Highlanders would eat their potatoes together without fear, and one of them might spill the salt without a shudder. I never heard of a Celtic peasant consulting his table as an oracle, or going to a clairvoyant; but plenty of them dream dreams and see visions, and believe in them as men in Bible history did of old.

A man had been lost in crossing the dangerous ford, five or six miles of sand or rock, between Benbecula and North Uist, shortly before I was there in 1859. I was told the fact, and it was added incidentally, “And did he not come to his sister in a dream, and tell her where to find him? and she went to the place, and got him there, half buried in sand, after the whole country side had been looking for him in vain.” Here is a similar story from Manchester:--

“FULFILMENT OF A DREAM.--An inquest was held last evening at Sheffield, before Mr. Thomas Badger, coroner, on the body of Mr. Charles Holmes, button manufacturer, Clough House Lane, who had been found drowned on Monday morning, in the Lead-mill dam in that town. The deceased left his home on Saturday night in company with his wife; they walked through the town together, and about nine o’clock, at which time they were at the top of Union Street, he said to her, ‘I’m going to leave thee here, Fanny.’ She said, ‘Are you?’ and he replied, ‘Yes, I want to see an old friend who is going to Birmingham on Monday, and he is to be here.’ She said to him, ‘Well, Charlie, don’t stop long, because I do feel queer about that dream,’ and he replied, ‘Oh, don’t say that; I’ll just have a glass, and then come home. Go and get the supper ready, and I’ll come directly.’ She then left him. When he got into the house he was invited to drink with his friend, but he exhibited some reluctance, saying that on the night before his wife had dreamed that she saw him dead in a public-house, and that she had dreamed a similar dream about a week before. Unfortunately, however, he yielded to the temptation, got drunk, and did not leave the public-house till after twelve. He was accompanied part of the way home by his friend, and was never afterwards seen alive. Near

his house are the Lead-mill dams, and, in consequence of his not returning home, his wife felt convinced that he had fallen in and got drowned. A search was made, and on Monday morning his body was found in the water, and was removed to the Royal Standard public-house, where his wife saw the body, and identified it as that of her husband; The jury returned a verdict of 'Found drowned,' and recommended that an opening in the wall, near the dam, through which it is supposed he had fallen, should be built up."--*Manchester Examiner*.

There are plenty of lowlanders as well as "ignorant" Highlanders who think that they are seers, without the aid of a deal board through which to look into futurity, by the help of a medium, and it is by no means uncommon, as I am told, for the Astronomer-Royal to receive English letters asking his advice, *ex officio*.

It may not be out of place to add a word as to the spoken Gaelic of these tales; the mode of writing it; and the English of the translation. First, then, it is admitted by all that the Gaelic of the West Highlands is a branch of the old Celtic stock, that is to say, the language of some of the oldest invaders or inhabitants of Europe of whom anything is known. Why it is I know not, but from works on philology it appears that the Highland dialect has been least studied, and for that reason, if for no other, it is perhaps best worth the trouble. I thought it best to ignore all that had been said or written on the subject, to go direct to those who now speak the language, especially to those who speak no other tongue; to men who use words as they use their feet and hands, utterly unconscious of design; who talk as nature and their parents taught them; and who are as innocent of philology as their own babies when they first learn to say "Abbi."

I requested those who wrote for me to take down the words as they were spoken, and to write as they would speak themselves; and the Gaelic of the tales is the result of such a process. The names of the writers are given, and I am satisfied that they have done their work faithfully and well. The Gaelic then is *not* what is called "classical Gaelic." It is generally Gaelic of the people--pure from the source.

Next, as to orthography. I chose one man, Mr. Hector MacLean, whom I know to be free from prejudice, and who knows the rules of Gaelic spelling, to correct he press, and I asked him to spell the sounds which he heard, according to the principles of Gaelic orthography, whenever he wrote anything down himself; and in correcting the press for the work of others, to correct nothing but manifest mistakes, and this he has done, as it appears to me, very well.

In Gaelic there are certain vowels, and combinations of them, which represent certain sounds; and they are all sounded, and always in the same manner, *according to theory*, but in practice it is a very different matter. In speaking Gaelic, as is the case in other languages, various modes of pronouncing the same vowels exist in various districts. The consonants meet and contend and extinguish each other, and change the sound of the vowels in Gaelic more than in any other language which I know; but they fight by rule, and the conquered and the slain encumber the words which are their battlefields, as dead or dying consonants standing beside the silent *h* which kills or controls them. One difficulty in writing Gaelic from dictation is to ascertain, in words of doubtful meaning, whether the sound *v* is to be expressed by *bh* or *mh*. The first "letter was once at the head of a small regiment of letters, and sounded his own note *m* or *b*, and so he regulated the meaning of the rest, but having fallen in with an *h* in an oblique case, and being changed thereby to *v*, the whole history of the word must be known before it can be settled whether it should begin with *mh* or *bh*, and it is much more difficult in other cases, where the letter is silenced altogether. My mother, if Gaelic, might become *vy vother*--father, *ather*, but the sounds would be spelt *mhother*, *fhather*. The meaning in a book

depends on the spelling, but in speaking, it is a different matter. There are shades of sound which an ear used to a language can detect, but which letters are wholly unfitted to express.

Gaelic scholars, then, who have a standard for Gaelic writing, and who adhere to it strictly, will probably find much which will appear to them erroneous spelling.

An English scholar reading Sir Walter Scott's novels will find plenty of words which are not in Johnson's Dictionary, and a student of Pickwick will find much in Sam Weller's conversation which he will not discover in that form in Shakspeare.

Had I found stories in the, Isle of Wight I should have spelt good morning good marnin, because it is so pronounced; falbh is spelt folbh when a story comes from some of the Western Islands, because it is so pronounced there; and for the same reason iad is spelt eud. I have no doubt there are errors. I can only vouch for having chosen men who did their best in a very difficult matter; for I do not believe that there are ten men now living who would write a hundred lines of Gaelic off hand and spell them in the same way. I very much doubt if ten men ever did live at the same time who would have agreed as to Gaelic spelling; and I know that I find forms of words in books which I have very rarely heard in conversation. For example, the plural in IBH (*iv*) is very rare; the common form is AN.

The spelling of the first book printed in the Gaelic language, Bishop Carswell's Prayer-book, 1567, is not the same as the spelling of the Gaelic Bible. The Gaelic names in old charters are not spelt according to modern rule. The old Gaelic manuscripts in the Advocates' Library are spelt in various ways. Every man who has written Gaelic for me, spells words variously. Manks spelling is phonetic. Irish spelling is different; and where there is so little authority, I hope to be forgiven if I have ventured to ask men to follow their own road. I hope they will be forgiven if they have taken a short cut to obtain a certain object, and if they have left the beaten path.

For the translation I am responsible, and I feel that the English needs excuse. It has been the fashion so far to translate Gaelic freely; that is, to give the sense of the passage without caring much for the sense of words. One result is, that dictionaries give so many meanings that they are almost useless to any one ignorant of Gaelic. There are many words in these tales which were new to me, and I have repeatedly been driven to gather their meaning from the context, or to ask for it at the source, because of the multitude of contradictory explanations given in dictionaries. Let me take one word as an example. In the first tale the hero meets CU SEANG NA COILL' UAINE, and the meaning turned on the word SEANG. To that word the following meanings are attached:--Slender, slender-waisted, hungry, hungry-looking, lank, lean, active, handsome, strong; (applied to a shirt-front), fine; "Sad am I this day arising the breast of my shirt is not *seang*;" (applied to food in a proverb), meat makes men "seang;" (applied to hinds in an ode), neat; (applied to a horse), spirited; also slim, small, small-bellied, gaunt, nimble, agile; (applied to lady), slender-waisted. On looking further it appears that SEANGAN is an ant; that SHUNKA is the Dakotah for all animals of the dog species, and that the word came to be applied to a horse, as spirit dog, when horses came first to that country; and it further appears that there is a word in broad Scotch which nearly fits the Gaelic, SWANK; that SING means a lion in India; and that the horses of the sun were swankas with beautiful steps in Sanscrit. It seemed to me that the phrase might be thus freely translated "The Forest Lion."

But though it seemed to me possible I might be entirely wrong, so I gave the meaning of the words, about which there could be no mistake:--

CU
SEANG

NA
COILL'
UAINE.

Dog
slim
of
the
wood green.

My belief is, that the word was an adjective, descriptive of the qualities of a lion wherever their likeness is to be found--as strength, activity, high courage, bold bearing, slender form, hunger, satiety; but I did not venture to translate CU SEANG by "*lion*," nor by "*grey hound*," as I was advised to do. I translated it by those words which seem to give the present meaning of the Gaelic. CU, a dog; SEANG, slim; and the phrase stands, "The slim dog of the green wood."

And so throughout I have aimed at giving the present real meaning of every separate word, but so as to give its true meaning in the passage in which it occurs. Where I have not been able to do both, I have tried to keep as close as I could to the original idea involved. For example, "In the mouth of night" is new to English, but it is comprehensible, and it is the exact meaning of the phrase commonly used to express the first coming on of darkness. The expression is poetical. It seems to refer to some old mythical notion that the sun went into a cave or a tent to sleep, for "Take thy sleep in thy cave" is a line in Ossian's "Address to the Sun," and though it was suggested to me to alter this translation, and make it "good English," I thought it best to adhere to my original plan. Generally where the phrase occurs it is translated "in the mouth of night," though I was advised to write, "in the dusk," "in the evening," "at nightfall," "in the mantle of night," "at twilight," "in the grey of the evening."

I admit that all these phrases express ideas which might be attached to the words; but what could an unfortunate student make of a passage in which a word meaning *mouth* according to all dictionaries, should seem to mean *mantle*, or *fall*, or *grey*. It is very much easier to write naturally and translate freely; and as I have tried hard to make my translation a close one, I hope the bad English will be forgiven.

Those only who have tried to turn Gaelic into English can understand the difficulty. There are in fact many Gaelic phrases which will not go into English at all. For example, THA SO AGAM (I have this), *is this at me*, or *with me*, or *by me*, is a phrase which cannot be rendered for want of a word equivalent to AG or AIG, which expresses position and possession, and is combined with *am*, *ad*, *e*, *inn*, *ibh*, and changed to *aca* to express the persons. Gaelic will not bear literal translation into English, but I have tried to give the real meaning of every word as nearly as I could, and to give it by using the English word which most resembled the Gaelic; and thus I have unexpectedly fallen in with a number of English words which seem to have the same origin as Gaelic, if they are not survivors of the language of the ancient Britons. I have translated CLAIDHEAMH, pronounced Claiv, by glave, TRAILL by thrall, and so throughout wherever I have thought of an English word that resembled a word admitted to be Gaelic.

It is my own opinion, and it is that of Mr. MacLean, that the Gaelic language is the same from Cape Clear in Ireland to Cape Wrath in Scotland, though there are many dialects, and there is much variety. The language was taught to me by a native of Lorn, and he was chosen by the advice of men well able to judge, as a native of the district where the best Gaelic was then supposed to be spoken. Speaking from my own experience, I can converse freely in Lorn

Gaelic with Scotch Highlanders in every district of Scotland, and with natives of Rathlin. I can make my way with natives of the North of Ireland, but I cannot converse with the natives of some Irish districts. I could not make the Manksmen understand me, but I can readily understand most of the words in Manks and in Irish, when pronounced separately.

There are a very great many words in Welsh and in Breton which I can understand, or trace when they are separately spoken, but the difference in these is much wider. Peasants come from Connaught to Islay, and in a very short time converse freely, though their accent betrays them; but an Argyllshire Highlander is known in the north by his accent, just as a Yorkshireman would be found out in Somersetshire. An Islay man is detected in Mull, and a native of one parish in Islay is detected when he speaks in another; but though there are such shades of difference, a Highlander used to hear languages variously spoken should have no difficulty in understanding any dialect of Gaelic spoken in Scotland, and most of the Irish dialects.

But which of all these is the best, who is to decide? The author of a very good dictionary says, under the word COIG, that "in the islands of Argyllshire every word is pronounced just as Adam spoke it." Dr. Johnson pronounced the whole to be the rude speech of a barbarous people; and the Saxon knew as much of Gaelic as the Celt did of Adam. One Gaelic scholar wished to change the island words; a good Highlander told me that Dalmally was the best place for Gaelic, another was all for Western Ross. Nobody has a good word for Sutherland Gaelic, but it is very pure nevertheless in some districts; north country men are all for Inverness. I have heard excellent Gaelic in the Long Island. On the whole, I am inclined to think that dialect the best which resembles the largest number of others, and that is the dialect spoken by the most illiterate in the islands, and on the promontories furthest to the west. I will not venture to name any district, because I have no wish to contend with the natives of all the others.

The spirit of nationality is one which has a large development amongst my countrymen, and the, subject of language brings it out in strong relief. It is but a phase of human nature, a result of the quality which phrenologists describe as combativeness, and it seems to be common to all the races classed as Indo-European.

It is a common opinion in England that one Englishman can thrash three Frenchmen; and I have no doubt that a similar opinion prevails in France, though I do not know the fact. Highlanders believe that lowlanders generally are soft and effeminate; lowlanders think that mountaineers are savages. An Irish Celt detests his brother Celt over the water. A Scotch Celt calls another Eireannach when he abuses him, but let a common foe appear and they will all combine. England, Ireland, and Scotland are up in arms, with rifles on their shoulders, at a hint of the approach of a Frenchman; but they joined France with heart and hand to fight the Russian and the Chinese; and as soon as the battle was over, they came back and fought at home.

The English lion stirred up the Scotch lion in the English press, and the northern lion growled over his wrongs. Ireland began to tell of the tyrant Saxon, and a stranger might think that the Union was about to fall to pieces. It is not so; it is but a manifestation of superfluous energy which breaks out in the other "union" over the water, and makes as much noise there as steam blowing off elsewhere.

I maintain that there is chronic war in every part of her Majesty's dominions. Not long ago a dispute arose about a manner of catching herrings. One set of men caught them with drift-nets, another with dragnets, and one party declared that the other violated the law; blood got up, and at last a whole fleet of fishing-boats left their ground and sailed twenty miles down to

attack the rival fleet in form. A gun-boat joined the party, and peace was preserved; but it was more the result of a calm, which enabled the light row-boats to escape from the heavier sailing fleet. Both parties spoke the same language, and on any subject but herrings, they would have backed each other through the world.

The purchase of an orange, and a box on the ear, grew into a serious riot in a northern town last year. The fight spread as from a centre, and lasted three days; but here it developed itself into a fight between Celt and Saxon. Both sides must have been in the wrong, and I am quite sure they were both ignominiously defeated, although they may hold the contrary.

Every election in the three kingdoms is a shameful riot, according to some public organ, whose party get the worst of it.

There is a regular stand-up fight in Paris periodically, the rest of Europe goes to war in earnest at every opportunity, and when there are no national or class wars, men fight as individuals all over the world. I was once at Christmas at a hurling match in Ireland. The game was played on ice on a lake, and after some hours the owner of the lake sent down a Scotch butler with bread and cheese and whisky for the players. They gathered about the cart in perfect good humour, when suddenly, without cause, an excited banker's clerk shouted, "Hurro for ------" (the nearest post town), and performed a kind of war dance on the outside edge of his skates, flourishing a stick wildly, and chanting his war song, "I'll bet ere a man in England, Ireland, or SCOTLAND." A knobby stick rose up in the crowd, and the Scotch butler was down; but an Irish boy who had not opened his mouth was the next. He went head-foremost into a willow bush amongst the snow, and three men in frieze great-coats kicked him with nailed shoes. In ten minutes the storm was over, the butler was up again in his cart dispensing the refreshments, the man in the bush was consoling himself with a dram, and all was peace. But that night the country party took up a position behind a stone wall, and when the others came, they sallied forth and there was a battle-royal.

So I have seen a parish shinty match in the Highlands become so hot and furious, that the leaders were forced to get two pipers and march their troops out of the field in opposite directions, to prevent a civil war of parishes.

And so, a part of her Majesty's guards having gone out to exercise at Clewer, and being stationed as "the enemy" at some point, obstinately refused to "retreat in disorder;" but stood, their ground with such determination, that the officers had to sound the retreat on both sides to prevent a serious battle.

So at Eton, shins were broken in my tutor's football match against my dame's; and boys injured themselves in rowing frantically for the honour of upper or lower sixes.

Two twins, who were so like, that one used to skip round a pillar and answer to his brother's name, and who probably would have died for each other, still fought in private so earnestly, that one carried the mark of a shovel on his forehead for many a long day; and so boys fight, and men fight, individually and collectively, as parties, races, and nations, all over Europe, if not all over the world.

I decline to state my opinion as to which Gaelic is the best, for that is a peculiarly delicate subject, my countrymen having ceased to use their dirks, are apt to fight with pens, and I would rather see the children of the Gael, in this as in other matters, fighting shoulder to shoulder against foes, and working side by side with their friends.

The Gaelic language is essentially descriptive, rich in words, which by their sound alone express ideas. The thundering sound of the waves beating on the shore is well expressed by TONN, a wave; LUNN, a heavy Atlantic swell.

The harsh rattling and crushing of thunder by TAIRNEANACH.

The plunge of a heavy body thrown into deep water by TUNN, plunge.

The noise of small stones and fine gravel streaming seawards from a beach in the undertow is heard in SCRITHEAN, gravel.

The tinkling of shells as they slip and slide on the sand at the edge of the sea is heard in SLIGEAN, shells.

The hard sharp knocking of stones in CLACH, a stone, and thence all manner of compound ideas follow as CLACHAN, a village; CLACHAIR, a mason; CLACHARAN, a stone-chat.

The names of domestic animals usually resemble their notes. Bo, a cow; gobhar, a goat; caora, a sheep; laogh, a calf. Words such as barking, growling, squealing, coughing, sneezing, suggest the idea by the sound, as they do in English. Many names of beasts and birds, which are not of this class, are descriptive in another sense. The grouse are the reddish brown cock and hen; the fox, the reddish brown dog; the wolf, the fierce dog; the sandpiper, the little driolichan of the strand. The crow is the flayer, the falcon, the darter; the otter the brown or black beast.

It is a language full of metaphorical and descriptive expressions. “He went to the beginning of fortune;” “he put the world under his head;” “he took his own body home;” “he went away”--that is, he went home sick, and he died. “There were great masses of rain, and there was night and there was darkness.” “Ye must not be out amidst the night, she is dark.”

It is rich in words expressive of war, by no means rich in words belonging to the arts. CRANN, a tree, means a mast, the bar of a door, a plough, and many other things made of wood. BEAIRT means a loom, a block and tackling, and engines of various kinds.

It seems to contain words to express the great features of nature, which can be traced in the names of rivers and mountains in a great part of Europe, such as EAS, a rapid (pr. ace); ATH (pr. A. and Av.), a ford; AMHAINN, OBHAINN, ABHAINN, a river, variously pronounced, *avain*, *a-wen*, *ovain*, *o-in*, *o-un*, *o-n*. Calais I take to be CALA, a harbour; the word has no meaning in French. Boulogne might be BEUL OBHAINN, river’s mouth; Donau, the Danube, might mean the brown river. Tana might mean the shallow, and both are descriptive.

Rhine might mean the division, and there is a district in Islay whose name is pronounced exactly as the name of the great German river. Balaclava is exceedingly like the name of an Islay farm, and might mean kite’s town, BAILE CHLAMHAIN; but though such resemblances can hardly fail to occur to any one who knows the Gaelic language, it requires time and careful study to follow out such a subject, and it is foreign to my purpose. There are plenty of Gaelic words which closely resemble words in other European languages. Amongst the few Sanscrit words which I have been able to glean from books, I find several which resemble Gaelic words of similar meaning--JWALA, light flame, has many Gaelic relations in words which mean shining, fire, lightning, the moon, white, swan.

DYU, day, is like an diugh, to-day; MIRAH, the ocean, like muir, mara, the sea; but this again is foreign to my purpose.

My wish has been simply to gather some specimens of the wreck so plentifully strewn on the coasts of old Scotland, and to carry it where others may examine it; rather to point out where curious objects worth some attention may be found, than to gather a great heap. I have not sought for stranded forests. I have not polished the rough sticks which I found; I have but cut

off a very few offending splinters, and I trust that some may be found who will not utterly despise such rubbish, or scorn the magic which peasants attribute to a fairy egg.

I. The Young King Of Easaidh Ruadh

From James Wilson, blind fiddler, Islay.

THE young king of Easaidh Ruadh, after he got the heirship to himself, was at much merry making, looking out what would suit him, and what would come into his humour. There was a GRUAGACH near his dwelling, who was called Gruagach carsalach donn--(The brown curly long-haired one.)

He thought to himself that he would go to play a game with him. He went to the Seanagal (soothsayer) and he said to him--"I am made up that I will go to game with the Gruagach carsalach donn." "Aha!" said the Seanagal, "art thou such a man? Art thou so insolent that thou art going to play a game against the Gruagach carsalach donn? 'Twere my advice to thee to change thy nature and not to go there." "I wont do, that," said he. "'Twere my advice to thee, if thou shouldst win of the Gruagach carsalach donn, to get the cropped rough-skinned maid that is behind the door for the worth of thy gaming, and many a turn will he put off before thou gettest her." He lay down that night, and if it was early that the day came, 'twas earlier than that that the king arose to hold gaming against the Gruagach. He reached the Gruagach, he blessed the Gruagach, and the Gruagach blessed him. Said, the Gruagach to him, "Oh young king of Easaidh Ruadh, what brought thee to me to-day? Wilt thou game with me?" They began and they played the game. The king won. "Lift the stake of thy gaming so that I may get (leave) to be moving." "The stake of my gaming is to give me the cropped rough-skinned girl thou hast behind the door." "Many a fair woman have I within besides her," said the Gruagach. "I will take none but that one." "Blessing to thee and cursing to thy teacher of learning." They went to the house of the Gruagach, and the Gruagach set in order twenty young girls. "Lift now thy choice from amongst these." One was coming out after another, and every one that would come out she would say, "I am she; art thou not silly that art not taking me with thee?" But the Seanagal had asked him to take none but the last one that would come out. When the last one came out, he said, "This is mine." He went with her, and when they were a bit from the house, her form altered, and she is the loveliest woman that was on earth. The king was going home full of joy at getting such a charming woman.

He reached the house, and he went to rest. If it was early that the day arose, it was earlier than that that the king arose to go to game with the Gruagach. "I must absolutely go to game against the Gruagach to-day," said he to his wife. "Oh!" said she, "that's my father, and if thou goest to game with him, take nothing for the stake of thy play but the dun shaggy filly that has the stick saddle on her."

The king went to encounter the Gruagach, and surely the blessing of the two to each other was not beyond what it was before. "Yes!" said the Gruagach, how did thy young bride please thee yesterday?" "She pleased fully." "Hast thou come to game with me to-day?" "I came." They began at the gaming, and the king won from the Gruagach on that day. "Lift the stake of thy gaming, and be sharp about it." "The stake of my gaming is the dun shag, filly on which is the stick saddle."

They went away together. They reached the dun shaggy filly. He took her out from the stable, and the king put his leg over her and she was the swift heroine! He went home. His wife had her hands spread before him, and they were cheery together that night. "I would rather myself," said his wife, "that thou shouldest not go to game with the Gruagach any more, for if

he wins he will put trouble on thy head." "I won't do that," said he, "I *will* go to play with him to-day."

He went to play with the Gruagach. When he arrived, he thought the Gruagach was seized with joy. "Hast thou come?" he said. "I came." They played the game, and, as a cursed victory for the king, the Gruagach won that day. "Lift the stake of thy game," said the young king of Easaidh Ruadh, "and be not heavy on me, for I cannot stand to it." "The stake of my play is," said he, "that I lay it as crosses and as spells on thee, and as the defect of the year, that the cropped rough-skinned creature, more uncouth and unworthy than thou thyself, should take thy head, and thy neck, and thy life's look off, if thou dost not get for Me the GLAIVE OF LIGHT of the king of the oak windows." The king went home, heavily, poorly, gloomily. The young queen came meeting him, and she said to him, "Mohrooai! my pity! there is nothing with thee tonight." Her face and her splendour gave some pleasure to the king when he looked on her brow, but when he sat on a chair to draw her towards him, his heart was so heavy that the chair broke under him.

"What ails thee, or what should ail thee, that thou mightest not tell it to me?" said the queen. The king told how it happened. "Ha!" said she, "what should'st thou mind, and that thou hast the best wife in Erin, and the second best horse in Erin. If thou takest my advice, thou wilt come (well) out of all these things yet."

If it was early that the day came, it was earlier than that that the queen arose, and she set order in everything, for the king was about to go on his journey. She set in order the dun shaggy filly, on which was the stick saddle, and though he saw it as wood, it was full of sparklings with gold and silver. He got on it; the queen kissed him, and she wished him victory of battlefields. "I need not be telling thee anything. Take thou the advice of thine own she comrade, the filly, and she will tell thee what thou shouldest do." He set out on his journey, and it was not dreary to be on the dun steed.

She would catch the swift March wind that would be before, and the swift March wind would not catch her. They came at the mouth of dusk and lateness, to the court and castle of the king of the oak windows.

Said the dun shaggy filly to him, "We are at the end of the journey, and we have not to go any further; take my advice, and I will take thee where the sword of light of the king of the oak windows is, and if it comes with thee without scrape or creak, it is a good mark on our journey. The king is now at his dinner, and the sword of light is in his own chamber. There is a knob on its end, and when thou catchest the sword, draw it softly out of the window 'case.'" He came to the window where the sword was. He caught the sword and it came with him softly till it was at its point, and then it gave a sort of a "sgread." "We will now be going," said the filly. "It is no stopping time for us. I know the king has felt us taking the sword out." He kept his sword in his hand, and they went away, and when they were a bit forward, the filly said, "We will stop now, and look thou whom thou seest behind thee." "I see" said he, "a swarm of brown horses coming madly." "We are swifter ourselves than these yet," said the filly. They went, and when they were a good distance forward, "Look now," said she; "whom seest thou coming?" "I see a swarm of black horses, and. one white-faced black horse, and he is coming and coming in madness, and a man on him." "That is the best horse in Erin; it is my brother, and he got three months more nursing than I, and he will come past me with a whirr, and try if thou wilt be so ready, that when he comes past me, thou wilt take the head off the man who is on him; for in the time of passing he will look at thee, and there is no sword in his court wilt take off his head but the very sword that is in thy hand." When this man was going past, he gave his head a turn to look at him, he drew the sword and he took his head off, and the shaggy dun filly caught it in her mouth.

This was the king of the oak windows. “Leap on the black horse,” said she, “and leave the carcass there, and be going home as fast as he will take thee home, and I will be coming as best I may after thee.” He leaped on the black horse, and, “Moirë!” he was the swift hero, and they reached the house long before day. The queen was without rest till he arrived. They raised music, and they laid down woe. On the morrow, he said, “I am obliged to go to see the Gruagach to-day, to try if my spells will be loose.” “Mind that it is not as usual the Gruagach will meet thee. He will meet thee furiously, wildly, and he will say to thee, didst thou get the sword? and say thou that thou hast got it; he will say, how didst thou get it? and thou shalt say, if it were not the knob that was on its end I had not got it. He will ask thee again, how didst thou get the sword? and thou wilt say, if it were not the knob that was on its end, I had not got it. Then he will give himself a lift to look what knob is on the sword, and thou wilt see a mole on the right side of his neck, and stab the point of the sword in the mole; and if thou dost not hit the mole, thou and I are done. His brother was the king of the oak windows, and he knows that till the other had lost his life, he would not part with the sword. The death of the two is in the sword, but there is no other sword that will touch them but it.” The queen kissed him, and she called on victory of battlefields (to be) with him, and he went away.

The Gruagach met him in the very same place where he was before. “Didst thou get the sword?” “I got the sword.” “How didst thou get the sword?” “If it were not the knob that was on its end I had not got it,” said he. “Let me see the sword.” “It was not laid on me to let thee see it.” “How didst thou get the sword?” “If it were not the knob that was on its end, I got it not.” The Gruagach gave his head a lift to look at the sword; he saw the mole; he was sharp and quick, and he thrust the sword into the mole, and the Gruagach fell down dead.

He returned home, and when he returned home, he found his set of keepers and watchers tied back to back, without wife, or horse, or sweetheart of his, but was taken away.

When he loosed them, they said to him, “A great giant came and he took away thy wife and thy two horses.” “Sleep will not come on mine eyes nor rest on mine head till I get my wife and my two horses back.” In saying this, he went on his journey. He took the side that the track of the horses was, and he followed them diligently. The dusk and lateness were coming on him, and no stop did he make until he reached the side of the green wood. He saw where there was the forming of the site of a fire, and he thought that he would put fire upon it, and thus he would put the night past there.

He was not long here at the fire, when “CU SEANG” of the green wood came on him.

He blessed the dog, and the dog blessed him.

“Oov! oov!” said the dog, “Bad was the plight of thy wife and thy two horses here last night with the big giant.” “It is that which has set me so pained and pitiful on their track to-night; but there is no help for it.” “Oh! king,” said the dog, “thou must not be without meat.” The dog went into the wood. He brought out creatures, and they made them meat contentedly. “I rather think myself,” said the king, “that I may turn home; that I cannot go near that giant.” “Don’t do that,” said the dog. “There’s no fear of thee, king. Thy matter will grow with thee. Thou must not be here without sleeping.” “Fear will not let me sleep without a warranty.” “Sleep thou,” said the dog, “and I will warrant thee.” The king let himself down, stretched out at the side of the fire, and he slept. When the watch broke, the dog said to him, “Rise up, king, till thou gettest a morsel of meat that will strengthen thee, till thou wilt be going on thy journey. Now,” said the dog, “if hardship or difficulty comes on thee, ask my aid, and I will be with thee in an instant.” They left a blessing with each other, and he went away. In the time of dusk and lateness, he came to a great precipice of rock, and there was the forming of the site of a fire.

He thought he would gather dry fuel, and that he would set on fire. He began to warm himself, and he was not long thus when the hoary hawk of the grey rock came on him. “Oov! oov!” said she, “Bad was the plight of thy wife and thy two horses last night with the big giant.” “There is no help for it,” said be. “I have got much of their trouble and little of their benefit myself.” “Catch courage,” said she. “Thou wilt get something of their benefit yet. Thou must not be without meat here,” said she. There is no contrivance for getting meat,” said he. “We will not be long getting meat,” said the falcon. She went, and she was not long when she came with three ducks and eight blackcocks in her mouth. They set their meat in order, and they took it. “Thou must not be without sleep,” said the falcon. “How shall I sleep without a warranty over me, to keep me from any one evil that is here.” “Sleep thou, king, and I will warrant thee.” He let himself down, stretched out, and he slept.

In the morning, the falcon set him on foot. “Hardship or difficulty that comes on thee, mind, at any time, that thou wilt get my help.” He went swiftly, sturdily. The night was coming, and the little birds of the forest of branching bushy trees, were talking about the briar roots and the twig tops; and if they were, it was stillness, not peace for him, till be came to the side of a great river that was there, and at the bank of the river there was the forming of the site of a fire. The king blew a heavy, little spark of fire. He was not long here when there came as company for him the brown otter of the river. “Och! och!” said the otter, “Bad was the plight of thy wife and thy two horses last night with the giant.” “There is no help for it. I got much of their trouble and little of their benefit.” “Catch courage, before mid-day to-morrow thou wilt see thy wife. Oh! king, thou must not be without meat,” said the otter. “How is meat to be got here?” said the king. The otter went through the river, and she came and three salmon with her, that were splendid. They made meat, and they took it. Said the otter to the king, “Thou must sleep.” How can I sleep without any warranty over me? Sleep thou, and I will warrant thee.” The king slept. In the morning, the otter said to him, “Thou wilt be this night in presence of thy wife.” He left blessing with the otter. “Now,” said the otter, “if difficulty be on thee, ask my aid and thou shalt get it.” The king went till he reached a rock, and he looked down into a chasm that was in the rock, and at the bottom he saw his wife and his two horses, and he did not know how be should get where they were. He went round till he came to the foot of the rock, and there was a fine road for going in. He went in, and if he went it was then she began crying. “Ud! ud!” said he, “this is bad! If thou art crying now when I myself have got so much trouble coming about thee.” “Oo!” said the horses, “set him in front of us, and there is no fear for him, till we leave this.” She made meat for him, and she set him to rights, and when they were a while together, she put him in front of the horses. When the giant came, he said, “The smell of the stranger is within.” Says she, “My treasure! My joy and my cattle! there is nothing but the smell of the litter of the horses.” At the end of a while he went to give meat to the horses, and the horses began at him, and they all but killed him, and he hardly crawled from them. “Dear thing,” said she, “they are like to kill thee.” “If I myself had my soul to keep, it’s long since they had killed me,” said he. “Where, dear, is thy soul? By the books I will take care of it.” “It is,” said he, “in the Bonnach stone.” When he went on the morrow, she set the Bonnach stone in order exceedingly. In the time of dusk and lateness, the giant came home. She set her man in front of the horses. The giant went to give the horses meat and they mangled him more and more. “What made thee set the Bonnach stone in order like that?” said he. “Because thy soul is in it.” “I perceive that if thou didst know where my soul is, thou wouldst give it much respect.” “I would give (that),” said she. “It is not there,” said he, “my soul is; it is in the threshold.” She set in order the threshold finely on the morrow. When the giant returned, he went to give meat to the horses, and the horses mangled him more and more. “What brought thee to set the threshold in order like that?” “Because thy soul is in it.” “I perceive if thou knewest where my soul is, that thou wouldst take care of it.” “I would take that,” said she. “It is not there that my soul is,” said he.

“There is a great flagstone under the threshold. There is a wether under the flag. There is a duck in the wether’s belly, and an egg in the belly of the duck, and it is in the egg that my soul is.” When the giant went away on the morrow’s day, they raised the flagstone and out went the wether. “If I had the slim dog of the greenwood, he would not be long bringing the wether to me.” The slim dog of the greenwood came with the wether in his mouth. When they opened the wether, out was the duck on the wing with the other ducks. “If I had the Hoary Hawk of the grey rock, she would not be long bringing the duck to me.” The Hoary Hawk of the grey rock came with the duck in her mouth; when they split the duck to take the egg from her belly, out went the egg into the depth of the ocean. “If I had the brown otter of the river, he would not be long bringing the egg to me.” The brown otter came and the ego, in her mouth, and the queen caught the egg, and she crushed it between her two hands. The giant was coming in the lateness, and when she crushed the egg, he fell down dead, and he has never yet moved out of that. They took with them a great deal of his gold and silver. They passed a cheery night with the brown otter of the river, a night with the hoary falcon of the grey rock, and a night with the slim dog of the greenwood. They came home and they set in order “a CUIRM CURAIDH CRIDHEIL,” a hearty hero’s feast, and they were lucky and well pleased after that.

Received June 9, 1859.

An old man, of the name of Angus MacQueen, who lived at Ballochroy, near Portaskaig, in Islay, “who could recite Ossian’s Poems,” taught this more than forty years ago (say 1820) to James Wilson, blind fiddler in Islay, who recited it to Hector MacLean, schoolmaster, Islay.

The Gaelic is dictated and written by Islay men.

(Gaelic omitted)

2. I have another version of this tale, written by Hector Urquhart, told by John Campbell, living at Strath Gairloch, Ross-shire, received June 27, 1859. It is very well told. It varies a little from the Islay version, but the resemblance is so close, that to print it entire would be repetition. It contains many characteristic phrases which the other has not got, so I give this abstract. The Gaelic is as it came to me.

THE “SGEULACHD” OF THE WIDOW’S SON.--There was once a widow’s son, and be was often stalking (SEALG). On a day of days and he stalking, he “sits” at the back of a knoll, before the sun and behind the wind (RI ACHAIDH GREINE ‘S RI CUL NA GAOITHE), and there came the way a youth, like a picture (OGANACH DEALBHANACH), riding a blue filly (FAILORE GORM), and he sits beside him. They played at cards, and the widow’s son won, and when evening came the youth said, “What is the stake of thy gaming?” (CE DHE BUIDH DO CHLUICHE?) and he said, “the blue filly under thee.” He took her home, and she changed into the finest woman that man ever saw. Next day he went stalking, and on coming home in the mouth of night (AM BEUL NA OIDECHE), he learned that the big giant had taken away his sweetheart--CHA NEIL COMAS AIR AS EISE ACH NA BO MHISE BO TREASA CHA MHEALLADH EISE FAD I. “There is no help for it,” said he, “but were I the stronger, he would not allure her far.”

DH’ ERICH MAC NA BANNTRICH. The widow’s son arose, ‘S CHAIDH E NA CHRIOSIBH IALLA S’NA IALLA GAISGICH, and he went into his belts of thongs and his thongs of warrior, ‘S DH’FHALBH E LE CEUMANIBH GU TUISLEAG DOMH MHEANMNACH, and he went with leaping strides, cheerful to me (or? *Doimhainneachd*--of deepness) S’ DHEANADH E MILE THORAN NA SLEIBH LEIS NA H UILLE CEUM A DHEANADH E, and he would make a thousand knolls of the hill with every step he made, ‘S

B’ FHEAR DHA NAMHAID A SHEACHANADH NA TACHAIRT AN LATHA SIN RIS, and his foe had better avoid him than meet that day with him. He saw a little hut “in the mouth of night,” and though far away, not long to reach it, AIR A THIUBHADH LE ITEAGAN GARBHA NAN EUN A MUIGH S LE ITEAGAN MINE NAN EUN A STEACH, thatched with coarse feathers of the birds without, and with fine feathers of the birds within, AGUS RUITHAG AN T UBHAL BHON DARNA CEAN DHON A CHIN EILE LE CHO COMHRAD S’A BHA E, and the apple would run from one end to the other end, so even it was. He went in and found no man, but two great fires on the fire-place (CHAGAILT) On the floor. SUIL DA DUG E, glance that he gave he saw a falcon coming in with a heath hen in her claws, and the next glance it was, GILLE BRIAGH BUIDH, a braw yellow lad, who spoke as in the Islay version, entertained him and told him in the morning to call on SEABHAG SUIL GHORM GHLENNA FEIST--the blue-eyed falcon of Glen Feist. Next day it was the same, and he came, AIR CIARADH DON FHEISGAR, at the turning-dun of the evening, to a second hut, thatched like the other, S’ BHA SNATHNEAN BEAG SUARACH SIODA CUMAIL DION A DHROMA RIS, and there was a little sorry silken thread, keeping the thatch of its back on. DOBHRAN DONN, otter brown, come in with a salmon, and became a man, and spoke as the other, and told him in the morning to call on DOBHRAN DONN SRUTH AN T’ SHIUL--Brown otter of sail stream. The third day was the same, the hut was the same, but that there were two great fires on each fire-place, and there came in, MADADH MOR, big dog, with a hare by the throat, who became the finest man, AIR AN DUG E ROSK RIAMH, he ever turned face to; who said as the others did--”It was late when the big giant went past with thy sweetheart on his shoulder.” At parting he told him to call On MADADH GLAS DRIOM AN T-SHLEIBHE--grey dog of mountain back in time of need. That night he saw, TIGH MOR GEAL AN AN GLEANN FADA FAISICH, a big white house in a long desert glen, and saw his sweatheart with a golden comb in her hand, and she would take a while at combing her hair, and a while at weeping, and when she saw him she said--”My pity, w hat brought thee here? the giant will kill thee.” “Two shares of fear on him, and the smallest share on me,” said the widow’s son.

She had laid it as crosses and as spells on the giant, not to come near her for a day and a year, and they were together in the giant’s house till evening.

She hid him, and had a long talk with the giant when he came home, who was wheedled, as in the other story, into telling first that his life (BETHA) was in (CARN GLAS UD THALL) yonder grey cairn. The lady was addressed as NIGHINN RIGH CHOIGE MUGH--O daughter of king of COIGE MUGH, which kingdom is not within my geographical studies.

The giant came home, and found the grey cairn dressed out and ornamented, and after a deal of persuasion, gave out that his life was in SEANN STOC DARRICH--an old oak stump on the bank of yonder river. So the next day that was dressed out, and when he came home he said, “Do thou make the stock braw, BRIAGH, every day. On the third day they split the oak stump with an axe, and a hare leaped out. “There now is the giant’s life away,” said the king’s daughter, “and he will come without delay and kill thee, and not spare me.” Grey dog of mountain back was called, and brought the hare, and a salmon leaped out into the river, Brown otter of sail stream brought the salmon, and a heath hen sprang out. Blue-eyed falcon of Glen Feist brought the bird, and the giant came roaring--”King’s daughter, let me have my life and thou shalt have the little chest of gold and the little chest of silver that is in yonder grey cairn.” The widow’s son answered, “I will have that, and I will have this;” and he seized the axe, and the stock fell, and the giant was dead. And the widow’s son and the daughter of King Coige Mugh, in Erin, staid in the house and the land of the giant, and their race was there when I was there last.

The warrior's dress of thongs is remarkable, and something like it is described in another tale. There is a curious picture at Taymouth of a man, supposed to be the Regent Murray, in a Highland dress, which may be the dress described. The upper part is composed of strips of some ornamental material, which might be stamped gilded leather; the rest of the dress is a linen shirt, with ruffles, and a plaid wrapped about the body in the form of a modern kilt, and belted plaid; he wears stockings and shoes of a peculiar pattern: the head-dress is a bonnet with an ostrich plume; the arms, a dirk and a long ornamented gun.

There is another picture at Dytchley, in Oxfordshire, which represents an ancestor of Lord Dillon in an Irish costume. The dress consists solely of a very short garment like a shirt, coloured, and very much ornamented with tags, which might be leather. The gentleman is armed with a spear, and the dress is probably a masquerade representation of a real Irish dress of some period.

I would here remark that the personages and places in all these tales are like the actors in a play and the scenes. The incidents vary but little, but the kings and their countries vary with every version, though there is a preference for Erin, Ireland; Lochlain, Scandinavia, or rather Denmark and Norway; and Greuge, the Greekdom, Greece.

3. I have a third version of this written by MacLean, told by Donald MacPhie, in South Uist. The old man was very proud of it, and said it was "the HARDEST" story that the transcriber had ever heard. He told me the same.

As often happens with aged reciters, when he repeated it a second time slowly for transcribing, nearly all the curious, "impassioned, and sentimental" language was left out. This is MacLean's account, and it entirely agrees with my own experience of this man, who is next thing to a professional reciter (see introduction). This version is the most curious of the three. I hope some day to get it better copied, so I do not abstract it now It is nearer the Ross-shire version than the Islay story, and carries the scene to Greece from Ireland. The reciter is 79, and says he learned it in his youth from an old man of the name of John MacDonald, Aird a Mhachair.

The principle on which gaming is carried on in this and in other tales is peculiar. The stake is rather a ransom, for it is always settled after the game is decided.

The game played is TAILEASG, which Armstrong translates as sport, game, mirth, chess, backgammon, draughts.

This story resembles in some particulars--

1. The Gaelic tale published by Dr. MacLeod, printed page 30, Leobhar Nan Cnoc. 1834

2. The Sea Maiden, in present collection, and the stories referred to in the notes.

3. The Giant who had no Heart in his Body. Norse Tales. 1859.

4. The Seven Foals, where a horse advises his rider. Norse Tales.

5. Dapplegrim, where the same occurs, where there are two horses, and where the rider hides about the horses. Norse Tales.

6. Fortunio, where the horse also advises his rider.

7. This also resembles a part of the "Arabian Nights," where the Calender is changed into a monkey, and the princess fights a genius in various shapes.

8. "The Ball of Crystal," Grimm, where the power of an enchanter is in *a crystal ball*, in *an egg*, in *a fiery bird*, in *a wild ox*.

9. The Three Sisters, page 52, where a little key is found in *an egg*, in *a duck*, in *a bull*. This book is an English translation (1845) of Volks Märchen, by Musaeus, 1872. Said to have been published in English in 1790.

10. Another version of the Sea Maiden recited to me in South Uist. The soul of the Sea Maiden was in *an egg*, in *a goose*, in *a ram*, in *a wild bull*, and was got by the help of *an otter*, *a falcon*, *a wolf* and *a lion*.

Lempriere--Ægyptus--Kneph or *Knouphis*--A God represented as a ram. He was the soul of the world; his symbol a circle, in the centre of which is a serpent with the head of a hawk, or a globe with a serpent turned round it. Together with mind, the primitive matter was given, both produced from the same great principle, existing in it from all eternity, imperishable. The primitive matter was rude and shapeless when the spirit imparted to it the power of motion, and gave it the form of a sphere. This became the sphere or *egg* of the world which *Kneph let fall from his mouth*, when he wished to form all things.

It is warmly contended by Irish writers that the religion of the Celts, and the Celts themselves, came from Phœnicia and Carthage.

If this story be mythological, here is something like it.

We have the *hawk*, *ram*, and a *bird*; and in the Inverary version we have a *fish* and the *egg*, with the life of bird, beast, fish, and man in it.

There is a place called *Lok Maaien-ker*, in Morbihan, Brittany, a long, dark, underground passage, at the end of which are certain rudely sculptured stones. On one of these is something which bears some faint resemblance to the snake, who appears in the next tale.

There is one word in this tale, “SEANG,” which is not given in dictionaries as a substantive, Sing, applied to an Indian prince, means lion, and the beast here described might be one. Seang, as an adjective, means thin, slim, slender, gaunt, and is the root of *Seangan*, an ant.

In Prichard’s “Celtic Nations,” by Latham, 1856, a Dacota word is quoted--”SUNGKA,” which originally comprehended the idea of Dog, Fox, and Wolf.

The word GRUAGACH, which here means some male personage, generally means a maiden. It also means “A female spectre of the class of Brownies to which the Highland dairymaids made frequent libations of milk--*rarely* THE CHIEF OF A PLACE.”--*Armstrong dic*. This word, which has not its common meaning, may help to trace the language. The root is GRUAG, the hair of the head.

A Gruagach used to haunt Skipness Castle, and is still remembered there as a supernatural female who did odd jobs about the house for the maids, and lived in the ruin.

“There was also a Gruagach in Kerrisdale, in Gairloch, in Ross-shire, once upon a time.”

This may be the same word as *Groac’h* or *Grac’h*, a name given to the Druidesses, who had colleges in an island near the coasts of Brittany (p. 155, vol. i., Foyer Breton). The story given has many incidents common to the Gaelic stories.

The sword of light is common in Gaelic stories; and, stripped of supernatural qualities, the whole thing seems very like an account of some race contending with another, whose chief wore long hair, who had horses and bright (?steel) swords, to which extraordinary virtues were attributed, and who were at the same time beset by savages who lived in caves, and were assisted by other savages represented by creatures.

II. The Battle Of The Birds

From John Mackenzie, fisherman, near Inverary.

THERE was once a time when every creature and bird was gathering to battle. The son of the king of Tethertown[2] said, that he would go to see the battle, and that he would bring sure word home to his father the king, who would be king of the creatures this year. The battle was over before he arrived all but one (fight), between a great black raven and a snake, and it seemed as if the snake would get the victory over the raven. When the King's son saw this, he helped the raven, and with one blow takes the head off the snake. When the raven had taken breath, and saw that the snake was dead, he said, "For thy kindness to me this day, I will give thee a sight. Come up now on the root of my two wings." The king's son mounted upon the raven, and, before he stopped, he took him over seven Bens, and seven Glens, and seven Mountain Moors.

"Now," said the raven, "seest thou that house yonder? Go now to it. It is a sister of mine that makes her dwelling in it; and I will go bail that thou art welcome. And if she asks thee, Wert thou at the battle of the birds? say thou that thou wert. And if she asks, Didst thou see my likeness? say that thou sawest it. But be sure that thou meetest me to-morrow morning here, in this place." The king's son got good and right good treatment this night. Meat of each meat, drink of each drink, warm water to his feet, and a soft bed for his limbs.

On the next day the raven gave him the same sight over seven Bens, and seven Glens, and seven Mountain moors. They saw a bothy far off, but, though far off, they were soon there. He got good treatment this night, as before--plenty of meat and drink, and warm water to his feet, and a soft bed to his limbs--and on the next day it was the same thing.

On the third morning, instead of seeing the raven as at the other times, who should meet him but the handsomest lad he ever saw, with a bundle in his hand. The king's son asked this lad if he had seen a big black raven. Said the lad to him, "Thou wilt never see the raven again, for I am that raven. I was put under spells; it was meeting thee that loosed me, and for that thou art getting this bundle. Now," said the lad, "thou wilt turn back on the self-same steps, and thou wilt lie a night in each house, as thou wert before; but thy lot is not to lose the bundle which I gave thee, till thou art in the place where thou wouldst most wish to dwell."

The king's son turned his back to the lad, and his face to his father's house; and he got lodging from the raven's sisters, just as he got it when going forward. When he was nearing his father's house he was going through a close wood. It seemed to him that the bundle was growing heavy, and he thought be would look what was in it.

When he loosed the bundle, it was not without astonishing himself. In a twinkling he sees the very grandest place he ever saw. A great castle, and an orchard about the castle, in which was every kind of fruit and herb. He stood full of wonder and regret for having loosed the bundle--it was not in his power to put it back again--and he would have wished this pretty place to be in the pretty little green hollow that was opposite his father's house; but, at one glance, he sees a great giant coming towards him.

"Bad's the place where thou hast built thy house, king's son," says the giant. "Yes, but it is not here I would wish it to be, though it happened to be here by mishap," says the king's son. "What's the reward thou wouldst give me for putting it back in the bundle as it was before?"

[2] Na Cathair Shlomain. Heather ropes are used for binding thatch on Highland cottages.

“What’s the reward thou wouldst ask?” says the king’s son. “If thou wilt give me the first son thou hast when he is seven years of age,” says the giant. “Thou wilt get that if I have a son,” said the king’s son.

In a twinkling the giant put each garden, and orchard, and castle in the bundle as they were before. “Now,” says the giant, “take thou thine own road, and I will take my road; but mind thy promise, and though thou shouldst forget, I will remember.”

The king’s son took to the road, and at the end of a few days he reached the place he was fondest of. He loosed the bundle, and the same place was just as it was before. And when he opened the castle-door he sees the handsomest maiden he ever cast eye upon. “Advance, king’s son,” said the pretty maid; “everything is in order for thee, if thou, wilt marry me this very night.” “It’s I am the man that is willing,” said the king’s son. And on the same night they married.

But at the end of a day and seven years, what great man is seen coming to the castle but the giant. The king’s son minded his promise to the giant, and till now he had not told his promise to the queen. “Leave thou (the matter) between me and the giant,” says the queen.

“Turn out thy son,” says the giant; “mind your promise.” “Thou wilt get that,” says the king, “when his mother puts him in order for his journey.” The queen arrayed the cook’s son, and she gave him to the giant by the hand. The giant went away with him; but he had not gone far when he put a rod in the hand of the little laddie. The giant asked him--”If thy father had that rod what would he do with it?” “If my father had that rod he would beat the dogs and the cats, if they would be going near the king’s meat,” said the little laddie. “Thou’rt the cook’s son,” said the giant. He catches him by the two small ankles and knocks him--”Sgleog”--against the stone that was beside him. The giant turned back to the castle in rage and madness, and he said that if they did not turn out the king’s son to him, the highest stone of the castle would be the lowest. Said the queen to the king, “we’ll try it yet; the butler’s son is of the same age as our son.” She arrayed the butler’s son, and she gives him to the giant by the hand. The giant had not gone far when he put the rod in his hand. “If thy father had that rod,” says the giant, “what would he do with it?” “He would beat the dogs and the cats when they would be coming near the king’s bottles and glasses.” “Thou art the son of the butler,” says the giant, and dashed his brains out too. The giant returned in very great rage and anger. The earth shook under the sole of his feet, and the castle shook and all that was in it. “OUT HERE THY SON,” says the giant, “or in a twinkling the stone that is highest in the dwelling will be the lowest.” So needs must they had to give the king’s son to the giant.

The giant took him to his own house, and he reared him as his own son. On a day of days when the giant was from home, the lad heard the sweetest music he ever heard in a room at the top of the giant’s house. At a glance he saw the finest face he had ever seen. She beckoned to him to come a bit nearer to her, and she told him to go this time, but to be sure to be at the same place about that dead midnight.

And as he promised he did. The giant’s daughter was at his side in a twinkling, and she said, “Tomorrow thou wilt get the choice of my two sisters to marry; but say thou that thou wilt not take either, but me. My father wants me to marry the son of the king of the Green City, but I don’t like him.” On the morrow the giant took out his three daughters, and he said, “Now son of the king of Tethertown, thou hast not lost by living with me so long. Thou wilt get to wife one of the two eldest of my daughters, and with her leave to go home with her the day after the wedding.” “If thou wilt give me this pretty little one,” says the king’s son, “I will take thee at thy word.”

The giant's wrath kindled, and he said, "Before thou gett'st her thou must do the three things that I ask thee to do." "Say on," says the king's son. The giant took him to the byre. "Now," says the giant, "the dung of a hundred cattle is here, and it has not been cleansed for seven years. I am going from home to-day, and if this byre is not cleaned before night comes, so clean that a golden apple will run from end to end of it, not only thou shalt not get my daughter, but 'tis a drink of thy blood that will quench my thirst this night." He begins cleaning the byre, but it was just as well to keep baling the great ocean. After mid-day, when sweat was blinding him, the giant's young daughter came where he was, and she said to him, "Thou art being punished, king's son." "I am that," says the king's son. "Come over," says she, "and lay down thy weariness." "I will do that," says he, "there is but death awaiting me, at any rate." He sat down near her. He was so tired that he fell asleep beside her. When he awoke, the giant's daughter was not to be seen, but the byre was so well cleaned that a golden apple would run from end to end of it. In comes the giant, and he said, "Thou hast cleaned the byre, king's son?" "I have cleaned it," says he. "Somebody cleaned it," says the giant. "Thou didst not clean it, at all events," said the king's son. "Yes, yes!" says the giant, "since thou wert so active to-day, thou wilt get to this time to-morrow to thatch this byre with birds' down--birds with no two feathers of one colour." The king's son was on foot before the sun; he caught up his bow and his quiver of arrows to kill the birds. He took to the moors, but if he did, the birds were not so easy to take. He was running after them till the sweat was blinding him. About mid-day who should come but the giant's daughter. "Thou art exhausting thyself, king's son," says she. "I am," said he. "There fell but these two blackbirds, and both of one colour." "Come over and lay down thy weariness on this pretty hillock," says the giant's daughter. "It's I am willing," said he. He thought she would aid him this time, too, and he sat down near her, and he was not long there till he fell asleep.

When he awoke, the giant's daughter was gone. He thought he would go back to the house, and he sees the byre thatched with the feathers. When the giant came home, he said, "Thou hast thatched the byre, king's son?" "I thatched it," says he. "Somebody thatched it," says the giant. "Thou didst not thatch it," says the king's son. "Yes, yes!" says the giant. "Now," says the giant, "there is a fir-tree beside that loch down there, and there is a magpie's nest in its top. The eggs thou wilt find in the nest. I must have them for my first meal. Not one must be burst or broken, and there are five in the nest." Early in the morning the king's son went where the tree was, and that tree was not hard to hit upon. Its match was not in the whole wood. From the foot to the first branch was five hundred feet. The king's son was going all round the tree. She came who was always bringing help to him; "Thou art losing the skin of thy hands and feet." "Ach! I am," says he. "I am no sooner up than down." "This is no time for stopping," says the giant's daughter. She thrust finger after finger into the tree, till she made a ladder for the king's son to go up to the magpie's nest. When he was at the nest, she said, "Make haste now with the eggs, for my father's breath is burning my back." In his hurry she left her little finger in the top of the tree. "Now," says she, "thou wilt go home with the eggs quickly, and thou wilt get me to marry to-night if thou canst know me. I and my two sisters will be arrayed in the same garments, and made like each other, but look at me when my father says, Go to thy wife, king's son; and thou wilt see a hand without a, little finger." He gave the eggs to the giant. "Yes, yes!" says the giant, "be making ready for thy marriage."

Then indeed there was a wedding, and it *was* a wedding! Giants and gentlemen, and the son of the king of the Green City was in the midst of them. They were married, and the dancing began, and that was a dance? The giant's house was shaking from top to bottom. But bed time came, and the giant said, "It is time for thee to go to rest, son of the king of Tethertown; take thy bride with thee from amidst those."

She put out the hand off which the little finger was, and he caught her by the hand.

“Thou hast aimed well this time too; but there is no knowing but we may meet thee another way,” said the giant.

But to rest they went. “Now,” says she, “sleep not, or else thou diest. We must fly quick, quick, or for certain my father will kill thee.”

Out they went, and on the blue gray filly in the stable they mounted. “Stop a while,” says she, “and I will play a trick to the old hero.” She jumped in, and cut an apple into nine shares, and she put two shares at the head of the bed, and two shares at the foot of the bed, and two shares at the door of the kitchen, and two shares at the big door, and one outside the house.

The giant awoke and called, “Are you asleep?” “We are not yet,” said the apple that was at the head of the bed. At the end of a while he called again. “We are not yet,” said the apple that was at the foot of the bed. A while after this he called again. “We are not yet,” said the apple at the kitchen door. The giant called again. The apple that was at the big door answered “You are now going far from me,” says the giant. “We are not yet,” says the apple that was outside the house. “You are flying,” says the giant.

The giant jumped on his feet, and to the bed he went, but it was cold--empty.

“My own daughter’s tricks are trying me,” said the giant. “Here’s after them,” says he.

In the mouth of day, the giant’s daughter said that her father’s breath was burning her back. “Put thy hand, quick,” said she, “in the ear of the gray filly, and whatever thou findest in it, throw it behind thee.” “There is a twig of sloe tree,” said he. “Throw it behind thee,” said she.

No sooner did he that, than there were twenty miles of black thorn wood, so thick that scarce a weasel could go through it. The giant came headlong, and there he is fleecing his head and neck in the thorns.

“My own daughter’s tricks are here as before,” said the giant; “but if I had my own big axe and wood knife here, I would not be long making a way through this.” He went home for the big axe and the wood knife, and sure he was not long on his journey, and he was the boy behind the big axe. He was not long making a way through the black thorn. “I will leave the axe and the wood knife here till I return,” says he.

“If thou leave them,” said a Hoodie[3] that was in a tree, “we will steal them.”

“You will do that same,” says the giant, “but I will set them home.” He returned and left them at the house. At the heat of day the giant’s daughter felt her father’s breath burning her back.

“Put thy finger in the filly’s ear, and throw behind thee whatever thou findest in it.” He got a splinter of gray stone, and in a twinkling there were twenty miles, by breadth and height, of great gray rock behind them. The giant came full pelt, but past the rock he could not go.

“The tricks of my own daughter are the hardest things that ever met me,” says the giant; “but if I had my lever and my mighty mattock, I would not be long making my way through this rock also.” There was no help for it, but to turn the chase for them; and he was the boy to split the stones. He was not lone, making a road through the rock. “I will leave the tools here, and I will return no more.” “If thou leave them,” says the hoodie, “we will steal them.” “Do that if thou wilt; there is no time too go back.” At the time of breaking the watch, the giant’s daughter said that she was feeling her father’s breath burning her back. “Look in the filly’s ear, king’s son, or else we are lost.” He did so, and it was a bladder of water that was in her

[3] The principal Gaelic vowels bear some resemblance to the cawing of a hoodie. They are all broad A.

ear this time. He threw it behind him and there was a fresh-water loch, twenty miles in length and breadth, behind them.

The giant came on, but with the speed he had on him, he was in the middle of the loch, and he went under, and he rose no more.

On the next day the young companions were come in sight of his father's house. "Now," said she, "my father is drowned, and he won't trouble us any more; but before we go further," says she, "go thou to thy father's house, and tell that thou hast the like of me but this is thy lot, let neither man nor creature kiss thee, for if thou dost thou wilt not remember that thou hast ever seen me." Every one he met was giving him welcome and luck, and he charged his father and mother not to kiss him; but as mishap was to be, an old greyhound was in and she knew him, and jumped up to his mouth, and after that he did not remember the giant's daughter.

She was sitting at the well's side as he left her, but the king's son was not coming. In the mouth of night she climbed up into a tree of oak that was beside the well, and she lay in the fork of the tree all that night. A shoemaker had a house near the well, and about mid-day on the morrow, the shoemaker asked his wife to go for a drink for him out of the well. When the shoemaker's wife reached the well, and when she saw the shadow of her that was in the tree, thinking of it that it was her own shadow--and she never thought till now that she was so handsome--she gave a cast to the dish that was in her hand, and it was broken on the ground, and she took herself to the house without vessel or water.

"Where is the water, wife?" said the shoemaker. "Thou shambling, contemptible old carle, without grace, I have stayed too long thy water and wood thrall."[4] "I am thinking, wife, that thou hast turned crazy. Go thou, daughter, quickly, and fetch a drink for thy father." His daughter went, and in the same way so it happened to her. She never thought till now that she was so loveable, and she took herself home. "Up with the drink," said her father. "Thou hume-spun[5] shoe carle, dost thou think that I am fit to be thy thrall." The poor shoemaker thought that they had taken a turn in their understandings, and he went himself to the well. He saw the shadow of the maiden in the well, and he looked up to the tree, and he sees the finest woman he ever saw. "Thy seat is wavering, but thy face is fair," said the shoemaker. "Come down, for there is need of thee for a short while at my house." The shoemaker understood that this was the shadow that had driven his people mad. The shoemaker took her to his house, and he said that he had but a poor bothy, but that she should get a share of all that was in it. At the end of a day or two came a leash of gentlemen lads to the shoemaker's house for shoes to be made them, for the king had come home, and he was going to marry. The glance the lads gave they saw the giant's daughter, and if they saw her, they never saw one so pretty as she. "'Tis thou hast the pretty daughter here," said the lads to the shoe-maker. "She is pretty, indeed," says the shoemaker, "but she is no daughter of mine." "St. Nail!" said one of them, "I would give a hundred pounds to marry her." The two others said the very same. The poor shoemaker said that he had nothing to do with her. "But," said they, "ask her to-night, and send us word to-morrow." When the gentles went away, she asked the shoemaker--"What's that they were saying about me?" The shoemaker told her. "Go thou after them," said she; "I will marry one of them, and let him bring his purse with him." The youth returned, and he gave the shoemaker a hundred pounds for tocher. They went to rest, and when she had laid down, she asked the lad for a drink of water from a tumbler that was on the board on the further side of the chamber. He went; but out of that he could not come, as he

[4] Tràill, a slave.
[5] Peillag, felt, coarse cloth.

held the vessel of water the length of the night. “Thou lad,” said she, “why wilt thou not lie down?” but out of that he could not drag till the bright morrow’s day was. The shoemaker came to the door of the chamber, and she asked him to take away that lubberly boy. This wooer went and betook himself to his home, but he did not tell the other two how it happened to him. Next came the second chap, and in the same way,--when she had gone to rest--”Look,” she said, “if the latch is on the door.” The latch laid hold of his hands, and out of that he could not come the length of the night, and out of that he did not come till the morrow’s day was bright. He went, under shame and disgrace. No matter, he did not tell the other chap how it had happened, and on the third night he came. As it happened to the two others, so it happened to him. One foot stuck to the floor; he could neither come nor go, but so he was the length of the night. On the morrow, he took his soles out (of that), and he was not seen looking behind him. “Now,” said the girl to the shoemaker, “thine is the sporran of gold; I have no need of it. It will better thee, and I am no worse for thy kindness to me.” The shoemaker had the shoes ready, and on that very day the king was to be married. The shoemaker was going to the castle with the shoes of the young people, and the girl said to the shoemaker, “I would like to get a sight of the king’s son before he marries.” “Come with me,” says the shoemaker, “I am well acquainted with the servants at the castle, and thou shalt get a sight of the king’s son and all the company.” And when the gentles saw the pretty woman that was here they took her to the wedding-room, and they filled for her a glass of wine. When she was going to drink what is in it, a flame went up out of the glass, and a golden pigeon and a silver pigeon sprung out of it, They were flying about when three grains of barley fell on the floor. The silver pigeon sprang, and he eats that. Said the golden pigeon to him, “If thou hadst mind when I cleared the byre, thou wouldst not eat that without giving me a share.” Again fell three other grains of barley, and the silver pigeon sprang, and he eats that, as before. “If thou hadst mind when I thatched the byre, thou wouldst not eat that without giving me my share,” says the golden pigeon. Three other grains fall, and the silver pigeon sprang, and he eats that. “If thou hadst mind when I harried the magpie’s nest, thou wouldst not eat that without giving me my share,” says the golden pigeon; “I lost my little finger bringing it down, and I want it still.” The king’s son minded, and he knew who it was he had got. He sprang where she was, and kissed her from hand to mouth. And when the priest came they married a second time. And there I left them.

This version of the Battle of the Birds was recited by John Mackenzie, April 1859, and written in Gaelic by Hector Urquhart. The reciter is a fisherman, and has resided for the last thirty-four years at Ceanmore, near Inverary, on the estate of the Duke of Argyll. He is a native of Lorn. He says he has known it from his youth, and he has been in the habit of repeating it to his friends on winter nights, as a pastime, “*He can read English and play the bagpipes, and has a memory like Oliver and Boyd’s Almanac*.” He got this and his other stories from his father and other old people in Lorn and elsewhere. He is about sixty years of age, and was employed, April 1859, in building dykes on the estate of Ardkinglas, where Hector Urquhart is gamekeeper. In reciting his stories he has all the manner of a practised narrator; people still frequent his house to hear his tales. I know the man, and I have heard him recite many. The Gaelic has some few north country words.

(Gaelic omitted.)

2. There is another version of this tale current in Islay. It was taken down from the recitation of Arm Darroch by Hector Maclean. It is called the “Widow’s Son.” He goes to seek his fortune, and comes to a giant’s house, where he engages himself as servant for a peck of gold and a peck of silver. He is sent first to cleanse the seven byres that have never been cleansed for seven years. All he puts out at one door comes in at the other. The giant’s daughter comes; he promises to marry her, and she says, “Gather, oh shovel, and put out, oh grape,”

and the tools work of themselves, and clear the byres. Next he has to thatch the byres with feathers, no quills to be upwards. He gets only one feather, and the giant's daughter takes three grains of barley, and throws them on the roof. The birds of the air gather, and thatch the byres in a minute. Next day he has to catch the steed that had never seen a blink of earth or air. The girl gives him a little rusty bridle, and the steed comes and puts her head into it. She makes six little cakes, which she places at the fire, the foot water, the door of the chamber, the side of the bed, and the kitchen door, and they mount the steed and ride off. The giant lies down and calls to his daughter. The cakes answer till there are none left to reply. Then he rises, takes his clothes, his boots, and his sword of light; he makes seven miles at each step he sees seven miles by the light of the sword--he follows; they hear him coming; the girl gives the widow's son a golden apple, and tells him to throw it at a mole on her father, where alone he is vulnerable; he fears that he will miss so small a mark, so she throws it herself, and the giant is dead in an instant.

They reach a big town. He is told to kiss nothing, or he will forget the girl and his promise. A big dog comes to meet him, and puts his paws on his shoulder and kisses him. He takes service with the king, and at last he is to be married to the king's daughter.

She takes service with a smith, disguised as a man, and "comes on famously." The smith's daughter falls in love with her, and wants to marry her. She tells, at last, that she is a girl in search of her own lover. On a day of days the smith and his daughter and his servant are invited to the wedding of the widow's son with the king's daughter. They go, and the giant's daughter sets a golden cock and a silver hen on the board before the bridegroom. She takes a grain of barley from her pocket and throws it before them. The cock pecks the hen and eats the barley; and the hen says, "Gog, Gog, if thou hadst mind when I cleansed the seven byres for thee, thou wouldst not do that to me." She does this three times, and the birds remind him of what has been done; then he knows her, leaps over the board, catches her by the arm, leaves the king's daughter, and marries her.

3. There is another version current at Inverary, repeated to me by a stable boy who was then employed at the ferry of St. Katharines, and who repeated it in Gaelic while rowing the boat to Inverary. It began thus:--I will tell you a story about the wren. There was once a farmer who was seeking a servant, and the wren met him, and he said, "What art thou seeking for?" "I am seeking a servant," said the farmer. "Wilt thou take me?" said the wren. "Thee, thou poor creature; what good wouldst thou do?" "Try thou me," said the wren. So he engaged him, and the first work he stet him to was threshing in the barn. The wren threshed (what did he thresh with?--a flail to be sure), and he knocked off one grain. A mouse came out and she eats that. "I'll praise thee, and don't do that again," said the wren. He struck again, and he knocked off two grains. Out came the mouse and she eats that. So they arranged a contest that they might know which was the strongest, and there was neither mouse nor rat on earth that did not gather, nor was there bird under heaven that did not come to the battle. The son of a gentleman heard of the fight, and he came also, but he slept before it was over, and when he awoke there was neither mouse nor rat to be seen; there was but one great black raven." The raven and the man agreed to travel together, and they come to an inn. The gentleman goes in, but the raven is sent to the stable, because the porters and waiters object to the like of a raven. Here he picks out all the horses' eyes, and in the morning there is a disturbance. The gentleman pays and scolds, and they go to another inn, where the raven is sent to the byre, and picks out all the cows' eyes. Then they part. The raven takes out a book, and gives it to his companion with a warning not to open it till he gets home to his father's house. He breaks the charge, looks, and finds himself in a giant's house. There he takes service, and is sent to clean the byre. It had seven doors, it had not been cleaned for seven years, and all that he put out at one door came in at the other. Then came the giant's red-haired daughter, and said, "If

thou wilt marry me I will help thee." He consents; and she sets all the grapes and forks about the place to work of themselves, and the byre is cleansed. Then the giant sets him to thatch the byre with feathers, and every feather he put on the wind blew away. Then came the giant's girl, and the promise was repeated; and she played a whistle that she had, and he laid his head in her lap, and every bird there was came, and they thatched the byre.

Then the giant sent him to the hill to fetch the gray horse that was seven years old; and she told him that he would meet two black dogs, and she gave him a cake of tallow and half a cheese, and a tether; and she said that the dogs and the horse would kill him unless he gave the dogs the food, and put the tether on the horse. When the dogs ran at him, he put the tallow in the mouth of one, and the cheese in the throat of the other; and when the horse came down the hill to kill him with his mouth open, he put the tether in his mouth and he followed him quietly home. "Now," said she, "we will be off." So they mounted and rode away, but first she took four apples, three she placed about the house, which spoke as in the other tales, the fourth she took with her. When the last of the apples had spoken, the giant rose and followed. Then the girl felt her father's breath on her back, and said, "Search in the horse's ear." And he found a twig. "Throw it behind you," said she; and he threw it, and it became the biggest wood that ever was. The giant came, and returned for his "big axe and his little axe," and he hewed his way through; and the red-haired girl said that she felt her father's breath. "Now," said she to the king's son (here the narrator remembered that he was a prince instead of a young farmer), "see in the filly's ear" (here he remembered that it was a filly). So he looked, and found a bit of stone, threw it, and it became a mountain. The giant came, looked for his big hammer and his little hammer, and smashed his way through the hill, and she felt his breath again. Then he sought in the ear, and found a (something) of water, and threw it, and it became a loch of fresh water. The giant came, and returned for his big scoop and his little scoop, and baled the water out, and he was after them again. Then she said, "My father is coming now, and he will kill us. Get off the filly, king's son," and he got off, and she gave him the apple, and she said, "Now put it under the filly's foot." And he did so; and the filly put her foot on it, and it smashed to bits; and the giant fell over dead, for his heart was in the apple. So they went on to his father's house, and she was made house-keeper, for they were not married; then in a short time she became house-maid, then kitchen-maid, and then hen-wife; and then the king was to be married (he had now become a king); and then first the porter, then the head waiter, and then some other servant, came and courted her. They promise to let her in to the wedding, and give her a fine dress each; and each in turn is admitted into the hen-wife's room; but the first goes to put the lid on the kettle, and is fast by the hands all night; the second is, in like manner, fast to a window which he goes to shut; and the feet of the third stick to the floor. Then she comes to the porter in her dirty dress. He drives her away, but he is at last obliged to give her a fine dress, and let her in. Then she comes to the head waiter, who does the same. Then she comes to the servant, who does the same, but is forced to let her in to the wedding. Then she takes out a golden cock and a silver hen, which she had brought. She sets them on the floor, and they talk. "Dost thou remember how I cleansed byre? Dost thou mind how I thatched the barn? Dost thou remember how I saved thy life?" And so on, till they repeat the whole story, reminding the king how she had been the house-keeper, housemaid, and hen-wife, and faithful throughout. And the king said, "Stop, I will marry thee." And when she said that, she showed the fine dresses that she had got from the porter, and the head waiter, etc., and they were married; and if they have not died since then, they are alive, merry, and rich.

4. The stable boy said that he had learned this from a very old man, now living near Lochgilphead, who could tell it much better than he could. A gentleman at the inn said that an old woman, now dead, used to tell something like this, and that her raven was the son of the

king of Lochlin. The old woman lived near Dalmally, and her daughter is said to be there still, but I have been unable to find her out. On asking for her, and giving my reason, I was told by a waiter that “light had dawned in that district, and that ignorance was banished.”

5. A very similar story is well known in South Uist, and a fragment of it is still told in Sutherland.

6. The Uist story told to me by Donald MacCraw, as we walked along the road last September, is called “Mother’s Blessing.” The lad, so called because he is so good, goes to seek his fortune. He plays cards, and wins from some gentles; then stakes seven years’ service against so many thousands, and loses to a black dog who comes in with a looking-glass on every paw. He goes to serve the dog, and is shown a cave where there are a hundred stakes and ninety-nine heads on them. He is set to cleanse the byre, to catch the steed, and to rob the nest. The black dog’s daughter helps. She throws out one spadeful, and the litter flies out, “seven spadefuls at each of seven doors for every one he throws out.” She gives a rusty bridle for the steed. She strikes the sea with a rod, and makes a way to the island where the nest is, and gives her toes to make a ladder to climb up. He leaves one, and offers one of his own instead. She refuses, because “her father always washes her feet himself.” They ride off on the horse--the dog and his company follow. A wood grows and a river flows from things found in the horse’s ear, and the dog is defeated but not killed. She gives the lad a treasure which is found under a tuft of rushes. He goes home, speaks to his mother, and forgets all. He builds a palace, and is to be married to a lady, but she is so proud that she will have the widow’s hut pulled down. Mother’s Blessing will not, so the match is off, but after a time it is on again. The door opens, and in walks the black dog smoking a pipe. He goes to the priest and forbids the ceremony. The priest says, “Begone to thine own place down below.” “It’s many along day since *thou* art wanted there,” says the dog. The priest defies all fiends, and *will* marry the pair. The dog says, “If I tell all I know thou wilt not.” Then he whispers, and the priest is silenced. Then he brings in a fine gentleman, and says to the bride--”There is thy first lover; marry him.” And they are married then and there. The dog brings in his own daughter; Mother’s Blessing marries her, and the dog danced at the wedding with the priest. MacCraw said there was something left out which his informant would not tell.

7. I have received yet another version of this tale, very well written in Gaelic, from JOHN DEWAR, who, according to his own account of himself, is now (October 1859) residing in Glendaruail, and is about to proceed to Roseneath, where he used to get employment in making stobbs for the fences. He heads his story--”Tales of the Gael in the Winter Nights,” and promises to send more. UIRSGEALN NAN GAEL S’ NA OIDHCHENAN GEAMHRAIDH.--His Gaelic spelling is rather phonetic--

He heard it from his mother, told nearly as the stable-boy gave it; and has heard it lately in Glendaruail. He first heard an abridgement four or five years before 1812 or 1813, when he learned this from Mary MacCalum, a native of Glen Falloch, at the head of Loch Lomond.

It begins with a quarrel between a mouse and a wren in a barn about a grain of oats, which the mouse *will* eat. The wren brings his twelve birds--the mouse her tribe. The wren says, “Thou hast thy tribe with thee”--”As well as myself,” says the mouse. The mouse sticks out her leg proudly, and the wren breaks it with his flail. The creatures of the plain and of the air all joined the quarrel, and there was a pitched battle on a set day. They fought the battle in a field above a king’s house; and the fight was so fierce, that there were left but a raven and a snake. The king’s son looked out of a window, and saw the snake twined round the raven’s neck, and the raven holding the snake’s throat in his beak--GOB--and neither dared to let go. Both promised friendship for help, and the king’s son slew--the serpent--NATHAIR.

The raven lived for a year and a day in the palace, then took the king's son hunting for the first time, and when he was tired, carried him. "And he put his hands about the raven before his wings, and he hopped with him over nine Bens, and nine Glens, and nine Moors." They go to the three sisters, and the king's son gets hospitality, because he comes from the land where the birds set the battle, and brings news of the raven, who is yet alive, and lived with him for a year and a day. Each day the number of glens, and hills, and moors passed over, falls from nine to six and three. The same thing is said by each of the three sisters: "That is a year and a day for thee in this place, and a piece in thy purse on the day when thou goest;" but he keeps tryst, and returns to the raven. On the third day came a mist, and the raven was not to be found; but when the king's son was nearly beat, he looked over a rock, and saw FEAR LEADANACH BUIDHE BOIDHEACH AGUS CIR OIR ANSA N' DARNA LAIMH, AGUS CIR AIRGID SAN LAIMH EILE, a beautiful yellow ringletted man, with a golden comb in the one hand, and a silver comb in the other, who asked if he would take him instead of the raven. He would not, "nor half-a-dozen such." So the yellow ringletted man told him that he was the FITHEACH CROM DUBH--the black humpy raven that was laid under spells by a bad DRUIDH that knew how to put under spells. He had been set free by coming to his father's house with the king's son. Then he gave him a book, and told him to go with the wind the way it might blow, and to look in the book when he wished to see his father's house, but always from a hill top.

The king's son soon got tired, and looked in the book at the bottom of a glen, and saw his father's house at the bottom of a peat hag, with all the doors and windows shut, and no way to get to it.

Then came a giant, who shewed him the way for the promise of his first son. He shewed him his father's house on the top of a hill, with each door and window open, and got the promise. "And it was the giant who had cast DRUIDHEACHD upon him, that he might see his father's house in the bottom of a peat hag."

"Long after that the old king died, and the son got the kingly chair. He married; he had a son; and he was coming on to be a brave lad, and they were dwelling happily in the castle. The giant came to them, and he asked that the king's son should be sent out to him there, and they were not very willing to do that; but the giant said, unless they sent him out, that the highest stone of the castle would be the lowest presently; and they thought of arraying the cook's son bravely, and sending him out; and they did that. The giant went away with him, and he had a rod in his hand, and when they were a little bit from the house, the giant asked the cook's son--'What would thy father do with this little rod if he had it?' 'I don't know myself,' said the cook's son, 'unless he would beat the dogs away from the meat.' With that the giant understood that he had not got the right one, and he turned back with him, and he asked that the king's son should be sent to him. Then they put brave clothes on the son of the STIUARD, and they sent him out to the giant, but the giant was not long till he did to him as he had done to the cook's son, and he returned with him full of heavy wrath. He said to them, unless they sent out to him there the king's son, that the highest stone in the castle would be the lowest presently, and that he would kill all who were within; and then they were obliged to send out the king's son himself, though it was very grievous; and the giant went away with him. When they were gone a little bit from the castle, the giant showed him the rod that was in his hand and he said--'What would thy father do with this rod if he were to have it?' And the king's son said--'My father has a braver rod than that.' And the giant asked him--'Where will thy father be when he has that brave (briagh) rod?' And the king's son said--'He will be sitting in his kingly chair;' and the giant understood that be had the right one. [*This passage is translated entire, because, as I am told, there is a similar passage in the Volsung tale*.] The giant took him home, and set him to clean the byre that had not been cleansed for seven

years; and in case of failure, threatened ‘S E T’ FHUIL URAR ALUIN GHRINN A BHITHIS AGUM A CHASGA M’ IOTADH AGUS T’ FHEOIL UR GHRINN MAR MHILLISTAIN FHIACAL. It is thy fresh goodly beautiful blood I will have quenching my thirst, and thy fresh, beautiful flesh as sweetening of teeth;” and he went to bed.

The king’s son failed of course; all that went out at one door came in at another. Then came MARI RUADH, Auburn Mary, the giant’s daughter, and made him promise to marry her, and he gave his band and his promise. She made him set all the CAIBE and shovels in order, waved her hand, and they worked alone, and cleaned the byre. “She took an apple from her pocket--a golden apple--and it would run from end to end, and would raise no stain in any place, it was so clean.”

The daughter “had been in sewing all day,” when her father came home from hunting, and asked his housewife. Next came the thatching of the barn with “the feathers of all the birds the giant had ever killed, to be laid as close as ever they lay on the back of a heather hen or a black cock.” The wind blew them a new promise, “CHATHUDH,” she shook them as chaff (is shaken on hill tops now), with the wind, and the wind blew them straight to their own place. The giant came home from his hunting as usual, and asked--”Housewife, was Auburn Mary out at all to-day?” “No, she was within sewing.” He went out, and brought in SRIAN BHRIAGH SHOILEIR DEARRSACH, a brave, clear, shiny bridle, and ordered the king’s son to catch the FALAIRE, filly, on yonder hill, and tie her in the stable, or else, &c.

The fine bridle would not do. Then the daughter brought from the stable, SEAN SRIAN DUBH MEIRGACH, an old, black, rusty bridle that was behind one of the turf seats, and shook it, and the filly came and put her nose *into it*.

The giant had the usual talk, but gave no more orders, and his daughter told the king’s son that he would kill him that night, but that she would save him if he would promise to marry her.

“She put a wooden bench in the bed of the king’s son; two wooden benches in her own bed. She spat at the front of her own bed, and spat at the side of the giant’s bed, and spat at the passage door, and she set two apples above the giant’s bed, ready to fall on him when he should wake and set him asleep again.” And they mounted and rode away, and set the filly “running with might.”

The giant awoke, and shouted--”Rise, daughter, and bring me a drink of the blood of the king’s son.” “I will arise,” said the spittle, in front of his bed; and one of the apples fell and struck him between the two shoulders, and he slept. The second time it was--”Rise, wife;” and the same thing happened. The third time he shouted--”Art thou rising to give me a drink of the blood of the king’s son, Oh wife?” “Coming with it,” said the spittle, “behind the door of the cabh.”

Then he lay a while, and got up with an axe, and struck it into the bench in the bed of the king’s sob. [So did a giant to Jack the giant-killer, and so did Skrymir to Thorr in Gylfi’s mocking. Edda (translated by G. W. Dasent, page 54)]. And when he saw what he had, he ran to his daughter’s bed, and struck his axe into the two things which be found there. Then he ran into the stable, and then he ran after the fugitives. At the mouth of day, the daughter said--”I feel my father’s breath burning me between the two shoulders;” and the king’s son took a drop of water from the filly’s right ear, and threw it over his shoulder, and it became a lake which the giant could not cross. Then he said--This is a part of my own daughter’s tricks; and he called Out, FIRE FAIRE, A MHARI RUADH, AGUS NA THUG MISE DHUITSA DO DH’ FHOLUM AGUS DO IONNSACHADH, N’ E SO MAR A RINN THU ORM MA DHEIREADH. “Feere Faire, Auburn Mary, and all the learning and teaching I have given

thee, is it thus thou hast clone to me at last?" And, said she, CHAN EILE AGUD AIR ACH A BHI NAS GLIC A RITHISD. "Thou hast for it but to be wiser again." Then he said, if I had MO BHATA DUBH DIONACH FHEIN NACH FACA GAOTH NA GRIAN O CHEAN SEACHD BLIADHNA. My own tight black boat that saw neither wind nor rain since seven years' end. And his daughter said--"Thou has for it but to go and fetch her then."

Next time it was a little stone that was found in the left ear which became a great crag, and was broken through with the big hammer and the little hammer, ORD MOR AGUS ORD BEAG, which broke and pounded a breach through the rock in an instant by themselves. The third time it was the seed of a tree which became a wood, and was cut through by the axes TUATHAN of the giant, which he set to work, and his wife brought up the black dogs.

The fourth time it was a very little tiny drop of water that was found in the left ear, which became a narrow loch, but so deep that the giant could not cross it. He had the usual talk with his daughter, and got the same reply; tried to drink the water, but failed, for a curious reason, then he thought he would leap it, but his foot slipped and he was drowned.

Then came the incident of the kiss and the old greyhound.

She went to the house of a seamstress, and engaged herself, and was a good workwoman. When the king's son was to be married to another, the cook sent one of his underlings to the well for water. She stood on a branch of the tree above the FUARAN cold spring, and when the maid saw her shadow in the well she thought she had grown golden herself, for there was "golden weaving" on the dress of Auburn Mary. And she went back to the cook and said: "Thou art the lad to send me to fetch thee water, and I am a lump of gold." He sent another, with the same result, so he went himself and saw Mary go to the house of the seamstress. The cook told, and they asked about the stranger, but no one knew anything about her, till the hen wife went to the seamstress and found out "that she had come from a shore afar off; that she never saw her like for sewing nor for shape, and if they had her at the wedding, she would make FEARTAN miracles that would astonish them."

The hen wife told the queen, and she was engaged to help to make the dresses. They were pleased with her, and asked her to the wedding, and when there they asked her to show some of her wonderful tricks.

"Then she got a pock, and showed that it was empty; and she gave it a shake, and it grew thick, and she put in her hand and took out a silver hen, and she set it on the ground, and it rose and walked about the house. Then came the golden cock, and the grain of corn, and the pecking, and the hen said--

"Leig ma choir leam,
Ma chuid do n' eorna."

Leave me my right, my share of the corn; and the cock pecked her; and she stood out from him, and said—

Geog Geog Geōa.

An cuimhne leat an latha
chuir mi m' bathach falamh
air do shon?
'S an cuimhne leat an latha
a thubh mi n' Sabhal
air do shon?
'S an cuimhne leat an latha
ghlac mi n'fhailair

air do shon?
‘S an cuimhne leat an latha
bhàth mi m’athair
air do shon?

Geog Geog Geōa.

Dost thou remember the day
that I emptied the byre
for thee?
Dost thou remember the day
that I thatched the barn
for thee?
Dost thou remember the day
that I caught the filly
for thee?
Dost thou remember the day
that I drowned my father
for thee?

Then the king’s son thought a little and he remembered Auburn Mary, and all she had done for him, and he asked a voice with her apart, and they had a little talk, and she told the king and the queen, and he found the “gin” kin good, and he turned his back on the other one, and he married Auburn Mary, and they made a wedding that lasted seven years; and the last day was no worse than the first day--

S’ma bha na b’fhearr ann, bha,
S’mar robh leig da

And if there were better there were,
And if not, let them be.

The tale is ended.
Tha crioch air ‘n sgeul.

This version is probably the oldest. It is the most picturesque; it contains nearly all that is in the others, and it is full of the quaint expressions which characterize the telling of Gaelic tales. The quarrel is remarkably like a fable aimed at the greedy *castle* mouse and the sturdy *country* wren, a fable from the country side, for the birds beat the beasts of the plain, the raven beat the snake.

8. I have still another version, told by Roderick Mackenzie, sawyer, Gairloch, and written by Hector Urquhart. It is called, NIGHEAN DUBH GHEAL DEARG, The Daughter of Black-white Red.

Three sons of the king of Erin were on a day playing shinny on a strand, and they saw birds whose like they had never seen, and one especially. Their father told them that this was MAC SAMHLADH NIGHINN DUBH GHEAL DEARG, and the eldest son said that he would never rest till he got the great beautiful bird for himself. Then his father sent him to the king of France (NA FRAINGE), and he struck palm on latch, and it was asked who it was, and he said that he was the son of Erin’s king, going to seek the daughter of Black-white Red. He was entertained, and next day set off to the king of Spain (NA SPAINDE), and did the same; and thence he went to the king of Italy (NA H’EADILT). He gave him an old man, BODACH, and a green boat, and they sailed (and here comes in a bit of the passage which is common to so many stories about hoisting the sails, etc., with one or two lines that I have

found nowhere else, and here the three kings seem to replace the three old women, who are always appearing, for they know where the lad is going, and help him on). The old man sailed the boat on shore, and up to the door of Black-white Red, a giant, who as usual said FIU FA FOAGRAICH, and threatened to make a shinny ball of his head, and eat him unless he performed the tasks set him. The giant's eldest daughter came, and he knew her at once, and they played at cards all night. She gave him a tether to catch the little dun shaggy filly, which he would lose unless he put it on the first time.

Next he had to kill, TARBH MOR NA TANICH, the great bull of the cattle, (or perhaps of the earth, TAN). The daughter gave him her father's BOGHA SAIGHEAD, arrow bow, with which he pushed at the bull, and he followed him. He put the big black arrow in his forehead when be got to the house.

The third task was to cleanse the great byre of the seven stalls that had not been cleansed for seven years, or his head to be a football. The daughter came at night as usual and gave him BARA agus CROMAN, a barrow and a crook, and told him to say CAB CAB A CHROMAIN, CUIR AIR A BHARA A SHLUASAID, CUIR A MACH A BHARA, and the tools worked of themselves.

Then he had three more tasks set. The three daughters put three needles through three holes in a partition, he caught the one without "CHRO." (?) They put out three great pins, and he caught the one that had two "PHLOC" heads. Then they pushed out their little fingers, and he took the one with, CAB AS AN IONGA, a notch in the nail.

"Hugh! huh!" said the giant, "thou hast her now, but to Erin thou goest not; thou must stay with me." At last they got out the barge (BIRLINN). The giant awoke and asked, what was that sound? One of the daughters answered, that it was a OIDHCHE UAMHASACH LE TEIN-ADHAIR 'S TAIRNEANACH, a fearful night with heaven-fire and thunder. "It is well to be under the shelter of a rock," said the giant. The next scrape of the boat it was the same thing, and at the third the barge was out and under sail, but the giant was on foot, and he threw A CHEARTLEADH DRUBH, his black clue, and the boat sailed stern foremost. The giant sat down in the gravel to haul the boat, and the daughter shot an arrow, ANN AM BONN DUBH AN FHAMBAIR, into the giant's black sole, and there he lay.

Then they got to Erin. He went home first; she staid in the barge, till tired of waiting, she went to a smith's house where she staid with the smith and his mother.

One day the smith heard that the RIDIR was going to be married, and told her. She sent him to the palace to tell the cook that the finest woman he ever saw was living with him, and would marry him if he would bring her part of the wedding feast.

The cook came, and when he saw her, brought a back load of viands. Then they played the same trick to the butler, and he brought a back load of wine every day. Then she asked the smith to make her a golden cock, and a silver hen; and when he could not, she made them herself. Then she asked the butler if she could get a sight of the king's son and the bride, "and the butler was very much pleased that she had asked him, and not the cook, for he was much afraid that the cook was looking after her also." When the gentles saw her they asked her to the dancing room, and then came the cock and hen play, in which the hen said--A CHOILICH DHURDANICH DHUIBH, Thou black, murmuring cock, dost thou remember, etc. The prince remembers, marries the true girl," and there I left them."

This version varies considerably from the others. It is very well told, and I much regret that space will not allow me to give it entire, the more so because the reciter has braved the prejudices of some of his neighbours who object to all fiction. I hope I have said enough to show that this story is worth preservation.

If stories be mythological this contains a serpent. NATHAIR, pronounced *Na-ir*, and a raven, FITHEACH, pronounced *Feeach*, who seem like transformed divinities, for they appear only to start the other characters, and then vanish into some undescribed kingdom. There is one passage (referred to) which resembles Norse mythology.

So far as I can make out, it seems to be best known near Cowal in Argyllshire, though it is known throughout the Highlands.

It would have been easy to construct one version from the eight here mentioned, but I have preferred to give the most complete, entire, and full abstracts of the rest. Many more versions can be got, and I shall be grateful to anyone who will throw light on the story and its origin.

One. of the tasks resembles one of those imposed on Hercules. It might have been taken from classical mythology if it stood alone, but Norwegian peasants and West Highlanders could not so twist the story of Hercules into the same shape.

All the Gaelic versions are clearly versions of the same story as the Master Maid, in Dasent's Norse Tales; and there are other traits in other Norse stories, which resemble the Gaelic.

Of the forty-three heroes called Hercules, and mentioned in ancient lore, one, at least, is said to have made long voyages in the Atlantic beyond his own pillars. Another, or the same, was prevented from being present at the hunting of the Caledonian boar, having killed a man in "Calydo," which, by the way, is Gaelic for Black Forest. Another was an Indian, and this may be one of the same clan.

If stories be distorted history of real events, seen through a haze of centuries, then the giants in this tale may be the same people as the Gruagach and his brother in the last. They are here described as a wise learned race, given to magic arts, yellow or auburn haired. (RUADH) possessing horses, and knowing how to tame them--able to put the water between them and their pursuers-able to sew better than the others--better looking--musical--possessing treasure and bright weapons--using king's sons of other races as slaves, and threatening to eat them. If the raven was one, they were given to combing their own golden ringlets with gold and silver combs and the giant maidens dressed the hair of their lovers who laid their heads in their laps, as I have often seen black haired Lapland ladies dress the hair of Lapland swains, and as ladies in popular tales of all lands always do. I will not venture to guess who this race may have been, but the race who contended with them would seem to have been dark complexioned. Nearly all the heroines of Gaelic songs are fair or yellow haired. Those are dark who now most admire yellow locks. A dark Southern once asked if a golden haired youth from the north had dyed his hair, for nothing natural could be so beautiful. Dark Celts and fair northmen certainly met and fought, and settled and intermarried, on the western isles and coasts, where this tale is current, but I am told that it has traits which are to be found in Eastern manuscripts, which were old long before the wars of the Northmen, of which we know, began. The task I have undertaken is to gather stories, not to account for them, but this much is sure, either Norway got this from Scotland or Scotland from Norway, when they were almost one country, or both got it from the same source. The Gaelic stories resemble each other about as much as they all resemble the Norse. The translation was published in 1859, and this story has been current in the islands at least for 40 years. I can remember to have heard part of it myself more than 20 years ago. I believe there is an Irish version, though I have not met with it in any book. I have traced the story amongst Irish labourers in London, who have told me that they used in their young days to sit about the fire whole winter nights, and tell about the fight between the raven and the snake; about the giants, Fin MacCoul and Conan Maol, "who had never a good word for any one," and similar tales. My informants

were from Cork, their language, though difficult, could be made out from a knowledge of Gaelic only.

The bridle described seems to be the old Highland bridle which is still common. It has no bit, but two plates of wood or iron are placed at right angles to the horse's mouth, and are joined above and below by a rope, which is often made of horsehair, leather, or twisted bent. The horse's nose goes INTO IT.

The ladder is also the Highland ladder still common in cottages. It consists of a long-stick with pegs stuck *through* it.

There are many stories in Grimm's German collection which resemble the Battle of the Birds. They have incidents in common, arranged somewhat in the same order; but the German stories, taken together, have a character of their own, as the Gaelic versions have: and both differ from the Norwegian tale. Each new Gaelic version which comes to me (and I have received several since this was written), varies from the rest, but resembles them; and no single version is like any one of the German tales, though German, Norse, and Gaelic all hang together.

III. The Tale Of The Hoodie

From Ann MacGilvray, Islay.--April 1859.

THERE was ere now a farmer, and he had three daughters. They were waulking[6] clothes at a river. A hoodie[7] came round and he said to the eldest one, 'M-POS-U-MI, "Wilt thou wed me, farmer's daughter?" "I won't wed thee, thou ugly brute. An ugly brute is the hoodie," said she. He came to the second one on the morrow, and he said to her, "M-POS-U-MI, wilt thou wed me?" "Not I, indeed," said she; "an ugly brute is the hoodie." The third day he said to the youngest, M-POS-U-MI, "Wilt thou wed me, farmer's daughter?," "I will wed thee," said she; "a pretty creature is the hoodie," and on the morrow they married.

The hoodie said to her, "Whether wouldst thou rather that I should be a hoodie by day, and a man at night; or be a hoodie at night, and a man by day?" "I would rather that thou wert a man by day, and a hoodie at night," says she. After this he was a splendid fellow by day, and a hoodie at night. A few days after they married he took her with him to his own house.

At the end of three quarters they had a son. In the night there came the very finest music that ever was heard about the house. Every man slept, and the child was taken away. Her father came to the door in the morning, and he asked how were all there. He was very sorrowful that the child should be taken away, for fear that he should be blamed for it himself.

At the end of three quarters again they had another son. A watch was set on the house. The finest of music came, as it came before, about the house; every man slept, and the child was taken away. Her father came to the door in the morning. He asked if every thing was safe; but the child was taken away, and he did not know what to do for sorrow.

Again, at the end of three quarters they had another son. A watch was set on the house as usual. Music came about the house as it came before; every one slept, and the child was taken away. When they rose on the morrow they went to another place of rest that they had, himself and his wife, and his sister-in-law. He said to them by the way, "See that you have not forgotten any thing." The wife said, "I FORGOT MY COARSE COMB." The coach in which they were fell a withered faggot, and he went away as a hoodie.

Her two sisters returned home, and she followed after him. When he would be on a hill top, she would follow to try and catch him; and when she would reach the top of a hill, he would be in the hollow on the other side. When night came, and she was tired, she had no place of rest or dwelling; she saw a little house of light far from her, and though far from her she was not long in reaching it.

When she reached the house she stood deserted at the door. She saw a little laddie about the house, and she yearned to him exceedingly. The housewife told her to come up, that she knew her cheer and travel. She laid down, and no sooner did the day come than she rose. She went out, and when she was out, she was going from hill to hill to try if she could see a hoodie. She saw a hoodie on a hill, and when she would get on the hill the hoodie would be in the hollow, when she would go to the hollow, the hoodie would be on another hill. When the night came she had no place of rest or dwelling. She saw a little house of light far from her,

[6] *Postadh*. A method of washing clothes practised in the Highlands--viz., by dancing on them barefoot in a tub of water.

[7] Hoodie--the Royston crow--a very common bird in the Highlands; a sly, familiar, knowing bird, which plays a great part in these stories. He is common in most parts of Europe.

and if far from her she, was not long reaching it. She went to the door. She saw a laddie on the floor to whom she yearned right much. The, housewife laid her to rest. No earlier came the day than she took out as she used. She passed this day as the other days. When the night came she reached a house. The housewife told her to come up, that she knew her cheer and travel, that her man had but left the house a little while, that she should be clever, that this was the last night she would see him, and not to sleep, but to strive to seize him. She slept, he came where she was, and he let fall a ring on her right hand. Now when she awoke she tried to catch hold of him, and she caught a feather of his wing. He left the feather with her, and he went away. When she rose in the morning she did not know what she should do. The housewife said that he had gone over a hill of poison over which she could not go without horseshoes on her hands and feet. She gave her man's clothes, and she told her to go to learn smithying till she should be able to make horse shoes for herself.

She learned smithying so well that she made horseshoes for her hands and feet. She went over the hill of poison. That same day after she had gone over the hill of poison, her man was to be married to the daughter of a great gentleman that was in the town.

There was a race in the town that day, and every one was to be at the race but the stranger that had come over to poison hill. The cook came to her, and he said to her, Would she go in his place to make the wedding meal, and that he might get to the race.

She said she would go. She was always watching where the bridegroom would be sitting.

She let fall the ring and the feather in the broth that was before him. With the first spoon he took up the ring, with the next he took up the feather. When the minister came to the fore to make the marriage, he would not marry till he should find out who had made ready the meal. They brought up the cook of the gentleman, and he said that *this* was not the cook who made ready the meal.

They brought up now the one who had made ready the meal. He said, "That now was his married wife." The spells went off him. They turned back over the hill of poison, she throwing the horse shoes behind her to him, as she went a little bit forward, and he following her. When they came, back over the hill, they went to the three houses in which she had been. These were the houses of his sisters, and they took with them the three sons, and they came home to their own house, and they were happy.

Written down by Hector Maclean, schoolmaster at Ballygrant, in Islay, from the recitation of "Ann MacGilvray, a Cowal woman, married to a farmer at Kilmeny, one Angus Macgeachy from Campbelltown." Sent April 14, 1859.

The Gaelic of this tale is the plain everyday Gaelic of Islay and the West Highlands. Several words are variously spelt, but they are variously pronounced--falbh, folbh, tigh, taighe, taighean.

There is one word, Tapaidh, which has no English equivalent; it is like *Tapper* in Swedish.

(Gaelic omitted)

HECTOR MACLEAN.

2. I have a great many versions of this tale in Gaelic; for example, one from Cowal, written from memory by a labourer, John Dewar. These are generally wilder and longer than the version here given.

This has some resemblance to an infinity of other stories. For example--Orpheus, Cupid and Psyche, Cinderella's Coach, The Lassie and her Godmother (Norse tales), East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon (ditto), The Master Maid (ditto), Katie Wooden Cloak (ditto), The Iron

Stove (Grimm), The Woodcutter's Child (ditto), and a tale by the Countess d'Aulnoy, Prince Cherie.

If this be history, it is the story of a wife taken from an inferior but civilized race. The farmer's daughter married to the Flayer "FEANNAG," deserted by her husband for another in some distant, mythical land, beyond far away mountains, and bringing him back by steady, fearless, persevering fidelity and industry.

If it be mythology, the hoodie may be the raven again, and a transformed divinity. If it relates to races, the superior race again had horses--for there was to be a race in the town, and every one was to be at it, but the stranger who came over the hill; and when they travelled it was in a coach, which was sufficiently wonderful to be magical, and here again the comb is mixed up with the spells.

There is a stone at Dunrobin Castle, in Sutherland, on which a comb is carved with other curious devices, which have never been explained. Within a few hundred yards in an old grave composed of great slabs of stone, accidentally discovered on a bank of gravel, a man's skeleton was found with teeth worn down, though perfectly sound, exactly like those of an old horse. It is supposed that the man must have ground his teeth on dried peas and beans--perhaps on meal, prepared in sandstone querns. Here, at least, is the COMB near to the grave of the farmer. The comb which is so often found with querns in the old dwellings of some pre-historic race of Britons; the comb which is a civilized instrument, and which in these stories is always a coveted object worth great exertions, and often magical.

IV. The Sea-Maiden

From John Mackenzie, fisherman, near Inverary.

THERE was ere now a poor old fisher, but on this year he was not getting much fish. On a day of days, and he fishing, there rose a sea-maiden at the side of his boat, and she asked him if he was getting fish. The old man answered, and he said that he was not. “What reward wouldst thou give me for sending plenty of fish to thee?” “Ach!” said the old man, “I have not much to spare.” “Wilt thou give me the first son thou hast?” said she. “It is I that would give thee that, if I were to have a son; there was not, and there will not be a son of mine,” said he, “I and my wife are grown so old.” “Name all thou hast.” “I have but an old mare of a horse, an old dog, myself and my wife. There’s for thee all the creatures of the great world that are mine.” “Here, then, are three grains for thee that thou shalt give thy wife this very night, and three others to the dog, and these three to the mare, and these three likewise thou shalt plant behind thy house, and in their own time thy wife will have three sons, the mare three foals, and the dog three puppies, and there will grow three trees behind thy house, and the trees will be a sign, when one of the sons dies, one of the trees will wither. Now, take thyself home, and remember me when thy son is three years of age, and thou thyself wilt get plenty of fish after this.” Everything happened as the sea-maiden said, and he himself was getting plenty of fish; but when the end of the three years was nearing, the old man was growing sorrowful, heavy hearted, while he failed each day as it came. On the namesake of the day, he went to fish as he used, but he did not take his son with him.

The sea-maiden rose at the side of the boat, and asked, “Didst thou bring thy son with thee hither to me?” “Och! I did not bring him. I forgot that this was the day.” “Yes! yes! then,” said the sea-maiden; “thou shalt get four other years of him, to try if it be easier for thee to part from him. Here thou hast his like age,” and she lifted up a big bouncing baby. “Is thy son as fine as this one?” He went home full of glee and delight, for that he had got four other years of his son, and he kept on fishing and getting plenty of fish, but at the end of the next four years sorrow and woe struck him, and he took not a meal, and he did not a turn, and his wife could not think what was ailing him. This time he did not know what to do, but he set it before him, that he would not take his son with him this time either. He went to fish as at the former times, and the sea-maiden rose at the side of the boat, and she asked him, “Didst thou bring thy son hither to me?” “Och! I forgot him this time too,” said the old man. “Go home then,” said the sea-maiden, “and at the end of seven years after this, thou art sure to remember me, but then it will not be the easier for thee to part with him, but thou shalt get fish as thou used to do.”

The old man went home full of joy; he had got seven other years of his son, and before seven years passed, the old man thought that he himself would be dead, and that he would see the sea-maiden no more. But no matter, the end of those seven years was nearing also, and if it was, the old man was not without care and trouble. He had rest neither day nor night. The eldest son asked his father one day if any one were troubling him? The old man said that some one was, but that belonged neither to him nor to any one else. The lad said he *must* know what it was. His father told him at last how the matter was between him and the sea-maiden. “Let not that put you in any trouble,” said the son; “I will not oppose you.” “Thou shalt not; thou shalt not go, my son, though I should not get fish for ever.” “If you will not let me go with you, go to the smithy, and let the smith make me a great strong sword, and I will go to the end of fortune.” His father went to the smithy, and the smith made a doughty sword for him. His father came home with the sword. The lad grasped it and gave it a shake

or two, and it went in a hundred splinters. He asked his father to go to the smithy and get him another sword in which there should be twice as much weight; and so did his father, and so likewise it happened to the next sword--it broke in two halves. Back went the old man to the smithy; and the smith made a great sword, its like he never made before. “There’s thy sword for thee,” said the smith, “and the fist must be good that plays this blade.” The old man gave the sword to his son, he gave it a shake or two. “This will do,” said he; “it’s high time now to travel on my way.” On the next morning he put a saddle on the black horse that the mare had, and he put the world under his head,[8] and his black dog was by his side. When he went on a bit, he fell in with the carcass of a sheep beside the road. At the carrion were a great dog, a falcon and an otter. He came down off the horse, and he divided the carcass amongst the three. Three third shares to the dog, two third shares to the otter, and a third share to the falcon. “For this,” said the dog, “if swiftness of foot or sharpness of tooth will give thee aid, mind me, and I will be at thy side.” Said the otter, “If the swimming of foot on the ground of a pool will loose thee, mind me, and I will be at thy side.” Said the falcon, “if hardship comes on thee, where swiftness of wing or crook of a claw will do good, mind me, and I will be at thy side.” On this he went onward till he reached a king’s house, and he took service to be a herd, and his wages were to be according to the milk of the cattle. He went away with the cattle, and the grazing was but bare. When lateness came (in the evening), and when he took (them) home they had not much milk, the place was so bare, and his meat and drink was but spare this night.

On the next day he went on further with them; and at last he came to a place exceedingly grassy, in a green glen, of which he never saw the like.

But about the time when he should go behind the cattle, for taking homewards, who is seen coming but a great giant with his sword in his hand. “HIU! HAU!! HOGARAICH!!!” says the giant. “It is long since my teeth were rusted seeking thy flesh. The cattle are mine; they are on my march; and a dead man art thou.” “I said, not that,” says the herd; “there is no knowing, but that may be easier to say than to do.”

To grips they go--himself and the giant. He saw that he was far from his friend, and near his foe. He drew the great clean-sweeping sword, and he neared the giant; and in the play of the battle the black dog leaped on the giant’s back. The herd drew back his sword, and the head was off the giant in a twinkling. He leaped on the black horse, and he went to look for the giant’s house. He reached a door, and in the haste that the giant made he had left each gate and door open. In went the herd, and that’s the place where there was magnificence and money in plenty, and dresses of each kind on the wardrobe with gold and silver, and each thing finer than the other. At the mouth of night he took himself to the king’s house, but he took not a thing from the giant’s house. And when the cattle were milked this night there was milk. He got good feeding this night, meat and drink without stint, and the king was hugely pleased that he had caught such a herd. He went on for a time in this way, but at last the glen grew bare of grass, and the grazing was not so good.

But he thought he would go a little further forward in on the giant’s land; and he sees a great park of grass. He returned for the cattle, and he puts them into the park.

They were but a short time grazing in the park when a great wild giant came full of rage and madness. “Hiu! Haw!! Hoagraich!!!” said the giant. “It is a drink of thy blood that quenches my thirst this night.” “There is no knowing,” said the herd, “but that’s easier to say than to do.” And at each other went the men. *There* was the shaking of blades! At length and at last it seemed as if the giant would get the victory over the herd. Then he called on his dog, and

[8] Took the world for his pillow.

with one spring the black dog caught the giant by the neck, and swiftly the herd struck off his head.

He went home very tired this night, but it's a wonder if the king's cattle had not milk. The whole family was delighted that they had got such a herd.

He followed herding in this way for a time; but one night after he came home, instead of getting "all hail" and "good luck" from the dairymaid, all were at crying and woe.

He asked what cause of woe there was this night. The dairymaid said that a great beast with three heads was in the loch, and she was to get (some) one every year, and the lots had come this year on the king's daughter, "and in the middle of the day (to morrow) she is to meet the Uile Bheist at the upper end of the loch, but there is a great suitor yonder who is going to rescue her."

"What suitor is that?" said the herd. "Oh, he is a great General of arms," said the dairymaid, "and when he kills the beast, he will marry the king's daughter, for the king has said, that he who could save his daughter should get her to marry."

But on the morrow when the time was nearing, the king's daughter and this hero of arms went to give a meeting to the beast, and they reached the black corrie at the upper end of the loch. They were but a short time there when the beast stirred in the midst of the loch; but on the general's seeing this terror of a beast with three heads, he took fright, and he slunk away, and he hid himself. And the king's daughter was under fear and under trembling with no one at all to save her. At a glance, she sees a doughty handsome youth, riding a black horse, and coming where she was. He was marvellously arrayed, and full armed, and his black dog moving after him. "There is gloom on thy face, girl," said the youth. "What dost thou here?" "Oh! that's no matter," said the king's daughter. "It's not long I'll be here at all events." "I said not that," said he. "A worthy fled as likely as thou, and not long since," said she. "He is a worthy who stands the war," said the youth. He lay down beside her, and he said to her, if he should fall asleep, she should rouse him when she should see the beast making for shore. "What is rousing for thee?" said she. "Rousing for me is to put the gold ring on thy finger on my little finger." They were not long there when she saw the beast making for shore. She took a ring off her finger, and put it on the little finger of the lad. He awoke, and to meet the beast he went with his sword and his dog. But there was the spluttering and splashing between himself and the beast The dog was doing all he might, and the king's daughter was palsied by fear of the noise of the beast. They would now be under, and now above. But at last he cut one of the heads off her. She gave one roar RAIVIC, and the son of earth, MACTALLA of the rocks (echo), called to her screech, and she drove the loch in spindrift from end to end, and in a twinkling she went out of sight. "Good luck and victory that were following thee, lad!" said the king's daughter. "I am safe for one night, but the beast will come again, and for ever, until the other two heads come off her." He caught the beast's head, and he drew a withy through it, and he told her to bring it with her there to-morrow. She went home with the head on her shoulder, and the herd betook himself to the cows, but she had not gone far when this great General saw her, and he said to her that he would kill her, if she would not say that 'twas he took the head off the beast. "Oh!" says she, "'tis I will say it, Who else took the head off the beast but thou!" They reached the king's house, and the head was on the General's shoulder. But here was rejoicing, that she should come home alive and whole, and this great captain with the beast's head full of blood in his hand. On the morrow they went away, and there was no question at all but that this hero would save the king's daughter.

They reached the same place, and they were not long there when the fearful Uile Bheist stirred in the midst of the loch, and the hero slunk away as he did on yesterday, but it was not long after this when the man of the black horse came, with another dress on. No matter, she knew that it was the very same lad. “It is I am pleased to see thee,” said she. “I am in hopes thou wilt handle thy great sword to-day as thou didst yesterday. Come up and take breath.” But they were not long there when they saw the beast steaming in the midst of the loch.

The lad lay down at the side of the king’s daughter, and he said to her, “If I sleep before the beast comes, rouse me.” “What is rousing for thee?” “Rousing for me is to put the ear-ring that is in thine ear in mine.” He had not well fallen asleep when the king’s daughter cried, “rouse! rouse!” but wake he would not; but she took the ear-ring out of her ear, and she put it in the ear of the lad. At once he woke, and to meet the beast he went, but *there* was Tloopersteich and Tlaperstich, rawceil s’taweeil, spluttering, splashing, raving and roaring on the beast! They kept on thus for a long time, and about the mouth of night, he cut another head off the beast. He put it on the withy, and he leaped on the black horse, and he betook himself to the herding. The king’s daughter went home with the heads. The General met her, and took the heads from her, and he said to her, that she must tell that it was he who took the head off the beast this time also. “Who else took the head off the beast but thou?” said she. They reached the king’s house with the heads. Then there was joy and gladness. If the king was hopeful the first night, he was now sure that this great hero would save his daughter, and there was no question at all but that the other head would be off the beast on the morrow.

About the same time on the morrow, the two went away. The officer bid himself as he usually did. The king’s daughter betook herself to the bank of the loch. The hero of the black horse came, and he lay at her side. She woke the lad, and put another ear-ring in his other ear; and at the beast he went. But if rawceil and toiceil, roaring and raving were on the beast on the days that were passed, this day she was horrible. But no matter, he took the third head off the beast; and if he did, it was not without a struggle. He drew it through the withy, and she went home with the heads. When they reached the king’s house, all were full of smiles, and the General was to marry the king’s daughter the next day. The wedding was going on, and every one about the castle longing till the priest should come. But when the priest came, she would marry but the one who could take the heads off the withy without cutting the withy. “Who should take the heads off the withy but the man that put the heads on?” said the king.

The General tried them, but he could not loose them; and at last there was no one about the house but had tried to take the heads off the withy, but they could not. The king asked if there were any one else about the house that would try to take the heads off the withy? They said that the herd had not tried them yet. Word went for the herd; and he was not long throwing them hither and thither. “But stop a bit, my lad,” said the king’s daughter, “the man that took the heads off the beast, he has my ring and my two ear-rings.” The herd put his hand in his pocket, and he threw them on the board. “Thou art my man,” said the king’s daughter. The king was not so pleased when he saw that it was a herd who was to marry his daughter, but he ordered that he should be put in a better dress; but his daughter spoke, and she said that he had a dress as fine as any that ever was in his castle; and thus it happened. The herd put on the giant’s golden dress, and they married that same night.

They were now married, and everything going on well. They were one day sauntering by the side of the loch, and there came a beast more wonderfully terrible than the other, and takes him away to the loch without fear, or asking. The king’s daughter was now mournful, tearful, blind-sorrowful for her married man; she was always with her eye on the loch. An old smith met her, and she told how it had befallen her married mate. The smith advised her to spread everything that was finer than another in the very same place where the beast took away her

man; and so she did. The beast put up her nose, and she said, “Fine is thy jewellery, king’s daughter.” “Finer than that is the jewel that thou tookest from me,” said she. “Give me one sight of my man, and thou shalt get any one thing of all these thou seest.” The beast brought him up. “Deliver him to me, and thou shalt get all thou seest,” said she. The beast did as she said. She threw him alive and whole on the bank of the loch.

A short time after this, when they were walking at the side of the loch, the same beast took away the king’s daughter. Sorrowful was each one that was in the town on this night. Her man was mournful, tearful, wandering down and up about the banks of the loch, by day and night. The old smith met him. The smith told him that there was no way of killing the Uille Bheist but the one way, and this is it--”In the island that is in the midst of the loch is Eillid Chaisfhion--the white footed hind, of the slenderest legs, and the swiftest step, and though she should be caught, there would spring a hoodie out of her, and though the hoodie should be caught, there would spring a trout out of her, but there is an egg in the mouth of the trout, and the soul of the beast is in the egg, and if the egg breaks, the beast is dead.”

Now, there was no way of getting to this island, for the beast would sink each boat and raft that would go on the loch. He thought he would try to leap the strait with the black horse, and even so he did. The black horse leaped the strait, and the black dog with one bound after him. He saw the Eillid, and he let the black dog after her, but when the black dog would be on one side of the island, the Eillid would be on the other side. “Oh! good were now the great dog of the carcass of flesh here!” No sooner spoke he the word than the generous dog was at his side; and after the Eillid he took, and the worthies were not long in bringing her to earth. But he no sooner caught her than a hoodie sprang out of her. “‘Tis now, were good the falcon grey, of sharpest eye and swiftest wing!” No sooner said he this than the falcon was after the hoodie, and she was not long putting her to earth; and as the hoodie fell on the bank of the loch, out of her jumps the trout. “Oh, that thou wert by me now, oh otter!” No sooner said than the otter was at his side, and out on the loch she leaped, and brings the trout from the midst of the loch; but no sooner was the otter on shore with the trout than the egg came from his mouth. He sprang and he put his foot on it. ‘Twas then the beast let out a roar, and she said, “Break not the egg, and thou gettest all thou askest.” “Deliver to me my wife?” In the wink of an eye she was by his side. When he got hold of her hand in both his hands he let his foot (down) on the egg and the beast died.

The beast was dead now, and now was the sight to be seen. She was horrible to look upon. The three heads were off her doubtless, but if they were, there were heads under and heads over head on her, and eyes, and five hundred feet. But no matter, they left her there, and they went home, and there was delight and smiling in the king’s house that night. And till now he had not told the king how he killed the giants. The king put great honour on him, and he was a great man with the king.

Himself and his wife were walking one day, when he noticed a little castle beside the loch in a wood; he asked his wife who was dwelling in it? She said that no one would be going near that castle, for that no one had yet come back to tell the tale, who had gone there.

“The matter must not be so,” said he; “this very night I will see who is dwelling in it.” “Go not, go not,” said she; “there never went man to this castle that returned.” “Be that as it pleases,” says he. He went; he betakes himself to the castle. When he reached the door, a little flattering crone met him standing in the door. “All hail and good luck to thee, fisher’s son; ‘tis I myself am pleased to see thee; great is the honour for this kingdom, thy like to be come into it--thy coming in is fame for this little bothy; go in first; honour to the gentles; go on, and take breath.” In he went, but as he was going up, she drew the Slachdan druidhach on him, on the back of his head, and at once--there he fell.

On this night there was woe in the king's castle, and on the morrow there was a wail in the fisher's house. The tree is seen withering, and the fisher's middle son said that his brother was dead, and he made a vow and oath, that he would go, and that he would know where the corpse of his brother was lying. He put saddle on a black horse, and rode after his black dog; (for the three sons of the fisher had a black horse and a black dog), and without going hither or thither he followed on his brother's step till he reached the king's house.

This one was so like his elder brother, that the king's daughter thought it was her own man. He stayed in the castle. They told him how it befell his brother; and to the little castle of the crone, go he must--happen hard or soft as it might. To the castle he went; and just as befell the eldest brother, so in each way it befell the middle son, and with one blow of the Slachdan druidhach, the crone felled him stretched beside his brother.

On seeing the second tree withering, the fisher's youngest son said that now his two brothers were dead, and that he must know what death had come on them. On the black horse he went, and he followed the dog as his brothers did, and he hit the king's house before he stopped. 'Twas the king who was pleased to see him; but to the black castle (for that was its name) they would not let him go. But to the castle he must go; and so he reached the castle.--"All hail and good luck to thyself, fisher's son: 'tis I am pleased to see thee; go in and take breath," said she (the crone). "In before me thou crone: I don't like flattery out of doors; go in and let's hear thy speech." In went the crone, and when her back was to him he drew his sword and whips her head off; but the sword flew out of his hand. And swift the crone gripped her head with both hands, and puts it on her neck as it was before. The dog sprung on the crone, and she struck the generous dog with the club of magic; and there he lay. But this went not to make the youth more sluggish. To grips with the crone he goes; he got a hold of the Slachan druidhach, and with one blow on the top of the head, she was on earth in the wink of an eye. He went forward, up a little, and he sees his two brothers lying side by side. He gave a blow to each one with the Slachdan druidhach and on foot they were, and there was the spoil! Gold and silver, and each thing more precious than another, in the crone's castle. They came back to the king's house, and then there was rejoicing! The king was growing old. The eldest son of the fisherman was crowned king, and the pair of brothers stayed a day and a year in the king's house, and then the two went on their journey home, with the gold and silver of the, crone, and each other grand thing which the king gave them; and if they have not died since then, they are alive to this very day.

Written, April 1850, by Hector Urquhart, from the dictation of John Mackenzie, fisherman, Kenmore, near Inverary, who says that he learned it from an old man in Lorn many years ago. He has lived for thirty-six years at Kenmore. He told the tale fluently at first, and then dictated it slowly.

The Gaelic is given as nearly as possible in the words used by Mackenzie, but he thinks his story rather shortened.

(Gaelic omitted)

HECTOR URQUHART.

2. Another version of this was told to me in South Uist, by DONALD MACPHIE, aged 79, in September 1859.

There was a poor old fisher in Skye, and his name was Duncan. He was out fishing, and the sea-maiden rose at the side of his boat, and said, "Duncan, thou art not getting fish." They had a long talk, and made a bargain; plenty of fish for his first son. But he said, "I have none." Then the sea-maiden gave him something, and said, "Give this to thy wife, and this to thy mare, and this to thy dog, and they will have three sons, three foals, and three pups," and

so they had, and the eldest son was Iain. When he was eighteen, he found his mother weeping, and learned that he belonged to the mermaid. “Oh,” said he, “I will go where there is not a drop of salt water.” So he mounted one of the horses and went away. He soon came to the carcase of an old horse, and at it a lion (leon), a wolf (matugally), and a falcon (showag). LEÒMHAN, MADADU-ALLUIDH, SEABHAG or SEOBHAG.

The lion spoke, and *she* asked him to divide the carcass. He did so, and each thanked him, and said, “When thou art in need think of me, and I will be at thy side (*or thou wilt be a lion, a wolf, or a falcon, I am uncertain which he meant*), for we were here under spells till some one should divide this carcass for us.”

He went on his way and became a king’s herd. He went to a smith and bade him make him an iron staff. He made three. The two first bent, the third did well enough. He went a-herding, and found a fine grass park, and opened it and went in with the cattle. FUATH of the seven heads, and seven humps, and seven necks, came and took six by the tails and went away with them (*so Cacus dragged away cows by the tail*). “Stop,” said the herd. The FUATH would not, so they came to grips. Then the fisher’s son either thought of the lion, or became one, but at all events a lion seized the giant and put him to earth. “Thine is my lying down and rising up,” said he. “What is thy ransom?” said the herd. The giant said, “I have a white filly that will go through the skies, and a white dress; take them.” And the herd took off his heads.

When he went home they had to send for carpenters to make dishes for the milk, there was so much.

The next day was the same. There came a giant with the same number of heads, and took eight cows by their tails, and slung them on his back. The herd and the wolf (or as a wolf) beat him, and got a red filly that could fly through the air, and a red dress, and cut off their heads. And there were still more carpenters wanted, there was so much milk.

The third day came a still bigger giant and took nine cows, and the herd *as*, or *with* a falcon, beat him, and got a green filly that would go through the sky, and a green dress, and cut his heads off, and there was more milk than ever.

On the fourth day came the Carlin, the wife of the last giant, and mother of the other two, and the fisher’s son went up into a tree. “Come down till I eat thee,” said she. “Not I,” said the herd. “Thou hast killed my husband and my two sons, comedown till I eat thee.” “Open thy mouth, then, till I jump down,” said the herd. So the old Carlin opened her gab, and he thrust the iron staff down her throat, and it came out at a mole on her breast [*this is like the mole of the Gruagach in No. 1*], and she fell. Then he sprang on her, and spoke as before, and got a basin, and when he washed himself in it, be would be the most beautiful man that was ever seen on earth, and a fine silver comb, and it would make him the grandest man in the world; and he killed the Carlin and went home.

[*So far this agrees almost exactly with the next version, but there is a giant added here and a coarse comb left out*].

When the fisher’s son came home, there was sorrow in the king’s house, for the DRAYGAN was come from the sea. Every time he came there was some one to be eaten, and this time the lot had fallen on the king’s daughter.

The herd said that he would go to fight the draygan, and the king said, “go; I cannot spare my herd.” So the king’s daughter had to go alone. [*The incident of the cowardly knight is here left out*]. Then the herd came through the air on the white filly, with the white dress of the Fuath. He tied the filly to the branch of a tree and went where the king’s daughter was, and laid his head in her lap, and she dressed his hair, and he slept. When the draygan came she

woke him, and after a severe battle he cut off one head, and the draygan said, “A hard fight tomorrow,” and went away. The herd went off in the white filly, and in the evening asked about the battle, and heard his own story. Next day was the same with the red filly and the red dress, and the draygan said, “The last fight to-morrow, “and he disappeared. On the third day she scratched a mark on his forehead when his head was in her lap: he killed the draygan, and when he asked about it all. there was great joy, for now the draygan was dead. Then the king’s daughter had the whole kingdom gathered, and they took off their head clothes as they passed, but there was no mark. Then they bethought them of the dirty herd, and when he came he would not put off his head gear, but she made him, and saw the mark, and said, “Thou mightest have a better dress.” He used his magic comb and basin, and put on a dress, and was the grandest in the company, and they married. It fell out that the king’s daughter longed for dulse, and he went with her to the shore to seek it. The sea-maiden rose up and took him. She was sorrowful, and went to the soothsayer and learned what to do.

And she took her harp to the sea shore and sat and played and the sea-maiden came up to listen, for sea-maidens are fonder of music than any other creatures, and when she saw the sea-maiden she stopped. The sea-maiden said, “Play on;” but she said, “No, till I see my man again.” So the sea-maiden put up his head. (*Who do you mean? Out of her mouth to be sure. She had swallowed him*.) She played again, and stopped, and then the sea-maiden put him up to the waist. Then she played again and stopped, and the sea-maiden placed him on her palm. Then he thought of the falcon, and became one and flew on shore. But the sea-maiden took the wife.

Then he went to the soothsayer, and he said, “I know not what to do, but in a glen there is TARBH NIMH, a hurtful bull, and in the bull a ram, and in the ram a goose, and in the goose an egg, and there is the soul of the sea-maiden.”

Then he called on his three creatures, and by their help got the goose, but the egg fell out in the loch.

Then the lion said *she* knew not what to do, and the wolf said the same. The falcon told of an otter in an island, and flew and seized her two cubs, and the otter dived for the egg to save her cubs. He got his wife, and dashed the egg on the stones, and the mermaid died. And they sent for the fisher and his sons, and the old mother and brothers got part of the kingdom, and they were all happy and lucky after that.

I asked if there was anything about one brother being taken for the other and the naked sword, and was told that the incident was in another story, as well as that of the withering of the three trees. These incidents were in the version of the stable boy; and as they are in Mackenzie’s, they probably belong to the story as it was known in Argyllshire.

3. Another version of this was told in April 1859, by John MacGibbon, a lad who was rowing me across Loch Fyne, from St. Katharine’s to Inverary; he said he had heard it from an old man living near Lochgilphead, who could tell many stories, and knew part of the history of the Feine.

The hero was the son of a widow, the youngest of ten; black-skinned and rough “carrach.” He went to seek his fortune, and after adventures somewhat like those of the heroes in the other versions, he became like them a king’s herd, and was in like manner beset by giants who claimed the pasture. Each fight was preceded by a long and curious parley across a ditch. The giants got larger each day, and last of all came the wife of one, and mother of the other two, who was worst of all.

He got spoil from each, which the conquered giant named as his ransom, and which, as usual, the herd took after killing his foe. From the mother he got a “golden comb, and when he

combed his hair with the fine side, he was lovely, and when he combed it with the coarse side, he was hideous again," and a magic basin which made him beautiful when he washed in it. And he got wonderful arms, and dresses, and horses from the giants.

Then the king's daughter was to be given to a giant with three heads who came in a ship. When he leaped on shore, he buried himself to the waist, he was so heavy. The herd was asleep with his head in the lap of the princess, and dressed in the giant's spoil, combed with the fine gold comb, and washed in the magic basin, and beautiful, but nevertheless the princess dressed his hair.

He was awakened each day by biting a joint off his little finger--cutting a patch from the top of his head--and a notch from his ear. Each day he cut off a head, and the giant, when he leaped from the ship on the third day, only sunk to his ankles in the sand, for he had lost two heads.

The third head jumped on again as fast as it was cut off, but at last, by the advice of a hoodie, the cold steel of the sword was held on the neck till the marrow froze, and then the giant was killed, and the herd disappeared as usual.

A red-headed lad, who went to guard the princess, ran away and hid himself, and took the credit each day, but he could not untie the knots with which the heads were bound together on a withy by the herd. Then when all the kingdom had been gathered, the herd was sent for, but he would not come, and he bound three parties of men who were sent to bring him by force.

At last he was entreated to come, and came, and was recognized by the marks, and then he combed his hair, and washed in the magic basin, and dressed in the giant's spoils, and he married the princess, and the Gille Ruadh was hanged.

Here the story ended, but so did the passage of the ferry.

4. I have another version written by Hector Maclean, from the dictation of a woman, B. Macaskill, in the small island of Berneray, Aug. 1859.--MAC A GHOBHA, The Smith's Son.

A smith takes the place of the old fisherman. The mermaid rises beside his boat, gets the promise of the son, and sends him fish. (The three mysterious grains are omitted.) One son is born to the fisher, and the mermaid lets him remain till he is fourteen years of age.

BHA 'N GILLE 'N SO CHO MOR AN CEAUNN NAN CEITHIR BLIADHNA DIAG! CHA ROBH LEITHID RE BHAIGHIN CHO MOR 'S CHO GARBH 'S CHO FOGHAINTEACH RIS.

The lad was now so big at the end of the 14 years! His like was not to be found, so big, so rugged, so formidable as he.

Then he asked his father not to go in the wind of the shore or the sea, for fear the mermaid should catch him, and to make him a staff in which there should be nine stone weight of iron; and he went to seek his fortune. His father made him the staff, and he went, and whom should he meet but MADADH RUADH the fox, MADADH ALLUIDH the Wolf, AGUS AN FHEANNAG, and the hoodie, AGUS OTHAISG ACA GA H'ITHEADH, and eating a year old sheep. He divided the sheep, and the creatures promised to help him, and he went on to a castle, where he got himself employed as a herd, and was sent to a park; "no man ever came alive out of it that ever went into it."

A big giant came and took away one of the cows, and then (SABAID) a fight began, and the herd was undermost, AGUS DE RINN AM BUACHAILL' ACH CUIMHNEACHADH AIR A MHADADH ALLUIDH AGUS GHRAD! BHA 'M BUACHAILL AN AIRD AGUS AM

FUAMHAIR FODHA AGUS MHARBH E ‘M FUAMHAIR, and what did the herd but remember the wolf, and swift! the herd was above and the giant below, and he killed the giant, and went home with the cattle, and his master said to the BANACHAGAN, “Oh, be good to the herd.” (*The spoil, the dresses, and the horses are here all left out*). The second day it was the same, and he again thought of the wolf, and conquered after he was down.

The third day it was again the same. On the, fourth day CAILLEACH MHOR a great carlan came. They fought, and he was undermost again, but thought of the wolf and was up. BAS AS DO CHIONN A CHAILLEACH ARS AM BUACHAILLE DE’ T’ EIRIG?[9]

“Death on thy top, Carlin,” said the herd, “what’s thy value?” “That is not little,” said the Carlin, “if thou gettest it. I have three TRUNCANNAN (*an English word with a Gaelic plural*) full of silver. There is a trunk under the foot-board, and two others in the upper end of the castle.” “Though that be little, its my own,” said he as he killed her.

On the morrow the king’s daughter was to go to the great beast that was on the loch to be killed, and what should the herd do but draw the cattle that way, and he laid his head in her lap and slept, but first told the lady, when she saw the loch trembling, to take off a joint of his little finger. She did so. He awoke, thought of the fox, and took a head, a hump, and a neck off the beast, and he went away, and no one knew that he had been there at all. Next day was the same, but he had a patch cut from his head.

The third day she took off the point of his ear, he awoke, was again beaten by the beast, thought of the fox, and was uppermost, and killed the beast (S’ BHA I NA LOCH UISGE N’ UAIR A MHARBH E I) and she was a fresh water lake when he had killed her.

(*The cowardly general, or knight, or lad, or servant, is here left out*.) Then the king’s daughter gave out that she would marry the man whose finger fitted the joint which she had cut off and kept in her pocket. Everybody came and cut off the points of their little fingers, but the herd staid away till it was found out by the dairymaids that he wanted the joint, and then he came and married the lady.

After they were married they went to walk by the shore, and the mermaid rose and took him away. “It is long since thou wert promised to me, and now I have thee perforce,” said she. An old woman advised the lady to spread all her dresses on the beach, and she did so in the evening, and the mermaid came, and for the dresses gave back her companion, “and they went at each other’s necks with joy and gladness.”

In a fortnight the wife was taken away, “and sorrow was not sorrow till now--the lad lamenting his wife.” He went to an old man, who said, “There is a pigeon which has laid in the top of a tree; if thou couldst find means to break the egg ANAIL, the breath of the barmaid is in it. “SMAOINTICH E AIR AN FHEANNAIG ‘S CHAIDH E NA FHEANNAIG ‘S LEUM E GO BARR NA CRAOIBHE. He thought on the hoodie, and he became a hoodie (went into his hoodie), and he sprang to the top of the tree, and he got the egg, and he broke the egg, and his wife came to shore, and the mermaid was dead.

It is worth remarking the incidents which drop out of the story when told by women and by men. Here the horses and armour are forgotten, but the faithful lover is remembered. The sword is a stick, and the whole thing savours strongly of the every-day experience of the Western Isles, which has to do with fishing, and herding sheep and cattle. It is curious also to

[9] EIRIG, a fine for bloodshed, a ransom. Fine anciently paid for the murder of any person. *Scottish Laws--Regiam Majestatem*, (Armstrong dic.) *The Laws of the Brets and Scots*, in which every one was valued according to his degree (Innes’s “Scotland in the Middle Ages “).

remark the variations in the incidents. The hero seems to acquire the qualities of the creatures, or be assisted by them.

5. I have another version from Barra, but it varies so much, and has so many new incidents, that I must give it entire, if at all. It most resembles MacGibbon's version. It is called AN 'T IASGAIR the fisher, and was told by Alexander MacNeill, fisherman.

6. I have a sixth version told by John Smith, labourer, living at Polchar in South Uist, who says he learned it about twenty years ago from Angus Macdonald, Balnish. It is called AN GILLE GLAS, the Grey lad. He is a widow's son, goes to seek his fortune, goes to a Smith, and gets him to make an iron shinny (that is a hockey club), he becomes herd to a gentleman, herds cattle, and is beset by giants whom he kills with his iron club; he gathers the skirt of his grey cassock (which looks like Odin), he gets a copper and a silver and a golden castle, Servants (or slaves) of various colour and appearance, magic whistles, horses, and dresses, and rescues the daughter of the king of Greece. The part of the cowardly knight is played by a red headed cook. The language of this is curious, and the whole very wild. Unless given entire, it is spoilt.

In another story, also from Berneray, the incident of meeting three creatures again occurs.

There is a lion, a dove, and a rat. And the lion says:--

"What, lad, is thy notion of myself being in such a place as this?"

"Well," said he, "I have no notion, but that it is not there the like of you ought to be; but about the banks of rivers."

It is impossible not to share the astonishment of the lion, and but for the fact that the rat and the dove were as much surprised at their position as the lion, one would be led to suspect that Margaret MacKinnon, who told the story, felt that her lion was out of his element in Berneray. Still he is there, and it seems worth inquiring how he and the story got there and to other strange places.

1st. The story is clearly the same as Shortshanks in Dasent's Norse Tales, 1859. But it is manifest that it is not taken from that book, for it could not have become so widely spread in the islands, and so changed within the time.

2d. It resembles, in some particulars, the Two Brothers, the White Snake, the Nix of the Mill Pond, the Ball of Crystal, in Grimm; and there are similar incidents in other German tales. These have long been published, but I never heard of a copy in the west, and many of my authorities cannot read. It is only necessary to compare any one of the Gaelic versions with any one German tale, or all together, to feel certain that Grimm's collection is not the source from which this story proceeded.

3d. A story in the latest edition of the Arabian Nights (Lane's, 1839), contains the incident of a genius, whose life was not in his body, but in a chest at the bottom of the Circumambient Ocean, but that book is expensive, and quite beyond the reach of peasants and fishermen in the west, and the rest of the story is different.

4th. There is something in Sanscrit about a fight for cattle between a herd and some giants, which has been compared with the classical story of Cacus.--(Mommsen's Roman History).

5th. I am told that there is an Irish "fenian" story which this resembles. I have not yet seen it, but it is said to be taken from a very old Irish MS. (Ossianic Society).

6th. It is clearly the same as the legend of St. George and the Dragon. It is like the classical story of Perseus and Andromeda, but Pegasus is multiplied by three, and like the story of

Hercules and Hesione, but Hercules was to have six horses. On the whole, I cannot think that this is taken from any known story of any one people, but that it is the Gaelic version of some old myth. If it contains something which is distorted history, it seems to treat of a seafaring people who stole men and women, and gave them back for a ransom, of a wild race of "giants" who stole cattle and horses, and dresses, and used combs and basins, and had grass parks; and another people who had cattle and wanted pasture, and went from the shore *in* on the giants' land.

If it be mythical, there is the egg which contains the life of the sea-monster, and to get which beast, bird, and fish, earth, air, and water, must be overcome. Fire may be indicated, for the word which I have translated SPINDRIFT, LASAIR, generally means flame.

I am inclined to think that it is a very old tale, a mixture of mythology, history, and every-day life, which may once have been intended to convey the moral lesson, that small causes may produce great effects; that men may learn from brutes, Courage from the lion and the wolf, Craft from the fox, Activity from the falcon, and that the most despised object often becomes the greatest. The whole story grows out of a grain of seed. The giant's old mother is more terrible than the giants. The little flattering crone in the black castle more dangerous than the sea monster. The herd thought of the wolf when he fought the giants, but he thought of the fox when he slew the dragon. I can but say with the tale tellers, "dh' fhàg mise n' sin eud." "There I left them," for others to follow if they choose. I cannot say how the story got to the Highlands, and the lion into the mind of a woman in Berneray.

V. Conall Cra Bhuidhe

From James Wilson, blind fiddler, Islay.

CONALL CRA BHUIDHE was a sturdy tenant in Eirinn: he had four sons. There was at that time a king over every fifth of Eirinn. It fell out for the children of the king that was near Conall, that they themselves and the children of Conall came to blows. The children of Conall got the upper hand, and they killed the king's big son. The king sent a message for Conall, and he said to him--"Oh, Conall! what made thy sons go to spring on my sons till my big son was killed by thy children? but I see that though I follow thee revengefully, I shall not be much the better for it, and I will now set a thing before thee, and if thou wilt do it, I will not follow thee with revenge. If thou thyself, and thy sons, will get for me the brown horse of the king of Lochlann, thou shalt get the souls of thy sons." "Why," said Conall, "should not I do the pleasure of the king, though there should be no souls of my sons in dread at all. Hard is the matter thou requirest of me, but I will lose my own life, and the life of my sons, or else I will do the pleasure of the king."

After these words Conall left the king, and he went home: when he got home he was under much trouble and perplexity. When he went to lie down he told his wife the thing the king had set before him. His wife took much sorrow that he was obliged to part from herself, while she knew not if she should see him more. "Oh, Conall," said. she, "why didst not thou let the king do his own pleasure to thy sons, rather than be going now, while I know not if ever I shall see thee more?" When he rose on the morrow, he set himself and his four sons in order, and they took their journey towards Lochlann, and they made no stop but (were) tearing ocean till they reached it. When they reached Lochlann they did not know what they should do. Said the old man to his sons--"stop ye, and we will seek out the house of the king's miller."

When they went into the house of the king's miller, the man asked them to stop there for the night. Conall told the miller that his own children and the children of the king had fallen out, and that his children had killed the king's son, and there was nothing that would please the king but that he should get the brown horse of the king of Lochlann. "If thou wilt do me a kindness, and wilt put me in a way to get him, for certain I will pay thee for it." "The thing is silly that thou art come to seek," said the miller; "for the king has laid his mind on him so greatly that thou wilt not get him in any way unless thou steal him; but if thou thyself canst make out a way, I will hide thy secret." "This, I am thinking," said Conall, "since thou art working every day for the king, that thou and thy gillies should put myself and my sons into five sacks of bran." "The plan that came into thy head is not bad," said the miller. The miller spoke to his gillies, and he said to them to do this, and they put them in five sacks. The king's gillies came to seek the bran, and they took the five sacks with them, and they emptied them before the horses. The servants locked the door, and they went away.

When they rose to lay hand on the brown horse, said Conall, "You shall not do that. It is hard to get out of this; let us make for ourselves five hiding holes, so that if they perceive us we may go in hiding." They made the holes, then they laid hands on the horse. The horse was pretty well unbroken, and he set to making a terrible noise through the stable. The king perceived him. He heard the noise. "It must be that that was my brown horse," said he to his gillies; "try what is wrong with him."

The servants went out, and when Conall and his sons perceived them coming they went into the hiding holes. The servants looked amongst the horses, and they did not find anything

wrong; and they returned and they told this to the king, and the king said to them that if nothing was wrong that they should go to their places of rest. When the gillies had time to be gone, Conall and his sons laid the next hand on the horse. If the noise was great that he made before, the noise he made now was seven times greater. The king sent a message for his gillies again, and said for certain there was something troubling the brown horse. "Go and look well about him." The servants went out, and they went to their hiding holes. The servants rummaged well, and did not find a thing. They returned and they told this. "That is marvellous for me," said the king: "go you to lie down again, and if I perceive it again I will go out myself." When Conall and his sons perceived that the gillies were gone, they laid hands again on the horse, and one of them caught him, and if the noise that the horse made on the two former times was great, he made more this time.

"Be this from me," said the king; "it must be that some one is troubling my brown horse." He sounded the bell hastily, and when his waiting man came to him, he said to him to set the stable gillies on foot that something was wrong with the horse. The gillies came, and the king went with them. When Conall and his sons perceived the following coming they went to the hiding holes. The king was a wary man, and he saw where the horses were making a noise. "Be clever," said the king, "there are men within the stable, and let us get them somehow." The king followed the tracks of the men, and he found them. Every man was acquainted with Conall, for he was a valued tenant by the king of Eirinn, and when the king brought them up out of the holes he said, "Oh, Conall art thou here?" "I am, O king, without question, and necessity made me come. I am under thy pardon, and under thine honour, and under thy grace." He told how it happened to him, and that he had to get the brown horse for the king of Eirinn, or that his son was to be put to death. "I knew that I should not get him by asking, and I was going to steal him." "Yes, Conall, it is well enough, but come in," said the king. He desired his look-out men to set a watch on the sons of Conall, and to give them meat. And a double watch was set that night on the sons of Conall. "Now, O Conall," said the king, "wert thou ever in a harder place than to be seeing thy lot of sons hanged to-morrow? But thou didst set it to my goodness and to my grace, and that it was necessity brought it on thee, and I must not hang thee. Tell me any case in which thou wert as hard as this, and if thou tellest that, thou shalt get the soul of thy youngest son with thee." "I will tell a case as hard in which I was," said Conall.

"I was a young lad, and my father had much land, and he had parks of year-old cows, and one of them had just calved, and my father told me to bring her home. I took with me a laddie, and we found the cow, and we took her with us. There fell a shower of snow. We went into the herd's bothy, and we took the cow and the calf in with us, and we were letting the shower (pass) from us. What came in but one cat and ten, and one great one-eyed fox-coloured cat as head bard[10] over them. When they came in, in very deed I myself had no liking for their company. 'Strike up with you,' said the head bard, I why should we be still? and sing a cronan to Conall Cra-Bhui.' I was amazed that my name was known to the cats themselves. When they had sung the cronan, said the head bard, 'Now, O Conall, pay the reward of the cronan that the cats have sung to thee.' 'Well then,' said I myself, 'I have no reward whatsoever for you, unless you should go down and take that calf.' No sooner said I the word than the two cats and ten went down to attack the calf, and, in very deed, he did not last them long. 'Play up with you, why should you be silent? Make a cronan to Conall Cra-Bhui,' said the head bard. Certainly I had no liking at all for the cronan, but up came the one cat and ten, and if they did not sing me a cronan then and there! 'Pay them now their reward,' said the great fox-coloured cat. 'I am tired myself of yourselves and your rewards,' said I. 'I have no

[10] Or commander-in-chief.

reward for you unless you take that cow down there.' They betook themselves to the cow, and indeed she did not stand them out for long.

"'Why will you be silent? Go up and sing a cronan to Conall Cra-Bhui,' said the head bard. And surely, oh, king, I had no care for them or for their cronan, for I began to see that they were not good comrades. When they had sung me the cronan. they betook themselves down where the head bard was. 'Pay now their reward,' said the head bard; and for sure, oh, king, I had no reward for them; and I said to them, 'I have no reward for you, unless you will take that, laddie with you and make use of him.' When the boy heard this he took himself out, and the cats after him. And surely, oh, king, there was "striongan" and catterwauling between them. When they took themselves out, I took out at a turf window that was at the back of the house. I took myself off as hard as I might into the wood. I was swift enough and strong at that time; and when I felt the rustling 'toirm' of the cats after me I climbed into as high a tree as I saw in the place, and (one) that was close in the top; and I hid myself as well as I might. The cats began to search for me through the wood, and they were not finding me; and when they were tired, each one said to the other that they would turn back. 'But,' said the one-eyed fox-coloured cat that was commander-in-chief over them, 'you saw him not with your two eyes, and though I have but one eye, there's the rascal up in the top of the tree.' When he had said that, one of them went up in the tree, and as he was coming where I was, I drew a weapon that I had and I killed him. 'Be this from me!' said the one-eyed one--'I must not be losing my company thus; gather round the root of the tree and dig about it, and let down that extortioner to earth.' On this they gathered about her (the tree), and they dug about her root, and the first branching root that they cut, she gave a shiver to fall, and I myself gave a shout, and it was not to be wondered at. There was in the neighbourhood of the wood a priest, and he had ten men with him delving, and he said, 'There is a shout of extremity and I must not be without replying to it.' And the wisest of the men said, 'Let it alone till we hear it again.' The cats began, and they began wildly, and they broke the next root; and I myself gave the next shout, and in very deed it was not weak. 'Certainly,' said the priest, 'it is a man in extremity--let us move.' They were setting themselves in order for moving. And the cats arose on the tree, and they broke the third root, and the tree fell on her elbow. I gave the third shout. The stalwart men hasted, and when they saw how the cats served the tree, they began at them with the spades; and they themselves and the cats began at each other, till they were killed altogether--the men and the cats. And surely, oh king, I did not move till I saw the last one of them falling. I came home. And there's for thee the hardest case in which I ever was; and it seems to me that tearing by the cats were harder than hanging to-morrow by the king of Lochlann.

"Oh! Conall," said the king, "thou art full of words. Thou hast freed the soul of thy son with thy tale; and if thou tellest me a harder case than thy three sons to be hanged to-morrow, thou wilt get thy second youngest son with thee, and then thou wilt have two sons."

"Well then," said Conall, "on condition that thou dost that, I was in a harder case than to be in thy power in prison to-night." Let's hear," said the king.--"I was there," said Conall, "as a young lad, and I went out hunting, and my father's land was beside the sea, and it was rough with rocks, caves, and geos.[11] When I was going on the top of the shore, I saw as if there were a smoke coming up between two rocks, and I began to look what might be the meaning of the smoke coming up there. When I was looking, what should I do but fall; and the place was so full of manure, that neither bone nor skin was broken. I knew not how I should get out of this. I was not looking before me, but I was looking over head the way I came--and the day will never come that I could get up there. It was terrible for me to be there till I should die. I

[11] Rifts or chasms, where the sea enters.

heard a great clattering ‘tuarneileis’ coming, and what was there but a great giant and two dozen of goats with him, and a buck at their head. And when the giant had tied the goats, he came up and he said to me, ‘Hao O! Conall, it’s long since my knife is rusting in my pouch waiting for thy tender flesh.’ ‘Och!’ said I, ‘it’s not much thou wilt be bettered by me, though thou should’st tear me asunder; I will make but one meal for thee. But I see that thou art one-eyed. I am a good leech, and I will give thee the sight of the other eye.’ The giant went and he drew the great caldron on the site of the fire. I myself was telling him how he should heat the water, so that I should give its sight to the other eye. I got heather and I made a rubber of it, and I set him upright in the caldron. I began at the eye that was well, pretending to him that I would give its sight to the other one, till I left them as bad as each other; and surely it was easier to spoil the one that was well than to give sight to the other.

“When he ‘saw’ that he could not see a glimpse, and when I myself said to him that I would get out in spite of him, he gave that spring out of the water, and he stood in the mouth of the cave, and he said that he would have revenge for the sight of his eye. I had but to stay there crouched the length of the night, holding in my breath in such a way that he might not feel where I was.

“When he felt the birds calling in the morning, and knew that the day was, he said--’Art thou sleeping? Awake and let out my lot of goats.” I killed the buck. He cried, ‘I will not believe that thou art not killing my buck.’ ‘I am not,’ said I, ‘but the ropes are so tight that I take long to loose them.’ I let out one of the goats, and he was caressing her, and he said to her, ‘There thou art thou shaggy, hairy white goat, and thou seest me, but I see thee not.’ I was letting them out by the way of one and one, as I flayed the buck, and before the last one was out I had him flayed *bag wise*. Then I went and I put my legs in place of his legs, and my hands in place of his fore legs, and my head in place of his head, and the horns on top of my head, so that the brute might think that it was the buck. I went out. When I was going out the giant laid his hand on me, and he said, ‘There thou art thou pretty buck; thou seest me, but I see thee not.’ When I myself got out, and I saw the world about me, surely, oh, king! joy was on me. When I was out and had shaken the skin off me, I said to the brute, ‘I am out now in spite of thee.’ ‘Aha!’ said he, ‘hast thou done this to me. Since thou were so stalwart that thou hast got out, I will give thee a ring that I have here, and keep the ring, and it will do thee good.’ ‘I will not take the ring from thee,’ said I, ‘but throw it, and I will take it with me.’ He threw the ring on the flat ground, I went myself and I lifted the ring, and I put it on my finger. When he said me then. ‘Is the ring fitting thee?’ I said to him, ‘It is.’ He said, ‘Where art thou ring?’ And the ring said, ‘I am here.’ The brute went and he betook himself towards where the ring was speaking, and now I saw that I was in a harder case than ever I was. I drew a dirk. I cut the finger off from me, and I threw it from me as far as I could out on the loch, and there was a great depth in the place. He shouted, ‘Where art thou, ring?’ And the ring said, ‘I am here,’ though it was on the ground of ocean. He gave a spring after the ring, and out he went in the sea. And I was as pleased here when I saw him drowning, as though thou shouldst let my own life and the life of my two sons with me, and not lay any more trouble on me.

“When the giant was drowned I went in, and I took with me all he had of gold and silver, and I went home, and surely great joy was on my people when I arrived. And as a sign for thee, look thou, the finger is off me.”

“Yes, indeed, Conall, thou art wordy and wise,” said the king. “I see thy finger is off. Thou hast freed thy two sons, but tell me a case in which thou ever wert that is harder than to be looking on thy two sons being hanged to-morrow, and thou wilt get the soul of thy second eldest son with thee.”

“Then went my father,” said Conall, “and he got me a wife, and I was married. I went to hunt. I was going beside the sea, and I saw an island over in the midst of the loch, and I came there where a boat was with a rope before her and a rope behind her, and many precious things within her. I looked myself on the boat to see how I might get part of them. I put in the one foot, and the other foot was on the ground, and when I raised my head what was it but the boat over in the middle of the loch, and she never stopped till she reached the island. When I went out of the boat the boat returned where she was before. I did not know now what I should do. The place was without meat or clothing, without the appearance of a house on it. I raised out on the top of a hill. I came to a glen; I saw in it, at the bottom of a chasm, a woman who had got a child, and the child was naked on her knee, and a knife in her hand. She would attempt to put the knife in the throat of the babe, and the babe would begin to laugh in her face, and she would begin to cry, and she would throw the knife behind her. I thought to myself that I was near my foe and far from my friends, and I called to the woman, ‘What art thou doing here?’ And she said to me, ‘What brought thee here?’ I told her myself word upon word how I came. ‘Well then,’ said she, ‘it was so I came also.’ She showed me to the place where I should come in where she was. I went in, and I said to her, ‘What was in fault that thou wert putting the knife on the neck of the child.’ ‘It is that he must be cooked for the giant who is here, or else no more of my world will be before me.’ I went up steps of stairs, and I saw a chamber full of stripped corpses. I took a lump out of the corpse that was whitest, and I tied a string to the child’s foot, and a string to the lump, and I put the lump in his mouth, and when it went in his throat he would give a stretch to his leg, and he would take it out of his throat, but with the length of the thread he could not take it out of his mouth. I cast the child into a basket of down, and I asked her to cook the corpse for the giant in place of the child. ‘How can I do that?’ said she, ‘when he has count of the corpses.’ ‘Do thou as I ask thee, and I will strip myself, and I will go amongst the corpses, and then he will have the same count,’ said I. She did as I asked her. We put the corpse in the great caldron, but we could not put on the lid. When he was coming home I stripped myself, and I went amongst the corpses. He came home, and she served up the corpse on a great platter, and when he ate it he was complaining that he found it too tough for a child.

“‘I did as thou asked me,’ said she. ‘Thou hadst count of the corpses thyself, and go up now and count them.’ He counted them and he had them. ‘I see one of a white body there,’ said he. ‘I will lie down a while and I will have him when I wake.’

When he rose he went up and gripped me, and I never was in such a case as when he was hauling me down the stair with my head after me. He threw me into the caldron, and he lifted the lid and he put the lid into the caldron. And now I was sure I would scald before I could get out of that. As fortune favoured me, the brute slept beside the caldron. There I was scalded by the bottom of the caldron. When she perceived that he was asleep, she set her mouth quietly to the hole that was in the lid, and she said to me ‘was I alive.’ I said I was. I put up my head, and the brute’s forefinger was so large, that my head went through easily. Everything was coming easily with me till I began to bring up my hips. I left the skin of my hips about the mouth of the hole, and I came out. When I got out of the caldron I knew not what to do; and she said to me that there was no weapon that would kill him but his own weapon. I began to draw his spear, and every breath that he would draw I would think I would be down his throat, and when his breath came out I was back again just as far. But with every ill that befell me I got the spear loosed from him. Then I was as one under a bundle of straw in a great wind, for I could not manage the spear. And it was fearful to look on the brute, who had but one eye in the midst of his face; and it was not agreeable for the like of me to attack him. I drew the dart as best I could, and I set it in his eye. When he felt this he gave his head a lift, and he struck the other end of the dart on the top of the cave, and

it went through to the back of his head. And he fell cold dead where he was; and thou mayest be sure, oh king, that joy was on me. I myself and the woman went out on clear ground, and we passed the night there. I went and got the boat with which I came, and she was no way lightened, and took the woman and the child over on dry land; and I returned home."

The king's mother was putting on a fire at this time, and listening to Conall telling the tale about the child. "Is it thou," said she, "that were there?" "Well then," said he, "'twas I." "Och! och!" said she, "'twas I that was there, and the king is the child whose life thou didst save; and it is to thee that life thanks might be given." Then they took great joy.

The king said, "Oh Conall, thou camest through great hardships. And now the brown horse is thine, and his sack full of the most precious things that are in my treasury."

They lay down that night, and if it was early that Conall rose, it was earlier than that that the queen was on foot making ready. He got the brown horse and his sack full of gold and silver and stones of great price, and then Conall and his four sons went away, and they returned home to the Erin realm of gladness. He left the gold and silver in his house, and he went with the horse to the king. They were good friends evermore. He returned home to his wife, and they set in order a feast; and that was the feast, oh son and brother!

This story, told by a blind man, is a good instance of the way in which a popular tale adapts itself to the mind of everybody. The blinding of the giant and his subsequent address to his yet goat--"There thou art, thou shaggy, hairy, white goat: thou seest me, but I see thee not"--comes from the heart of the narrator. It is the ornament which his mind hangs on the frame of the story.

"James Wilson learnt it from John MacLachlan, an old man at Kilsleven, upwards of forty years ago. The old man would be about eighty years of age at the time."

CRA-BHUIDHE is probably a corruption of some proper name.

CRAG is a paw, a palm. BUIDHE, yellow.

(Gaelic omitted)

VI. The Tale Of Conal Crovi

From Neill Gillies, fisherman, near Inverary.

THERE was a king over England once, and he had three sons, and they went to France to get learning, and when they came back home they said to their father that they would go to see what order was in the kingdom since they went away; and that was the first place to which they went, to the house of a man of the king's tenants, by name Conal Crobhi.

Conal Crovi had every thing that was better than another waiting for them; meat of each meat, and draughts of each drink. When they were satisfied, and the time came for them to lie down, the king's big son said--

"This is the rule that we have since we came home--The goodwife must wait on me, and the maid must wait on my middle brother, and the guidman's daughter on my young brother." But this did not please Conal Crovi at all, and he said--"I won't say much about the maid and the daughter, but I am not willing to part from my wife, but I will go out and ask themselves about this matter;" and out he went, and he locked the door behind him, and he told his gillie that the three best horses that were in the stable were to be ready without delay; and he and his wife went on one, his gillie and his daughter on another, and his son and the maid on the third horse, and they went where the king was to tell the insult his set of sons had given them.

The king's watchful gillie was looking out whom he should see coming. He called out that he was seeing three double riders coming. Said the king, ha! hah! This is Conal Crovi coming, and he has my three sons under cess,[12] but if they are, I will not be. When Conal Crovi came the king would not give him a hearing. Then Conal Crovi said, when he got no answer, "I will make thy kingdom worse than it is," and he went away, and he began robbing and lifting spoil.

The king said that he would give any reward to any man that would make out the place where Conal Crovi was taking his dwelling.

The king's swift rider said, that if he could get a day and a year he would find out where he was. He took thus a day and a year seeking for him, but if he took it he saw no sight of Conal Crovi. On his way home he sat on a pretty yellow brow, and he saw a thin smoke in the midst of the tribute wood.

Conal Crovi had a watching gillie looking whom he should see coming. He went in and he said that he saw the likeness of the swift rider coming. "Ha, ha!" said Conal Crovi, "the poor man is sent away to exile as I went myself."

Conal Crovi had his hands spread waiting for him, and he got his choice of meat and drink, and warm water for his feet, and a soft bed for his limbs. He was but a short time lying when Conal Crovi cried, "Art thou asleep, swift rider?" "I am not," said he. At the end of a while again he cried, "Art thou asleep?" He said he was not. He cried again the third time, but there was no answer. Then Conal Crovi cried, "On your soles! all within, this is no crouching time. The following will be on us presently." The watchman of Conal Crovi was shouting that he was seeing the king's three sons coming, and a great company along with them. He had of arms but one black rusty sword. Conal Crovi began at them, and he did not leave a man alive there but the three king's sons, and he tied them and took them in, and he laid on them the

[12] Cìs, cess, tax, subjection.

binding of the three smalls, straitly and painfully and he threw them into the peat corner, and he said to his wife to make meat speedily, that he was going to do a work whose like he never did before. “What is that, my man!” said she. “Going to take the heads off the king’s three sons.” He brought up the big one and set his head on the block, and he raised the axe. “Don’t, don’t,” said he, “and I will take thy part in right or unright for ever.” Then he took the middle one, he set his head on the block and he raised the axe. “Don’t, don’t,” said he, “and I will take with thee in right or unright for ever.” Then he brought up the young one, and he did the very same to him. “Don’t, don’t,” said he, “and I will take with thee, in right or unright for ever.” Then he went, himself and the king’s three sons, where the king was.

The watching gillies of the king were looking out when they should see the company coming with the head of Conal Crovi. Then one called out that he was seeing the likeness of the king’s three sons coming, and Conal Crovi before them.

“Ha, ha!” said the king, “Conal Crovi is coming, and he has my three sons under cess, but if they are I won’t be.” He would give no answer to Conal Crovi, but that he should be hanged on a gallows in the early morning of the morrow’s day.

Now, the gallows was set up and Conal Crovi was about to be hanged, but the king’s big son cried, “I will go in his place.” The king’s middle son cried, “I will go in his place;” and the king’s young son cried, “I will go in his place.” Then the king took contempt for his set of sons. Then said Conal Crovi, “We will make a big ship, and we will go steal the three black whitefaced stallions that the king of Eirinn has, and we will make the kingdom of Sasunn as rich as it ever was. When the ship was ready, her prow went to sea and her stern to shore, and they hoisted the chequered flapping sails against the tall tough masts; there was no mast unbent, nor sail untorn, and the brown buckies of the strand were “glagid”ing on her floor. They reached the “Paileas” of the King of Eirinn. They went into the stable, but when Conal Crovi would lay a hand on the black whitefaced stallions, the stallions would let out a screech. The King of Eirinn cried, “Be out lads; some one is troubling the stallions.” They went out and they tried down and up, but they saw no man. There was an old hogshead in the lower end of the stable, and Conal Crovi and the king’s three sons were hiding themselves in the hogshead. When they went out Conal laid hands on the stallion and the stallion let out a screech, and so they did three times, and at the third turn, one of those who were in the party said, that they did not look in the hogshead. Then they returned and they found the king’s three sons and Conal in it. They were taken in to the king, “Ha, ha, thou hoary wretch,” said the king, “many a mischief thou didst before thou thoughtest to come and steal my three black stallions.”

The binding of the three smalls, straitly and painfully, was put on Conal Crovi, and he was thrown into the peat corner, and the king’s three sons were taken up a stair. When the men who were above had filled themselves full of meat and drink, it was then that the king thought of sending word down for Conal Crovi to tell a tale. ‘Twas no run for the king’s big son, but a leap down to fetch him. Said the king, “Come up here, thou hoary wretch, and tell us a tale.” “I will tell that,” said he, “if I get the worth of its telling; and it is not my own head nor the head of one of the company.” “Thou wilt get that,” said the king, “Tost! hush! over there, and let us hear the tale of Conal Crovi”:--

“As a young lad I was fishing on a day beside a river, and a great ship came past me. They said to me would I go as ‘pilot’ to go to Rome. I said that I would do it; and of every place as we reached it, they would ask was that Rome? and I would say that it was not, and I did not know where in the great world Rome was.

“We came at last to an island that was there, we went on shore, and I went to take a walk about the island, and when I returned back the ship was gone. There I was, left by myself, and I did not know what to do. I was going past a house that was there, and I saw a woman crying. I asked what woe was on her; she told me that the heiress of this island had died six weeks ago, and that they were waiting for a brother of hers who was away from the town, but that she was to be buried this day.

“They were gathering to the burying, and I was amongst them when they put her down in the grave; they put a bag of gold under her head, and a bag of silver under her feet. I said to myself, that were better mine; that it was of no use at all to her. When the night came I turned back to the grave.[13] When I had dug up the grave, and when I was coming up with the gold and the silver I caught hold of the stone that was on the mouth of the grave, the stone fell down and I was there along with the dead carlin. By thy hand, oh, King of Eirinn! and by my hand, though free, if I was not in a harder case along with the carlin than I am here under thy compassion, with a hope to get off.”

“Ha! ha! thou hoary wretch, thou camest out of that, but thou wilt not go out of this.”

“Give me now the worth of my ursgeul,” said Conal.

“What is that?” said the king.

“It is that the big son of the King of Sasunn, and the big daughter of the King of Eirinn, should be married to each other, and one of the black white-faced stallions a tocher for them.”

“Thou shalt get that,” said the king.

Conal Crovi was seized, the binding of the three smalls laid on him straitly and painfully, and he was thrown into the peat corner; and a wedding of twenty days and twenty nights was made for the young couple. When they were tired then of eating and drinking, the king said that it were better to send for the hoary wretch, and that he should tell them how he had got out of the grave.

‘Twas no run, but a leap for the king’s middle son to go to fetch him; he was sure he would get a marriage for himself as he had got for his brother. He went down and he brought him up.

Said the king, “Come up and tell to us how thou gottest out of the grave.” “I will tell that,” said Conal Crovi, “if I get the worth of telling it; and it is not my own head, nor the head of one that is in the company.” “Thou shalt get that,” said the king.

“I was there till the day. The brother of the heiress came home, and he must see a sight of his sister; and when they were digging the grave I cried out, oh! catch me by the hand; and the man that would not wait for his bow he would not wait for his sword, as they called that the worst one was there; and I was as swift as one of themselves. Then I was there about the island, not knowing what side I should go. Then I came across three young lads, and they were casting lots. I asked them what they were doing thus. They said ‘what was my business what they were doing?’ ‘Hud! hud!’ said I myself, ‘you will tell me what you are doing.’ Well, then, said they, a great giant took away our sister. We are casting lots which of us shall go, down into this hole to seek her. I cast lots with them, and there was but that the next lot fell on myself to go down to seek her. They let me down in a creel. There was the very prettiest woman I ever saw, and she was winding golden thread off a silver windle. Oh! said

[13] The same word means cave and grave; the grave is dug because western graves are dug; but the stone falls on the mouth of the grave, probably because the story came from some country where graves were caves. There is an Italian story in which this incident occurs--Decameron of Boccacio.

she to myself, how didst thou come here? I came down here to seek thee; thy three brothers are waiting for thee at the mouth of the hole, and you will send down the creel to-morrow to fetch me. If I be living, 'tis well, and if I be not, there's no help for it. I was but a short time there when I heard thunder and noise coming with the giant. I did not know where I should go to hide myself; but I saw a heap of gold and silver on the other side of the giant's cave. I thought there was no place whatsoever that was better for me to hide in than amidst the gold. The giant came with a dead carlin trailing to each of his shoe-ties. He looked down, and he looked up, and when he did not see her before him, he let out a great howl of crying, and he gave the carlins a little singe through the fire and he ate them. Then the giant did not know what would best keep wearying from him, but he thought that he would go and count his lot of gold and silver; then he was but a short time when he set his hand on my own head. 'Wretch!' said the giant, I many a bad thing didst thou ever before thou thoughtest to come to take away the pretty woman that I had; I have no need of thee to-night, but 'tis thou shalt polish my teeth early to-morrow.' The brute was tired, and he slept after eating the carlins; I saw a great flesh stake beside the fire. I put the iron spit in the very middle of the fire till it was red. The giant was in his heavy sleep, and his mouth open, and he was snoring and blowing. I took the red spit out of the fire and I put it down in the giant's mouth; he took a sudden spring to the further side of the cave, and he struck the end of the spit against the wall, and it went right out through him. I caught the giant's big sword, and with one stroke I struck the head off him. On the morrow's day the creel came down to fetch myself; but I thought I would fill it with the gold and. silver of the giant; and when it was in the midst of the hole, with the weight of the gold and silver, the tie broke. I fell down amidst stones, and bushes, and brambles; and by thy hand, oh, King of Eirinn! and by my hand, though free, I was in a harder case than I am to-night, under thy clemency, with the hope of getting out."

"Ah! thou hoary wretch, thou camest out of that, but thou wilt not go out of this," said the king.

"Give me now the worth of my ursgeul."

'What's that?" said the king.

"It is the middle son of the King of Sasunn, and the middle daughter of the King of Eirinn to be married to each other, and one of the black white-faced stallions as tocher."

"That will happen," said the king.

Conal Crovi was caught and bound with three slender ends, and tossed into the peat corner; and a wedding of twenty nights and twenty days was made for the young couple, there and then.

When they were tired of eating and drinking, the king said they had better bring Conal Crovi up, till he should tell how he got up out of the giant's cave. 'Twas no run, but a spring for the king's young son to go down to fetch him; he was sure he would get a "match" for him, as he got for the rest.

"Come up here, thou hoary wretch," said the king, and tell us how thou gottest out of the giant's cave."

"I will tell that if I get the worth of telling; and it is not my own head, nor the head of one in the company." "Thou wilt get that," said the king. "Tost! silence over there, and let us listen to the sgeulachd of Conal Crovi," said the king.

"Well! I was there below wandering backwards and forwards; I was going past a house that was there, and I saw a woman there, and she had a child in one hand and a knife in the other hand, and she was lamenting and crying. I cried myself to her, 'Hold on thy hand, woman,

what art thou going to do?' 'Oh!' said she, 'I am here with three giants, and they ordered my pretty babe to be dead, and cooked for them, when they should come home to dinner.' 'I see,' said I, 'three hanged men on a gallows yonder, and we will take down one of them; I will go up in the place of one of them, and thou wilt make him ready in place of the babe.' And when the giants came home to dinner, one of them would say, 'This is the flesh of the babe;' and another would say, 'It is not.' One of them said that he would go to fetch a steak out of one of those who were on the gallows, and that he would see whether it was the flesh of the babe he was eating. I myself was the first that met them; and by thy hand, oh, King of Eirinn, and by my hand, were it free, if I was not in a somewhat harder case, when the steak was coming out of me, than I am to-night under thy mercy, with a hope to get out."

"Thou hoary wretch, thou camest out of that, but thou wilt not come out of this," said the king.

"Give me now the reward of my ursgeul?"

"Thou wilt get that," said the king.

"My reward is, the young son of the King of Sasunn, and the young daughter of the King of Eirinn, to be married, and one of the black stallions as tocher."

There was catching of Conal Crovi, and binding him with the three slender ends, straitly and painfully, and throwing him down into the peat corner; and there was a wedding made, twenty nights and twenty days for the young pair. When they were tired eating and drinking, the king said that it were best to bring up that hoary wretch to tell how he came off the gallows. Then they brought myself up.

"Come up hither, thou hoary wretch, and tell us how thou gottest off the gallows." "I will tell that," said I myself, "if I get a good reward." "Thou wilt get that," said the king.

"Well! when the giants took their dinner, they were tired and they fell asleep. When I saw this, I came down, and the woman gave me a great flaming sword of light that one of the giants had; and I was not long throwing the heads off the giants. Then I myself, and the woman were here, not knowing how we should get up out of the giant's cave. We went to the farther end of the cave, and then we followed a narrow road through a rock, till we came to light, and to the giant's 'biorlinn' of ships.[14] What should I think, but that I would turn back and load the biorlinn with the gold and silver of the giant; and just so I did. I went with the biorlinn under sail till I reached an island that I did not know. The ship, and the woman, and the babe were taken from me, and I was left there to come home as best I might. I got home once more to Sasunn, though I am here to-night."

Then a woman, who was lying in the chamber, cried out, "Oh, king, catch hold of this man; I was the woman that was there, and thou wert the babe." It was here that value was put on Conal Crovi; and the king gave him the biorlinn full of the giant's gold and silver, and he made the kingdom of Sasunn as rich as it ever was before.

Told by Neill Gillies a fisherman at Inverary, about fifty-five years old, who says that he has known the story, and has repeated it for many years: he learned it from his parents. Written down by

HECTOR URQUHART.

(Gaelic omitted)

[14] BIOR, a log; LINN a pool; LUINGEANACH, of ships; *naval barge*; or LUNN, handle of an oar, *oared barge*.

This story was told to me at Inveraray, April 25, 1859, by Gillies. It was told with the air of a man telling a serious story, and anxious to tell it correctly. The narrative was interlarded with explanations of the words used, and the incidents described. Those who sat about the fire argued points in the story. These were John MacKenzie, fisherman; John MacDonald, travelling tinker; John Clerk, our host, formerly miller to the Duke of Argyll; and some others, whose names I have forgotten. The story is very correctly written. I took notes at the time, and they agree with the Gaelic as written by Hector Urquhart, from the dictation of Gillies.

VII. The Tale Of Connal

From Kenneth MacLennan, Pool Ewe.

THERE was a king over Eirinn once, who was named King Cruachan, and he had a son who was called Connal MacRigh Cruachan, The mother of Connal died, and his father married another woman. She was for finishing Connal, so that the kingdom might belong to her own posterity. He had a foster mother, and it was in the house of his foster mother that he made his home. He and his eldest brother were right fond of each other; and the mother was vexed because Connal was so fond of her big son. There was a bishop in the place, and he died; and he desired that his gold and silver should be placed along with him in the grave. Connal was at the bishop's burying, and he saw a great bag of gold being placed at the bishop's head, and a bag of silver at his feet, in the grave. Connal said to his five foster brothers, that they would go in search of the bishop's gold; and when they reached the grave, Connal asked them which they would rather; go down into the grave, or hold up the flagstone. They said that they would hold up the flag. Connal went down; and whatever the squealing was that they heard, they let go the flag and they took to their soles home. Here he was, in the grave on top of the bishop. When the five of foster brothers reached the house, their mother was somewhat more sorrowful for Connal than she would have been for the five. At the end of seven mornings, there went a company of young lads to take the gold out of the bishop's grave, and when they reached the grave they threw the flag to the side of the further wall; Connal stirred below, and when he stirred they went, and they left each arm and dress they had. Connal arose, and he took with him the gold, and arms and dress, and he reached his foster mother with them. They were all merry and lighthearted as long as the gold and silver lasted.

There was a great giant near the place, who had a great deal of gold and silver in the foot of a rock; and he was promising a bag of gold to any being that would go down in a creel. Many were lost in this way; when the giant would let them down, and they would fill the creel, the giant would not let down the creel more till they died in the hole.

On a day of days, Connal met with the giant, and he promised him a bag of gold, for that he should go down in the hole to fill a creel with the gold. Connal went down, and the giant was letting him down with a rope; Connal filled the giant's creel with the gold, but the giant did not let down the creel to fetch Connal, and Connal was in the cave amongst the dead men and the gold.

When it beat the giant to get another man who would go down in the hole, he sent his own son down into the hole, and the sword of light in his lap, so that he might see before him.

When the young giant reached the ground of the cave, and when Connal saw him he caught the sword of light, and he took off the head of the young giant.

Then Connal put gold in the bottom of the creel, and he put gold over him; and then he hid in the midst of the creel, and, he gave a pull at the rope. The giant drew the creel, and when he did not see his son, he threw the creel over the top of his head. Connal leaped out of the creel, and the black back of the giant's head (being) towards him, he laid a swift hand on the sword of light, and he took the head off the giant. Then he betook himself to his foster mother's house with the creel of gold and the giant's sword of light.

After this, he went one day to hunt on Sliamh na leirge. He was going forwards till he went into a great cave. He saw, at the upper part of the cave, a fine fair woman, who was thrusting the flesh stake at a big lump of a baby; and every thrust she would give the spit, the babe

would give a laugh, and she would begin to weep. Connal spoke, and he said,--"Woman, what ails thee at the child without reason?" "Oh," said she, "since thou art an able man thyself, kill the baby and set it on this stake, till I roast it for the giant." He caught hold of the baby, and he put a plaid that he had on about the babe, and he hid the baby at the side of the cave.

There were a great many dead bodies at the side of the cave, and he set one of them on the stake, and the woman was roasting it.

Then was heard under. ground trembling and thunder coming, and he would rather that he was out. Here he sprang in the place of the corpse that was at the fire, in the very midst of the bodies, The giant came, and he asked, "Was the roast ready?" He began to eat, and he said, "Fiu fau hoagrich; it's no wonder that thy own flesh is tough; it is tough on thy brat."

When the giant had eaten that one, he went to count the bodies; and the way he had of counting them was, to catch hold of them by the two smalls of the leg, and to toss them past the top of his head; and he counted them back and forwards thus three or four times and as he found Connal somewhat heavier, and that he was soft and fat, he took that slice out of him from the back of his head to his groin. He roasted this at the fire, and he ate it, and then he fell asleep. Connal winked to the woman to set the flesh stake in the fire. She did this, and when the spit grew white after it was red, he thrust the spit through the giant's heart, and the giant was dead.

Then Connal went and he set the woman on her path homewards, and then he went home himself. His stepmother sent him and her own son to steal the whitefaced horse from the King of Italy, "Eadailt;" and they went together to steal the whitefaced horse, and every time they would lay hand on him, the whitefaced horse would let out an *ialt* (neigh?). A "company" came out, and they were caught. The binding of the three smalls was laid on them straitly and painfully. "Thou big red man," said the king, "wert thou ever in so hard a case as that?" "A little tightening for me, and a loosening for my comrade, and I will tell thee that," said Connal.

The Queen of the Eadailt was beholding Connal.

Then Connal said:--

"Seven morns so sadly mine,
As I dwelt on the bishop's top,
That visit was longest for me,
Though I was the strongest myself.
At the end of the seventh morn
An opening grave was seen,
And I would be up before
The one that was soonest down.
They thought I was a dead man,
As I rose from the mould of earth
At the first of the harsh bursting
They left their arms and their dresses,
I gave the leap of the nimble one,
As I was naked and bare.
'Twas sad for the, a vagabond,
To enjoy the bishop's gold."

"Tighten well, and right well," said the king; "it was not in one good place that he ever was; great is the ill he has done." Then he was tightened somewhat tighter, and somewhat tighter

and the king said, “Thou great red man, wert thou ever in a harder case than that?” “Tighten myself, and let a little slack with this one beside me, and I will tell thee that.”

They did that. “I was,” said he,

“Nine morns in the cave of gold;
My meat was the body of bones,
Sinews of feet and hands.
At the end of the ninth morn
A descending creel was seen;
Then I caught hold on the creel,
And laid gold above and below;
I made my biding within the creel,
I took with me the glaive of light,
The luckiest turn that I did.”

They gave him the next tightening, and the king asked him, “Wert thou ever in case, or extremity, as hard as that?” “A little tightening for myself, and a slack for my comrade, and I will tell thee that.”

They did this.

“On a day on Sliabh na leirge,
As I went into a cave,
I saw a smooth, fair, mother-eyed wife,
Thrusting the stake for the flesh
At a young unreasoning child. ‘Then,’ said I,
‘What causes thy grief, oh wife,
At that unreasoning child?’
‘Though he’s tender and comely,’ said she,
‘Set this baby at the fire.’
Then I caught bold on the boy,
And wrapped my ‘maundal’ around;
Then I brought up the great big corpse
That was up in the front of the heap;
Then I heard, Turstar, Tarstar, and Turaraich,
The very earth mingling together
But when it was his to be fallen
Into the soundest of sleep,
There fell, by myself, the forest fiend
I drew back the stake of the roast,
And I thrust it into his maw.”

There was the Queen, and she was listening to each thing that Connal suffered and said; and when she heard this, she sprang and cut each binding that was on Connal and on his comrade: and she said, “I am the woman that was there;” and to the king, “thou art the son that was yonder.”

Connal married the king’s daughter, and together they rode the whitefaced horse home; and there I left them.

From HECTOR URQUHART, June 27, 1859. Recited by KENNETH MACLENNAN of Turnaig, Pool Ewe, Ross-shire, aged 70, who learned it from an old man when he was a boy.

(Gaelic omitted)

Recited by Kenneth MacLennan, Turnaig, Pool Ewe, Ross-shire. Written by Hector Urquhart, June 27, 1859.

4. Another story, which seems to be a fragment of this tale made reasonable, forms part of a collection very well written in the Gaelic of Gearrloch, Ross-shire, from the telling of old men, by Mr. Thomas Cameron, schoolmaster, at the request of Osgood H. MacKenzie, Esq., July 1859.

ALEXANDER MACDONALD, INVERASDALE, tells how Uisdean Mor MacIlle Phadraig, a local here, famous for slaying "Fuathan" (bogles), in a winter that was very cold, on a day of hailing and snowing (sowing and winnowing) was taking the way of "A BHRAIGHE MHOIR" (the great top), and was determined to reach as far as Lochbhraoin. Coming through a place called Lead leachaeachan mu Thuath (na Fuath?), he fell in with a woman, and he soon fell in with a new-born child. No house was near, so he killed his horse, put the mother and child inside, and left them in the snow. He went for help, and when he came back he found them warm and well. He took care of them till the woman could do for herself, and the child grew to be an able lad. He was named "MacMhuirich a curach an Eich," which name has stuck to his race to this day.

After this Uisdean came to poverty. On a cold winter's night of hailing and snowing, he was going on a street in Dun Edin (Edinburgh), a woman put her head out of a window and cried, "It is cold this night on Leathad leachachan mu Thuath." "It is," said he. When she heard his Gaelic, she thought she was not far wrong, and asked him in. "What is the hardest 'Cath' that ever befel thee?" said the woman. He repeated the story, and ended with,--"And though I am this night in Dun Edin, many is the hard fight that I have wrestled with." "I am the woman that was there, and this is the child," said she; and she offered him shelter for the rest of his days.

Surely these are Connal, the robber; and the king and his mother; and the king's horse put to a new use, transferred to the Cowgate from Eirinn and Lochlann, and the forests of Germany; brought down from the days of Sindbad, or of Ulysses, or from the fifteenth century, from the age of romance to the nineteenth century and to prose.

5. I have another version of this story, called AN GADAICHE DUBH, The Black Robber, told by Alexander MacNeill, fisherman in Barra, and written by Hector MacLean in August 1859. It varies much from the others. The outline is nearly the same, but the pictures are different. I hope to find room for it.

The story resembles--

1st. The Robber and his Sons, referred to in Grimm's third volume, as taken from a MS. of the fifteenth century. An old robber desires to become an honest man, but his three sons follow their profession, and try to steal the queen's horse. They are caught, and the old robber tells three stories of his own adventures to rescue them.

In the first he is caught by a giant and about to be eaten, but escapes by putting out the giant's eyes with "destructive ingredients." He gets out of a cave by putting on the skin of a sheep. He puts on a gold ring which the giant gave him, which forces him to call out "here I am." He bites off his own finger, and so escapes.

Next--In a wilderness, haunted by strange creatures, he finds a woman about to kill her child as a dinner for some wild men. He makes her cook a hanged thief instead; hangs himself on a tree in place of the cooked thief, and has a slice cut from his side.

Lastly, the giants, frightened by a clap of thunder, run away; he returns to a civilized country, and the queen, as a reward for his stories, liberates the three sons.

2d. Part of this is manifestly the same as the Adventures of Ulysses in the Cave of the Cyclop.--(Odyssey, book ix.)

3d. And the adventure of Sindbad with the giants and dwarfs, on his third voyage (Arabian Nights). The Cat adventure, in the Islay version, may be compared with Sindbad's meeting with the serpents and with the elephants. And

4th. With a Highland story, of some laird of Rasa, whose boat was upset by a company of cats, headed by one large black cat; supposed to be a troop of witches headed by their master.

(There is no fifth item given by Campbell--JBH)

6. The incident of being buried in a treasure cave with the dead, is common to the Arabian Nights. See Sindbad's Fourth Voyage, and Aladdin; and also,

7. To the Decameron, second day, novel 5; where a man, after a number of adventures, is lowered into a well by two thieves. He is hauled up with a wheel and a rope by the watch, who are frightened and run away, leaving their arms.

The three meet once more; go to the cathedral, and raise up a marble slab laid over the grave of an archbishop. When "Andreuccio" has gone in and robbed the grave, they send him back for a ring, and drop the slab. The priests come on the same errand as the thieves; he frightens them, gets out with the ring, and returns to Perugia from Naples--"having laid out his money on a ring, whereas the intent of his journey was to have bought horses."

To all these, Greek, Italian, Arabic, German, and Gaelic, there is a general resemblance, but nothing more.

I have given three versions of the same story together, as an illustration of the manner in which popular tales actually exist: and as specimens of language, The men who told the story live as far apart as is possible in the Highlands, I heard one of them tell it; each has his own way of telling the incidents; and each gives something peculiar to himself, or to his locality, which the others leave out. Ewan MacLachlan, in discussing the MSS. in the Advocates' Library in 1812, referring to Dean MacGreggor's MS., written about 1526, says:--"MacDougall is compared to MacRuslainn, the Polyphemus of our winter tales." It would seem, then, that this story has been long known, and it is now widely spread in the Highlands.

The manners and customs of the king and his tenant are very highland, so far as they can be referred to the present day. Probably they are equally true pictures of bygone days. The king's sons probably visited their vassals, and got into all manner of scrapes. The vassals in all probability resented insults, and rebelled, and took to the wild wood and became outlaws. So the mill was probably the resort of idlers and the place for news, as it still is. The king, in all likelihood, lived very near his own stable, for there are no ruins of palaces; and it seems to have been the part of a brave man to submit, without flinching, to have his wrists and ankles tied to the small of his back, and be "tightened" and tortured; and then to recite his deeds as an Indian brave might do,

It seems, too, that, "Lochlann," now Scandinavia, was once within easy sail of England and Ireland; and that the King of Lochlann knew the tenants of the neighbouring king. From the history of the Isle of Man, it, appears that there really was a king called "Crovan," who is also mentioned by Worsaae (page 287) as the Norwegian Godred Crovan who conquered Man, A.D. 1077. Anil in this, the stories are probably true recollections of manners and events, so far as they go. When it comes to giants, the story is just as likely to be true in the same sense. There probably was a race of big man-eating savages somewhere on the road from east to west, if not all along the route; for all popular tales agree in representing giants and wild men as living in caves, hoarding wealth, eating men, and enslaving women.

In these stories the caves are described from nature. When Conal walks along the top of the high shore, “rough with eaves and goes,” and falls into a cave which has an opening below, he does that which is not only possible but probable. I know many caves on the west coast, where a giant might have walked in with his goats from a level sandy beach, near a deep sea, and some where a man might fall into the further end through a hole in a level green sward, and land safely; many are full of all that belongs to a sheep-fold, or a shelter used by goats and cattle, and by the men who take care of them.

I know one where a whole whisky distillery existed not very long ago; I first landed in it from a boat to pick up a wild pigeon; I afterwards scrambled into it from the shore; and I have looked down into it from smooth green turf, through a hole in the roof, into which there flowed a little stream of water. An active man might drop into the far end on a heap of fallen earth.

And here again comes the notion, that the so-called giants had swords so bright, that they shone in the dark like torches, and that they owned riches hid underground in holes.

Perhaps we may believe the whole as very nearly true. It may be that there were really such people, and that they were miners and shepherds; when those who now tell stories about them, were wandering huntsmen armed with stone weapons.

The third version is remarkable as an instance of the way in which poems of greater merit used to be commonly, and still are occasionally recited. “Cuchullin” was partly told, partly recited, by an old man near Lochawe, within the memory of a clergyman who told me the fact. I heard Patrick Smith, in South Uist, and other men, so recite stories in alternate prose and verse, in 1859; and it appears that the Edda was so composed. Poems of the same nature as “the poems of Ossian,” if not the poems themselves, were so recited by an old man in Bowmore more than sixty years ago, when my friend Mr. John Crawford, late Governor of Singapore, and a well-known linguist, was a school boy, who spoke little but Gaelic; and when it was as rare to find a man amongst the peasantry in Islay who could speak English, as it is now remarkable to find one who cannot.

VIII. Murchag A's Mionachag

From Ann Darroch, James Wilson, Hector MacLean, Islay, and many others in other parts of the Highlands.

MOORACHUG and Meenachug went to gather fruit, and as Moorachug would gather Meenachug would eat. Moorachug went to seek a rod to lay on Meenachaig, and she eating his share of fruit.

"What's thy news to-day, oh Voorachai?" said the rod. "'Tis my own news, that I am seeking a rod to lay on Meenachug, and she eating my share of fruit."

"Thou wilt not get me until thou gettest an axe that will reap me." He reached the axe. "What's thy news to-day, oh Voorachai?" "'Tis my own news that I am seeking an axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachug--and she eating my share of fruit."

"Thou wilt not get me until thou gettest a stone to smooth me." He reached a stone; "What's thy news to-day, oh Voorachai?" said the stone. "'Tis my own news that I am seeking stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit."

"Thou wilt not get me," said the stone, "till thou gettest water will wet me." He reached the water. "What's thy news to-day, oh Voorachai?" said the water. "'Tis my own news that I am seeking--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit."

"Thou wilt not get me," said the water, "till thou gettest a deer to swim me." He reached the deer. "What's thy news to-day, oh Voorachai?" said the deer. "'Tis my own news, that I am seeking--deer to swim water--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit."

"Thou wilt not get me," said the deer, "until thou gettest a dog to run me." He reached the dog. "What's thy news to-day, oh Voorachai?" said the dog. "'Tis my own news that I am seeking--dog to run deer--deer to swim water--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit."

"Thou wilt not get me," said the dog, "till thou gettest butter to be rubbed to my feet." He reached the butter. "What's thy news to-day, oh Voorachai?" said the butter. "'Tis my own news, that I am seeking--butter to feet of dog--dog to run deer--deer to swim water--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit."

"Thou wilt not got me," said the butter, "till thou gettest a mouse will scrape me." He reached the mouse. "What's thy news to-day, oh Voorachai?" said the mouse. "'Tis my own news, that I am seeking--mouse to scrape butter--butter to feet of dog--dog to run deer--door to swim water--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit."

"Thou wilt not got me," mid the mouse, "till thou gettest a cat to hunt me." He reached the cat.

"What's thy news to-day, oh Voorachai?" said the cat. "'Tis my own news, that I am seeking--cat to hunt mouse--mouse to scrape butter--butter to feet of dog--dog to run deer--deer to swim water--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit."

“Thou wilt not get me,” said the cat, “until thou gettest milk for me.” He reached the cow. “What’s thy news to-day, oh! Voorachai?” said the cow. “‘Tis my own news, that I am seeking--milk for the cat--cat to hunt mouse--mouse to scrape butter--butter to feet of dog--dog to run deer--deer to swim water--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit.”

“Thou wilt not get milk from me till thou gettest a whisp from the barn gillie.” He reached the barn gillie. “What’s that news to-day, oh, Voorachai?” said the barn gillie. “‘Tis my own news that I am seeking--a whisp for the cow--a cow will shed milk for the cat--cat to hunt mouse--mouse to scrape butter--butter to feet of dog--dog to run deer--deer to swim water--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit.”

“Thou wilt not get a whisp from me,” said the barn gillie, “till thou gettest a bonnach for me from the kneading wife.” He reached the kneading wife. “What’s thy news to-day, oh, Voorachai!” said the kneading wife. “‘Tis my own news, that I am seeking--bonnach to the barn gillie--whisp to the cow from the barn gillie--milk from the cow to the cat--cat will hunt mouse--mouse will scrape. butter--butter to feet of dog--dog to run deer--deer to swim water--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating my share of fruit.”

“Thou wilt not get bonnach from me till thou bringest in water will knead it.”

“How will I bring in the water? There is no vessel but that sowen’s sieve.”

Moorachug took with him the sowen’s sieve. He reached the water, and every drop he would put in the sowen’s sieve it would go through. A hoodie came over his head, and she cried, “Gawr-rag, gawr-rag, little silly, little silly.” “Thou art right, oh hoodie,” said Moorachug. “Crèah rooah s’ còinneach, crèah rooah s’ còinneach,” said the hoodie.

Moorachug set crèah rooah s’ còinneach, brown clay and moss to it, and he brought in the water to the kneading wife--and he got bonnach from the kneading wife to barn gillie--whisp from the barn gillie to the cow--milk from the cow to the cat--cat to hunt mouse--mouse to scrape butter--butter to feet of dog--dog to run deer--deer to swim water--water to stone--stone to smooth axe--axe to reap rod--rod to lay on Meenachaig--and she eating his share of fruit. And when Moorachug returned Meenachag had just BURST.

This is the best known of all Gaelic tales. It is the infant ladder to learning a chain of cause and effect, and fully as sensible as any of its kind. It used to be commonly taught to children of five or six years of age, and repeated by school boys, and it is still remembered by grown-up people in all parts of the Highlands. There are few variations. In one version the crow was a light bird; in another a gall was introduced, which advised the use of the sand to stuff the riddle.

The tale has sixteen steps, four of which contain double ideas. The English house that Jack built has eleven. The Scotch old woman with the silver penny has twelve. The Norsk cock and hen a-nutting twelve, ten of which are double. The German story in Grimm has five or six, all single ideas. All these are different. In Uist the actors are Biorachan mor agus Biorchan Beag; in Sutherland, Morachan agus Mionachan.

The speech of the Hoodie is always a very close imitation of his note. In another version she Says, “CUIR CRIADH RIGHIN RUADH RIS--Put tough red clay to it;” and the gull said, “CUIR POLL BOG RIS--Put soft mud to it;” which is rather the speech of some other bird. There are several rare words in this; for example, “Gadhar,” a dog.

(Gaelic omitted)

IX. The Brown Bear Of The Green Glen

From John MacDonald, Travelling Tinker.

THERE was a king in Erin once, who had a leash of sons. John was the name of the youngest one, and it was said that he was not wise enough; and this good worldly king lost the sight of his eyes, and the strength of his feet. The two eldest brothers said that they would go seek three bottles of the water of the green Isle that was about the heaps of the deep.[15] And so it was that these two brothers went away. Now the fool said that he would not believe but that he himself would go also. And the first big town he reached in his father's kingdom, there he sees his two brothers there, the blackguards! "Oh! my boys," says the young one, "it is thus you are?" "With swiftness of foot," said they, "take thyself home, or we will have thy life." "Don't be afraid, lads. It is no thing to me to stay with you." Now John went away on his journey till he came to a great desert of a wood. "Hoo, hoo!" says John to himself, "It is not canny for me to walk this wood alone." The night was coming now, and growing pretty dark. John ties the cripple white horse that was under him to the root of a tree, and he went up in the top himself. He was but a very short time in the top, when he saw a bear coming with a fiery cinder in his mouth. "Come down, son of the king of Erin," says he. "Indeed, I won't come. I am thinking I am safer where I am." "But if thou wilt not come down, I will go up," said the bear. "Art thou, too, taking me for a fool?" says John. "A shaggy, shambling creature like thee, climbing a tree!" "But if thou wilt not come down I will go up," says the bear, as he fell out of hand to climb the tree. "Lord! thou canst do that same?" said John; "keep back from the root of the tree, then, and I will go down to talk to thee." And when the son of Erin's king drew down, they came to chatting. The bear asked him if he was hungry. "Weel! by your leave," said John, "I am a little at this very same time." The bear took that wonderful watchful turn and he catches a roebuck. "Now, son of Erin's king," says the bear, "whether wouldst thou like thy share of the buck boiled or raw?" "The sort of meat I used to get would be kind of plotted boiled," says John; and thus it fell out. John got his share roasted. "Now," said the bear, "lie down between my paws, and thou hast no cause to fear cold or hunger till morning." Early in the morning the Mathon (bear) asked, "Art thou asleep, son of Erin's king?" "I am not very heavily," said he. "It is time for thee to be on thy soles then. Thy journey is long--two hundred miles; but art thou a good horseman, John?" "There are worse than me at times," said he. "Thou hadst best get on top of me, then." He did this, and at the first leap John was to earth.

"Foil! foil!" says John. "What! thou art not bad at the trade thyself. Thou hadst best come back till we try thee again." And with nails and teeth he fastened on the Mathon, till they reached the end of the two hundred miles and a giant's house. "Now, John," said the Mathon, "thou shalt go to pass the night in this giant's house; thou wilt find him pretty grumpy, hut say thou that it was the brown bear of the green glen that set thee here for a night's share, and don't thou be afraid that thou wilt not get share and comfort." And he left the bear to go to the giant's house. "Son of Ireland's King," says the giant, "thy coming was in the prophecy; but if I did not get thy Father, I have got his son. I don't know whether I will put thee in the earth with my feet, or in the sky with my breath." "Thou wilt do neither of either", said John, "for it is the brown hear of the green glen that set me here." "Come in, son of Erin's king," said he, "and thou shalt be well taken to this night." And as he said, it was true, John got meat and drink without stint. But to make a long tale short, the bear took John day after day to the

[15] "Eilean uaine a bha 'n iomal torra domhain."

third giant. “Now,” says the bear, “I have not much acquaintance with this giant, but thou wilt not be long in his house when thou must wrestle with him. And if he is too hard on thy back, say thou, ‘If I had the brown bear of the green glen here, that was thy master.’” As soon as John went, in--”Ai! ai!! or ee! ee!!” says the giant, “If I did not, get thy father, I have got his son;” and to grips they go. They would make the boggy bog of the rocky rock. In the hardest place they would sink to the knee; in the softest, up to the thighs; and they would bring wells of spring water from the face of every rock. The giant gave John a sore wrench or two. “Foil! foil!” says he, “if I had here the brown bear of the green glen, thy leap would not, be so hearty.” And no sooner spoke he the word than the worthy bear was at his side. “Yes! yes!” says the giant, “son of Erin’s king, now I know thy matter better than thou dost thyself.” So it was that the giant ordered his shepherd to bring home the best wether he had in the hill, and to throw his carcass before the great door. “Now, John,” says the giant, “an eagle will come and she will settle on the carcass of this wether, and there is a wart on the ear of this eagle which thou must cut off her with this sword, but a drop of blood thou must not draw.” The eagle came, but she was not long eating when John drew close to her, and with one stroke he cut the wart off her without drawing one drop of blood. (“*Och! is not that a fearful lie*?”) “Now,” said the eagle, “come on the root of my two wings, for I know thy matter better than thou dost thyself.” He did this; and they were now on sea, and now on land, and now on the wing, till they reached the Green Isle. “Now, John,” says she, “be quick, and fill thy three bottles; remember that the black dogs are away just now.” (“*What dogs*?” “*Black dogs; dost thou not know that they always had black dogs chasing the Gregorach*!”) When he filled the bottles with the water out of the well, he sees a little house beside him. John said to himself that he would go in, and that he would see what was in it. And the first chamber he opened, he saw a full bottle. (“*And what was in it*?” “*What should be in it but whisky*.”) He filled a glass out of it, and he drank it; and when he was going, he gave a glance, and the bottle was as full as it was before. “I will have this bottle along with the bottles of water,” says he.

Then he went into another chamber, and be saw a loaf; he took a slice out of it, but the loaf was as whole as it was before. “Ye gods! I won’t leave thee,” says John. He went on thus till he came to another chamber. He saw a great cheese; he took a slice off the cheese, but it was as whole as ever. “I will have this along with the rest,” says he. Then he went to another chamber, and he saw laid there the very prettiest little jewel of a woman he ever saw. “It were a great pity not to kiss thy lips, my love,” says John.

Soon after, John jumped on top of the eagle, and she took him on the self same steps till they reached the house of the big giant, and they were paying rent to the giant, and there was the sight of tenants and giants and meat and drink. “Well! John,” says the giant, “didst thou see such drink as this in thy father’s house in Erin?” “Pooh,” says John, “Hoo! my hero; thou other man, I have a drink that is unlike it.” He gave the giant a glass out of the bottle, but the bottle was as full as it was before. “Well!” said the giant, “I will give thee myself two hundred notes, a bridle and a saddle for the bottle.” “It is a bargain, then,” says John, “but that the first sweetheart I ever had must get it if she comes the way.” “She will get that,” says the giant; but, to make the long story short, he left each loaf and cheese with the two other giants, with the same covenant that the first sweetheart he ever had should get them if she came the way.

Now John reached his father’s big town in Erin and he sees his two brothers as he left them-the “blackguardan!” “You had best come with me, lads,” says he, “and you will get a dress of cloth, and a horse and a saddle and bridle each.” And so they did; but when they were near to their father’s house, the brothers thought that they had better kill him, and so it was that they set on him. And when they thought he was dead, they threw him behind a dike; and they took from him the three bottles of water, and they went home. John was not too long here, when

his father's smith came the way with a cart load of rusty iron. John called out, "Whoever the Christian is that is there, oh! that he should help him." The smith caught him, and he threw John amongst the iron; and because the iron was so rusty, it went into each wound and sore that John had; and so it was, that John became rough skinned and bald. Here we will leave John, and we will go back to the pretty little jewel that John left in the Green Isle. She became pale and heavy; and at the end of three quarters, she had a fine lad son. "Oh! in all the great world," says she, "how did I find this?" "Foil! foil!" says the henwife, "don't let that set thee thinking. Here's for thee a bird, and as soon as he sees the father of thy son, he will hop on the top of his head." The Green Isle was gathered from end to end, and the people were put in at the back door and out at the front door; but the bird did not stir, and the babe's father was not found. Now here, she said she would go through the world altogether till she should find the father of the babe. Then she came to the house of the big giant and sees the bottle. "Ai! ai!!" said she, "who gave thee this bottle?" Said the giant, "It was young John, son of Erin's king, that left it." "Well, then, the bottle is mine," said she. But to make the long story short, she came to the house of each giant, and she took with her each bottle, and each loaf, and each cheese, till at length and at last she came to the house of the king of Erin. Then the five-fifths of Erin were gathered, and the bridge of nobles of the people; they were put in at the back door and out at the front door, but the bird did not stir. Then she asked if there was one other or any one else at all in Erin, that had not been here. "I have a bald rough-skinned gillie in the smithy," said the smith,, but,--"Rough on or off, send him here," says she. No sooner did the bird see the head of the bald rough-skinned gillie, than he took a flight and settles on the bald top of the rough-skinned lad. She caught him and kissed him. "Thou art the father of my babe."

"But, John," says the great king of Erin, "It is thou that gottest the bottles of water for me." "Indeed, 'twas I," says John. "Weel, then, what art thou willing to do to thy two brothers?" "The very thing they wished to do to me, do for them;" and that same was done. John married the daughter of the king of the Green Isle, and they made a great rich wedding that lasted seven days and seven years, and thou couldst but hear leeg, leeg, and beeg, beeg, solid sound and peg drawing. Gold a-crushing from the soles of their feet to the tips of their fingers, the length of seven years and seven days.

(Gaelic omitted)

Written from the recitation of JOHN MACDONALD, travelling tinker. He wanders all over the Highlands, and lives in a tent with his family. He can neither read nor write. He repeats some of his stories by heart fluently, and almost in the same words. I have followed his recitation as closely as possible, but it was exceedingly difficult to keep him stationary for any length of time. HECTOR URQUHART.

The tinker's comments I got from the transcriber. John himself is a character; he is about fifty years of age; his father, an old soldier, is alive and about eighty; and there are numerous younger branches; and they were all encamped under the root of a tree in a quarry close to Inveraray, at Easter 1859.

The father tells many stories, but his memory is failing. The son told me several, and I have a good many of them written down. They both recite; they do not simply tell the story, but act it with changing voice and gesture, as if they took an interest in it,. and entered into the spirit and fun of the tale. They belong to the race of "Cairds," and are as much nomads as the gipsies are.

The father, to use the son's expression, "never saw a school." He served in the 42d in his youth. One son makes horn spoons, and does not know a single story; the other is a sporting

character, a famous fisherman, who knows all the lochs and rivers in the Highlands, makes flies, and earns money in summer by teaching Southerns to fish. His ambition is to become an underkeeper.

This bear story is like a great many others which I have got elsewhere in the Highlands, but I have none told exactly in the same way. It should be much longer, but the wandering spirit of the man would not let him rest to dictate his story. They had to move to an outhouse and let him roam about amongst the shavings, and swing his arms, before this much was got out of him.

I have found the same restlessness amongst wanderers elsewhere. I could never get Lapps to sit still for ten minutes when I tried to draw them; and the air of a house seemed to oppress them. I have hitherto failed in catching an English tinker, whom I let slip one day in London, and to whom I promised good pay if he would come and dictate a story which he had told me. There is a similar wandering population in Norway and Sweden. They own boats and carts, and pretend to magic arts; and are feared and detested by householders as wizards and thieves. It is said that these Norwegian wanderers bold a meeting on a hill near Christiania, once a year, and barter and sell, and exchange whatever they may have acquired in their travels. I have heard a great deal about them from peasants. I have seen them, but very seldom in Norway. I once met a party in the gleaming on a Swedish road, and a little girl, who was following and driving a gentleman in a posting-cart, when she met them, flogged her horse and galloped for dear life.

There is a similar race in Spain, and though they are not all gipsies, they are classed with them. The history of these wanderers would be curious if it could be learned. Borrow’s Bible in Spain gives some insight, but there is still much to be known about them. “London Labour and the Poor,” and reports on “Ragged Schools,” treat of similar people.

This story may be compared with Grimm’s Water of Life.

X. The Three Soldiers

From James MacLachlan, servant, Islay.

THERE was before a regiment in Dublin in Erin, and it was going a long journey. There was a sergeant, a corporal, and a single soldier, who had sweethearts in the town. They went to see them on the day that they were to go, and they stayed too long, and the regiment left them; they followed it, and they were going and going till the night came on them. They saw a light a long way from them; and if it was a long way from them, it was not long they were in reaching it. They went in, the floor was ready swept, and a fire on it, and no one in; they sat at the fire toasting themselves; they were not, long there when the single soldier rose, to whom was the name of John, to look what was in the chamber, because there was a light in it. There was there a board covered with every sort of meat, and a lighted candle on it; he went up, he began to eat, and the rest began to hinder him, for that he had no business with it. When they saw that he did not stop, they went up and they began themselves. There were three beds in the chamber, and one of them went to lie in each bed; they had not laid long when three great red girls came in, and one of them stretched herself near each one of the beds; and when they saw the time fitting in the morning, they rose and went away. When the girls rose, it could not be known that a bit had ever come off the board. They sat and they took their meat. The sergeant said that they had better follow the regiment; and John said that they should not follow it; as long as he could get meat and rest that he would not go. When dinner time came they sat and they took their dinner. The sergeant said they had better go; and John said that they should not go. When supper time came they sat and they took their supper; after supping they went to lie down, each one to his own bed. The girls came this night too, and went to lie down as before. In the morning when they saw the time fitting, they rose and they went away. When the lads rose the board was covered, and it could not be known that a bit had ever come off it. They sat and they took their meat; and when they took their meat, the sergeant said that they would go at all events. John said that they should not go. They took their dinner and their supper as they used; they went to lie down; the girls came and they lay down after them. In the morning the eldest gave the sergeant a purse, and every time he would unloose it, it would be full of gold and silver.

She said to the middle one, “What wilt thou give to thine?” “I will give him a towel, and every time he spreads it it will be full of every sort of meat.” She gave the towel to the corporal; and she said to the youngest, “What wilt thou give to thine own?” “I will give him a whistle, and every time he plays it he will be in the very middle of the regiment.” She gave him the whistle; they left their blessing with them, and they went away. “I won’t let it rest here,” said John; “I will know who they are before I go further forward.” He followed them, and he saw them going down a glen; and when he was about to be down, they came to meet him, crying. “What is the matter with you! says he. “Much is the matter with us,” said they, that we are under charms, till we find three lads who will spend three nights with us without putting a question to us; and if thou hadst stayed without following us we were free.” “Is there any way that you can get free but that!” said he. “There is,” said they. “There is a tree at the end of the house, and if you come at the end of a day and year and pluck up the tree, we were free.” John turned back where the rest were, and he told them how it happened to him; and they gave this advice to each other that they should return back to Dublin again, because it was not worth their while to follow the regiment. They returned back to Dublin.

That night John said,--”I had better go to see the king’s daughter to-night.” “Thou had’st better stay in the house,” said the rest, “than go there.”

“I will go there, at all events,” says he. He went and he reached the king’s house; he struck at the door, one of the gentlewomen asked him what he wanted; and he said that he wished to be speaking to the king’s daughter. The king’s daughter came where he was, and she asked what business he had with her. “I will give thee a whistle,” said he, “and when thou playest it thou wilt be in the middle of such a regiment.” When she got the whistle she drove him down stairs, and she shut the door on him. ‘How went it with thee?’ said they. “She wheedled the whistle from me,” said he. He did not stop till he had beguiled a loan of the purse from the sergeant. “I had better,” said he, “go to see the king’s daughter again.” He went away and he reached the house; he saw the king’s daughter; she wheedled the purse from him, and drove him down stairs, as she did before; and he turned back. He did not stop till he beguiled a loan of the towel from the corporal. He went again where the king’s daughter was. “What wilt thou give me this journey?” said she. “A towel, and when it is opened it will be full of every sort of meat.” “Let me see it,” said she. “We will spread it out,” said he. He spread it out, and there was a corner that would not lie right. He said to her to stand on the corner; she stood on it; he stood himself on another corner, and he wished to be in the uttermost isle of the deep; and himself and the king’s daughter, and the towel, were in it in five minutes. There was the very prettiest island that man ever saw, and nothing in it but trees and fruits. There they were, going through the island backwards and forwards, and sleep came on him. They came to a pretty little hollow, and he laid his head in her lap; and he took a death grip of her apron, in order that she should not get away without his perceiving her. When he slept she loosed the apron; she left him there; she took the towel with her; she stood on it; she wished herself to be in her father’s house, and she was in it. When he awoke he had nothing to get, he had nothing to see but trees and birds; he was then keeping himself alive with the fruits of the island, and hit upon apples; and when he would eat one sort of them they would put a deer’s head on him; and when he would eat another sort of them, they would put it off him.

One day he gathered a great many of the apples, and he put the one sort in the one end of the pock, and the other sort in the other end. He saw a vessel going past, he waved to her; a boat came to shore, and they took him on board. The captain took him down to meat, and he left the pock above. The sailors opened the pock to see what was in it; when they saw that apples were in it, they began to eat them. They ate the sort that would put deers’ horns on them, and they began fighting till they were like to break the vessel. When the captain heard the row, he came up; and when he saw them, he said, “Thou bad man, what hast thou done to my men now?” “What,” said John, “made thy men so impudent that they would go and look into any man’s pock?” “What wilt thou give me,” said John, “if I leave them as they were before?” The skipper took fright, and he said that he would give him the vessel and cargo at the first port they reached. Here he opened the pock, and he gave them the other sort, and the horns fell off them. It was a cargo of gold was on the ship, and it was to Dublin she vas going. When they arrived the captain said to him to be taking care of the vessel and cargo, that he was done with it. “Be patient,” said John, “till we see how it goes with us at the end of a few days.” He went away on the morrow to sell the apples about the town with nothing on but torn clothes. He went up through the town, and he came opposite the king’s house, and he saw the king’s daughter with her head out of the window. She asked that a pound of the apples should be sent up to her. He said she should try how they would agree with her first. He threw up an apple to her of the sort that would put a deer’s head on her; when she ate the apple there came a deer’s head and horns on her. The king sent forth word, that if any man whatsoever could be found, who would heal his daughter, that he should get a peck of gold, and a peck of silver, and herself to marry. She was thus many days and no man coming that could do any good at all. John came to the door with the torn clothes, asking to get in; and when they saw his like, they would not let him in; but she had a little brother who saw them keeping him out, and he told it to his father; and his father said, “Though it were the beggar

of the green!" Word went after him that he should return, and he returned. The king said to him, "Could he heal his daughter?" and he said "that he would try it." They took him up to the chamber where she was. He sat, and he took a book out of his pocket, with nothing in it, pretending that he was reading it. "Didst thou," said he, "wheedle a whistle from a poor soldier; when he would play it, it would take him to the middle of the regiment?" "I wheedled," said she. "If that is not found," said he, "I cannot heal thee." "It is," says she. They brought the whistle to him. When he got the whistle he gave her a piece of apple, and one of the horns fell off her. "I can't," said he, "do more to-day, but I will come here to-morrow. Then he went out, and his old comrades met him. The trade they had was to be slaking lime and drawing water for stone masons. He knew them, but they did not know him; he noticed nothing at all, but he gave them ten shillings, and he said to them, "Drink the health of the man who gave them." He left them there and he returned to the ship. On the morrow he went where the king's daughter was; he took out the book, and he said to her, "Didst thou wheedle a purse from a poor soldier, that would be full of gold and silver every time it was opened?" "I wheedled," said she. "If that is not found," said he, "I cannot heal thee." "It is," said she; and they gave him the purse. When he got the purse he gave her a piece of the apple, and another horn fell off her. "I can do no more to-day," said he, "but I will come the next night." He went where his old comrades were, and he gave them other ten shillings, and he said to them, "To drink the health of the man who gave them." Then he returned to the vessel. The captain said to him, "Was he going to take charge of the vessel now?" Said he, "Catch patience till the end of a day or two, till we see how it goes with us." He returned the next night to see the king's daughter. He gave a pull at the book as he used to do,--"Didst thou wheedle," said he, "a towel from a poor soldier, that would be full of every kind of meat every time it was undone?" "I wheedled," said she. "If that towel is not to be found, I cannot cure thee," says he. "It is," says she. They gave it to him; as quick as he got it, he gave her a whole apple; and when she ate it she was as she was before. Here he got a peck of gold and a peck of silver; and they said to him that he would get herself to marry. "I will come to-morrow," said he. He went the way of his old comrades this time too; he gave them ten shillings, and he said to them, "To drink the health of the man who gave them." Said they, "It would be pleasing to us to know what kind friend is giving us the like of this every night." "Have you mind," said he, "when we were in such a place, and that we promised to the three girls that we would go there again a year from the time." Then they knew him. "That time has gone past long ago," said they. "It is not gone," said he "next night is the night." He returned where the captain was; he said to him that himself and his cargo might be off; that he would not be troubling him; that he had enough. On the morrow he went past the king's house, and the king's daughter said to him, "Art thou going to marry me to-day?" "No, nor to-morrow," said he. He returned where the rest were, and he began to set them in order for going where they promised. He gave the purse to the sergeant, the towel to the corporal, and the whistle he kept himself. He bought three horses, and they went riding with great haste to the place to which they had promised to go. When they reached the house they caught the tree, and it came with them at the first pull. The three girls came so white and smiling where they were, and they were free from the spells. Every man of them took his own with him; they came back to Dublin, and they married.

(Gaelic omitted)

Got this tale from a young lad of the name of James M'Lachlin, who is at present in my own employment. I have had the preceding tale from him also. He has had them from an old woman that lives somewhere up the way of Portaskaig, who, he says, can repeat several more, and to whom I intend immediately to apply.

May 27, 1860--After speaking to the old woman MacKerrol, I find that, from age and loss of memory, she is unable now to tell any of the tales she was wont to repeat.

HECTOR MACLEAN.

Another version of this has been sent by Mr. Osgood Mackenzie from Gairloch. It was recited by HECTOR MACKENZIE at Dibaig, who learned it some years ago from KENNETH MACKENZIE at Dibaig; and it was written by ANGUS MACRAE at Dibaig. This Dibaig version tells how--

1. There was a soldier, by name Coinneach Buidhe, Kenneth the Yellow, in the army of old, and he belonged to Alba. He deserted, and his master sent a "corpaileir" after him; but the corporal deserted too; and so did a third. They went on till they reached the "yearly wood," in America. After a time, they saw on a certain night, a light which led them to a large house; they found meat and drink, and all that they could desire. They saw no one for a year and a day, except three maidens, who never spoke, but called in at odd times; and as they did not speak, the soldiers were silent.

At the end of the year the maidens spoke, and praised them for their politeness, explained that they were under spells, and for their kindness, gave to the first a cup that would be ever full, and a lamp of light; to the second, a table-cover on which meat was ever; and to the third, a bed in which there would ever be rest for them at any time they chose; and besides, the "TIADHLAICEAN" would make any one who had them get anything he wished. They reached a certain king, whose only daughter pretended to be fond of Kenneth the Yellow, and wheedled him till he gave her the TIADHLAICEAN, when she ordered him to be put in an island in the ocean. When there alone he grew hungry, and ate "abhlan," and a wood like thatch grew through his head, and there remained till he ate "ABHLAN" of another kind, when the wood vanished. He got off in a ship with "ABHLAN" of each sort, and reached the big town of the king where he had been before, where he set up a booth. On a certain day a fair lad came in to sell ABHLAN, and through him the other kind were sold to the king's daughter, and a wood grew on her head. Kenneth the Yellow got back the TIADHLAICEAN, and found his two companions AGUS BHA IAD UILE TUILLEADH ANN AM MEAS AGUS SOIRBHEACHADH GUS A CHRIOCH. And they were all after in worship and prosperousness till the end.

This is manifestly the same story shortened, and made reasonable. It is very well written and spelt according to rule.

3. I have another version of this told by Hector Boyd, fisherman, Castle Bay, Barra, who says he learned it from John MacNeill, who has left the island; and from Neill MacKinnon, Ruagh Lias. In this the three soldiers are English, Scotch, and Irish. The two last desert; and the first, a sergeant, is sent after them. They persuade him to desert also, and they come to a castle. The Irishman acts the part of John in the Islay version; and the first night they eat and go to sleep, and find dresses when they wake. In the morning they get up and put on their dresses; and the board was set over with meat and with drink, and they took their TRATH MADAIN, breakfast. They went to take a walk without. The Englishman had a gun, and he saw three swans swimming on a loch, and he began to put a charge in his gun. The swans perceived him, and they cried to him, and they were sure he was going to shoot at them. They came on shore and became three women. "How are these dresses pleasing you?" said they. "The like will be yours every day in the year, and your meat as good as you got; but that you should neither think or order one of us to be with you in lying down or rising up." And so they remained for a year in the castle. One night the Irishman thought of the swans, and in the morning they had nothing but their old dresses.

They went to the loch; the swans came on shore, became women, and gave a purse that would always be full of gold and jewels, to the Englishman; a knife to the Scotchman, and whenever it was opened he would be wherever he wished; and to the Irishman a horn, and when he blew in the small end there would be a thousand soldiers before him; and when he blew in the big end none of them would be seen.

They go to a big town, and build a house on a green hill with money from the purse; and when the house was built, one about went to the town to buy meat. The Irishman fell in love with the king's daughter, and was cheated out of his magic horn; borrowed the purse, and lost that; and then, by the help of the knife, transported himself and the king's daughter to an island which could hardly be seen in the far ocean. And there they were, and there they stayed for seventeen days, eating fruits. One day he slept with his head on her knee, and she looked at her hands and saw how long the nails had grown; so she put her hand in his pocket and took out the knife to pare them. "Oh," said she, "that I were where the nails grew on me," and she was in her father's house. Then he found red apples and grey apples; and no sooner had he eaten some of the red apples than his head was down, and his heels were up, from the weight of the deer's horns that grew on his head. Then he bethought him that one of the grey apples might heal him; and he stretched himself out with his head downwards, and kicked down one of the apples with his feet, and ate it, and the horns fell off him. Then he made baskets, and filled them with the apples; climbed a tree, saw a ship, tore his shirt and waved it on a stick, and was seen.

The skipper was under an oath that he would never leave a man in extremity. They came on shore for him, and were terrified at his beard, thinking that he was the evil spirit. When he got on board, a razor was got, and (as the narrator said) SHEUBHAIG E he was shaved. The ship sailed straight to the king's house. The lady looked out of a window. He sold her a red apple for a guinea. She ate it, the horns grew, and there were not alive those who could take her from that. They thought of saws, and they sent for doctors; and he came, and then there is a scene in which he pretends to read a divining book, and tries saws on the horns, and frightens the lady and recovers the lost gifts. Then he went to his friends, and they went to the swans; and the spells went off them, and they married them.

The story is very well told, especially the last scene; but it is too like the Islay version to make it worth translating at full length.

4. I have another story, from a Ross-shire man, now in Glasgow, which begins in the same manner, but the incidents are very different.

This story has a counterpart in German, Der Krautesel; and it has a very long pedigree in Grimm's third volume. It seems to be very widely spread, and very old, and to belong to many languages; many versions are given. In one a soldier, one of three, eats apples in a forest, and his nose grows right through the forest, and sixty miles beyond it; and the king's daughter's nose is made to grow, exactly as horns are made to grow on the princess in the Highlands; and she is forced to give up the things which she had got from the soldiers; and which are a purse, a mantle, and a horn of magic power.

In another version, it is a young huntsman who changes a witch and her daughter into donkeys, by giving them magic cabbages, which had previously transformed him.

The swans in the third version seem to belong to Sanscrit, as well as to Norse and other languages. In "Comparative Mythology," by Max Muller, Oxford Essays, 1856, a story is given from the Brâhmana of the Yagurveda, in which this passage occurs--"Then he bewailed his vanished love in bitter grief; and went near Kurukshetra. There is a lake there called Anyatahplaksha, full of lotus flowers; and while the king walked along its border, the fairies

were playing there in the water in the shape of birds; and Urvasi discovered him, and said, ‘That is the man with whom I dwelt so long.’ Then her friends said, ‘Let us appear to him,’” etc., etc.

The rest of the Eastern story has many Western counterparts, such as “Peter Wilkins and the Flying Ladies,” and a story which I have from Islay. The incident of birds which turn out to be enchanted women, occurs in a great many other Gaelic stories; and is in Mr. Peter Buchan’s “Green Sleeves” (see introduction); and, as I am told, in the Edda.

BAILECLIATH is Dublin, and takes its Gaelic name from a legend. The name should be Baile àth Cliath, the town of Wattle Ford; either from wattled boats, or a bridge of hurdles; and as it appears, there was a weaver, or tailor, residing at Ath Cliath, Wattle Ford, who got his living by making creels or hurdles, CLIATHAN, for crossing the river. There was a fluent, gabby old man, who was a friend of his; and from his having such a tongue, the maker of the creels advised him to become a beggar, as he was sure to succeed. He began, and got plenty of money. He wore a cap or currachd, and all the coin he got he buried under a stone, at the end of the wattle bridge. The bridge maker died; the beggar got ill and kept his cap on, and never took it off; and when he was dying he asked his wife to bury him in it; and he was buried with his cap on. The widow’s son found out about the buried treasure, and dug it up; but the beggar’s ghost so tormented the boy, that he had to go to the minister, who advised them to build a bridge with the money; so they built DROCHAID ATH CLIATH, and there it is to this very day.

I do not know which of the Dublin bridges is meant, but the story was got from a woman at Kilmeny in Islay, and this is a mere outline of it. It is known as the story of the red-haired beggar, Am Bochd Ruagh.

Bailecliath is a great place in Gaelic songs.

The story of the Three Soldiers is one of which I remember to have heard a part in my childhood. I perfectly remember contriving with a companion how we would have given the cruel princess bits of different kinds of apples, mixed together, so as to make the horns grow, and fall off time about; but I cannot remember who told me the story. The version I have given is the most complete, but the language of the Barra version is better.

There are two or three inconsistencies. They travel on the towel which had the commissariat, and do not use the locomotive whistle at all. But there are touches of nature. The mason’s labourers thought the time had passed, but the adventurer did not find time so long; and he alone remembered the day.

XI. The Story Of The White Pet

From Mrs. MacTavish, widow of the late minister of Kildalton, Islay.

THERE was a farmer before now who had a White Pet (sheep), and when Christmas was drawing near, he thought that he would kill the White Pet. The White Pet heard that, and he thought he would run away; and that is what he did.

He had not gone far when a bull met him. Said the bull to him, All hail! White Pet, where art thou going? “I,” said the White Pet, “am going to seek my fortune; they were going to kill me for Christmas, and I thought I had better run away.”

“It is better for me,” said the bull, “to go with thee, for they were going to do the very same with me.”

“I am willing,” said the White Pet; “the larger the party the better the fun.”

They went forward till they fell in with a dog.

“All hail! White Pet,” said the dog. “All hail! thou dog.” “Where art thou going?” said the dog.

“I am running away, for I heard that they were threatening to kill me for Christmas.”

“They were going to do the very same to me,” said the dog, “and I will go with you.” “Come, then,” said the White Pet.

They went then, till a cat joined them, “All hail! White Pet!” said the cat. “All hail! oh cat.”

“Where art thou going?” said the cat. “I am going to seek my fortune,” said the White Pet, “because they were going to kill me at Christmas.”

“They were talking about killing me too,” said the cat, “and I had better go with you.”

“Come on then,” said the White Pet.

Then they went forward till a cock met them. “All hail! White Pet,” said the cock.” “All hail to thyself! oh cock,” said the White Pet. “Where,” said the cock, “art thou going?” “I,” said the White Pet, “am going (away), for they were threatening my death at Christmas.”

“They were going to kill me at the very same time,” said the cock, “and I will go with you.”

“Come, then,” said the White Pet.

They went forward till they fell in with a goose.

“All hail! White Pet,” said the goose. “All hail to thyself! oh goose,” said the White Pet. “Where art thou going?” said the goose.

“I,” said the White Pet, “am running away because they were going to kill me at Christmas.”

“They were going to do that to me too,” said the goose, “and I will go with you.”

The party went forward till the night was drawing on them, and they saw a little light far away; and though far off, they were not long getting there. When they reached the house, they said to each other that they would look in at the window to see who was in the house, and they saw thieves counting money; and the White Pet said, “Let every one of us call his own call. I will call my own call; and let the bull call his own call; let the dog call his own

call; and the cat her own call, and the cock his own call; and the goose his own call." With that they gave out one shout--GAIRE!

When the thieves heard the shouting that was without, they thought the mischief was there; and they fled out, and they went to a wood that was near them. When the White Pet and his company saw that the house was empty, they went in and they got the money that the thieves had been counting, and they divided it amongst themselves; and then they thought that they would settle to rest. Said the White Pet, "Where wilt thou sleep to-night, oh bull?" "I will sleep," said the bull, "behind the door where I used" (to be). "Where wilt thou sleep thyself, White Pet?" "I will sleep," said the White Pet, "in the middle of the floor where I used" (to be). "Where wilt thou sleep, oh dog?" said the White Pet. "I will sleep beside the fire where I used" (to be), said the dog. "Where wilt thou sleep, oh cat?" "I will sleep," said the cat, "in the candle press, where I like to be." "Where wilt thou sleep, oh cock?" said the White Pet. "I," said the cock, "will sleep on the rafters where I used" (to be). "Where wilt thou sleep, oh goose?" "I will sleep," said the goose, "on the midden, where I was accustomed to be."

They were not long settled to rest, when one of the thieves returned to look in to see if he could perceive if any one at all was in the house. All things were still, and he went on forward to the candle press for a candle, that he might kindle to make him a light; but when he put his hand in the box the cat thrust her claws into his hand, but he took a candle with him, and he tried to light it. Then the dog got up, and he stuck his tail into a pot of water that was beside the fire; he shook his tail and put out the candle. Then the thief thought that the mischief was in the house, and he fled; but when he was passing the White Pet, he gave him a blow; before he got past the bull, he gave him a kick; and the cock began to crow; and when he went out, the goose began to belabour him with his wings about the shanks.

He went to the wood where his comrades were, as fast as was in his legs. They asked him how it had gone with him. "It went," said he, "but middling; when I went to the candle press, there was a man in it who thrust ten knives into my hand; and when I went to the fireside to light the candle, there was a big black man lying there, who was sprinkling water on it to put it out; and when I tried to go out, there was a big man in the middle of the floor, who gave me a shove; and another man behind the door who pushed me out; and there was a little brat on the loft calling out CUIR-ANEES-AN-SHAW-AY-S-FONI-MI-HAYN-DA--Send him up here and I'll do for him; and there was a GREE-AS-ICH-E, shoemaker, out on the midden, belabouring me about the shanks with his apron."

When the thieves heard that, they did not return to seek their lot of money; and the White Pet and his comrades got it to themselves; and it kept them peaceably as long as they lived.

(Gaelic omitted)

Mrs. MacTavish got this story from a young girl in her service, November 1859, who learned it in OA, a district of Islay, last year, when she was employed in herding cattle.

It is a version of the same tale as Grimm's "Bremer Stadt Musikanten," which appears to have been long known in Germany in various shapes.

The crowing of the cock is imitated in Gaelic and in German. The Gaelic is closer. "Bringt mir den Schelm her" is not so close to "kikeriki" as the Gaelic words--which I have tried to spell phonetically--are to the note of a cock. There is a bull in the Gaelic tale, instead of an ass; and a sheep and a goose, in addition to the dog, cat, and cook, which are common to both. There are six creatures in the one tale, commonly found about the Highland cottage, which is well described; four in the other, common about German cottages. My own opinion is, that the tale is common to both languages and old, but it might have been borrowed from a book so well known in England as Grimm's Stories are. It is worth remark, that the dog and

the cat were to die at Christmas, as well as the sheep and bull, who might reasonably fear to be eaten anywhere, and who have been sacrificed everywhere; the goose, who is always a Christmas dish in the Highlands; and the cock, who should die last of his family, because the toughest. The dog was once sacrificed to Hecate on the 30th of every month; and there was a dog divinity in Egypt. Cats drew the car of Freya, a Norse divinity; they were the companions of Scotch witches, and did wondrous feats in the Highlands. See "Grant Stewart's Highland Superstitions." To roast a cat alive on a spit was a method of raising the fiend and gaining treasure, tried, as it is asserted, not very long ago. I myself remember to have heard, with horror, of a cruel boy, who roasted his mother's cat in an iron pot on a Sunday, while the rest were at church, though it was not said why he did it. A cock has been a sacrifice and sacred amongst many nations; for instance, a cock and a ram's head were emblems of Æsculapius. The crowing of a cock is a terror to all supernatural, unholy beings, according to popular mythology everywhere. When the mother, in these stories, sends her children into the world to seek their fortune, she bakes a cake, and kills a cock. A fowl, as I am informed by a minister in one of the Orkneys, is still, or was lately, buried alive by nurses as a cure for certain childish ailments. In short, the dog, the cat, and the cock may possibly have had good reason to fear death at a religious festival, if this part of their history came from the East with the Celts. The goose also has been sacred time out of mind. Bernacle geese are supposed to be hatched from a seashell. The goose was the great cackler who laid the egg of the world, according to Egyptian inscriptions on coffins. He was the emblem of Seb; he is sacred at the present day in Ceylon. He was sacred in Greece and at Rome; and the Britons would not eat his flesh in the days of Cæsar. Perhaps the custom of eating a goose at Christmas, which, to the best of my knowledge, is peculiar to the Scotch Highlands, may be a custom begun by the British Christians to mark their conversion, and carried on ever since. Much will be found on this subject in "Rawlinson's Herodotus," p. 122, etc.; in "Mill and Wilson's History of British India;" and in books on Ceylon. At all events, this Gaelic story is well known in Islay, for MacLean writes that be has often heard it, and all the creatures mentioned in it have had to do with mythology at some period somewhere.

I suspect that it is one of the class given in "Contes et Apologues Indiens" (Paris, 1860), a class which includes such well known stories as "*The Goose with the golden Eggs*," as a man who cut down a tree to get at the fruit (No. 45); "*The Belly and the Members*," as a quarrel between the head and tail of a serpent (No. 40), a story which somewhat resembles that which is quoted in the introduction, as "*MacLeod's Fool*," "Le Sage et le Fou" (No. 18); "The two Geese that carried a Tortoise" (No. 14); "Le Jenne Brâmane qui c'est sali le Doight" (No. 64), which is a schoolboy story in Scotland in another shape; "The Ass in the Lion's Skin" (No. 59); "Les Choses impossibles et les Reliques du Bouddha" (No. 110), which has a parallel in Gaelic, in broad Scotch, and in Norse. The Gaelic poet describes impossibilities, such as shell-fish bringing heather from the hill, and the climax is a certain great laird dressed in homespun. The Scotch rhyme came to me from a little boy of five year's old, and is called "The Mantle Joe." It begins "'Twas on a Monday Mornin' when the Cat crew Day;" There are "Twenty-four Weavers riding on a Paddock;" "A Hare and a Haddie racin' owre the Lea," and such like; and it, ends, "Frae Beginning to the End it's a' big Lees." The Norse song was written out for me by an officer on board a steamer, and includes "Two Squirrels taming a Bear," and other such events; and the Sanscrit, which Chinese and French savants have translated, names similar absurd events which might sooner happen than the discovery of the reliques of Buddha. In short, European stories are to be traced in the east, and this White Pet may be one of the kind.

XII. The Daughter Of The Skies

From James MacLauchlan, servant, Islay.

THERE was there before now a farmer, and he had a leash of daughters, and much cattle and sheep. He went on a day to see them, and none of them were to be found; and he took the length of the day to search for them. He saw, in the lateness, coming home, a little doggy running about a park.

The doggy came where he, was--"What wilt thou give me," said he, "if I get thy lot of cattle and sheep for thee?" "I don't know myself, thou ugly thing; what wilt thou be asking, and I will give it to thee of anything I have?" "Wilt thou give me," said the doggy, "thy big daughter to marry?" "I will give her to thee," said he, "if she will take thee herself."

They went home, himself and the doggy. Her father said to the eldest daughter, Would she take him? and she said she would not. He said to the second one, Would she marry him? and she said, she would not marry him, though the cattle should not be got for ever. He said to the youngest one, Would she marry him? and she said, that she would marry him. They married, and her sisters were mocking her because she had married him.

He took her with him home to his own place. When he came to his own dwelling-place, he grew into a splendid man. They were together a. great time, and she said she had better go see her father. He said to her to take care that she should not stay till she should have children, for then she expected one. She said she would not stay. He gave her a steed, and he told her as soon as she reached the house, to take the bridle from her head and let her away; and when she wished to come home, that she had but to shake the bridle, and that the steed would come, and that she would put her head into it.

She did as he asked her; she was not long at her father's house when she fell ill, and a child was born. That night men were together at the fire to watch. There came the very prettiest music that ever was heard about the town; and everyone within slept but she. He came in and he took the child from her. He took himself out, and he went away. The music stopped, and each one awoke; and there was no knowing to what side the child had gone.

She did not tell anything, but so soon as she rose she took with her the bridle, and she shook it, and the steed came, and she put her head into it. She took herself off riding, and the steed took to going home; and the swift March wind that would be before her, she would catch; and the swift March wind that would be after her, could not catch her.

She arrived. "Thou art come," said he. "I came," said she. He noticed nothing to her; and no more did she notice anything to him. Near to the end of three quarters again she said, "I had better go see my father." He said to her on this journey as he had said before. She took with her the steed, and she went away; and when she arrived she took the bridle from the steed's head, and she set her home.

That very night a child was born. He came as he did before, with music; every one slept, and he took with him the child. When the music stopped they all awoke. Her father was before her face, saying to her that she must tell what was the reason of the matter. She would not tell anything. When she grew well, and when she rose, she took with her the bridle, she shook it, and the steed came and put her head into it. She took herself away home. When she arrived he said, "Thou art come." "I came," said she. He noticed nothing to her; no more did she notice anything to him. Again at the end of three quarters, she said, "I had better go to see my

father." "Do," said he, "but take care thou dost not as thou didst on the other two journeys." "I will not," said she. He gave her the steed and she went away. She reached her father's house, and that very night a child was born. The music came as was usual, and the child was taken away. Then her father was before her face; and he was going to kill her, if she would not tell what was happening to the children; or what sort of man she had. With the fright he gave her, she told it to him. When she grew well she took the bridle with her to a hill that was opposite to her, and she began shaking the bridle, to try if the steed would come, or if she would put her head into it; and though she were shaking still, the steed would not come. When she saw that she was not coming, she went out on foot. When she arrived, no one was within but the crone that was his mother. "Thou art without a houseman to-day," said the crone; and if thou art quick thou wilt catch him yet. She went away, and she was going till the night came on her. She saw then a light a long way from her; and if it was a long way from her, she was not long in reaching it. When she went in, the floor was ready swept before her, and the housewife spinning up in the end of the house. "Come up," said the housewife, "I know of thy cheer and travel. Thou art going to try if thou canst catch thy man; he is going to marry the daughter of the King of the Skies." "He is!" said she. The housewife rose; she made meat for her; she set on water to wash her feet, and she laid her down. If the day came quickly, it was quicker than that that the housewife rose, and that she made meat for her. She set her on foot then for going; and she gave her shears that would cut alone; and she said to her, "Thou wilt be in the house of my middle sister to-night." She was going, and going, till the night came on her. She saw a light a long way from her; and if it was a long way from her, she was not long in reaching it. When she went in the house was ready swept, a fire on the middle of the floor, and the housewife spinning at the end of the fire. "Come up," said the housewife, "I know thy cheer and travel." She made meat for her, she set on water, she washed her feet, and she laid her down. No sooner came the day than the housewife set her on foot, and made meat for her. She said she had better go; and she gave her a needle would sew by itself. "Thou wilt be in the house of my youngest sister to-night," said she. She was going, and going, till the end of day and the mouth of lateness. She saw a light a long way from her; and if it was a long way from her, she was not long in reaching it. She went in, the house was swept, and the housewife spinning at the end of the fire. "Come up," said she, "I know of thy cheer and travel." She made meat for her, she set on water, she washed her feet, and she laid her down. If the day came quickly, it was quicker than that that the housewife rose; she set her on foot, and she made her meat; she gave her a clue of thread, and the thread would go into the needle by itself and as the shears would cut, and the needle sew, the thread would keep up with them. "Thou wilt be in the town to-night." She reached the town about evening, and she went into the house of the king's hen wife, to lay down her weariness, and she was warming herself at the fire. She said to the crone to give her work, that she would rather be working than be still. "No man is doing a turn in this town to-day," says the hen wife; "the king's daughter has a wedding." "Ud!" said she to the crone, "give me cloth to sew, or a shirt that will keep my hands going." She gave her shirts to make; she took the shears from her pocket, and she set it to work; she set the needle to work after it; as the shears would cut, the needle would sew, and the thread would go into the needle by itself. One of the king's servant maids came in; she was looking at her, and it caused her great wonder how she made the shears and the needle work by themselves. She went home and she told the king's daughter, that one was in the house of the hen wife, and that she had shears and a needle that could work of themselves. "If there is," said the king's daughter, "go thou over in the morning, and say to her, I what will she take for the shears."' In the morning she went over, and she said to her that the king's daughter was asking what would she take for the shears. "Nothing I asked," said she, "but leave to lie where she lay last night." "Go thou over," said the king's daughter, "and say to her that she will get that." She gave the shears to

the king's daughter. When they were going to lie down, the king's daughter gave him a sleep drink, so that he might not wake. He did not wake the length of the night; and no sooner came the day, than the king's daughter came where she was, and set her on foot and put her out. On the morrow she was working with the needle, and cutting with other shears. The king's daughter sent the maid servant over, and she asked "what would she take for the needle?" She said she would not take anything, but leave to lie where she lay last night. The maid servant told this to the king's daughter. "She will get that," said the king's daughter. The maid servant told that she would get that, and she got the needle. When they were going to lie down, the king's daughter gave him a sleep drink, and he did not wake that night. The eldest son he had was lying in a bed beside them; and he was hearing her speaking to him through the night, and saying to him that she was the mother of his three children. His father and he himself was taking a walk out, and he told his father what he was hearing. This day the king's daughter sent the servant maid to ask what she would take for the clue; and she said she would ask but leave to lie where she lay last night. "She will get that," said the king's daughter. This night when he got the sleep drink, he emptied it, and he did not drink it at all. Through the night she said to him that he was the father of her three sons; and he said that he was. In the morning, when the king's daughter came down, he said to her to go up, that she was his wife who was with him. When they rose they went away to go home. They came home; the spells went off him, they planted together and I left them, and they left me.

(Gaelic omitted)

This is but another version of No. III., "The Hoodie;" but it has certain magic gifts which I have not found in any other Gaelic story; and the *little dog* who goes to the skies, and is about to marry the daughter of the king, and is transformed into a man at home, may turn out to be a Celtic divinity. When so little is known of Celtic mythology, anything may be of use. The raven, the crow, and the serpent, have appeared as transformed beings of superior power. Now, the little dog appears, and there are mystic dogs elsewhere in Gaelic stories, and in other Celtic countries. In the Isle of Man is the well-known "Modey dhu," black dog which used to haunt Peel Castle, and frightened a soldier to death.

In a carious book, written to prove Gaelic to be the original language (History of the Celtic Language, by L. MacLean, 1840), there is a great deal of speculation as to the Farnese Globe; and the dog-star in particular is supposed to have been worshipped by the Druids. Without entering into such a wide field, it is worth notice that "Anubis," the dog-star, was son of Osiris and Nephthys, had the nature of a dog, and was represented with the head of one. He was a celestial double deity, and watched the tropics. The servant lad who told this story; and the old woman, MacKerrol, from whom he learned it, are not likely persons to have heard of Anubis, or the Farnese Globe; so anything got from them may be taken at its value, whatever that may be. The opinion that Celts came from the East by way of Phœnicia, has been held by many, and some one may wish to follow the trail of the little dog; so I give his history as it came to me, rather than fuse it into one story with the Hoodie, as I was at first tempted to do before the plan of this work was decided on.

The beginning of this tale is the Gaelic "Once upon a time."

Bha siod ann roimhe so.

Was yonder in it ere this.

TRIUR is a collective noun of number for three, and answers to *leash*; or to *pair*, *brace*, *dozen*, for two; twelve.

STEUD is clearly the same word as steed. It is commonly used in these stories, and I have never heard it used in conversation. It is feminine, like FALAIRE, the other word commonly used for a horse in stories and poetry; and hardly ever in ordinary speech.

Many words are derived from steud, and I do not think that it is imported.

XIII. The Girl And The Dead Man

From Ann Darroch, Islay.

THERE was before now a poor woman, and she had a leash of daughters. Said the eldest one of them to her mother, “I had better go myself and seek for fortune.” “I had better,” said her mother, “bake a bannock for thee.” When the bannock was ready, her mother said to her, “Whether wouldst thou like best the bit and my blessing, or the big bit and my curse?” “I would rather,” said she, “the big bit and thy curse.” She went away, and when the night was wreathing round her, she sat at the foot of a wall to eat the bannock. There gathered the sreath chuileanach and her twelve puppies, and the little birds of the air about her, for a part of the bannock. “Wilt thou give us a part of the bannock,” said they. “I won’t give it, you ugly brutes; I have not much for myself.” “My curse will be thine, and the curse of my twelve birds; and thy mother’s curse is the worst of all.” She rose and she went away, and she had not half enough with the bit of the bannock. She saw a little house a long way from her; and if a long way from her, she was not long reaching it. She struck in the door. “Who’s there?” “A good maid seeking a master.” “We want that,” said they, and she got in. She had now a peck of gold and a peek of silver to get; and she was to be awake every night to watch a dead man, brother of the housewife, who was under spells. She had besides, of nuts as she broke, of needles as she lost, of thimbles as she pierced, of thread as she used, of candles as she burned, a bed of green silk over her, a bed of green silk under her, sleeping by day and watching by night. The first night when she was watching she fell asleep; the mistress came in, she struck the magic club on her, she fell down dead, and she threw her out at the back of the midden.

Said the middle one to her mother, “I had better go seek fortune and follow my sister.” Her mother baked her a bannock; and she chose the big half and her mother’s curse, as her elder sister did, and it happened to her as it happened to her sister.

Said the youngest one to her mother, “I had better myself go to seek fortune too, and follow my sisters.” “I had better bake a bannock,” said her mother. “Whether wouldst thou rather the little bit and my blessing, or the big bit and my curse?

“I would rather the little bit and your blessing.” She went, and the night was wreathing round her, and she sat at the foot of a wall to eat the bannock. There gathered the sreath chuileanach and the twelve puppies, and the little birds of the air about her. “Wilt thou give us some of that?” “I will give, you pretty creatures, if you will keep me company.” She gave them some of the bannock; they ate and they had plenty, and she had enough. They clapped their wings about her till she was snug with the warmth. She went, she saw a little house a long way from her; and if it was a long way from her, she was not long reaching it. She struck in the door. “Who’s there?” “A good maid seeking a master.” “We have need of that.” The wages she had were a peck of gold and a peck of silver; of nuts as she broke, of needles as she lost, of thimbles as she pierced, of thread as she used, of candles as she burned, a bed of the green silk over her, and a bed of the green silk under her. She sat to watch the dead man, and she was sewing; on the middle of night he rose up, and screwed up a grin. “If thou dost not lie down properly, I will give thee the one leathering with a stick.” He lay down. At the end of a while, he rose on one elbow, and screwed up a grin; and the third time he rose and screwed up a grin. When he rose the third time, she struck him a lounder of the stick; the stick stuck to the dead man, and the hand stuck to the stick; and out they were. They went forward till they were going through a wood; when it was low for her it was high for him; and when it was

high for him it was low for her. The nuts were knocking their eyes out, and the sloes taking their ears off, till they got through the wood. After going through the wood they returned home. She got a peck of gold and a peck of silver, and the vessel of cordial. She rubbed the vessel of cordial to her two sisters, and brought them alive. They returned home; they left me sitting here, and if they were well, ‘tis well; and if they were not, let them be.

(Gaelic omitted)

This story has some relation to “The man who travelled to learn what fear was;” but I know nothing quite like it in Gaelic, or in any other language. Ann Darroch, who told it to Hector MacLean in May 1859, learned it from an old woman, Margaret Conal, of whom MacLean writes--

“I have some recollection of her myself; she was wont to repeat numerous ‘ursgeuln’ (tales). Her favourite resorts were the kilns, where the people were kiln-drying their corn; and where she was frequently rewarded, for amusing them in this manner, by supplies of meal. She was paralytic; her head shook like an aspen leaf, and whenever she repeated anything that was very exciting, her head shook more rapidly; which impressed children with great awe.”

Some of the phrases are evidently remembered, and said by heart; the maid’s wages, for instance; and the creatures that came to the wandering daughters. The vessel of Balsam occurs often in Gaelic stories, and I cannot make out what it really means. BALLAN IOCSHLAINT, teat, of ichor, of health, seems to be the meaning of the words.

In former days the kilns were not always used for drying corn. It is related that one of the first excisemen who went to the West, found and caught a large party of men kiln-drying malt. He made a seizure of course, and was not a little surprised when he was seized himself, and his arms tied fast behind him. His eyes were bound also; and then he was led to the kiln and set down near the fire; and they gave him the malt to smell and taste; and then they told him it was to be used in making whiskey; and then they gave him a drop, and then a dram, till the gauger was so drunk that they left him there, and departed with their malt kiln-dried and ground.

This I have heard told of the very place which Margaret Conal. used to haunt, and of a time when she might have been a little girl; I cannot vouch for the truth of my story, but the kiln and the men about it may be seen now; and such scenes may well account for the preservation of wild stories. A child would not easily forget a story learned amongst a lot of rough farmers, seated at night round a blazing fire, listening to an old crone with palsied head and hands; and accordingly, I have repeatedly heard that the mill, and the kiln, were the places where my informants learned their tales.

There is a word in this tale which the narrator, the translator, the transcriber, the dictionary, and the “old men,” have failed to explain.

SREATH [?] SOIGH, a bitch (Ross-shire, etc.) CHUILEANACH means some kind of bird, and she has twelve “puppies,” DA CHUILEAN DEUG. The narrator maintains that the words are right as she heard them.

XIV. The King Who Wished To Marry His Daughter

From Ann Darroch, Islay.

THERE was a king before now, and he married, and he had but one daughter. When his wife departed, he would marry none but one whom her clothes would fit. His daughter one day tried her mother's dress on, and she came and she let her father see how it fitted her. It was fitting her well. When her father saw her he would marry no woman but her. She went, crying where her muime was; and her foster mother said to her, "What was the matter with her?" She said, "That her father was insisting that he would marry her." Her muime told her to say to him, "That she would not marry him till he should get her a gown of the swan's down." He went, and at the end of a day and a year he came, and the gown with him. She went again to take the counsel of her muime. "Say to him," said her muime, "that thou wilt not marry him till he gets thee a gown of the moorland canach." She said this to him. He went, and at the end of a day and year he returned, and a gown of the moorland canach with him. "Say now to him," said her muime, "that thou wilt not marry him till he brings thee a gown of silk that will stand on the ground with gold and silver." At the end of a day and year he returned with the gown. "Say to him now," said her muime, "that thou wilt not marry him till he brings thee a golden shoe, and a silver shoe." He got her a golden shoe and a silver shoe. "Say to him now," said her muime, "that thou wilt not marry him unless he brings thee a kist that will lock without and within, and for which it is all the same to be on sea or on land." When she got the kist, she folded the best of her mother's clothes, and of her own clothes in it. Then she went herself into the kist, and she asked her father to put it out on the sea to try how it would swim. Her father put it out; when it was put out, it was going, and going, till it went out of sight.

It went on shore on the other side; and a herd came where it was, intending to break it, in hopes that there, were finding in the chest. When he was going to break it she called out, "Do not so; but say to thy father to come here, and he will get that which will better him for life." His father came, and he took her with him to his own house. It was with a king that he was herd, and the king's house was near him. "If I could get," said she, leave to go to service to this great house yonder." They want none," said the herd, "unless they want one under the hand of the cook." The herd went to speak for her, and she went as a servant maid under the hand of the cook. When the rest were going to the sermon; and when they asked her if she was going to it, she said that she was not; that she had a little bread to bake, and that she could not go to it. When they went away, she took herself to the herd's house, and she put on a gown of the down of the swan. She went to the sermon, and she sat opposite the king's son. The king's son took love for her. She went a while before the sermon skailed, she reached the herd's house, she changed her clothes, and she was in before them. When the rest came home, it was talking about the gentlewoman that was at the sermon they were.

The next Sunday they said to her, "Was she going to the sermon;" and she said, "That she was not, that she had a little bread to bake." When they went away, she reached the herd's house, and she put on a gown of the moorland canach; and she went to the sermon. The king's son was seated where he was the Sunday before, and she sat opposite to him. She came out before them, and she changed, and she was at the house before them; and when the rest came home, it was talking about the great gentlewoman that was at the sermon they were. The third Sunday, they said to her, "Was she going to the sermon;" and she said, "That she was not, that she had a little bread to bake." When they went away, she reached the herd's

house; she put on the gown that would stand on the ground with gold and silver, and the golden shoe and the silver shoe, and she went to the sermon. The king's son was seated where she was the Sunday before, and she sat where he was. A watch was set on the doors this Sunday. She arose, she saw a cranny, and she jumped out at the cranny; but they kept hold of one of the shoes.

The king's son said, "Whomsoever that shoe would fit, she it was that he would marry."

Many were trying the shoe on, and taking off their toes and heels to try if it would fit them; but there were none whom the shoe would fit. There was a little bird in the top of a tree, always saying as every one was trying on the shoe, "Beeg beeg ha nan doot a heeg ach don tjay veeg a ha fo laiv a hawchkare." "Wee wee, it comes not on thee; but on the wee one under the hand of the cook." When he could get none whom the shoe would fit, the king's son lay down, and his mother went to the kitchen to talk over the matter. "Wont you let me see the shoe?" said she; "I will not do it any harm at all events." "Thou! thou ugly dirty thing, that it should fit thee." She went down, and she told this to her son. "Is it not known," said he, "that it wont fit her at all events? and can't you give it her to please her?" As soon as the shoe went on the floor, the shoe jumped on her foot. "What will you give me," said she, "to let you see the other one?" She reached the herd's house, and she put on the shoes, and the dress that would stand on the floor with gold and silver. When she returned, there was but to send word for a minister, and she herself and the king's son married.

(Gaelic omitted)

Ann Darroch got this tale from Margaret Connel.

The chest meant by the narrator of this version is clearly the kist, which every well provided highland lass takes to service. Such kists, and such lassies seated on them, may be seen in every highland steam-boat; and still finer kists may be seen in every cottage in Norway, where wood is more plentiful, and kists are on a larger scale. The contents of all are alike; the clothes of generations. The mother's Sunday dresses, and the grandmother's, with some fine shawl, or cap, or bonnet, or something hideous, modern, and fashionable, more prized far than the picturesque old plaid, or bright red cloak of Scotch women, or the endless Norse costumes, which are going out of fashion in the same way. The little bird's note is imitated, and I have tried to spell the speech in English.

2d. I heard a version of this in the island of South Uist, in September 1859, from my companion MacCraw, who got it from a girl then in the inn at the Sound of Benbecula, MORAG A CHOTA BHAIN, Margery White Coats. A king had four daughters, and his wife died, and he said he would marry any one whom his dead wife's clothes would fit. One day the daughters tried, and the youngest only could wear them. The king saw them from a window, and wished to marry her, and she went for advice to her mother's brother. He advised her to promise to marry the king if he would bring her a gown of birds' down, and a gown of the colours of the sky, woven with silver; and when he got that, a gown of the colours of the stars, woven with gold, and glass shoes. When he had got them, she escaped with all her clothes, by the help of her uncle, on a filly, with a magic bridle, she on one side, and her chest of clothes on the other. She rode to a king's palace, hid the chest in a hill under a bush of rushes, turned the filly loose, and went to the palace with nothing on but a white petticoat and a shift. She took service with the cook, and grew dirty and ugly, and slept on a bench by the kitchen fire, and her work was to blow under the great caldron all day long. One day the king's son came home, and was to hold a feast; she went to the queen and asked leave to go, and was refused because she was so dirty. The queen had a basin of water in her hand, and threw it at her, and it broke. She went to the hill, took out the dress of down and silver,

and shook her magic bridle; the filly came, and she mounted, and rode to the feast. “The king’s son took her by the hand, and took her up as high as any there, and set her on his own lap; and when the feast was over, there was no reel that he danced but he gave it to her.” He asked her whence she came, and she said, from the kingdom of Broken Basins; and the prince said that he had never heard of that land, though he had travelled far. She escaped and returned to the cook, and all were talking about the beautiful lady. She asked about her, and was told not to talk about what she did not understand, “a dirty little wretch like her.” Then the prince had another feast; and she asked leave again, and the queen refused, and threw a candlestick at her, and it broke, and she did as before. She put on another dress and went; the king’s son had eight men on each side of the door to catch her. The same scene went on, and she said she came from the country of Candlesticks--”TIR NAN COILLEARAN,” and escaped, leaving a glass shoe. Then the king’s son fell sick (of course), and would only marry the woman whom the shoe would fit; and all the ladies came and cut off their toes and heels, but in vain. Then he asked if there was none other. Then a small creature put his head in at the door and said, “If thou didst but know, she whom thou seekest is under the cook.” Then he got the history of the basin and candlestick from his mother. The shoe was tried and fitted, and he was to marry Morag. All were in despair, and abused her; but she went out to her chest, shook the magic bridle, and arrayed herself, and came back on the filly, with a “powney” behind with the chest. Then all there that had despised her fell on their knees, and she was married to the prince. “And I did not get a bit there at the wedding,” said the girl.

This was told as we walked along the road, and is but a short outline of what was told me, written from notes made in the evening. The man said that the girl told it with a great deal of the queer old language, which he could not remember.

The girl and her chest on the same horse may be seen in the Highlands. The girl, in her white coats and short gown, may be seen blowing the fire in highland inns, the queen’s likeness might be found; and the feast is a highland ball; the filly and the magic bridle are common in other stories; the incidents of the basin and candlestick have an equivalent in Norse; and I got them from a woman at the Sound of Barra afterwards, in another story. This shows what may be lost by dignified travelling. While the man was enjoying himself in the kitchen, the employer was smoking in solitary dignity, up stairs in his bed-room, writing a journal, and utterly unconscious that the game he pursued was, so near.

I have other versions of this tale from other sources, and may find room for them hereafter.

The beginning is clearly the same as the French story of “Peau d’Ane,” and the end of it is the same as the Norse “Katie Wooden Cloak;” that is the same as Mr. Peter Buchan’s “Rashen Coatie” (MSS. collection); and that again has something of “The Sharp Grey Sheep” in Gaelic; and that has to do with half a dozen stories in Grimm; and this is like “Cinderella,” and like a Scotch story, quoted in a review of Chambers’ Nursery Rhymes in Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine.

In fifteen volumes which I explored one fine day, to see if Tait could account for highland stories, I found few popular tales; and of these taken from the German, which I did find, I have found none in the west, so far as I can remember. Tait’s stories are polished, but in some of the original poetry legends can be traced.

“Finette Cendron,” in the collection of the Contesse d’Aulnoy, belongs to the same class; and the story exists in Straparola, a book which is now very little known, and which deserves to be forgotten, but which contains useful information nevertheless. Those who hold that popular tales are derived from books, will look on Straparola’s story as the original. It was printed at Venice in Italian in 1567, that is 293 years ago. Those who hold that popular tales

are preserved in all countries, and in all languages alike, will hold that the Italian, German, French, Norse, English, and Gaelic, are all versions of the same story, and that it is as old as the common stock from which all these races sprang.

After working for a year, and weighing all the evidence that has come in my way, I have come to agree with those who hold that popular tales are generally pure traditions; but in order that others may judge, I give the following short outline of the story in Straparola. Favola iv.

Tebaldo, prince of Salerno, promises to his dying wife, that he will only marry another, if he can find one whom a certain ring will fit. After a time the promise becomes known, and it is noised abroad that the prince wishes to marry again. Ladies come; but the ring is too small for one, too large for another, and fits no one. One day, Doralice, the daughter of Tebaldo, tries on her mother's ring, and shows her father that it fits, and then the same strange unnatural wish to marry his daughter seizes the Prince of Salerno that seizes the fathers in the French and Gaelic stories, and caused the Cenci tragedy; but the French and Gaelic stories have something about dresses, which the Italian has not.

Doralice goes to her old nurse for advice, and hides herself in a wardrobe which none could open from without but the nurse, who puts in a supply of a certain liquor, of which a spoonful, however small, would keep a person alive for a long time. The wardrobe is described, and it is such a one as would be found in an Italian palace. The father, having missed the daughter, cannot abide the sight of the wardrobe, orders it to be carried to the piazza by servants, and it is sold to a Genoese merchant. He carries it over sea in a ship to Britannia, and there sells it to the king "Genese."

Here let me remark that the form of the popular tale was exactly the same as it is now, nearly three hundred years ago. The scene is laid somewhere a long way off; the names are those which the narrator happens to know, misapplied; the ornaments are those about him; and the incidents. within a certain range, are preserved entire. The story is an old play, with new scenery, and decorations in every country, and with fresh actors in every age.

King Genese of England comes on board the ship, and is taken with the beauty of the wardrobe, buys it, and has it taken to his own chamber. The hidden lady comes out when she is left alone, adorns the chamber, sweeps it and keeps it neat, and at last she is discovered, and the king marries her.

And here the Italian story goes off on quite a different road. It does as popular tales seem to do everywhere else. No sooner has a seeming origin been discovered for one bit, than the whole changes into something else. It is as if some convulsion were to overturn the Vatican, and break the statues once more, and some future antiquary were to try to fit the heads, legs, and arms to the proper bodies. The head of Apollo would not do for the Torso Farnese, but it might seem to fit some strapping Venus, and her arms might go on to some Apollino; and so, when only a few fragments of popular tales are known, it is perfectly hopeless to try to restore them. If all the fragments of all the statues in the Vatican were gathered together, then there might be some hope of mending them; but some are strongly suspected not to wear their own heads even now. If all the fragments of all the popular tales in the world were gathered, something might be reconstructed; but, unless each collector is content to bring his gatherings without alteration, the restorer will have hard work.

But to return to Straparola. The king marries the beautiful lady who keeps his room so tidy in so mysterious a manner, and they have two sons. The wicked Tebaldo, wandering over the world in disguise, arrives in Britain, knows his daughter, obtains access to the palace, murders the two children, and leaves a bloody knife in the Queen's possession. An astrologer

is consulted, tells that the knife will be found, and it is found in the Queen's keeping; and she is to die. The astrologer, who knows everything, goes off to the old nurse, who comes at once to England, and tells the king all that has happened. Tebaldo is caught, and torn to pieces by four horses, and his flesh given to rabid dogs.

So end the wicked in many Gaelic tales. "He was torn between horses, burned amongst fires, and his ashes let fly with the wind," is the end of one.

The French story, "Peau d'Ane," is in "les Contes des Fées de Charles Perrault," the wicked father was sent for "Robes," "Couleur du temps," "Couleur du soleil," "Couleur de la Lune," and got them; and then for a donkey's skin, in which the lady disguised herself. But then the French story goes off on another road, for the donkey was precious and magical, and pieces of gold were found in his stall; and he belongs to another class of stories, which have Gaelic relations. (Perrault died 1703).

And so popular tales are woven together in a network which seems to pervade the world, and to be fastened to everything in it. Tradition, books, history, and mythology, hang together; no sooner has the net been freed from one snag, and a mesh gained, than another mesh is discovered; and so, unless many hands combine, the net and the contents will never be brought to shore.

XV. The Poor Brother And The Rich

From Flora MacIntyre, Islay.

THERE was a poor brother and a rich brother before now. The work that the poor one had, was to be at drains; he hired a gillie, and they had nothing with their mealtime but to take it without sauce. “Had’nt we better,” said the gillie, “steal a cow of thy brother’s lot?” They went and they did this.

The rich brother was taking a notion that it was they who stole his cow; and he did not know in what way he could contrive to find out if it were they who stole her. He went and he put his mother-in-law in a kist, and he came to seek room for the kist in his brother’s house; he put bread and cheese with the crone in the kist; and there was a hole in it, in order that she might find out everything. The gillie found out that the crone was in the kist; he wetted sacks and put them on top of the kist; the water was streaming out of the sacks on the crone, and she was not hearing a word. He went, in the night, where the crone was, and he said to her, “Was she hearing?” “I am not,” said she.” “Art thou eating a few?” “I am not.” “Give me a piece of the cheese, and I will cut it for thee.” He cut the cheese, and he stuffed it into her throat till she was choked. The kist was taken home, and the dead crone in it. They buried the crone, and they laid out but little on her.

In the night, said the poor man’s gillie to his master, “Is it not lamentable that such and such linen should go with the crone to the cell,[16] while the children are so much in want of shirts?” He went, and he took a spade with him, and he reached the church-yard. He dug the grave, and he took the crone from the coffin; he took off her the tais dress, he threw her on his back, and he came to the house of the rich brother; he went in with her, and he placed her seated at the fireside, and the tongs between her two feet. When the maid servant rose in the morning, she fell in a faint when she saw the crone before her. The rich brother thrashed his wife because of her mother saying, “that she was about to bring him to bare ruin.” He went to the house of his poor brother and told that the crone had come home. “Ah ha!” said the gillie, “because thou didst not spend enough on her living, thou wilt spend it on her dead; I saw the like of this before; thou must lay out a good deal on her.”

They bought a good lot of things for the funeral, and they left the one half of it in the house of the poor brother and they buried the crone again. “Is it not lamentable,” said the poor brother’s gillie to his master, “that such a lot of linen should go on the crone, while thou art so much in want of a shirt thyself?” He went to the cell that night again, he raised the crone, he took off her the tais clothes, and he took her with him on his back; he went into the house of the rich brother, as was usual, and be set the crone standing at the end of the dresser, with her claw full of seeds from the dish of sowens, as if she were eating it. When the man of the house saw her back in the morning, he thrashed his wife soundly, because of her mother. He went then to the house of his poor brother, and he told that the crone had come home again. “Aha!” said the gillie, “because thou didst not spend money on her living, thou wilt spend it on her dead; I saw the like of this before.” “Go thou, then, and lay out a good deal on her, for I am tired of her,” said the man. He bought a good lot for the crone’s funeral, and he took the one half to his master’s house. They buried the crone. In the night, said the gillie to his master, “Is it not lamentable that such linen should go with the crone to the cell, while I myself am in such want of a shirt.” He took himself to the cell, he raised the crone, he took

[16] “KILL,” cell a small church; hence applied to church yards.

off her the tais dress, he put her on top of him, and he reached the rich brother's house. He did not get in this journey, so he went with her to the stable, and he tied her on top of a year-old colt. When they rose in the morning, they were well pleased when they did not see the crone before them. He was going from home; he went out to the stable, and he took the mare with him; but he never perceived that the crone was on top of the year-old. When he went away on top of the mare, after him went the year-old with the crone clattering on top of him. He turned back when he saw the crone, and he was like to kill his wife this time. He went to his brother's house and he told that the crone had come back again.

"As thou didst not spend money on her living," said the gillie, "thou must spend it on her dead"

"Go and lay out as thou wilt on her," said he to the gillie, "but keep her away."

He went this time and he bought a good lot for the crone's funeral, and he invited every one in the place.

The buried the crone again; and the poor brother was as wealthy as the other, by reason of the funerals.

(Gaelic omitted)

One James MacQueen, who lived at Tirneagan, near Kilmeny, but who is not living now, gave this to one Flora MacIntyre, at Kilmeny, who told it to Hector MacLean.--May 1859.

This story is not like any other that I know. It is one of a kind which is common, in which mortals alone play a part. Some are humorous, and some free. One such has been versified by Allan Ramsay, page 520, vol. 2; and is nearly the same as Tom Totherhouse, the Norse tale.

The expensive funeral was once truly highland; and the invitation to all the world characteristic. It used to be told of one such funeral party, that they dropped the coffin out of a cart on the way over a strand, and never found it out till they got to the churchyard. They returned and finished the funeral, but went home afterwards very drunk; the sons shouting "Horo! it's the carlin's wedding." The funeral dinner was within my memory, and still may be, a solemn feast. Such toasts as "Comfort to the distressed," and "The memory of the deceased," were drank in solemn silence; and the whole matter was conducted with gravity and decorum, but with profuse and necessary hospitality, for the funeral guests had often to travel great distances, and the coffin had to be carried many miles. No Highlander, if his friends can help it, is buried anywhere but at home; coffins may be seen on board the steamers, conveying to the outer islands the bodies of those who have died on the mainland. It is a poetic wish to be buried amongst friends, and one that is in full force in the Highlands to this day. The curse of Scotland may occasionally intrude even on such solemn occasions; but a funeral is almost always decorously conducted. In some places, as I am told, a piper may still be seen at the head of the funeral procession, playing a dirge. There is no want of reverence, but death is treated as an ordinary event. I have seen a man's tombstone, with a blank for the date, standing at the end of his house, while he was quite well.

It was lately said of a man who went home to die, "He took his own body home;" and so he did.

There is something mythological about the old woman who will not rest, because enough has not been laid out on her funeral. It may be some remnant of a notion of purgatory; but I suspect it is something heathen.

Romans had to pay their passage, perhaps Celts had to do so likewise.

XVI. The King Of Lochlin's Three Daughters

From Neill Gillies, fisherman, near Inverary.

THERE was a king over Lochlin, once upon a time, who had a leash of daughters; they went out (on) a day to take a walk; and there came three giants, and they took with them the daughters of the king, and there was no knowing where they had gone. Then the king sent word for the sheanachy, and he asked him if he knew where his lot of daughters had gone. The sheanachy said to the king that three giants had taken them with them, and they were in the earth down below by them, and there was no way to get them but by making a ship that would sail on sea and land; and so it was that the king set out an order, any one who would build a ship that would sail on sea and on land, that he should get the king's big daughter to marry. There was a widow there who had a leash of sons; and the eldest said to his mother on a day that was there, "Cook for me a bannock, and roast a cock; I am going away to cut wood, and to build a ship that will go to seek the daughters of the king." His mother said to him, "Which is better with thee, the big bannock with my cursing, or a little bannock with my blessing?" "Give me a big bannock, it will be small enough before I build a ship." He got a bannock and he went away. He arrived where there was a great wood and a river, and there he sat at the side of the river to take the bannock. A great Uruisg came out of the river, and she asked a part of the bannock. He said that he would not give her a morsel, that it was little enough for himself. He began cutting the wood, and every tree he cut would be on foot again; and so he was till the night came.

When the night came, he went home mournful, tearful, blind sorrowful. His mother asked, "How went it with thee to-day, son?" He said "That it went but black ill; every tree I would cut would be on foot again." A day or two after this the middle brother said that he himself would go; and he asked his mother to cook him a cake and roast him a cock; and in the very way as happened to his eldest brother, so it happened to him. The mother said the very same thing to the young one; and *he* took the little bannock. The Uruisg came, and she asked a part of the cake and the cock. He said to her, "That she should get that." When the Uruisg had eaten her own share of the cake and of the cock, she said to him, That she knew what had brought him there as well as he himself, but he was to go home; but to be sure to meet her there at the end of a day and year; and that the ship would be ready at the end.

It was thus it happened: At the end of a day and a year the widow's young son went, and he found that the Uruisg had the ship floating on the river, fully equipped. He went away then with the ship, and a leash of gentlemen, as great as were in the kingdom, that were to marry the daughters of the king. They were but a short time sailing when they saw a man drinking a river that was there. He asked him, "What art thou doing there?" "I am drinking up this river." "Thou hadst better come with me, and I will give thee meat and wages, and better work than that." "I will do that," said he. They had not gone far forward, when they saw a man eating a stot in a park. "What art thou doing there?" said he.

"I am here going to eat all the stots in this park."

"Thou hadst better go with me, and thou wilt get work, and wages better than raw flesh." "I will do that," said he. They went but a short distance when they saw another man with his ear to the earth. "What art thou doing there?" said he. "I am here hearing the grass coming through earth." "Go with me, and thou wilt get meat, and better wages than to be there with thy ear to the earth." They were thus sailing back and forwards, when the man who was listening said, "That this was the place in which were the king's daughters and the giants."

The widow's son, and the three that had fallen in with them, were let down in a creel in a great hole that was there. They reached the house of the big giant. "Ha! ha!" said he, the giant, "I knew well what thou art seeking here. Thou art seeking the king's daughter, but thou wilt not get that, unless thou hast a man that wilt drink as much water as I." He set the man who was drinking the river to hold drinking against the giant; and before he was half satisfied the giant burst. Then they went where the second giant was. "Ho, both! ha, hath!" said the giant, "I know well what sent thee here; thou art seeking the king's daughter; but thou shalt not get her, if thou hast not a man who will eat as much flesh as I." He set the man who was eating the stot to hold the eating of flesh against the giant; but before he was half satisfied the giant burst. Then he went where the third giant was. "Haio!" said the giant, "I know what set thee here; but thou wilt not get the king's daughter, by any means, unless thou stayest a day and a year by me a sgalag" (slave, servant). "I will do that," said he; and he sent up in the basket, first the three men, and then the king's daughters. The three great men were waiting at the mouth of the hole till they should come up, and they went with them where the king was; and they told the king that they themselves had done all the daring deeds that there were.

When the end of a day and year had come, he said to the giant, "that he was going." The giant said, "That he had an eagle that would set him up to the top of the hole." The giant set the eagle away with him, and five stots and ten for a meal for her; but the eagle went not half way up through the hole when she had eaten the stots, and she returned back again.

Then the giant said to him, "Thou must remain by me another day and year, and then I will send thee away." When the end of this year came he sent the eagle away with him, and ten stots and twenty. They went this time well further on than they went before, but she ate the stots and she turned back. "Thou must," said the giant, "stay by me another year, and then I will send thee away." The end of this year came, and the giant sent them away, and three score of stots for the eagle's meat; and when they were at the mouth of the hole the stots were expended, and she was going to turn back; but he took a steak out of his own thigh, and he gave this to the eagle, and with one spring she was on the surface of the earth.

At the time of parting the eagle gave him a whistle, and she said to him, "Any hard lot that comes on thee, whistle and I will be at thy side." He did not allow his foot to stop, or empty a puddle out of his shoe, till he reached the king's big town. He went where there was a smith who was in the town, and he asked the smith if he was in want of a gillie to blow the bellows. The smith said that he was. He was but a short time by the smith, when the king's big daughter sent word for the smith. "I am hearing," said she, "that thou art the best smith in the town; but if thou dost not make for me a golden crown, like the golden crown that I had when I was by the giant, the head shall be taken off thee." The smith came home sorrowfully, lamentably; and his wife asked him his news from the king's house. "There is but poor news," said the smith; "the king's daughter is asking that a golden crown shall be made for her, like the crown that she had when she was under the earth by the giant; but what do I know what likeness was on the crown that the giant had." The bellows-blowing gillie said, "Let not that set thee thinking; get thou for me enough of gold, and I will not be long making the crown." The smith got of gold as he asked, with the king's order. The gillie went into the smithy, and he shut the door; and he began to splinter the gold asunder, and to throw it out of the window. Each one that came the way was gathering the gold, that the bellows lad was hurling out. Here, then, he blew the whistle, and in the twinkling of an eye the eagle came. "Go," said he to the eagle, "and bring here the golden crown that is above the big giant's door." The eagle went, and she was not long on the way, and the crown (was) with her. He gave the crown to the smith. The smith went so merrily, cheerily with the crown where the king's daughter was. "Well then," said she, "if I did not know that it could not be done, I would not believe that this is not the crown I had when I was with the big giant." The king's

middle daughter said to the smith, “Thou wilt lose the head if thou dost not make for me, a silver crown, like the one I had when I was by the giant.” The smith took himself home in misery: but his wife went to meet him, expecting great news and flattery; but so it was, that the gillie said that he would make a silver crown if he could get enough of silver. The smith got plenty of silver with the king’s order. The gillie went, and he did as he did before. He whistled: the eagle came. “Go,” said he, “and bring hither here to me, the silver crown that the king’s middle daughter had when she was by the giant.”

The eagle went, and she was not long on the journey with the silver crown. The smith went merrily, cheerily, with the silver crown to the king’s daughter. “Well, then,” said she, “it is marvellously like the crown I had when I was by the giant.” The king’s young daughter said to the smith that he should make a copper crown for her, like the copper crown she had when she was by the giant. The smith now was taking courage, and he went home much more pleasantly this turn. The gillie began to splinter the copper, and to throw it out of each door and window; and now they were from each end of the town gathering the copper, as they were gathering the silver and gold. He blew the whistle, and the eagle was at his side.

“Go back,” said he, “and bring here hither to me the copper crown that the king’s young daughter had when she was by the giant,” The eagle went, and she was not long going and coming. He gave the crown to the smith. The smith went merrily, cheerily, and he gave it to the king’s young daughter. “Well, then!” said she, “I would not believe that this was not the very crown that I had when I was by the giant underground, if there were a way of getting it.” Here the king said to the smith, that he must tell him where he had learned crown making, “for I did not know that the like of thee was in the kingdom.” “Well, then,” said the smith, “with your leave, oh king, it was not I who made the crowns, but the gillie I have blowing the bellows.” “I must see thy gillie,” said the king, “till he makes a crown for myself.”

The king ordered four horses in a coach, and that they should go to seek the smith’s gillie; and when the coach came to the smithy, the smith’s gillie was smutty and dirty, blowing the bellows. The horse gillies came, and they asked for the man who was going to look on the king. The smith said, “That was he yonder, blowing the bellows.” “Oov! oov!” said they; and they (set) to catch him, and throw him head foremost into the coach, as if they had a dog.

They went not far on their journey when he blew the whistle. The eagle was at his side. “If ever thou didst good for me take me out of this, and fill it full of stones,” said he. The eagle did this. The king was out waiting on the coach; and when the king opened the door of the coach, he was like to be dead with the stones bouncing on top of him. There was catching of the horse gillies, and hanging them for giving such an affront to the king,

Here the king sent other gillies with a coach and when they reached the smithy, “Oov! oov!” said they. “Is this, the black thing the king sent us to seek?” They caught him, and they cast him into the coach as if they had a turf peat. But they went not far on their way when he blew the whistle, and the eagle was at his side; and he said to her, “Take me out of this, and fill it with every dirt thou canst get.” When the coach reached the king’s palace, the king went to open the door. Each dirt and rubbish fell about the king’s head. Then the king was in a great rage, and he ordered the horse gillies to be hanged immediately. Here the king sent his own confidential servant away; and when he reached the smithy, he caught the black bellows-blowing gillie by the hand. “The king,” said he, “sent me to seek thee. Thou hadst better clean a little of the coal off thy face.” The gillie did this; he cleaned himself well, and right well; and the king’s servant caught him by the hand, and he put him into the coach. They were but a short time going, when he blew the whistle. The eagle came; and he asked her to bring the gold and silver dress that was by the big giant here without delay, and the eagle was not long going and coming with the dress. He arrayed himself with the giant’s dress. And

when they came to the king's palace, the king came, and he opened the door of the coach, and there was the very finest man the king ever saw. The king took him in, and he told the king how it happened to him from first to last. The three great men who were going to marry the king's daughters were hanged, and the king's big daughter was given him to marry; and they made them a wedding the length of twenty nights and twenty days; and I left them dancing, and I know not but that they are cutting capers on the floor till the day of to-day.

(Gaelic omitted)

This story was written, May 1859, by Hector Urquhart, gamekeeper, from the dictation of Neil Gillies, a fisherman and builder of stone dykes, who lives near Inverary. He is now about fifty-five, and says he learned the story from his father, who used to tell it when he was about sixteen or seventeen.

It has something of many other Gaelic tales. In particular, one called "Bolgum Mor," in which there are more gifted men. It has some resemblance to Fortunio; and the part which goes on under ground resembles part of many other popular tales. The Three Giants, with their gold, silver, and copper crowns, are like the Gnomes of the Mine. Similar Giants, ruling over metals, and living in castles made of gold, silver, and copper, are mentioned in a story front South Uist, which resembles the Sea Maiden.

As a whole, No. 16 is unlike anything I know, but nearly every incident has a parallel woven in with something else, and it most resembles Grimm's Golden Goose.

The Enchanted Ship, which could sail on sea or land, belongs to Norse tales and to Norse mythology. The gods had such a ship.

The Eagle is peculiarly eastern: he is but a genius in another shape; the underground treasures are also eastern; and it is worth remark, that two of the daughters are not provided for at all. The three gentlemen were hanged, and the smith's servant married the eldest princess with the golden crown, so the two youngest remain spinsters. It is suggested by the author of Norse Tales, that similar incidents may show the change from Eastern to Western manners. There would be no hitch, if it were lawful to marry the three ladies in this story; and in the Norse story of Shortshanks, it is suggested that the second brother is added, to make all things proper. In No. 22, a man marries a round dozen.

The clothes of these giants fit the lad, so they were but underground men.

There is the usual moral. The least becomes the greatest but there is a dash of character in the pride of the smith's lad, who will not come till he is taken by the hand by the king's own confidential servant. And this is characteristic of the race. A Celt can be led anywhere, but he will not be driven. The king, who opens his own coach door, is somewhat like a farmer. The coach and four is but the grandest of the vehicles seen in the neighbourhood--one of which was compared by a friend of mine, to "a packing box upon wheels, lined with an old blanket." In the mouth of a city narrator, it would have been a lord mayor's coach, and it probably was a palanquin at one time.

This story may be compared with "The Big Bird Dan," Norse Tales, No. 55. Gifted men are to be found in "The Master Maid," No. 11. Such men are also in German, "How six travelled through the World;" and, according to the notes in the third volume of Grimm, the story is widely spread, and common to Italian.

XVII. Maol A Chliobain

From Ann MacGilvray, Islay.

THERE was a widow ere now, and she had three daughters; and they said to her that they would go to seek their fortune. She baked three bannocks. She said to the big one, “Whether dost thou like best the half and my blessing, or the big half and my curse?” “I like best,” said she, “the big half and thy curse.” She said to the middle one, “Whether dost thou like best the big half and my curse, or the, little half and my blessing?” “I like best,” said she, “the big half and thy curse.” She said to the little one, “Whether dost thou like best the big half and my curse, or the little half and my blessing?” “I like best the little half and thy blessing.” This pleased her mother, and she gave her the two other halves also. They went away, but the two eldest did not want the youngest to be with them, and they tied her to a rock of stone. They went on, but her mother’s blessing came and freed her. And when they looked behind them, whom did they see but her with the rock on top of her. They let her alone a turn of a while, till they reached a peat stack, and they tied her to the peat stack. They went on a bit (but her mother’s blessing came and freed her), and they looked behind them, and whom did they see but her coming, and the peat stack on the top of her. They let her alone a turn of a while, till they reached a tree, and they tied her to the tree. They went on a bit (but her mother’s blessing came and freed her), and when they looked behind them, whom did they see but her, and the tree on top of her.

They saw it was no good to be at her; they loosed her, and let her (come) with them. They were going till night came on them. They saw a light a long way from them; and though a long way from them, it was not long that they were in reaching it. They went in. What was this but a giant’s house! They asked to stop the night. They got that, and they were put to bed with the three daughters of the giant. (The giant came home, and he said, “The smell of the foreign girls is within.”) There were twists of amber knobs about the necks of the giant’s daughters, and strings of horse hair about their necks. They all slept, but Maol a Chliobain did not sleep. Through the night a thirst came on the giant. He called to his bald, rough-skinned gillie to bring him water. The rough-skinned gillie said that there was not a drop within. Kill,” said he, “one of the strange girls, and bring to me her blood.” How will I know them?” said the bald, rough-skinned gillie. “There are twists of knobs of amber about the necks of my daughters, and twists of horse hair about the necks of the rest.”

Maol a Chliobain heard the giant, and as quick as she could she put the strings of horse hair that were about her own neck and about the necks of her sisters about the necks of the giant’s daughters; and the knobs that were about the necks of the giant’s daughters about her own neck and about the necks of her sisters; and she laid down so quietly. The bald, rough-skinned gillie came, and he killed one of the daughters of the giant, and he took the blood to him. He asked for MORE to be brought him. He killed the next. He asked for MORE; and he killed the third one.

Maol a Chliobain awoke her sisters, and she took them with her on top of her, and she took to going. (She took with her a golden cloth that was on the bed, and it called out.)

The giant perceived her, and he followed her. The sparks of fire that she was putting out of the stones with her heels, they were striking the giant on the chin; and the sparks of fire that the giant was bringing out of the stones with the points of his feet, they were striking Maol a Chliobain in the back of the head. It is this was their going till they reached a river. (She plucked a hair out of her head and made a bridge of it, and she run over the river, and the

giant could not follow her.) Maol a Chliobain leaped the river, but the river the giant could not leap.

“Thou art over there, Maol a Chliobain.” “I am, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou killedst my three bald brown daughters.” “I killed them, though it is hard for thee.” “And when wilt thou come again?” “I will come when my business brings me.”

They went on forward till they reached the house of a farmer. The farmer had three sons. They told how it happened to them. Said the farmer to Maol a Chliobain, “I will give my eldest son to thy eldest sister, and get for me the fine comb of gold, and the coarse comb of silver that the giant has.” “It will cost thee no more,” said Maol a Chliobain.

She went away; she reached the house of the giant; she got in unknown; she took with her the combs, and out she went. The giant perceived her, and after her he was till they reached the river. She leaped the river, but the river the giant could not leap. “Thou art over there, Maol a Chliobain.” “I am, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou killedst my three bald brown daughters.” “I killed them, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou stolest my fine comb of gold, and my coarse comb of silver.” “I stole them, though it is hard for thee.” “When wilt thou come again?” “I will come when my business brings me.”

She gave the combs to the farmer, and her big sister and the farmer’s big son married. “I will give my middle son to thy middle sister, and get me the giant’s glave of light.” “It will cost thee no more,” said Maol a Chliobain. She went away, and she reached the giant’s house; she went up to the top of a tree that was above the giant’s well. In the night came the bald rough-skinned gillie with the sword of light to fetch water. When he bent to raise the water, Maol a Chliobain came down and she pushed him down in the well and she drowned him, and she took with her the glave of light.

The giant followed her till she reached the river; she leaped the river, and the giant could not follow her. “Thou art over there, Maol a Chliobain.” “I am, if it is hard for thee.” “Thou killedst my three bald brown daughters.” “I killed, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou stolest my fine comb of gold, and my coarse comb of silver.” “I stole, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou killedst my bald rough-skinned gillie.” “I killed, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou stolest my glave of light.” “I stole, though it is hard for thee.” “When wilt thou come again?” “I will come when my business brings me.” She reached the house of the farmer with the glave of light; and her middle sister and the middle son of the farmer married. “I will give thyself my youngest son,” said the farmer, “and bring me a buck that the giant has.” “It will cost thee no more,” said Maol a Chliobain. She went away, and she reached the house of the giant; but when she had hold of the buck, the giant caught her. “What,” said the giant, “wouldst thou do to me: if I had done as much harm to thee as thou hast done to me, I would make thee burst thyself with milk porridge; I would then put thee in a pock! I would hang thee to the roof-tree; I would set fire under thee; and I would set on thee with clubs till thou shouldst fall as a faggot of withered sticks on the floor.” The giant made milk porridge, and he made her drink it. She put the milk porridge about her mouth and face, and she laid over as if she were dead. The giant put her in a pock, and he hung her to the roof-tree; and he went away, himself and his men, to get wood to the forest. The giant’s mother was within. When the giant was gone, Maol a Chliobain began--”‘Tis I am in the light! ‘Tis I am in the city of gold!” “Wilt thou let me in?” said the carlin. “I will not let thee in.” At last she let down the pock. She put in the carlin, cat, and calf, and cream-dish. She took with her the buck and she went away. When the giant came with his men, himself and his men began at the bag with the clubs. The carlin was calling, “‘Tis myself that’s in it.” “I know that thyself is in it,” would the giant say, as he laid on to the pock. The pock came down as a faggot of sticks, and what was in it but his mother. When the giant saw how it was, he took after Maol a Chliobain; he

followed her till she reached the river. Maol a Chliobain leaped the river, and the giant could not leap it. “Thou art over there, Maol a Chliobain.” “I am, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou killedst my three bald brown daughters.” “I killed, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou stolest, my golden comb; and my silver comb.” “I stole, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou killedst my bald rough-skinned gillie.” “I killed, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou stolest my glave of light.” “I stole, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou killedst my mother.” “I killed, though it is hard for thee.” “Thou stolest my buck.” “I stole, though it is hard for these.” “When wilt thou come again?” “I will come when my business brings me.” “If thou wert over here, and I yonder,” said the giant, what wouldst thou do to follow me?” “I would stick myself down, and I would drink till I should dry the river.” The giant stuck himself down, and he drank till he burst. Maol a Chliobain and the farmer’s youngest son married.

(Gaelic omitted)

This story came to me from four sources. First, the one which I hare translated, into which several passages are introduced (in brackets) from the other versions. This was written down by Hector MacLean.

2d. A version got by the same collector from Flora Macintyre, in Islay; received June 16, 1859. In this the whole of the first part is omitted; it begins at the giant’s house. The incidents are then nearly the same till she runs away, when she leaps the river with her sisters under her arms. The farmer or king is omitted. She returns, is caught by the giant, tied to a peat-stack, and a rock, which she takes away, and she makes the giant kill; the three cropped red girls: and she kills the cropped rough-skinned gillie: she steals the white glave of light, a fine comb of gold, and a coarse comb of silver. She makes the giant kill his mother, and his dog and cat enticed into a sack; at last she sets the giant to swill the river; he bursts, and she goes home with the spoil. The bit about the sack is worth quoting. She put the crone in the pock, and a cat, and a dog, and a cream-dish with her. When the giant and his men came, they began laying on the pock. The crone cried out, “It’s myself thou hast;” and the giant said, “I know, thou she rogue, that it’s thou.” When they would strike a stroke on the dog, he would give out a SGOL; when they would strike a stroke on the cat, he would give out a MIOG; and when they would strike a stroke on the cream-dish, it would give Out a STEALL (a spurt). I have,

3rd. A version very prettily told, at Easter 1859, by a young girl, nursemaid to Mr. Robertson, Chamberlain of Argyll, at Inverary. It was nearly the same as the version translated, but had several phrases well worth preservation, some of which will be found in brackets; such as, “but her mother’s blessing came and freed her.” The heroine also stole a golden cover off the bed, which called out; and a golden cock and a silver hen, which also called out. The end of the giant was thus: At the end of the last scolding match, the giant said, “If thou wert here, and I yonder, what wouldst thou do?” “I would follow thee over the bridge,” said she. So Maol a chliobain stood on the bridge, and she reached out a stick to him, and he went down into the river, and she let go the stick, and he was drowned. “And what become of Maol a chliobain? did she marry the farmer’s youngest son?” “Oh, no; she did not marry at all. There was something about a key hid under a stone, and a great deal more which I cannot remember. My father did not like my mother to be telling us such stories, but she knows plenty more,”--and the lassie departed in great perturbation from the parlour.

The 4th version was got by John Dewar from John Crawfort, herring-fisher, Lochlonghead, Arrochar, and was received on the 2d of February 1860. Dewar’s version is longer than any, but it came too late. It also contains some curious phrases which the others have not got, some queer old Gaelic words, and some new adventures. The heroine was not only the youngest, but “maol carrach” into the bargain, and the rest called her Maol a Mhoibean; but when they went on their travels she chose the little cake and the blessing. The others tied her

to a tree, and a cairn of stones, which she dragged away. Then they let her loose, and she followed them till they came to a burn. “Then the eldest sister stooped to drink a draught from the burn, and there came a small creature, named Bloinigain, and he dabbled and dirtied the burn, and they went on. The next burn they came to the two eldest sisters stooped, one on each side of the burn, to drink a draught; but Bloinigain came and he dabbled and dirtied the burn; and when they had gone on another small distance, they reached another burn; and the youngest sister, whom the rest used to call Maol a Mhoibean, was bent down drinking a draught from the burn, and Bloinigain came and stood at the side of the burn till she had drank her draught, and the other two came; but when they stooped to drink their draught, Bloinigain dabbled the burn, and they went on; and when they came to another burn, the two eldest were almost parched with thirst. Maol a Mhoibean kept Bloinigain back till the others got a drink; and then she tossed Bloinigain heels over head, CAR A MHUILTEAN, into a pool, and he followed them no wore.”

This Bloinigain plays a great part in another story, sent by Dewar; and his name may perhaps mean “fatty;” BLONAG, fat, suet, lard; BLOINIGEAN-GARAIDH, is spinnage.

The next adventure is almost the very same. The giant’s three red-haired polled daughters had PAIDIREANAN of gold about their necks (which word *may* be derived from *pater*, and a name for a rosary), and the others had only strings.

When they fled they came to a great EAS, cataract, and there was no way of getting over it, unless they could walk on two hairs that were as a bridge across the cataract; and their name was DROCHAID AN DA ROINEAG, the two-hair bridge; and Maol a Mhoibean ran over the eas on the two hairs; but her sisters could not walk on the two hairs, and Maol a Mhoibean had to turn back and carry her sisters, one after one, over the eas on the two-hair bridge.” The giant could not cross, and they scolded each other, across the river as in the other stories. The giant shouted, “Art thou yonder, Maol a Mhoibean?” and she said “AIR MO NODAIG THA;” and when she had told her deeds, she said, “I will come and go as my business brings me;” and the three sisters went on and took service with the king.

This two-hair bridge over the fall may possibly be a double rainbow; many a time have I sat and watched such a bridge over a fall; and the idea that the rainbow was the bridge of spirits, is old enough.

“Still seem as to my childhood’s sight
  A midway station given,
For happy spirits to alight
  Betwixt the earth and heaven.”

The Norse gods rode over the bridge, Bif-raust, from earth to heaven; and their bridge was the rainbow which the giants could not cross. There is also a bridge, as fine as a hair, over which the Moslem pass to Paradise; and those who are not helped, fall off and are lost.

The sisters took service; one was engaged to sew, the other to mind the house, and the youngest said she was good at running errands; so at the end of a day and year she was sent for the giant’s CABHRAN full of gold, and CABHRAN full of silver; and when she got there the giant was asleep on a chest in which the treasure was.

Then Maol a Mhoibean thought a while, in what way she should get the giant put off the chest; but she was not long till she thought on a way; and she got a long broad bench that was within, and she set the bench at the side of the chest where the giant was laid; she went out where the burn was, and she took two cold stones from the burn, and she went in where the giant was, and she would put one of the stones in under the clothes, and touch the giant’s skin at the end of each little while with the stone; and the giant would lay himself back from her,

till bit by bit the giant went back off the chest on to the bench; and then Maol a Mhoibean opened the chest, and took with her the cabhran of gold, and the cabhran of silver." The rest of the adventure is nearly the same as in the other versions; and the eldest sister married the king's eldest son.

The next was the Claidheamh Geal Soluis, white glave of light.

She got in and sat on a rafter on a bag of salt; and as the giant's wife made the porridge, she threw in salt. Then the giant and his son sat and supped, and as they ate they talked of how they would catch Maol, and what they would do to her when they had her; and after supper they went to bed. Then the giant got very thirsty, and he called to his son to get him a drink; and in the time that the giant's son was seeking a CUMAN (cup), Maol a Mhoibeau took with her the fill of her SGUIRD (skirt) of salt, and she stood at the outside of the door; and the giant's son said to him "that there was no water within;" and the giant said "That the spring was not far off, and that he should bring in water from the well;" and when the giant's son opened the door, Maol a Mhoibean began to throw salt in his face; and he said to the giant, "That the night was dark, and that it was sowing and winnowing hailstones (GUN ROBH AN OIDHCHE DORCHA AGUS CUR'S CABRADH CLACH-A-MEALLAIN ANN);" and the giant said, "Take with thee my white glave of light, and thou wilt see a great distance before thee, and a long way behind thee."

When the young giant came out, it was a fine night; and be went to the well with the bright sword, and laid it down beside him; while he stooped to take up the water, Maol followed him, and picked up the sword, and SGUIDS I AN CEANN, she whisked the head off the giant's son. Then came the flight and pursuit, and escape, and scolding match, and the second son of the king married the second sister.

The next adventure was the theft of BOC CLUIGEANACH, the back with lumps of tangled hair and mud dangling about him. She went over the bridge and into the goats' house, and the goats began at BEUCHDAICH, roaring; and the giant said, "Maol a Mhoibean is amongst the goats;" and he went out and caught her; and he said, "What wouldst thou do to me if thou shouldst find me amongst thy goats, as I found thee?" And she said, "It is (this) that I would kill the best buck that I might have, and I would take out the paunch, and I would put thee in the paunch, and I would hang thee up till I should go to the wood; and I would get clubs of elder, and then I would come home, AGUS SHLACAINN GU BAS THU, and I would belabour thee to death." "And that is what I will do thee," said the giant.

Then comes the bit which is common to several other stories, in various shapes; and which is part of a story in Straparola.

When she was hung up in the goat's paunch, and the giant gone for his elder-wood clubs, Maol a Mhoibean began to say to the giant's wife, "Oh! it's I that am getting the brave sight! Oh! it's I that am getting the brave sight!" as she swayed herself backwards and forwards; and the giant's wife would say to her, "Wilt thou let me in a little while?" and Maol a Mhoibean would say (I will) *not let* (thee in) CHA LEIG, and so on till the wife was enticed into the paunch, and then Maol took the belled buck and went away with him. "AGUS AN UAIR A' B AIRD ISE B' ISLE EASAN, S' AN NUAIR A B' AIRD ASAN B' ISLE ISE;" and the time she was highest he was lowest, and the time he was highest she was lowest, till they reached the two-hair bridge. The giant came home and belaboured his wife to death, and every blow he struck, the wife would say, "IS MI FHEIN A THA ANN, O 'S MI FHEIN A THA ANN--It is myself that is in it: Oh! it is myself that is in it;" and the giant would say, "I know it is thyself that is in it."

[And in this the giant is like the water-horse in another story, and like the cyclop in the Odyssey, and like all other giants throughout mythology. He was a great, strong, blundering fool, and his family were as stupid as himself.]

Maol married the king's third son, and the king said, "There is one other thing yet of what the giant has that I want, and that is, A SGIATH BHALLABHREAC AGUS A BHOGHA S A DHORLACH--his lumpy bumby shield, and his bow and his quiver, or in poetical language, his variegated bossy shield, and his bow and quiver--and I will give thee the kingdom if thou wilt get me them." This is a good instance of what may happen in translating Gaelic into English, one language into another, which is far removed from it, both in construction and meaning. BHALLABHREAC applies to almost anything that is round or spotted. The root of the epithet is BALL, which, in oblique cases, becomes BHALL, vall, and means a spot, a dot, and many other things. It is the same as the English word ball. A shield was round, and covered with knobs; a city wall was round, and it was the shield of the town; an egg was round, and the shell was the shield or the wall of the egg; a skull is round, and the shield of the brain, and a head is still called a knob in English slang; a toad-stool is round,--and so this word ball has given rise to a succession of words, which at first sight appear to have nothing to do with each other, and the phrase *might* be translated speckled-wings. The epithet is applied to clouds and to many things in Gaelic poetry, and has been translated in many ways, according to the taste of each translator. Those who felt the beauty of the passages used the words which they found applicable. Those who do not, may, if they choose, search out words which express their feeling; and so a poem which stands on its own merit, in its own language, is at the mercy of every translator; and those who work at Gaelic with dictionaries for guides, may well be puzzled with the multitude of meanings assigned to words.

So Maol went, and the giant's dog barked at her, and the giant came out and caught her, and said he would cut her head off; and she said she would have done worse to him; and "What was that? Put him in sack and roast him so he said he would do that, and put her in, and went for wood. She got her hand out, untied the string, and put in the dog and cat, and fled with the arms, and the giant roasted his own dog and cat, AGUS BHA AM MADADH AN 'S AN SGALAILLE AGUS AN CAT ANNS AN SGIABHUIL--and the dog was in, and the squalling; and the cat (was) in, and the squalling, and the giant would say, "FEUCH RUIT A NIS—"Try thyself now." When he found out the trick, he pursued, and when they got to the bridge, his hand was on her back, and he missed his step and fell into the EAS, and there he lay. And the king's son and Maol a Mhoibean were made heirs in the kingdom, and if they wanted any more of the giant's goods, they got it without the danger of being caught by the giant.

The Gaelic given in Dewar's version is spelt as it came, and is somewhat Phonetic. The writer knows his own language well, but has had very little practice in writing it. As he spells in some degree by ear, his phonetics have their value, as they have in his English letter given in the introduction.

5. A gentleman at the inn at Inverary remembered to have heard a similar story "long ago about a witch that would be running in and out of a window on a bridge of a single hair."

6. "Kate ill Pratts" is referred to in a review of Chambers' Nursery Rhymes, at page 117, vol. 10; 1853--Tait's Edinburgh Magazine. The story is mentioned as told in Perthshire, and seems to be of the same kind; with a bit of Cinderella, as known in the west, with the advice of the hoodie in Murchadh and Mionachag put in the mouth of a little bird--

"Stuff wi' fog, and clem wi' clay,
And then ye'll carry the water away."

These sounds are not imitations of any bird's note, and the Gaelic sounds are; so I am inclined to think the Gaelic older than the low country version.

The story is well known as Little Thumb. It is much the same as Boots and the Troll, Norse Tales, p. 247. It is somewhat like part of Jack and the Bean-stalk. Part of it is like Big Peter and Little Peter, Norse Tales, p. 395; and that is like some German Stories, and like a story in Straparola. The opening is like that of a great many Gaelic Stories, and is common to one or two in Grimm.

There is something in a story from Polynesia, which I have read, in which a hero goes to the sky on a ladder made of a plant, and brings thence precious gifts, much as Jack did by the help of his bean-stalk. In short, this story belongs to that class which is common to all the world, but it has its own distinctive character in the Highlands; for the four versions which I have, resemble each other much more than they do any other of which I know anything.

XVIII. Fables

1. From J. MacLeod, fisherman on the Laxford, Sutherland.

ONE day the fox succeeded in catching a fine fat goose asleep by the side of a loch, he held her by the wing, and making a joke of her cackling, hissing and fears, he said,--

“Now, if you had me in your mouth as I have you, tell me what you would do?”

“Why,” said the goose, “that is an easy question. I would fold my hands, shut my eyes, say a grace, and then eat you.”

“Just what I mean to do,” said Rory, and folding his hands, and looking very demure, he said a pious grace with his eyes shut.

But while he did this the goose had spread her wings, and she was now half way over the loch; so the fox was left to lick his lips for supper.

“I will make a rule of this,” he said in disgust, “never in all my life to say a grace again till after I feel the meat warm in my belly.”

The wild goose in the Highlands has her true character; she is one of the most wary and sagacious of birds, and a Gaelic proverb says:--

Sealgair thu mar a mharbhas thu Gèadh a’s Corr’ a’s Crotach.

Sportsman thou, when killest thou goose, and heron, and curlew?

Rory is a corruption of a Gaelic proper name, which means, one whose hair is of the colour of the fox “Ruadh.” The fox is called by various descriptive and other names. BALGAIR, he with the “BALG,” bag or quiver, from which the shape of the quiver may be surmised to have resembled the foxes’ brush. MADADH RUADH, the red-brown dog. GILLE MARTUINN; the servant of Martin, or perhaps the Martinmas lad, but the true Gaelic, according to my instructor, a Lorn man, is SIONNACH, pronounced *Shunach*, which is surely the same as the Sanscrit SVAN, dog. SUNUH SHUNI, dog-bitch.

2. From John Campbell, piper; and many other sources lately.

The fox is much troubled by fleas, and this is the way in which he gets rid of them. He hunts about till he finds a lock of wool, and then he takes it to the river, and holds it in his mouth, and so puts the end of his brush into the water, and down he goes slowly. The fleas run away from the water, and at last they all run over the fox’s nose into the wool, and then the fox dips his nose under and lets the wool go off with the stream.

This is told as a fact. The place where an “old grey fellow” was seen performing this feat, was mentioned by one of my informants. The fox was seen in the sea near the Caithness hills.

3. “Tha biadh a’s ceol an seo,” as the fox said when he ate the pipe bag.

This saying I have known from my childhood, and the story attached to it is that the fox being hungry one day, found a bagpipe, and proceeded to eat the bag, which is generally, or was till lately, made of hide. There was still a remnant of breath in the bag, and when the fox bit it the drone gave a groan, when the fox surprised but not frightened, said:--

“Here is meat and music!”

4. From D. M. and J. Macleod, Laxford, Sutherland.

One day the fox chanced to see a fine cock and fat hen, off which he much wished to dine, but at his approach they both jumped up into a tree. He did not lose heart, but soon began to make talk with them, inviting them at last to go a little way with him. “There was no danger,” he said, “nor fears of his hurting them, for there was peace between men and beasts, and among all animals.” At last after much parleying the cook said to the hen, “My dear, do you not see a couple of hounds coming across the field?”

“Yes,” said the hen, “and they will soon be here.”

“If that is the case, it is time I should be off,” said the sly fox, “for I am afraid these stupid hounds may not have heard of the peace.”

And with that he took to his heels and never drew breath till he reached his den.

This fable is very well known, and is probably derived from *Æ*sop, though the narrator did not know the fact. I give it because the authority cannot be impeached, and because equally well-known fables are found in old Chinese books, and are supposed to be common property. This may be pure tradition, though I suspect it to be derived indirectly from some book. I myself lately told the fable of the Monkey and the Cats, in Gaelic, to a highlander who was going to law; and it is impossible to be sure of the pedigree of such well-known fables.

The next two are of the same kind, and were new to me when they arrived.

5. THE FOX AND THE FOX-HUNTER.

Once upon a time a Tod-hunter had been very anxious to catch our friend the fox, and had stopped all the earths in cold weather. One evening he fell asleep in his hut; and when he opened his eyes he saw the fox sitting very demurely at the side of the fire. It had entered by the hole under the door provided for the convenience of the dog, the cat, the pig, and the hen.

“Oh! ho!” said the Tod-hunter, “now I have you.” And he went and sat down at the hole to prevent Reynard’s escape.

“Oh! ho!” said the fox, “I will soon make that stupid fellow get up.” So he found the man’s shoes, and putting them into the fire, wondered if that would make the enemy move.

“I shan’t get up for that, my fine gentleman,” cried the Tod-hunter.

Stockings followed the shoes, coat and trousers shared the same fate, but still the man sat over the hole. At last the fox having set the bed and bedding on fire, put a light to the straw on which his jailor lay, and it blazed up to the ceiling.

“No! That I cannot stand,” shouted the man, jumping up; and the fox taking advantage of the smoke and confusion, made good his exit.

Note by the Collector.--This is the beginning of Reineke Fuchs in the Erse. I cannot get any one to write them down in Gaelic, which very few people can *write*. Most of the tales are got from my guide, the gamekeeper; but I have got them from many others.

C. D.

Having told this story to a man whom I met near Oban, as a bait, I was told the following in return.--J. F. C.

6. “The fox is very wise indeed. I don’t know whether it is true or not, but an old fellow told me that he had seen him go to a loch where there were wild ducks, and take a bunch of heather in his mouth, then go into the water, and swim down with the wind till he got into the middle of the ducks, and then he let go the heather and killed two of thew.”

7. THE FOX AND THE WRENS.

A fox had noticed for some days, a family of wrens, off which he wished to dine. He might have been satisfied with one, but he was determined to have the whole lot,--father and eighteen sons,--and all so like that he could not tell one from the other, or the father from the children.

“It is no use to kill one son,” he said to himself, “because the old cock will take warning and fly away with the seventeen. I wish I knew which is the old gentleman.”

He set his wits to work to find out, and one day seeing them all threshing in a barn, he sat down to watch them; still he could not be sure.

“Now I have it,” he said; “well done the old man’s stroke! He hits true,” he cried.

“Oh replied the one he suspected of being the head of the family, “If you had seen my grandfather’s strokes, you might have said that.”

The sly fox pounced on the cock, ate him up in a trice, and then soon caught and disposed of the eighteen sons, all flying in terror about the barn.

C. D.

This is new to me, but there is something like it in the Battle of the Birds, where the wren is a farmer threshing in a barn. Why the wren should wield the flail does not appear, but I suppose there was some good reason for it “once upon a time.” J. F. C.

8. From John Dewar, Inveraray, August 27, 1860.

A fox one day met a cock and they began talking.

“How many tricks canst thou do?” said the fox?

“Well,” said the cock, I could do three; how many canst thou do thyself?”

“I could do three score and thirteen,” said the fox.

“What tricks canst thou do?” said the cock.

“Well,” said the fox, “my grandfather used to shut one eye and give a great shout.”

“I could do that myself,” said the cock.

“Do it,” said the fox. And the cock shut one eye and crowed as loud as ever he could, but he shut the eye that was next the fox, and the fox gripped him by the neck and ran away with him. But the wife to whom the cock belonged saw him and cried out, “Let go the cock he’s mine.”

Say thou, “‘SE MO CHOILEACH FHEIN A TH’ ANN” (it is my own cock), said the cock to the fox.

Then the fox opened his mouth to say as the cock did, and he dropped the cock, and he sprung up on the top of a house, and shut one eye and gave a loud crow; and that’s all there is of that sgeulachd.

I find that this is well-known in the west.

9. HOW THE WOLF LOST HIS TAIL.

One day the wolf and the fox were out together, and they stole a dish of crowdie. Now the wolf was the biggest beast of the two, and he had a long tail like a greyhound, and great teeth.

The fox was afraid of him, and did not dare to say a word when the wolf ate the most of the crowdie, and left only a little at the bottom of the dish for him, but he determined to punish him for it; so the next night when they were out together the fox said:

“I smell a very nice cheese, and (pointing to the moonshine on the ice) there it is too.”

“And how will you get it?” said the wolf.

“Well, stop you here till I see if the farmer is asleep, and if you keep your tail on it, nobody will see you or know that it is there. Keep it steady. I may be some time coming back.”

So the wolf lay down and laid his tail on the moonshine in the ice, and kept it for an hour till it was fast. Then the fox, who had been watching him, ran in to the farmer and said: “The wolf is there; he will eat up the children,--the wolf! the wolf!”

Then the farmer and his wife came out with sticks to kill the wolf, but the wolf ran off leaving his tail behind him, and that’s why the. wolf is stumpy tailed to this day, though the fox has a long brush.

C. D.

This is manifestly the same as the Norse story,--”Why the bear is stumpy tailed?” and it errs in ascribing a stumpy tail to the wolf. There was not time for the “Norse Tales” to become known to the people who told the story, so perhaps this may be a Norse tradition transferred from the bear to the wolf. There is another wolf story in Sutherland, which was told to me by the Duke of Sutherland’s head forester in 1848. It was told in Gaelic by a fine old Highlander, who is now dead. His sons have succeeded him, and will probably remember this story which I quote from recollection.

J. F. C.

10. HOW THE LAST WOLF WAS KILLED IN SUTHERLAND.

There was once a time when there were wolves in Sutherland, and a woman that was living in a little town lost one of her children. Well, they went all about the hills looking for the lad, but they could not find him for three days. Well, at the end of that time they gave up, but there was a young lad coming home late through a big cairn of stones, and he heard the crying of a child, and a kind of noise, and he went up to the cairn, and what should he see, in a hole under a big stone, but the boy and two young wolves with him.

Well he was frightened that the old wolf would come, so he went home to the town, and got two others with him, and in the morning they went back to the cairn and they found the hole.

Well, then, one of the lads stopped outside to watch, and the other two went in, and they began to kill the young wolves, and they were squealing, and the old one heard them, and she came running to the place, and slipped between the legs of the lad who was watching, and got her head into the hole, but he held her by the tail.

“What,” said the lad who was inside, “is keeping the light from us.”

MA BHRISTEAS BUN FIONN BITHIDH FIOS AGAD.

“If the root of Fionn (or if the hairy root) breaks, thou wilt know,” said the man outside.

Well, he hold on, and the lads that were inside killed the wolf and the young ones, and they took the boy home to his mother, and his family were alive in the time of my grandfather, and they say they were never like other people.

This is manifestly the same as the story of Romulus and Remus, but it appears very strong evidence that wolves really carry off and suckle children in Oude now, and that these children grow up to be half savages. It is either a fact in natural history, or a tradition, believed to be a fact in Sutherland and in Oude. I have heard the same story told in the Highlands of a wild boar, but the boar’s tail would be but a slippery hold.

J. F. C.

According to Innes (Scotland in the Middle Ages, Pp. 125), in 1283, there was an allowance f or one hunter of wolves at Stirling; and there were wild boars fed at the King's expense in 1263, in Forfarshire. There are plenty of wolves now in Scandinavia, and in Brittany, and wild boars in Germany, and elsewhere in Europe. The Gaelic names for wolf are MADADH ALLUIDH, commonly used; FAOL CHU, ALLA MHADADH, all of which are composed of an epithet, and a word which now means dog. Dic. etc. MAC TIRE, Earth's Son; FAOL, Armstrong.

A Boar is TORC, CULLACH, FIAIDH CHULLACH.

The Fox appears as a talking creature in several stories. So does the Bear in No. IX., and the Wolf and Falcon, No. IV. The Dog appears in No. XII.; the Sheep, Cat, Cock, Goose, Dog, and Bull, in No. XI.; the Frog in No. XXXIII.; the Cat and the mouse in No. XLIX. The Rat and the Lion, and the Dove, appear in a story to which I have referred in No. IV. Other creatures, also, not mentioned in stories, are gifted with speech, but their speech is generally but a translation of their notes into Gaelic.

11. BI GLIC, BI GLIC, *Bee-Gleechk*, be wise, say the Oyster-catchers, when a stranger comes near their haunts.

12. GÒRACH, GÒRACH, *Gawrach*, "silly," says the Hoodie, as he sits on a hillock by the way side and bows at the passengers.

13. Here is another bit of crow language,--a conversation with a frog. When it is repeated in Gaelic it can be made absurdly like the notes of the creatures.

"Ghille Criosda mhic Dhughail cuir a nois do mhàg,

Christ's servant, son of Dugald, put up thy paw.

"Tha eagal orm, tha eagal orm, tha eagal orm."

I fear.

"Gheibh thu còta gorm a's léine. Gheibh thu còta gorm a's leine."

Thou shalt have a blue coat and a shirt.

Then the frog put up his hand and the hoodie took him to a hillock and began to eat him, saying,

"Biadh dona lom! 's bu dona riabh thu.

Bad bare meat and bad wert thou ever.

"Caite bheil do ghealladh math a nis?" said the frog.

Where is thy good promise now?

"Sann ag ol a bha sinn an latha sin. Sann ag ol a bha sinn an latha sin."

It is drinking we were on that day.

"Toll ort a ruid ghrannda gur beag feola tha air do chramhan."

"Toll ort!" said the hoodie.

A hole in thee, ugly thing! how little flesh is on thy bones.

Why the frog is called Gilchrist MacDugald, unless the story was made to fit some real event, I do not know. The story used to be told by an old Islay man, Donald Macintyre, to Hector MacLean; and I remember to have heard part of it in my childhood.

The Hoodie has appeared in many places already, and he and his family, the Crows, have been soothsayers time out of mind, and in many lands. A more mischievous, knowing bird does not exist, or one that better deserves his character for wisdom.

The old fable of the bird which dropped a tortoise on a stone, is enacted every day by Hoodies. Any one who will take the trouble to watch, may see hoodies on the shores of the Western Isles, at low tide, flying up into the air and dropping down again.

It will be found that they are trying to drop large stranded mussels and other shells, on the stones on the beach; and if left to their own devices, they will go on till they succeed in cracking the shell, and extracting the inhabitant.

Keepers who trap them most successfully, do it by beating them at their own weapons. They put a bait into a pool of water, and make a show of hiding it, and set the trap on a knoll at some distance. The Hoodie makes a gradual approach, reconnoitering the ground as he advances; and settling on the knolls which command a view, perhaps repeating his song of silly, silly, till he settles on the trap, and next morning his head is on the kennel door with the mortal remains of other offenders.

I suspect that the Hoodie was made a soothsayer because of his natural wisdom.

14. The Grouse Cock and his wife are always disputing and may be heard on any fine evening or early morning quarrelling and scolding about the stock of food.

This is what the hen says,--

“FAIC THUSA ‘N LA UD ‘S AN LA UD EILE.”

And the cock, with his deeper voice, replies,--

“FAIC THUSA ‘N CNOC UD ‘S AN CNOC UD EILE.”

See thou yonder day, and yon other day. See thou yonder hill, and yon other hill.

Of all the stories I have gathered and heard, this is all I have about the Grouse. It is remarkable; for if these stories were home-made, and in modern times, they would surely treat of the only bird whose births, deaths, and marriages are chronicled in the newspapers,--and which is peculiar to the British Isles.

15. The Eagle and the Wren once tried who could fly highest, and the victor was to be king of the birds. So the Wren flew straight up, and the Eagle flew in great, circles, and when the Wren was tired he settled on the Eagle’s back.

When the Eagle was tired he stopped and

“C’ AITE BHEIL THU DHREOLAIN?” URS’ AN IOLAIR.

“THA MISE AN SO OS DO CHEANN,” URS’ AN DREOLAN.

“Where art thou, Wren?” said the Eagle.

“I am here above thee,” said the Wren.

And so the Wren won the match.

This was told to me in my childhood, I think, by the Rev. Mr. MacTavish. There is a much better version of the story in Grimm’s “King Wren,” in which the notes of many creatures are

made into German; but this describes the flight of eagle and wren correctly enough. I lately, Sept. 1860, heard it in Skye.

16. THA FIOS FITHICH AGUD. Thou hast ravens' knowledge, is commonly said to children who are unusually knowing about things of which they have no ostensible means of gaining knowledge.

Odin had two ravens whose names meant Mind and Memory, which told him everything that passed in the world.

17. NEAD AIR BRIDE; UBH AIR INID; EUN AIR CAISG. MUR AM BI SIN AIG AN FHITHEACH BITHIDH AM BAS.

Nest at Candlemas, egg at Inid, bird at Pash.

If that hath not the Raven, death he hath.

This is rather a bit of popular natural history than anything else, but it shews that the raven is at least as important a personage amongst Celts as the grouse is amongst Saxons.

18. 'S BIGEAD THU SIOD, ARS AN DREOLAN 'N UR THUM E GHOB ANNS AN FHAIRIGE.

Thou'rt lessened by that, said the Wren, when he dipped his beak in the sea.

There are a great number of similar stories current in the islands,, but it is very hard to persuade any one that such trifles can be of any value. I have lately heard of a number of stories of the kind. For example--

19. John Mackinnon, stable-boy at Broadford in Skye, tells that "a man was one day walking along the road with a creel of herrings on his back, and two foxes saw him, and the one, who was the biggest, said to the other, 'Stop thou here, and follow the man, and I will run round and pretend that I am dead.' So he ran round, and stretched himself on the road. The man came on, and when he saw the fox, he was well pleased to find so fine a beast, and he picked him up, and threw him into the creel, and he walked on. But the fox threw the herrings out of the creel, and the other followed and picked them up; and when the creel was empty, the big fox leaped out and ran away, and that is how they got the herrings."

Well, they went on together till they came to a smith's house, and there was a horse tied at the door, and he had a golden shoe, and there was a name on it.

"I will go and read what is written on that shoe,' said the big fox, and he went; but the horse lifted his foot, and struck a kick on him, and drove his brains out.

"'Ghill' ghill' ars an siunnach beag cha sgolair mi 's cha 'n aill leam a bhi.'

"'Lad, Lad,' said the little fox, 'no scholar me, nor wish I to be;'" and of course, he got the herrings, though my informant did not say so.

20. A boy, Alexander Mackenzie, who walked with me from Carbost, in Skye, told that a bee (seillean) met a mouse and said,

Teann a nall 'us gun deanamaid tigh."
"Come over till we make a house."
"I will not," said Luchag, the mousie.

Fear dha 'n dug thusa do mhil shamraidh,
Deanadh e tigh gheamhraidh dhuit.
Tha tigh agamsa fo thalamh,
Nach ruig air gallian na gaoith.

Bith tusa an ad isean pheallach
A ruidh air barradh nan craobh.

He to whom thou gavest thy summer honey,
Let him make a winter house for thee;
I have a little house under the ground,
That can reach neither cold nor breeze,
Thou wilt be a ragged creature,
Running on the tops of the trees.

21. The same boy told that there was a mouse in the hill, and a mouse in a farm.

“It were well,” said the hill mouse, “to be in the farm where one might get things.”

Said the farm mouse, “‘S fhearr an t-sith.” Better is peace.

22. The following is not strictly speaking a fable, but it is a sort of moral tale, and may be classed with fables. It seems to inculcate a lesson of self-reliance and self-help. I wrote it in English from the Gaelic repetition of John Mackenzie at Inveraray in 1859, and made him repeat it in 1860, when I made up several omissions. Other versions have come to me from other sources, and the tale seems to be well known in the Highlands. If it is in any book, I have not been able to find it. Mackenzie says he learned it from a native of Uist, and I have a very well written version of it, told by Macintyre in Benbecula, to Mr. Torrie. It is called the “Provost of London,” and begins with the family history of the hero of the tale. A great lady fell in love with a poor Highland lad, and he was ashamed of the love she had taken for him, and went away to an uncle who was a colonel, and who got him made a major. The lady took to black melancholy, and he was sent for, and they married. He went to the wars, bought a small estate, was killed, and his brother-in-law brought up his son. Then comes the dream, the journey for three years in Scotland, Ireland, and England; the meeting with “one of the people of Cambridge,” and the rest of the incidents nearly as they were told to me by Mackenzie, but in different words.

XIX. Bailie Lunnain

Told by John Mackenzie, at Inverary, to J. F. C. August 1859 and 1860.

THERE were at some time of the world two brothers in one farm, and they were very great friends, and they had each a son; and one of the brothers died, and he left his brother guardian. When the lad was near to be grown up, he was keeping the farm for his mother almost as well as his father could have done. One night he saw a dream in his sleep, the most beautiful lady that there was in the world, and he dreamed of her three times, and he resolved to marry her and no other woman in the world; and he would not stay in the farm, and he grew pale, and his father's brother could not think what ailed him; and he was always asking him what was wrong with him. "Well, never mind," one day he said, "brother of my father, I have seen a dream, the most beautiful woman that there is in the world, and I will marry no other but she; and I will now go out and search for her over the whole world till I find her."

Said the uncle, "Son of my brother, I have a hundred pounds; I will give them to thee, and go; and when that is spent come back to me, and I will give thee another hundred."

So the lad took the hundred pounds, and he went to France, and then he went to Spain, and all over the world, but he could not find the lady he had seen in his sleep. At last he came to London, and he had spent all his money, and his clothes were worn, and he did not know what he should do for a night's lodging.

Well, as he was wandering about the streets, whom should he see but a quiet-looking respectable old woman; and he spoke to her; and, from less to more, he told her all that had happened to him; and she was well pleased to see a countryman, and she said,

"I, too, am a Highland woman, though I am in this town." And she took him to a small house that she had, and she gave him meat and clothes.

And she said, "Go out now and take a walk; maybe thou mayest see here in one day what thou mightest not see in a year."

On the next day he was out taking a walk about the town, and he saw a woman at a window, and he knew her at once, for she was the lady he had seen in his sleep, and he went back to the old woman.

"How went it with thee this day, Gael?" said she.

"It went well," said he.

"Oh, I have seen the lady I saw in my sleep," said he. And he told her all about it.

Then the old woman asked about the house and the street; and when she knew--"Thou hast seen her," said she. "That is all thou wilt see of her. That is the daughter of the Bailie of London; but I am her foster mother, and I would be right glad if she would marry a countryman of my own. Now, do thou go out on the morrow, and I will give thee fine highland clothes, and thou wilt find the lady walking in such a street: herself and three maidens of company will go out together; and do thou tread on her gown; and when she turns round to see what is the matter, do thou speak to her."

Well, the lad did this. He went out and he found the lady, and he set his foot on her dress, and the gown rent from the band; and when she turned round he said, "I am asking you much grace--it was an accident."

“It was not your fault; it was the fault of the dressmaker that made the dress so long,” said she.

And she looked at him; and when she saw how handsome he was, she said, “Will you be so kind as to come home with me to my father’s house and take something?”

So the lad went and sat down, and before she asked him anything she set down wine before him and said, “Quicker is a drink than a tale.”

When he had taken that, he began and he told her all that happened, and how he had seen her in his sleep, and when, and she was well pleased.

“And I saw thee in my sleep on the same night,” said she.

He went away that day, and the old woman that he was lodging with asked him how he had got on, and he told her everything that had happened; and she went to the Bailie’s daughter, and told her all the good she could think of about the young lad; and after that he was often at the Bailie’s house; and at last the daughter said she would marry him. “But I fear that will not do,” said she. “‘Go home for a year, and when thou comest back I will contrive to marry thee,” said she, “for it is the law of this country that no one must be married unless the Bailie himself gives her by the hand to her bridegroom,” said she; and she left blessing with him.

Well, the lad went away as the girl said, and he was putting everything in order at home; and he told his father’s brother all that had happened to him; but when the year was nearly out he set off for London again, and he had the second hundred with him, and some good oat-meal cakes.

On the road, whom should he meet but a Sassanach gentleman who was going the same road, and they began to talk.

“Where art thou going said the Saxon.

“Well, I am going to London,” said he

“When I was there last I set a net[17] in a street, and I am going to see if it is as I left it. If it is well I will take it with me; if not, I will leave it.”

“Well,” said the other, “that is but a silly thing. How can lintseed be as thou hast left it? It must be grown up and trodden down by ducks and geese, and eaten by hens long ago. I am going to London, too; but I am going to marry the Bailie’s daughter.”

Well, they walked on together, and at long last the Saxon began to get hungry, and be had no food with him, and there was no house near; and he said to the other, “Wilt thou give me some of thy food?”

“Well,” said the Gael, “I have but poor food-oaten bread; I will give you some if you will take it; but if I were a gentleman like you I would never travel without my own mother.”

“How can I travel with my mother?” said the Saxon.

“She is dead and buried long ago, and rotting in the earth; if not, why should I take her with me?”

And he took the oat cake and ate it, and they went on their way.

They had not gone far when a heavy shower came on, and the Gael had a rough plaid about him, but the Saxon had none; and he said to the other,

[17] (To set a net and to sow lint are expressed by the same words.)

“Wilt thou lend me thy plaid?”

“I will lend you a part of it,” said the Gael: but if I were a gentleman like you, I would never travel without my house, and I would not be indebted to any one for favours.”

“Thou art a fool,” said the Saxon; “my house is four storeys high. How could any man carry a house that is four storeys high about with him?”

But he wrapped the end of the Highlander’s plaid about his shoulders, and they went on.

Well, they had not gone far till they came to a small river, and the water was deep after the rain, and there was no bridge, and in those days bridges were not so plentiful as they are now; and the Saxon would not wet his feet, so he said to the Highlander,

“Wilt thou carry me over?”

“Well,” said the Gael, “I don’t mind if I do; but if I were a gentleman like you, I would never travel without my own bridge, and I would not be in any man’s debt for favours.”

“Thou art a silly fellow,” said the Saxon. “How can any man travel about with a bridge that is made of stone and lime. Thou art but a ‘burraidh,’ and weighs as much as a house?”

But he got on the back of his fellow-traveller nevertheless, and they travelled on till they got to London. Then the Saxon went to the house of the Bailie, and the other went to the little house of his old countrywoman, who was the foster-mother of the Bailie’s daughter.

Well, the Saxon gentleman began to tell the Bailie all that had happened to him by the way; and he said--

“I met with a Gael by the way, and he was a perfect fool--the greatest booby that man ever saw. He told me that he had sown lint here a year ago in a street, and that he was coming to fetch it, if he should find it as he left it, but that if he did not, he would leave it; and how should he find that after a year? He told me I should never travel without my mother, and my house, and my bridge; and how could a man travel with all these things? But though he was nothing but a fool, he was a good-natured fellow, for he gave me some of his food, and lent me a bit of his plaid, and he carried me over a river.”

“I know not but he was as wise as the man that was speaking to him,” said the Bailie; for he was a wise man. “I’ll tell you what he meant,” said he.

“Well, I will shew that he was a fool as great as ever was seen,” said the Saxon.

“He has left a girl in this town,” said the Bailie, “and he is come to see if she is in the same mind as she was when he left her; if so, he will take her with him, if not, he will leave her; and he has set a net,” said he. “Your mother nourished you, and a gentleman like you should have his own nourishment with him. He meant that you should not be dependent on him. It was the booby that was with him,” said the Bailie. “A gentleman like you should have his own shelter, and your house is your shelter when your are at home. A bridge is made for crossing a river, and a man should always be able to do that without help; and the man was right, and he was no fool, but a smart lad, and I should like to see him,” said the Bailie; “and I would go to fetch him if I knew where he was,” said he. [According to another version, the house and bridge meant a coach and a saddle-horse.]

Well, the next day the Bailie went to the house where the lad was, and he asked him to come home to his dinner; and the lad came, and he told the Bailie that he had understood all that had been said.

“Now,” said he, “as it is the law that no man may be married here unless the Bailie gives him the bride by the hand, will you be so kind as to give me the girl that I have come to marry, if she is in the same mind? I will have everything ready.”

And the Bailie said, “I will do that, my smart lad, to-morrow, or whenever thou dost choose. I would go farther than that for such a smart boy,” said he.

“Well, I will be ready at such a house to-morrow,” said the lad; and he went away to the foster-mother’s house.

When the morrow came, the Bailie’s daughter disguised herself, and she went to the house of the foster-mother, and the Gael had got a churchman there; and the Bailie came in, and he took his own daughter by the hand; but she would not give her hand to the lad.

“Give thy hand, girl,” said the Bailie. “It is an honour for thee to marry such a smart lad.” And he gave her to him, and they were married according to law.

Then the Bailie went home, and he was to give his daughter by the hand to the Saxon gentleman that day; but the daughter was not to be found; and he was a widower, and she was keeping the house for him, and they could not find her anywhere.

“Well,” said the Bailie, “I will lay a wager that Gael has got her, after all.” And the Gael came in with the daughter, and he told them everything just as it had happened, from beginning to the end, and how he had plenty in his own country.

And the Bailie said, “Well, since I myself have given thee my daughter by the hand, it is a marriage, and I am glad that she has got a smart lad like thee for a husband.”

And they made a wedding that lasted a year and a day, and they lived happily ever after, and if they have not died since then they are alive yet.

XX. The Slim Swarthy Champion

From James Wilson, blind fiddler, Islay, 1859.

THERE was a poor man dwelling in Ard na h-Uamh, and a son was born to him, and he gave him school and learning till he was fourteen years of age. When he was fourteen years of age, he said to his father,

“Father, it is time for me to be doing for myself, if thou wouldst give me a fishing-rod and a basket.”

The poor man found every chance till he got a fishing-rod and a basket for him. When he got the fishing-rod and the basket, he went round about Loch Aird na h-Uamb, and took down (by) Loch Thorabais; and after he had fished Loch Thorabais closely, he came to Loch Phort an Eillean;[18] and after he had fished Loch Phort an Eillean before him, he took out by Loch Allalaidh. He stayed the night in Aird Eileastraidh, and every trout he had he left with a poor woman that was there.

On the morrow he thought that he would rise out, and that he would betake himself to Eirinn. He came to the garden of Aird Inneasdail, and he plucked with him sixteen apples, and then he came to Mull of Otha.[19] He threw an apple out into the sea, and he gave a step on it: he threw the next one, and he gave a step on it: he threw thus one after one, until he came to the sixteenth, and the sixteenth took him on shore in Eirinn.

When he was on shore he shook his ears, and he thought that it was in no sorry place he would stay.--

“He moved as sea heaps from sea heaps,
And as playballs from playballs--
As a furious winter wind
So swiftly, sprucely, cheerily,
Right proudly,
Through glens and high-tops,
And no stop made he
Until he came
To city and court of O’Domhnuill.
He gave a cheery, light leap
O’er top and turret
Of court and city
Of O’Domhnuill.”[20]

O’Domhnuill took much anger and rage that such an unseemly ill strippling should come into his court, while he had a doorkeeper for his town.

“I will not believe,” said the Champion, but “that thou art taking anger and rage, O’Domhnuill.”

“Well, then, I am,” said O’Domhnuill, “if I did but know at whom I should let it out.”

[18] The lake in which is the island where the Lords of the Isles had their dwelling.
[19] The nearest point to Ireland.
[20] The only authority for writing this as poetry is the rhythm and alliteration of the original.

“My good man,” said the Champion, coming in was no easier for me than going out again would be.”

“Thou goest not out,” said O’Domhnuill, “until thou tellest me from whence thou camest.”

“I came from hurry-skurry,
From the end of endless spring.
From the loved swanny glen--
A night in Islay and a night in Man,
A night on cold watching cairns.
On the face-of a mountain
In the Scotch king’s town
Was I born.
A soiled, sorry Champion am I,
Though I happened upon this town.”

“What,” said O’Domhnuill, “canst thou do, oh Champion? Surely, with all the distance thou hast travelled, thou canst do something.”

“I was once,” said he, “that I could play a harp.”

“Well, then,” said O’Domhnuill, “it is I myself that have got the best harpers in the five-fifths of Eirinn, or in the bridge of the first of the people, such as Ruairidh O’Cridheagan, Tormaid O’Giollagan, and Thaog O’Chuthag.”

“Let’s hear them playing,” said the Champion.

“They could play tunes and “UIRT” and “ORGAIN,”
Trampling things, tightened strings,
Warriors, heroes, and ghosts on their feet.
Ghosts and spectres, illness and fever,
They’d set in sound lasting sleep
The whole great world,
With the sweetness of the calming tunes
That the harpers could play.”

The music did not please the Champion. He caught the harps, and he crushed them under his feet, and he set them on the fire, and made himself a warming, and a sound warming at them.

O’Domhnuill took much lofty rage that a man had come into his court who should do the like of this to the harps.

“My good man, I will not believe that thou art not taking anger,” said the Champion.

“Well, then, I am, if I did but know at whom I should let it out.”

“Back, my good man; it was no easier for me to break thy harps than to make them whole again,” said the Champion.

“I will give anything to have them made whole again,” said O’Domhnuill.

“For two times five marks I will make thy harps as good as they were before,” said the Champion.

“Thou shalt get that,” said O’Domhnuill.

O’Domhnuill gave him the marks, and he seized on the fill of his two palms of the ashes, and he made a harp for Ruairidh O’Cridheagan; and one for Tormaid O’Giollagan; and one for Thaog O’Chuthag; and a great choral harp for himself.

“Let’s hear thy music,” said O’Domhnuill.

“Thou shalt hear that, my good man,” said the Champion.

The Champion began to play. and och! but he was the boy behind the harp.

“He could play tunes, and UIRT and ORGAIN
Trampling things, tightened strings,
Warriors, heroes, and ghosts on their feet,
Ghosts and souls, and sickness and fever,
That would set in sound lasting sleep
The whole great world
With the sweetness of the calming tunes
That the champion could play.”

“Thou art melodious, oh Champion!” said O’Domhnuill.

When the harpers heard the Champion playing, they betook themselves to another chamber, and though he had followed on, still they had not come to the fore.

O’Domhnuill went away, and he sent a bidding to meat to the Champion.

“Tell the good man that he will not have that much to gloom on me when I go at mid-day to-morrow,” said the Champion.

O’Domhnuill took much proud rage that such a man should come into his court, and that he would not take meat from him. He sent up a fringed shirt, and a storm mantle.

“Where is this going?” said the Champion.

“To thee, oh Champion,” said they.

“Say you to the good man that he will not have so much as that to gloom on me when I go at mid-day to-morrow,” said the Champion.

O’Domhnuill took much anger and rage that such a man had come into his court and would not either take meat or dress from him. He sent up five hundred Galloglachs to watch the Champion, so that O’Domhnuill might not be affronted by his going out by any way but by the door.

“Where are you going?” said the Champion.

“To watch thee, Champion, so that thou shouldst not go to affront O’Domhnuill, and not to let thee out but as thou shouldst,” said they.

“Lie down there,” said the Champion, “and I will let you know when I am going.”

They took his advice, and they lay down beside him, and when the dawn broke, the Champion went into his garments.

“Where are my watchers, for I am going?” said the Champion.

“If thou shouldst stir,” said the great Galloglach, “I would make a sharp sour shrinking for thee with this plough-board in my hand.”

The Champion leaped on the point of his pins, and he went over top and turret of court and city of O’Domhnuill.

The Galloglach threw the plough-board that was in his hand, and he slew four and twenty persons of the very people of O’Domhnuill.

Whom should the Champion meet, but the tracking lad of O’Domhnuill, and he said to him--

“Here’s for thee a little sour grey weed, and go in and rub it to the mouths of those whom it killed and bring them alive again, and earn for thyself twenty calving cows, and look behind thee when thou partest from me, whom thou shalt see coming.”

When the tracking lad did this he saw no being coming, but he saw the Champion thirteen miles on the other side of Luimineach (Limerick).

“He moved as sea-heaps o’ sea-heaps,
And as playballs o’ playballs.
As a furious winter wind
So swiftly, sprucely, cheerily,
Right proudly,
Through glens and high tops,
And he made no stop
Until he reached
MacSeathain,[21] the Southern Earl.”

He struck in the door. Said MacSeathain, the southern Earl, “Who’s that in the door?”

“I am Duradan o’ Duradan, Dust of Dust,” said the Champion.

“Let in Dust of Dust,” said MacSeathain, the southern Earl; “no being must be in my door-without getting in.”

They let him in.

“What couldst thou do, Duradan o’ Duradan?” said the southern Earl.

“I was on a time, and I could play a juggle,” said he.

“Well, then, it is I myself that have the best juggler in the five-fifths of Eirinn, or the bridge of the first of the people, as is Taog Bratach Mac a Cheallaich, rascally Toag, the son of Concealment.”

They got up the juggler.

“What,” said the southern Earl, “is the trick that thou canst do, Dust of Dust?”

“Well, I was on a time that I could bob my ear off my cheek,” said he.

The Champion went and he takes the ear off the cheek.

Said rascally Taog, the son of Concealment: “I could do that myself.”

He went and he took down his ear, and up he could not bring it! but the Champion put up his own ear as it was before.

The Earl took much anger and rage that the ear should be off his juggler.

“For five merks twice over,” said the, Champion, “I would set the ear as it was before.”

He got the five merks twice over, and he put the ear on the juggler as it was before.

“I see,” said the Earl, “that the juggling of this night is with thee.”

Rascally Taog went away; and though they should have staid there the length of the night, he would not have come near them.

Then the Champion went and he set a great ladder up against the moon, and in one place of it he put a hound and a hare, and in another place of it he put a carl and a girl. A while after that

[21] Seathain is supposed to be John, therefore Johnson.

he opened first where he had put the hound and the hare, and the hound was eating the hare; he struck him a stroke of the edge of his palm, and cast his head off. Then he opened again where were the carl and the girl, and the carl was kissing the girl. He struck him a stroke of the edge of his palm, and he cast his head off.

“I would not for much,” said the Earl, “that a hound and a carl should be killed at my court.

“Give five merks twice over for each one of them, and I will put the heads on them,” said the Champion.

“Thou shalt get that,” said the southern Earl.

He got the five merks twice over, and he put the head on the hound and the carl as they were before; and though they should be alive till now, the hound would not have touched a hare, nor the carl a girl, for fear their heads should be taken off.

On the morrow, after their meat in the morning, he went hunting with the Earl. When they were amongst the wood, they heard a loud voice in a knoll (or a bush).

“Be this from me,” said Dust of Dust, “I must go to see the foot of the carl MacCeochd.” He went out--

“And moved as sea-heaps o’ sea-heaps,
And as playballs o’ playballs;
As a furious winter wind--
So swiftly, sprucely, cheerily,
Right proudly,
Through glens and high tops,
And no stop made he
Until he reached
The house of the Carl MacCeochd.”

He struck at the door. “Who’s that?” said the carl MacCeochd.

“I,” said he, “am the leech’s lad.”

“Well,” said the carl, “many a bad black leech is coming, and they are not, doing a bit of good to me.”

Give word to the carl that unless he will not let me in, I will be going,” said the Champion.

“Let in the leech’s lad; perhaps he is the one in whom is my help,” said the carl MacCeochd.

They let him in.

“Rise up, carl MacCeochd, thou art free from thy sores,” said the Champion.

Carl MacCeochd arose up, and there was not a man in Eirinn swifter or stronger than he.

“Lie down, carl MacCeochd, thou art full of sores,” said the Champion.

The carl MacCeochd lay down, and he was worse than he ever was.

“Thou didst ill,” said the carl MacCeochd, “to heal me and spoil me again.”

“Thou man here,” said the Champion, “I was but shewing thee that I could heal thee.”

“I have,” said the carl MacCeochd, “but the one daughter in the world, and thou shalt get her and half of all I have, and all my share when I go way, and heal my leg.”

“It shall not be so, but send word for every leech that thou hast had, that I might get talking with them,” said the leech’s lad.

They sent word by running lads through the five-fifths of Eirinn for the leeches that were waiting on the carl, and they came, all thinking that they would get pay, and when they came riding to the house of the carl, the Champion went out and he said to them,

"What made you spoil the leg of the carl MacCeochd, and set himself thus?"

"Well then," said they, "if we were to raise the worth of our drugs, without coming to the worth of our trouble, we would not leave him the worth of his shoe in the world.

Said the leech's lad, "I will lay you a wager, and that is the full of my cap of gold, to be set at the end of yonder dale, and that there are none in Eirinn that will be at it sooner than the carl MacCeochd."

He set the cap full of gold at the end of the dale, and the leeches laid the wager that they could never be.

He went in where the carl MacCeochd was, and he said to him,

"Arise, carl MacCeochd, thou art whole of sores, I have laid a wager on thee."

The earl got up whole and healthy, and he went out, and he was at three springs at the cap of gold, and he left the leeches far behind.

Then the leeches only asked that they might get their lives. Promise of that they got not (but) the leech's lad got in order.

He snatched his holly in his fist, and be seized the grey hand plane that was on the after side of his haunch, and he took under them, over them, through and amongst them; and left no man to tell a tale, or earn bad tidings, that he did not kill.[22]

When the carl was healed he sent word for the nobles and for the great gentles of Eirinn to the wedding of his daughter and the Champion, and they were gathering out of each quarter.

"What company is there?" said the leeches' lad.

"There is the company of thine own wedding, and they are gathering from each half and each side," said the carl MacCeochd.

"Be this from me!" said he; "O'Conachar the Shelly (or of Sligo) has a year's service against me," and he put a year's delay on the wedding.

"Out he went as Voorveel o Voorveel
And as Veerevuil o Veerevuill,
As a furious winter wind,
So swiftly, sprucely, cheerily,
Right proudly,
Through glens and high tops.
And no stop did he make
Till he struck in the door
Of Conachar of Sligo."

"Who's that?" said O'Conachar of Sligo.

"I," said he, "Goodherd."

"Let in Goodherd," said O'Conachar of Sligo, for great is my need of him here."

[22] This seems like mock heroics, an imitation of such tales as the Knight of the Red Shield and Murachadh MacBrian.

They let him in.

“What couldst thou do here?” said O’Conachar.

“I am hearing,” said he, to O’Conachar of Sligo, “that the chase is upon thee. If thou wilt keep out the chase, I will keep in the spoil,” said Goodherd.

“What wages wilt thou take?” said O’Conachar of Sligo.

“The wages I will, take is that thou shouldst not make half cups with me till the end of a day and year,” said Goodherd.

O’Conachar made this covenant with him, and the herdsman went to herd.

The chase broke in on O’Conachar of Sligo, and they betook themselves to where the herdsman was, to lift the spoil. When the herdsman saw that they had broken in, he took the holly in his fist, and seized the grey hand-plane that was on the after side of his haunch, and left no man to tell a tale, or earn bad tidings, that he did not kill. He went into a herd’s bothy, and he (was) hot, and he saw O’Conachar Sligheach just done drinking a boyne of milk and water.

“Witness, gods and men, that thou hast broken thy promise,” said Goodherd.

“That fill is no better than another fill,” said O’Conachar Sligheach.

“That selfsame fill thou didst promise to me,” said Goodherd.

He took anger at O’Conachar Sligheach, and he went away, and he reached the house of the carl MacCeochd. The daughter of the earl made him a drink of green apples and warm milk, and he was choked.

And I left them, and they gave me butter on a cinder, porridge kail in a creel, and paper shoes; and they sent me away with a big gun bullet, on a road of glass, till they left me sitting here within.

(Gaelic omitted)

XXI. Second Version. The History Of The Ceabharnach

From John Campbell, Strath Gearloch, Ross-shire.

ON the day when O'DONULL came out to hold right and justice, he saw a young chap coming. His two shoulders were through his old SUAINAICHE (sleeping coat?) his two ears through his old AIDE, hat, his two squat kick-er-ing tatter-y shoes full of cold roadway-ish water, three feet of his sword sideways on the side of his haunch, after the scabbard had ended.

He blest with easy true-wise maiden's words.

O'Donull blest him in the like of his own words.

O'Donull asked him what was his art?

"I could do harping," said the Ceabharnach.

"There are twelve men with me," said O'Donull, "and we will go to look on them."

"I am willing to do that," said the Ceabharnach.

When they went in O'Donull asked them to begin.

"Hast thou ever heard music, A Ceabharnach, finer than that?"

"I came past by the Isle of Cold, and I did not hear a screech in it that was more hideous than that."

"Wouldst thou play a harp thyself, Ceabharnach'? said O'Donull.

"Here is her player, and who should not play!"

"Give him a harp," said O'Donull.

"Well canst thou play a harp," said O'Donull.

"It is not as thou pleasest but as I please myself, since I am at work."

The music of the Ceabharnach put every harper O'Donull had asleep.

"I will be taking fare thee well," said the Ceabharnach to O'Donull.

"Thou wilt not do that to me," said O'Donull, "thou must awaken my men."

"I am going to take a turn through Eirinn," said the Ceabharnach; "if I come the way they will see, and if I come not they will be thus with thee."

He left him, and he met with one herding. "Thy master's harpers are asleep, and they will not wake till they are awakened. Go thou and awaken them, and thou wilt get what will make a rich man of thee!"

"How shall I do that?" asked the herd.

"Take a tuft of that grass and dip it in water, and shake it on them, and thou wilt awaken them."

He left the man, and he reached SEATHAN MOR MAC AN IARLE, great Seathan the son of the Earl, thirteen miles on the western side of Lumraig.

He saw a young chap coming; his two shoulders were through his old coat, his two ears through his old hat, his shoes full of cold roadway-ish water, three feet of his sword sideways on the side of his haunch after the scabbard was ended.

He asked him what was his trade? He said that he could do juggling.

“I have jugglers myself; we will go to look on them.”

“I am willing enough,” said the Ceabharnach.

“Shew thy juggling,” said the great Seathan, “till we see it.”

He put three straws on the back of his fist and he blew them off it.

“If I should get half five marks,” said one of the king’s lads, “I would make better juggling than that.”

“I will give thee that,” said the Ceabharnach.

He put three straws on the back of his fist and the fist went along with the straws.

“Thou art sore, and thou wilt be sore,” said his master; “my blessing on the hand that gave it to thee.”

“I will do other juggles for thee,” said the Ceabharnach.

He caught a hold of his own ear, and he gave a pull at it.

“If I could get half five marks,” said another of the king’s lads, “I would make a better juggle than that.”

“I will give thee that,” said the Ceabharnach.

He gave a pull at the ear and the head came away with the ear.

“I am going away,” said the Ceabharnach.

“Thou wilt not leave my set of men so.”

“I am for taking a turn through Eirinn. If I come the way I will see them, and if I come not they will be so along with thee.”

He went away, and he met with a man threshing in a barn. He asked him if his work could keep him up.

“It was no more than it could do.”

“I,” said the Ceabharnach, “will make thee a free man for thy life. There are two of thy master’s lads, one with his fist off, and one with his head off. Go there and put them on again, and thy master will make thee a free man for life.”

“With what shall I bring them alive?”

“Take a tuft of grass, hold it in water, shake it on them, and thou wilt heal them.”

He went away and he came to FEAR CHUIGEAMH MUGHA,[23] a nasty man that could not bear a man to go the way of his house, to look at him when he was taking his food. There were twelve men with axes at the outer gate, and twelve men of swords on the inner gate; a porter at the great door.

[23] The man of Munster, Cuige mumhe.

They saw a young chap coming, his two shoulders through his old coat, his two ears through his old hat, his two squat kick-ering tatter-y shoes full of cold roadway-ish water.

He asked their license in to see Fear Chuigeamh Mugha.

One of them raised his axe to drive his head off, but so it was that he struck it on his own comrade.

They arose on each other till they killed each other; and he came to the men of the sword, one raised his sword to strike off his head, but he cut the head off his comrade with it, and they all fell to slaying each other.

He reached the porter; he caught him by the small of the legs, and he struck his head on the door.

He reached the great man as he sat at his dinner; he stood at the end of the board.

“Oh evil man,” said the king, “great was thy loss before thou camest here,” as he rose to catch hold of his sword to strike his head off. His hand stuck to the sword, and his seat stuck to the chair, and he could not rise; no more could his wife leave her own place. When he had done all he wished he went away, and he met a poor man that was travelling the world.

“If thou wilt take my advice,” said the Ceabharnach, “I will make a lucky man of thee as long as thou art alive.”

“How wilt thou do that?” said the man.

“The king and the queen are fast in their chairs; go thou and loose them, and the king will make a great man of thee.”

“How shall I loose them?”

“Shake water on them and they will arise.”

He went out of that, and he reached ROB MAC SHEOIC MHIC LAGAIN with a pain in his foot for seven years.

He struck palm to bar. The porter asked “Who was there?”

He said there was a leech.

“Many a leech has come,” said the porter. “There is not a spike on the town without a leech’s head but one, and may be it is for thy head that one is.”

“It might not be,” said the Ceabharnach. “Let me in.”

“What is putting upon thee, Rob?” said the Ceabharnach.

“My foot is taking to me these seven years. She has beat the leech and leeches.”

“Arise and stretch out thy foot with the stitch,” said the Ceabharnach; “and let’s try if thou canst catch the twelve leeches, or if the twelve leeches will catch thee.”

He arose, no man could catch him; and he himself could catch every other one.

“I have but one begotten, a champion of a girl, and I will give her to thee and half my realm.”

“Be she good or bad,” said the Ceabharnach, “let her be mine or thine.”

An order was made for a wedding for the Ceabharnach; but when they had got the wedding in order, he was swifter out of the town than a year-old hare. He came to TAOG O-CEALLAIDH, who was going to raise the spoil of CAILLICHE BUIDHNICHE.

A young chap was seen coming, his two shoulders through his old coat, his two ears through his old hat, his two squat kick-ering tatter-y shoes full of cold roadway-ish water, three feet of his sword sideways on the side of his haunch after the scabbard was ended.

“What’s this that puts on thee?” said the Ceabharnach. “Hast thou need of men?”

“Thou wilt not make a man for me,” said O-Ceallaidh.

“I shall I not get a man’s share if I do a man’s share?”

“What’s thy name?” said Taog.

“There is on me (the name of) Ceabharanach Saothrach Suarach Siubhail--the servile, sorry, strolling kern.”

“What art thou seeking for thy service?

“I am but asking that thou shouldst not forget my drink.”

“Whence camest thou?”

“From many a place; but I am an Albanach.”

They went to raise the raid of the carlin. They raised the spoil, but they saw the following coming.

“Be stretching out,” said great Taog to the Ceabharnach, “Thou wilt not make thy legs at least. Whether wouldst thou rather turn the chase or drive the spoil with thy set of men?”

“I would not turn the chase, but if the chase would turn, we would drive the spoil at least.”

The Ceabharnach cut a sharp, hard whistle, and the drove lay down on the road.

He turned to meet them. He caught each one of the slenderest legs, and the biggest head, and he left them stretched legs on head. He returned after the spoil.

“Thyself and thy lot of men can hardly drive the spoil.”

“The spoil will never get up,” said Taog.

He cut a whistle: the drove got up, and he drove it home.

It happened that the great man forgot to give the first drink to the Ceabharnach.

“Mine is the half of the spoil,” said the Ceabharnach.

“That is more than much for thee,” said the king.

“Many a time was I,” said the Ceabharnach, “and Murcha MacBrian hewing shields and splitting blades; his was the half of the spoil, and mine was the other half.”

“If thou art a comrade of that man, thou shalt have half the spoil,” said Taog.

But he went away, and he left themselves and the spoil.

“Health be with thee, oh Ceabharnach. Arise not for ever.”

(Gaelic omitted)

3. A third version of this curious tale was told to me in South Uist, by MacPhie. It was very like the version told by James Wilson, blind fiddler in Islay.

It is evidently a composition fallen to bits, and mended with prose, and it is equally clear that it points to Ireland, though the hero was made a Scotchman by the three old men.

As a picture of bygone manners, this is curious, and I know nothing at all like it in any collection of popular tales.

I believe it to be some bardic recitation half-forgotten. It is said that in the mouth of one reciter in Islay, the story used to last for four hours,

I lately (September 1860) heard MacPhie repeat his version in part. It was a mixture of the two versions here given, and a fifth, Irish grandee, was added.

XXII. The Tale Of The Shifty Lad, The Widow's Son

From John Dewar, Arrochar, June, 1860.

THERE was at some time or other before now a widow, and she had one son. She gave him good schooling, and she was wishful that he should choose a trade for himself; but he said he would not go to learn any art, but that he would be a thief.

His mother said to him: "If that is the art that thou art going to choose for thine ownself, thine end is to be banged at the bridge of Baile Cliath,[24] in Eirinn."

But it was no matter, be would not go to any art, but to be a thief; and his mother was always making a prophecy to him that the end of him would be, hanging at the Bridge of Baile Cliath, in Eirinn.

On a day of the days, the widow was going to the church to hear the sermon, and was asking the Shifty Lad, her son, to go with her, and that he should give over his bad courses; but he would not go with her; but he said to her: "The first art of which thou hearest mention, after thou hast come out of the sermon, is the art to which I will go afterwards."

She went to the church full of good courage, hoping that she would hear some good thing.

He went away, and he went to a tuft of wood that was near to the church; and he went in hiding in a place where he could see his mother when she should come out of the church; and as soon as she came out he shouted, "Thievery! thievery! thievery!" She looked about, but she could not make out whence the voice was coming, and she went home. He ran by the way of the short cut, and he was at the house before her, and he was seated within beside the fire when she came home. He asked her what tale she had got; and she said that she had not got any tale at all, but that "thievery, thievery, thievery, was the first speech she heard when she came out of the church."

He said "That was the art that he would have."

And she said, as she was accustomed to say: "Thine ending is to be hanged at the bridge of Baile Cliath, in Eirinn."

On the next day, his mother herself thought, that as nothing at all would do for her son but that he should be a thief, that she would try to find him a good aid-to-learning; and she went to the gadaiche dubh of Aachaloinne, the black gallows bird of Aachaloinne, a very cunning thief who was in that place; and though they had knowledge that he was given to stealing, they were not finding any way for catching him. The widow asked the Black Rogue if he would take her son to teach him roguery. The Black Rogue said, "If he were a clever lad that he would take him, and if there were a way of making a thief of him that he could do it;" and a covenant was made between the Black Rogue and the Shifty Lad.

When the Shifty Lad, the widow's son, was making ready for going to the Black Rogue, his mother was giving him counsel, and she said to him: "It is against my will that thou art going to thievery; and I was telling thee, that the end of thee is to be hanged at the bridge of Baile Cliath, Eirinn;" but the Shifty Lad went home to the Black Rogue.

[24] Dublin

The Black Rogue was giving the Shifty Lad every knowledge he might for doing thievery; he used to tell him about the cunning things that he must do, to get a chance to steal a thing; and when the Black Rogue thought that the Shifty Lad was good enough at learning to be taken out with him, he used to take him out with him to do stealing; and on a day of these days the Black Rogue said to his lad--

"We are long enough thus, we must go and do something. There is a rich tenant near to us, and he has much money in his chest. It was he who bought all that there was of cattle to be sold in the country, and he took them to the fair, and he sold them; he has got the money in his chest, and this is the time to be at him, before the people are paid for their lot of cattle; and unless we go to seek the money at this very hour, when it is gathered together,[25] we shall not get the same chance again."

The Shifty Lad was as willing as himself; they went away to the house, they got in at the coming on of the night, and they went up upon the loft,[26] and they went in hiding up there; and it was the night of SAMHAIN, Halloween; and there assembled many people within to keep the Savain hearty as they used to do. They sat together, and they were singing songs, and at fun burning the nuts;[27] and at merry-making.

The Shifty Lad was wearying that the company was not scattering; he got up and he went down to the byre, and he loosed the bands off the necks of the cattle, and he returned and he went up upon the loft again. The cattle began goring each other in the byre, and roaring. All that were in the room ran to keep the cattle from each other till they could be tied again; and in the time while they were doing this, the Shifty Lad went down to the room and he stole the nuts with him, and he went up upon the loft again, and he lay down at the back of the Black Rogue.

There was a great leathern hide at the back of the Black Rogue, and the Shifty Lad had a needle and thread, and he sewed the skirt of the Black Rogue's coat to the leathern hide that was at his back; and when the people of the house came back to the dwelling room again, their nuts were away; and they were seeking their nuts; and they thought that it was some one who had come in to play them a trick that had taken away their nuts, and they sat down at the side of the fire quietly and silently.

Said the Shifty Lad to the Black Rogue, "I will crack a nut."

"Thou shalt not crack (one)," said the Black Rogue; "they will hear thee, and we shall be caught."

Said the Shifty Lad, "I never yet was a Savain night without cracking a nut," and he cracked one.

Those who were seated in the dwelling-room heard him, and they said,

"There is some one up on the loft cracking our nuts, we will go and catch them."

[25] Round to each other.
[26] The loft meant, is the space in the roof of a cottage which is above the rafters, and is used as a kind of store.
[27] See Dewar's note at the Gaelic for his account of this: p. 351 One of the amusements which Highland people used to entertain themselves with, is what they call burning nuts on Hallow-eve, the last night of October. A party of young people would collect together in one house for to make merry; one of their amusements was, they would propose a marriage between some lad and lass, and they would name a nut for each of them. The two nuts would be placed beside each other in the fire. If the two nuts burned together, and blazed over each other, that was called a good omen; it was a sign that the party for whom the nuts was named were to be married yet, and live happy together; but if either of the nuts puffed, or flew away, that was a sign that the person for whom that nut was named was proud, and would not accept of the other party.

When the Black Rogue heard that, he sprang off the loft and he ran out, and the hide dragging at the tail of his coat. Every one of them shouted that there was the Black Rogue stealing the hide with him. The Black Rogue fled, and the people of the house after him; and he was a great distance from the house before he got the hide torn from him, and (was able) to leave them. But in the time that the people of the house were running after the Black Rogue, the Shifty Lad came down off the loft; he went up about the house, he hit upon the chest where the gold and the silver was; he opened the chest, and he took out of it the bags in which the gold and silver was, that was in the chest; and he took with him a load of the bread and of the butter, and of the cheese, and of everything that was better than another which he found within; and he was gone before the people of the house came back from chasing the Black Rogue.

When the Black Rogue reached his home, and he had nothing, his wife said to him, “How hast thou failed this journey?”

Then the Black Rogue told his own tale; and he was in great fury at the Shifty Lad, and swearing that he would serve him out when he got a chance at him.

At the end of a little while after that, the Shifty Lad came in with a load upon him.

Said the wife of the Black Rogue, “But, I fancy that thou art the better thief!”

The Black Rogue said not a word till the Shifty Lad shewed the bags that he had full of gold and silver; then, said the Black Rogue, “But it is thou that wert the smart lad!”

They made two halves of the gold and silver, and the Black Rogue got the one half, and the Shifty Lad the other half. When the Black Rogue’s wife saw the share, that came to them, she said, “Thou thyself art the worthy thief!” and she had more respect for him after that, than she had for the Black Rogue himself.

At the end of a few weeks after that, a wedding was to be in the neighbourhood; and it was the custom of the country, when any who were well off were asked, that they should send some gift or other to the people of the wedding. There was a rich tenant, and he was asked; and he desired his herd to go to the mountain moor and bring home a wether for the people of the wedding. The herd went up the mountain and he got the wether, and he was going home with it; and he had it on his back when he was going past the house of the Black Rogue.

Said the Shifty Lad to his master, “What wager wilt thou lay that I do not steal the wether from the back of that man yet, before he reaches the house.”

Said the Black Rogue, “I will lay thee a wager of a hundred marks that thou canst not; how shouldst thou steal the thing that is on his back!”

“Howsoever I do it, I will try it,” said the Shifty Lad.

“Well, then, if thou dost it,” said the Black Rogue, “I will give thee a hundred marks.”

“It is a bargain,” said the Shifty Lad; and with that he went away after the herd.

The herd had to go through a wood, and the Shifty Lad took the ground that was hidden from him until he got before him; and he put some dirt in his shoe, and he set his shoe on the road before the herd, and he himself went in hiding; and when the herd came forward, and he saw the shoe, he said, “But thou art dirty, and though thou art, if thy fellow were there I would clean thee;” and he went past.

The Shifty Lad lifted the shoe, and he ran round about and he was before the herd, and he put his other shoe on the road before him. When the herd came forward and saw the other shoe on the road before him, he said to himself, But there is the fellow of the dirty shoe.”

He set the wether on the ground, and he said to himself, “I will return back now, and I will get the dirty shoe, and I shall clean it, and I shall have two good shoes for my trouble;” and he ran swiftly back again.

The Shifty Lad ran swiftly, and he stole with him the wether, and he took with him the two shoes; and he went home to his master, and he got a hundred marks from his master.

The herd went home and he told his own master himself how it had befallen him. His master scolded the herd; and the next day he sent him again up the mountain to seek a kid, instead of the wether he had lost.

The herd went away to the hill and he got hold of a kid, and he tied it; he put it on his back, and he went away to go home with it. The Shifty Lad saw him, and he went to the wood, and he was there before the herd; and he went in hiding, and he began at bleating like the wether. The herd thought that it was the wether that was in it; and he put the kid off him, and he left it at the side of the road, and he went to seek the wether. At the time when the herd was seeking the wether, the Shifty Lad went and he stole the kid with him, and he went home with it to the Black Rogue.

When the herd went back to where he had left the kid, the kid was gone, the kid was not in it; he sought the kid, and when he could not find the kid, he went home and he told his master how it had befallen, him; and his master scolded him, but there was no help for it.

On the next day the tenant asked his herd to go up the mountain and bring home a stot; to be sure that he did not lose it. The herd went up the mountain, and he got a good fat stot, and he was driving it home. The. Shifty Lad saw him, and he said to the Black Rogue, “Tiugain, come along, and we will go and try to steal the stot from the herd when he is going through the wood with it.”

The Black Rogue and the Shifty Lad went away to the wood before the herd; and when the herd was going through the wood with the stot, the Black Rogue was in one place baa-ing, and the Shifty Lad in another bleating like a goat. The herd heard them, and he thought that he would get the wether and the kid again. He tied the stot to a tree, and went all about the wood seeking the wether and the kid, and he sought them till he was tired. While he was seeking the wether and the kid, the Shifty Lad went, and he stole with him the stot, and he took it home with him to the house of the Black Rogue. The Black Rogue went home after him, and they killed the stot, and they put it in hiding, and the Black Rogue’s wife had good puddings for them that night. When the herd came back to the tree where he had left the stot tied, the stot was not there. He knew that the stot had been stolen. He went home and he told his master how it had happened, and his master scolded him, but there was no help for it.

On the next day his master asked the herd to go up the mountain and to bring home a wether, and not let it come off his back at all till he should come home, whatever he might see or hear. The herd went away, and he went up the mountain and he got the wether, and he succeeded in taking that wether home.

The Black Rogue and the Shifty Lad went on stealing till they had got much money, and they thought that they had better buy a drove (of cattle) and go to the fair with it to sell, and that people would think that it was at drovering they had made the money that they had got. The two went, and they bought a great drove of cattle, and they went to a fair that was far on the way from them. They sold the drove, and they got the money for them, and they went away to go home. When they were on the way, they saw a gallows on the top of a hill, and the Shifty Lad said to the Black Rogue, “Come up till we see the gallows; some say that the gallows is the end for the thieves at all, events.”

They went up where the gallows was, and they were looking all about it. Said the Shifty Lad, “Might we not try what kind of death is in the gallows, that we may know what is before us, if we should be caught at roguery. I will try it myself first.”

The Shifty Lad put the cord about his own neck, and he said to the Black Rogue, “Here, draw me up, and when I am tired above I will shake my legs, and then do thou let me down.”

The Black Rogue drew the cord, and he raised the Shifty Lad aloft off the earth, and at the end of a little blink the Shifty Lad shook his legs, and the Black Rogue let him down.

The Shifty Lad took the cord off his neck, and he said to the Black Rogue, “Thou thyself hast not ever tried anything that is so funny as hanging. If thou wouldst try once, thou wouldst have no more fear for hanging. I was shaking my legs for delight, and thou wouldst shake thy legs for delight too if thou wert aloft.”

Said the Black Rogue, “I will try it too, so that I may know what it is like.”

“Do,” said the Shifty Lad; “and when thou art tired above, whistle, and I will let thee down.”

The Black Rogue put the cord about his neck, and the Shifty Lad drew him up aloft; and when the Shifty Lad found that the Black Rogue was aloft against the gallows, he said to him, “Now, when thou wantest to come down, whistle, and if thou art well pleased where thou art, shake thy legs.”

When the Black Rogue was a little blink above, he began to shake his legs and to kick; and the Shifty Lad would say, “Oh! art thou not funny! art thou not funny I art thou not funny! When it seems to thee that thou art long enough above whistle.”

But the Black Rogue has not whistled yet. The Shifty Lad tied the cord to the lower end of the tree of the gallows till the Black Rogue was dead; then he went where he was, and he took the money out of his pouch, and he said to him, “Now, since thou hast no longer any use for this money, I will take care of it for thee.” And he went away, and he left the Black Rogue hanging there. Then he went home where was the house of the Black Rogue, and his wife asked where was his master?

The Shifty Lad said, “I left him where he was, upraised above the earth.”

The wife of the Black Rogue asked and asked him about her man, till at last he told her, but he said to her, that he would marry her himself. When she heard that, she cried that the Shifty Lad had killed his master, and he was nothing but a thief. When the Shifty Lad heard that he fled. The chase was set after him; but he found means to go in hiding in a cave, and the chase went past him. He was in the cave all night, and the next day he went another way, and he found means to fly to Eirinn.

He reached the house of a wright, and he cried at the door, “Let me in.”

“Who art thou?” said the wright.

“I am a good wright, if thou hast need of such,” said the Shifty Lad.

The wright opened the door, and he let in the Shifty Lad, and the Shifty Lad began to work at carpentering along with the wright.

When the Shifty Lad was a day or two in their house, he gave a glance thither and a glance hither about the house, and he said, “O choin! what a poor house you have, and the king’s store-house so near you.”

“What of that,” said the wright.

“It is,” said the Shifty Lad, “that you might get plenty from the king’s store-house if you yourselves were smart enough.”

The wright and his wife would say, “They would put us in prison if we should begin at the like of that.”

The Shifty Lad was always saying that they ought to break into the king’s store-house, and they would find plenty in it; but the wright would not go with him; but the Shifty Lad took with him some of the tools of the wright, and he went himself and he broke into the king’s store-house, and he took with him a load of the butter and of the cheese of the king, and he took it to the house of the wright. The things pleased the wife of the wright well, and she was willing that her own husband should go there the next night. The wright himself went with his lad the next night, and they got into the store-house of the king, and they took with them great loads of each thing that pleased them best of all that was within in the king’s store-house.

But the king’s people missed the butter and the cheese and the other things that had been taken out of the store-house, and they told the king how it had happened.

The king took the counsel of the Seanagal about the best way of catching the thieves and the counsel that the Seanagal gave them was that they should set a hogshead of soft pitch under the hole where they were coming in. That was done, and the next night the Shifty Lad and his master went to break into the king’s storehouse.

The Shifty Lad put his master in before him, and the master went down into the soft pitch to his very middle, and he could not get out again. The Shifty Lad went down, and he put a foot on each of his master’s shoulders, and he put out two loads of the king’s butter and of the cheese at the hole; and at the last time when he was coming out, he swept the head off his master, and he took the head with him, and he left the trunk in the hogshead of pitch, and he went home with the butter and with the cheese, and he took home the head, and he buried it in the garden.

When the king’s people went into the storehouse, they found a body without a head into the hogshead of pitch; but they could not make out who it was. They tried if they could find any one at all that could know him by the clothes, but his clothes were covered with pitch so that they could not make him out. The king asked the counsel of the Seanagal about it; and the counsel that the Seanagal gave was, that they should set the trunk aloft on the points of the spears of the soldiers, to be carried from town to town, to see if they could find any one at all that would take sorrow for it; or to try if they could hear any one that would make a painful cry when they should see it; or if they should not see (one crying) one that should seem about to make a painful cry when the soldiers should be going past with it. The body was taken out of the hogshead of pitch, and set on the points of the spears; and the soldiers were bearing it aloft on the points of their long wooden spears, and they were going from town to town with it; and when they were going past the house of the wright, the wright’s wife made a tortured scream, and swift the Shifty Lad cut himself with the adze; and he kept saying to the wright’s wife, “The cut is not so bad as thou thinkest.”

The commander-in-chief, and his lot of soldiers, came in and they asked,

“What ailed the housewife?”

Said the Shifty Lad, “It is that I have just cut my foot with the adze, and she is afraid of blood;” and he would say to the wife of the wright, “Do not be so much afraid; it will heal sooner than thou thinkest.”

The soldiers thought that the Shifty Lad was the wright, and that the wife whom they had was the wife of the Shifty Lad; and they went out, and they went from town to town; but they found no one besides, but the wife of the wright herself that made cry or scream when they were coming past her.

They took the body home to the king's house; and the king took another counsel from his Seanagal, and that was to hang the body to a tree in an open place, and soldiers to watch it that none should take it away, and the soldiers to be looking if any should come the way that should take pity or grief for it.

The Shifty Lad came past them, and he saw them; he went and he got a horse, and he put a keg of whisky on each side of the horse in a sack, and he went past the soldiers with it, as though he were hiding from them. The soldiers thought that it was so, that he had taken something away from them, or that he had something which he ought not to have; and some of them ran after him and they caught the old horse and the whisky; but the Shifty Lad fled, and he left the horse and the whisky with them. The soldiers took the horse and the kegs of whisky back to where the body was hanging against the mast. They looked what was in the kegs; and when they understood that it was whisky that was in them, they got a drinking cup, and they began drinking until at last every one of them was drunk, and they lay and they slept. When the Shifty Lad saw that, that the soldiers were laid down and asleep and drunk, he returned and he took the body off the mast. He set it crosswise on the horse's back, and he took it home; then he went and he buried the body in the garden where the head was.

When the soldiers awoke out of their sleep, the body was stolen away; they had for it but to go and tell it to the king. Then the king took the counsel of the Seanagal; and the Seanagal said to them, all that were in his presence, that his counsel to them was, to take out a great black pig that was there, and that they should go with her from town to town; and when they should come to any place where the body was buried, that she would root it up. They went and they got the black pig, and they were going from farm to farm with her, trying if they could find out where the body was buried. They went from house to house with her till at last the came to the house where the Shifty Lad and the wright's widow were dwelling. When they arrived they let the pig loose about the grounds. The Shifty Lad said that he himself was sure that thirst and hunger was on them; that they had better go into the house and that they would get meat and drink; and that they should let their weariness from off them, in the time when the pig should be seeking about his place.

They went in, and the Shifty Lad asked the wright's widow that she should set meat and drink before the men. The widow of the wright set meat and drink on the board, and she set it before them; and in the time while they were eating their meat, the Shifty Lad went out to see after the pig; and the pig had just hit upon the body in the garden; and the Shifty Lad went and he got a great knife and he cut the head off her, and he buried herself and her head beside the body of the wright in the garden.

When those who had the care of the pig came out, the pig was not to be seen. They asked the Shifty Lad if he had seen her; he said that he had seen (her), that her head was up and she was looking upwards, and going two or three steps now and again; and they went with great haste to the side where the Shifty Lad said that the pig had gone.

When the Shifty Lad found that they had gone out of sight, he set everything in such a way that they should not hit upon the pig. They on whom the care of the pig was laid went and they sought her every way that it was likely she might be. Then when they could not find her, they had nothing for it but to go to the king's house and tell how it had happened.

Then the counsel of the Seanagal was taken again; and the counsel that the Seanagal gave them was, that they should set their soldiers out about the country at free quarters; and at whatsoever place they should get pig's flesh, or in whatsoever place they should see pig's flesh, unless those people could show how they had got the pig's flesh that they might have, that those were the people who killed the pig, and that had done every evil that had been done.

The counsel of the Seanagal was taken, and the soldiers sent out to free quarters about the country; and there was a band of them in the house of the wright's widow where the Shifty Lad was. The wright's widow gave their supper to the soldiers, and some of the pig's flesh was made ready for them; and the soldiers were eating the pig's flesh, and praising it exceedingly. The Shifty Lad understood what was the matter, but he did not let on. The soldiers were set to lie out in the barn; and when they were asleep the Shifty Lad went out and he killed them. Then he went as fast as he could from house to house, where the soldiers were at free quarters, and he set the rumour afloat[28] amongst the people of the houses, that the soldiers had been sent out about the country to rise in the night and kill the people in their beds; and he found (means) to make the people of the country believe him, so that the people of each house killed all the soldiers that were asleep in their barns; and when the soldiers did not come home at the time they should, some went to see what had happened to them; and when they arrived, it was so that they found the soldiers dead in the barns where they had been asleep; and the people of each house denied that they knew how the soldiers had been put to death, or who had done it.

The people who were at the ransacking for the soldiers, went to the king's house, and they told how it had happened; then the king sent word for the Seanagal to get counsel from him; the Seanagal came, and the king told how it had happened, and the king asked counsel from him. This is the counsel that the Seanagal gave the king, that he should make a feast and a ball, and invite the people of the country; and if the man who did the evil should be there, that he was the man who would be the boldest who would be there, and that he would ask the king's daughter herself to dance with him. The people were asked to the feast and the dance; and amongst the rest the Shifty Lad was asked. The people came to the feast, and amongst the rest came the Shifty Lad. When the feast was past, the dance began; and the Shifty Lad went and he asked the king's daughter to dance with him; and the Seanagal had a vial full of black stuff, and the Seanagal put a black dot of the stuff that was in the vial on the Shifty Lad. But it seemed to the king's daughter that her hair was not well enough in order, and she went to a side chamber to put it right; and the Shifty Lad went in with her; and when she looked in the glass, he also looked in it, and he saw the black dot that the Seanagal had put upon him. When they had danced till the tune of music was finished, the Shifty Lad went and he got a chance to steal the vial of the Seanagal from him unknown to him, and he put two black dots on the Seanagal, and one black dot on twenty other men besides, and he put the vial back again where he found it.

Between that and the end of another while, the Shifty Lad came again and he asked the king's daughter to dance. The king's daughter had a vial also, and she put a black dot on the face of the Shifty Lad; but the Shifty Lad got the vial whipped out of her pocket, unknown to her; and since there were two black dots on him, he put two dots on twenty other men in the company, and four black dots on the Seanagal. Then when the dancing was over, some were sent to see who was the man on whom were the two black dots, When they looked amongst the people, they found twenty men on whom there were two black dots, and there were four black dots on the Seanagal; and the Shifty Lad found (means) to go swiftly where the king's

[28] Cuir e an ceil.

daughter was, and to slip the vial back again into her pocket. The Seanagal looked and he had his black vial; the king's daughter looked and she had her own vial; then the Seanagal and the king took counsel; and the last counsel that they made was that the king should come to the company, and say, that the man who had done every trick that had been done, must be exceedingly clever; if he would come forward and give himself up, that he should get the king's daughter to marry, and the one half of the kingdom while the king was alive, and the whole of the kingdom after the king's death. And every one of those who had the two black dots on their faces came and they said that it was they who had done every cleverness that had been done. Then the king and his high council went to try how the matter should be settled; and the matter which they settled was, that all the men who had the two black dots on their faces should be put together in a chamber, and they were to get a child, and the king's daughter was to give an apple to the child, and the child was to be put in where the men with the two black dots on their faces were seated and to whatsoever one the child should give the apple, that was the one who was to get the king's daughter.

That was done, and when the child went into the chamber in which the men were, the Shifty Lad had a shaving and a drone (sliseag us dranndan), and the child went and gave him the apple. Then the shaving and the drone were taken from the Shifty Lad, and he was seated in another place, and the apple was given to the child again; and he was taken out of the chamber, and sent in again to see to whom he would give the apple; and since the Shifty Lad had the shaving and the drone before, the child went where he was again, and he gave him the apple. Then the Shifty Lad got the king's daughter to marry.

And shortly after that the king's daughter and the Shifty Lad were taking a walk to Baile Cliabh; and when they were going over the bridge of Baile Cliabh, the Shifty Lad asked the king's daughter what was the name of that place; and the king's daughter told him that it was the bridge of Baile Cliabh, in Eirinn; and the Shifty Lad said--

"Well, then, many is the time that my mother said to me, that my end would be to be hanged at the bridge of Baile Cliabh, in Eirinn; and she made me that prophecy many a time when I might play her a trick."

And the king's daughter said, "Well then, if thou thyself shouldst choose to hang over the little side (wall) of the bridge, I will hold thee aloft a little space with my pocket napkin."

And they were at talk and fun about it; but at last it seemed to the Shifty Lad that he would do it for sport, and the king's daughter took out her pocket napkin, and the Shifty Lad went over the bridge, and he hung by the pocket napkin of the king's daughter as she let it over the little side (wall) of the, bridge, and they were laughing to each other.

But the king's daughter heard a cry, "The king's castle is going on fire!" and she started, and she lost her hold of the napkin; and the Shifty Lad fell down, and his head struck against a stone, and the brain went out of him; and there was in the cry but the sport of children; and the king's daughter was obliged to go home a widow.

(Gaelic omitted)

From Kate Macfarlane, in or near the year 1810; A. Campbell, Roseneath, 1860; and J. M'Nair, Clachaig, 1860.

Some incidents in this story I have known as long as I can remember. They used to be told me as a child by John Campbell, piper. Some of them were told me in 1859 by John Mackenzie at Inverary, who said they were part of a long story of which he could not repeat the rest. Others are alluded to in the Sutherland collection as known in that county. The

version given came to me with the pedigree given above, and is unaltered, except in orthography and punctuation here and there.

It may be compared with a very great many stories in many languages, but I know none exactly like it. (See note on No. 40, Vol. ii.)

Some of the incidents are very like part of the story of Rampsintus (Rawlinson's Herodotus, Vol. ii. p. 191), which were told to Herodotus more than two thousand years ago by priests in Egypt, and the most natural conclusion to arrive at is, that these incidents have been spread amongst the people by those members of their families who study the classics at the Scotch universities, and who might well repeat what they had learned over a winter fire in their father's cottages, as their share of a night's entertainment.

But the incidents of this story, which resemble the classical tale, are associated with a great many other incidents which are not in Herodotus. Some of these have a resemblance to incidents in the Norse story of "The Master Thief;" and, according to Mr. Dasent's introduction, these have a resemblance to Sanscrit stories which are not within my reading. They have a relation to Italian stories in Straparola, and, according to a note in Rawlinson's Herodotus, the: story of Rampsintus "has been repeated in the Pecorone of Ser Giovanni, a Florentine of the fourteenth century, who substitutes a Doge of Venice for the king."

I am told that the barrel of pitch and the marks on the men are introduced into an old German story; but there are several incidents such as that of the pig which was to discover the dead body, as pigs now do truffles, and the apple which as usual is mystical, which so far as I know are in Gaelic only.

On the whole, then, there seems to me nothing for it but to admit this to be the Gaelic version of a popular tale, traditionally preserved for ages, altering as times roll on, and suiting itself to the manners of the narrators of the time.

To suppose it to be derived from books is to suppose that these books have all been read at some time so widely in Scotland as to have become known to the labouring population who speak Gaelic, and so long ago as to have been forgotten by the instructed, who speak English and study foreign languages.

Either this is a traditional popular tale, or learning must have been much more widely spread in the west at some former period than it is at present.

My own opinion is that the tale is traditional, but there is room enough for speculation. On the 25th and 27th of August, I heard parts of the story told by Dewar, and MacNair, and John Mackenzie. Hector Urquhart told me that his father used to tell it in Ross-shire when he was a child. In his version, the storehouse was a treasury full of gold and silver, and the entrance a loose stone in the wall; the man was caught in "CEP," a gin for catching foxes. The pig was a hungry boar, and the lad killed him with an arrow. Even John the tinker, who was present, knew the story, though not well enough to repeat it. It is manifestly widely spread in the Highlands.

The Gaelic is somewhat peculiar, and there are some errors in it which have not been corrected.

END OF VOL. I.

XXIII. The Chest

From Mrs MacGeachy, Islay.

BEFORE this there was a king, and he wished to see his son with a wife before she should depart. His son said he had better go for a wife; and he gave him half a hundred pounds to get her. He went forward in to a hostelry to stay in it. He went down to a chamber with a good fire in front of him; and when he had gotten meat, the man of the house went down to talk to him. He told the man of the house the journey on which he was. The man of the house told him he need not go further; that there was a little house opposite to his sleeping chamber that the man of the house had three fine daughters; and if he would stand in the window of his chamber in the morning, that he would see one after another coming to dress herself. That they were all like each other, and that he could not distinguish one from the other, but that the eldest had a mole. That many were going to ask for them, but that none got them, because whoever wished for one, must tell whether the one he liked best was younger or older; and if he made her out, that she would cost him a hundred pounds. "I have but half a hundred," said the king's son. "I will give thee another half hundred," said the man of the house, "if thou wilt pay me at the end of a day and a year; and if thou dost not pay me, a strip of skin shall come from the top of thy head to the sole of thy foot."

On the morrow when he rose he went to the window; he saw the girls coming to dress themselves; and after meat in the morning, he went over to the house of their father. When he went in he was taken down to a chamber, and the man of the house went down to talk to him. He told the journey on which he was, and he said to him, "They tell me that thou hast three fine daughters." "I have that same, but I am afraid that it is not thou who wilt buy them." "I will give them a trial, at all events," said he. The three were sent down before him, and it was said to him "Whether she, the one he liked best, was the elder or younger." He thought he would take the one with the mole, because he knew she was the eldest. She then was much pleased that it was she herself he was for. He asked her father how much she would be, and her father said she would be a hundred pounds. He bought her and he took her to the house, of his father, and the married. Shortly after they married his father departed.

A day or two after the death of the old king the young king was out hunting; he saw a great ship coming in to the strand; lie went down to ask the captain what be had on board. The captain said, "That he had a cargo of silk." Thou must," said he, "give me a gown of the best silk thou hast for my wife." "Indeed!" said the captain, "thou must have an exceedingly good wife when thou must have a gown of the best silk I have on board." "I have that," said the king, "a wife many of whose equals are not to be got." "Wilt thou lay a wager," said the captain, "that with all her goodness I will not get leave to enter thy chamber?" "I will lay a wager, anything thou desiredst, that thou wilt not." "What wager wilt thou lay?" said the captain. "I will put the heirship in pledge," said the king. Said the captain: "I will put all the silk in ship in pledge to thee that I will." The captain came on shore and the king went on board.

The captain went where the hen-wife was, to try if she could make any way to get in with to king's chamber that night. The hen-wife thought a while, and she said "That she did not think that there was any way that would succeed." The captain rose here, and he was going. "Stop thou!" said she, "I have thought on a way: her maid servant and I are well with each other; I will say to her that I have got word from a sister of mine that I will scarce find her alive; I will say to the king's wife that I must go to see my sister; that I have a big kist, of good

worth, and I should like if she would oblige me and let it into her own sleeping chamber till I come back." She went where the queen was, she asked her this, and she got leave. Here the captain was put into the kist, and the king's gillies were gathered, and the kist put in the chamber. The king's wife was within by herself wearying, for the king was not coming home. At last she went to bed; when she was going to bed she put a gold ring that was on her finger, and a gold chain that was about her neck, on a board that was opposite to the bed. When the man who was in the kist thought that she had time to be asleep, he rose and he took with him the chain and the ring, and he went into the kist again. At the mouth of day came the hen-wife to ask for the kist; the gillies were gathered, and the kist was taken down. When every one went from the house, as soon as he could, the captain rose and he went down to the ship; he shook the chain and the ring at the king. Then the king thought that the captain had been with his wife, or that he could not have the chain and ring. He said to the captain, "Would he put him over to the other side of the loch?" The captain, said, "That he would." When the captain got him over he returned himself, and he went to dwell in the king's house. Then the king's wife did not know what to do with herself, for that the king had not come home. She went that day and she dressed herself in man's clothes, and she went down to the strand; she met with a boat, and she said to them, "Would they put her over on the other side?" They put her over, and she went on forward till she reached the house of a gentleman; she struck in the door, and the maid servant came down. She said to her, "Did she know if her master wanted a stable gillie?" The maid servant said, "That she did not know, but that she would ask." The maid servant went and she asked her master if he wanted a stable gillie. He said, "He did;" and he asked that he should come in; he engaged her, and she stayed working about the stable. There was a herd of wild beasts coming every night, and going into an empty barn that the gentleman had; a wild man after them, and his face covered with beard. She kept asking her master to send a man with her, and that they would catch him. Her master said, "That he would not; that they had no business with them; and that he had not done any harm to them." She went out one night by herself, and she stole with her the key of the barn door; she lay hid in a hole till the wild man and the beasts went in; she took with her the gillies, and they caught the wild man. They brought him in and they took off his beard; when the beard came off him she knew him, but she took no notice; and he did not know her. On the morrow he was about to go, but she spoke to her master to keep him; that the work was too heavy on her, and that she needed help. Her master ordered her to keep him. She kept him with her, and he himself and she were cleaning the stable.

A short time after this she spoke to her master for leave to go home on a trip to see her friends. Her master gave her leave. She said she would like well to have her gillie with her, and the two best horses that were in the stable.

When they went, she was questioning him by the way what had made him go with these wild beasts; or what be was at before the day. He would not tell her anything. They went on forward till they came to the hostelry where he had got the half hundred pounds. When she set her face down to the house, he refused to go into it. She said to him, "Did he do anything wrong, as he was refusing to go into it." He said, "That he had got half a hundred pounds from the man of the house." She said to him, "Had he paid them;" and he said, "That he had not paid, and that a strip of skin was to come from the top of his head to the sole of his foot, if it was not paid at the end of a day and a year." She said, "It would be well deserved; but that she was going to stay the night in the hostelry, and that she must go down." She asked him to put the horses into the stable, and they went in to the hostelry. He was standing in the door of the stable, and his head was bent. The man of the house came out, and he saw him. "My big gillie, I have thee here," said the man of the house; "art thou going to pay me to-day?" "I am not," said he. Then he went in, and they were going to begin to cut the strip of skin. She heard

the noise, and she asked what they were going to do to her gillie. They said, “They were going to cut a strip of skin off him from his crown to his sole.” “If that was to be done,” said she, “he was not to lose a drop of blood; send up here a web of linen, let him stand on it, and if a drop of blood comes out of him, another strip of skin shall come off thee.” Here there was nothing for it but to let him go; they could not make anything of it. Early on the morrow she took him over with her to the house of her father. If he was against going to the hostelry the night before, he was seven times as much when going to her father’s house. “Didst thou do harm here too, as thou art against going in?” “I got a wife here such a time since.” “What came of her?” “I don’t know.” No wonder whatever happens to thee, thou hast only to put up with all that comes thy way.” When her father saw him, he said: “I have thee here! Where is thy wife?” “I don’t know where she is.” “What didst thou to her?” said her father. He could not tell what he had done to her. Now there was nothing to be done but to hang him to a tree. There was to be a great day about the hanging, and a great many gentlemen were to come to see it. She asked her father what they were going to do to her gillie. Her father said, “That they were going to hang him; he bought a wife from me, and he does not know what has happened to her.” She went out to see the gentles coming in to the town; she asked of the one of the finest horse, what was his worth. “Five score,” said he. “Though he were five hundreds, he’s mine,” said she. She told her servant to put a shot in the horse. She asked her father if he had paid for his wife. He said he had paid. “If he paid,” said she, “thou hast no business with him, he might do what he liked with her; I bought the finest horse that came into the town to-day; I made my gillie put a shot in him, and who dares to say that it is ill.” Here there was nothing to be done but to let him loose. They could do nothing to him because he had bought her.

Here she went in to her father’s house, and she told one of her sisters to give her a gown. “What art thou going to do with a gown?” said she. “Never mind, if I spoil it I’ll pay for it.” When she put on the gown her father and sisters knew her. Her father and sisters told him that it was she was with him, and he did not believe them. She put off the woman’s clothes and put on the man’s clothes again. They went, herself and he; they went on forward till they were near his own old house. “Now,” said she, “we will stay here to-night; do thou sit at the top of the stair, and thou shalt set down all the talk that I and the man of the house will have.” When they went in and sat, she and the man of the house began to talk together. “I thought,” said she to the captain, “that a king was dwelling here; how didst thou get it?” He was that who was here before; but I am thinking, as thou art a stranger, that I may tell thee how I got it.” “ Thou mayest,” said she, “I will not make a tale of thee, the matter does not touch me.” He told her every turn, how the hen wife had put him in the kist, and the rest of the matter, to the going of the king on the morrow.

Very early on the morrow the man of the house was going to court: he said to her “That if she was not in a hurry to go away, that she might go with him to listen to the court.” She said “she would be willing, and she would like well that her gillie should be with her.” She went in the coach with the captain, and her gillie rode after her. When the court was over she said, “That she had got a word or two to say, if it were their pleasure to let her speak.” They said to her, “To let them hear what she had to say.” She said to her gillie, “Rise up and give them the paper thou wrotest last night.” When they read the paper, she said, “What should be done to that man?” “Hang him, if he were here,” said they.

“There you have him,” said she, “do with him what you will.” Herself and the king got back to their own house, and they were as they were before.

(Gaelic omitted)

This was written, April 1859, by Hector MacLean, “from the dictation of Catherine Milloy, a Cowal woman, married to a mer at Kilmeny, Islay--one Angus MacGeachy. Mrs. MacGeachy learned the story from a young man who resides in Cowal, Robert MacColl.”

May 1860.--No other version of this story has come to me as yet. It resembles Cymbeline in some of the incidents; and one incident, that of the blood, is like Portia’s defence in the Jew of Venice. It is worth remark that the scene of Cymbeline is partly laid in Britain, partly in Italy.

In the Decameron, 2nd day, novel 9, is the Italian story from which Cymbeline is supposed to have originated. “Bernard of Genoa is imposed upon by one Ambrose, loses his money, and orders his wife, who is quite innocent, to be put to death. She makes her escape, and goes in man’s dress into the service of the Sultan; there she meets with the deceiver, and, sending for her husband to Alexandria, has him punished; she then resumes her former habit, and returns with her husband rich to Genoa.”

In the Decameron, the Italian merchants dispute at Paris, and lay a bet. “A poor woman who frequented the house,” replaces the Gaelic “Hen wife.” The man who was hid in the chest took a ring, a girdle, a purse, and a gown, and in the Gaelic he takes a ring and a chain. The wife disguises herself as a man in both, but the service which she undertakes is different; and “the Sultan” is replaced by “a gentleman.” In both stories she discloses the cheat in open Court,--in the one, before “the Sultan’s court;” in the other, “in a court”--”to them.” But though there are such resemblances, the two stories differ widely in spirit, in incident, in scene, and in detail. Those who hold that old stories are handed down traditionally, will probably consider this to be one of the kind; and if so, Shakspeare *may* have gathered his incidents at home. On the other hand, so well known a book as the Decameron, translated into English, 1566, might well account for part of the story.

In either case it is curious to trace the resemblance and the difference in these three versions of what appears to be the same popular tale; told by Boccaccio, Shakspeare, and a farmer’s wife in the Highlands. If traditional, the story would seem to belong to a forgotten state of society. It is not now the custom to buy a wife, and thereby acquire the right to shoot her; and yet this right is insisted on, and acknowledged, and the story hinges on it. It seems that the Gauls had the power of life and death over their families, and that there was a custom very like the purchase of a wife among the old Icelanders.

There used to be, and probably there still are, certain ceremonies about betrothals, both in Norway and in the Highlands, which look like the remains of some such forgotten practice.

In the Highlands, a man used to go on the part of the bridegroom to settle the dower with the bride’s father, or some one who acted for him. They argued the point, and the argument gave rise to much fun and rough wit. For example, here is one bit of such a discussion, of which I remember to have heard long ago.

“This is the youngest and the last, she must be the worst; you must give me a large dower, or I will not take her.”

“Men always sell the shots first when they can; this is the best--I should give no dower at all.”

The first knotty point settled, and the wedding day fixed, the bridegroom, before the wedding day, sent a best man and maid to look after the bride, and gathered all his friends at home. The bride also gathered her friends, and her party led the way to church, the bride was supported by the best-man and best-maid, and a piper played before them. The bridegroom’s

party marched first on the way home; and then there was a jollification, and a ball, and some curious ceremonies with a stocking.

The strip of skin to be cut from the debtor is mentioned in other stories; and I believe such a mode of torture can be traced amongst the Scandinavians who once owned the Western Islands.

In another story which I have heard, a man was to be punished by cutting IALL, a thong, from his head to his heels, another from his forehead to his feet, a thong to tie them, and a thong to make all fast.

TIGH-OSDA’ is the word commonly used for an inn. It is probably derived from the same root as Hostelry Spanish, Osdal; French, Hôtel.

SEOMBAR is pronounced almost exactly like the French chambre--the only difference being that between the French *a* and the Gaelic *o*.

SEARBHANNT is very near the French servante.

XXIV. The Inheritance

From Donald Macintyre, Benbecula.

THERE was once a farmer, and he was well off. He had three sons. When he was on the bed of death he called them to him, and he said, “My sons, I am going to leave you: let there be no disputing when I am gone. In a certain drawer, in a dresser in the inner chamber, you will find a sum of gold; divide it fairly and honestly amongst you, work the farm, and live together as you have done with me;” and shortly after the old man went away. The sons buried him; and when all was over, they went to the drawer, and when they drew it out there was nothing in it.

They stood for a while without speaking a word. Then the youngest spoke, and he said--”There is no knowing if there ever was any money at all;” the second said--”There was money surely, wherever it is now;” and the eldest said--”Our father never told a lie, There was money certainly, though I cannot understand the matter.” “Come,” said the eldest, “let us go to such an old man; he was our father’s friend; he knew him well; he was at school with him; and no man knew so much of his affairs. Let us go to consult him.”

So the brothers went to the house of the old man, and they told him all that had happened. “Stay with me,” said the old man, “and I will think over this matter. I cannot understand it; but, as you know, your father and I were very great with each other. When he had children I had sponsorship, and when I had children he had gostji. I know that your father never told a lie.” And he kept them there, and he gave them meat and drink for ten days.

Then he sent for the three young lads, and he made them sit down beside him, and he said--

“There was once a young lad, and he was poor; and he took love for the daughter of a rich neighbour, and she took love for him; but because he was so poor there could be no wedding. So at last they pledged themselves to each other, and the young man went away, and stayed in his own house. After a time there came another suitor, and because he was well off, the girl’s father made her promise to marry him, and after a time they were married. But when the bridegroom came to her, he found her weeping and bewailing; and he said, ‘What ails thee?’ The bride would say nothing for a long time; but at last she told him all about it, and how she was pledged to another man. ‘Dress thyself,’ said the man, ‘and follow me.’ So she dressed herself in the wedding clothes, and he took the horse, and put her behind him, and rode to the house of the other man, and when he got there, he struck in the door, and he called out, ‘Is there man within?’ and when the other answered, he left the bride there within the door, and he said nothing, but he returned home. Then the man got up, and got a light, and who was there but the bride in her wedding dress.

“‘What brought thee here?” said he. ‘Such a man,’ said the bride. ‘I was married to him to-day, and when I told him of the promise we had made, he brought me here himself and left me.’

“‘Sit thou there,’ said the man; ‘art thou not married?’ So he took the horse, and he rode to the priest, and he brought him to the house, and before the priest he loosed the woman from the pledge she had given, and he gave her a line of writing that she was free, and he set her on the horse, and said, ‘Now return to thy husband.’

“So the bride rode away in the darkness in her wedding dress. She had not gone far when she came to a thick wood where three robbers stopped and seized her. ‘Aha!’ said one, ‘we have

waited long, and we have got nothing, but now we have got the bride herself.' 'Oh,' said she, 'let me go: let me go to my husband; the man that I was pledged to has let me go. Here are ten pounds in gold--take them, and let me go on my journey.' And so she begged and prayed for a long time, and told what had happened to her. At last one of the robbers, who was of a better nature than the rest, said, 'Come, as the others have done this, I will take you home myself.' 'Take thou the money,' said she. 'I will not take a penny,' said the robber; but the other two said, 'Give us the money,' and they took the ten pounds. The woman rode home, and the robber left her at her husband's door, and she went in, and showed him the line--the writing that the other had given her before the priest, and they were well pleased."

"Now," said the old man, "which of all these do you think did best? So the eldest son said, "I think the man that sent the woman to him to whom she was pledged, was the honest, generous man: he did well." The second said, "Yes, but the man to whom she was pledged did still better, when he sent her to her husband." "Then," said the youngest, "I don't know myself; but perhaps the wisest of all were the robbers who got the money." Then the old man rose up, and he said, "Thou hast thy father's gold and silver. I have kept you here for ten days; I have watched you well. I know your father never told a lie, and thou hast stolen the money." And so the youngest son had to confess the fact, and the money was got and divided.

I know nothing like No. 19. No. 20 begins like a German story in Grimm; but the rest is unlike anything I have read or heard. The first part has come to me in another shape, from Ross-shire; and some men whom I met in South Uist seemed to know these incidents.

The two belong to the class referred to in the Introduction, page xxxv. as fourth. Many of the novels in Boccaccio might be ranked with the same class; they are embryo three-volume novels, which only require nursing by a good writer to become full-grown books. There are plenty of the kind throughout the Highlands, and, as it seems to me, they are genuine popular traditions, *human* stories, whose incidents would suit a king or a peasant equally well. Without a wide knowledge of books, it is impossible to say whence these stories came; or whether they are invented by the people. MacIntyre said he had learned those which he told me from old men like himself, in his native island; and all others whom I have questioned say the same of their stories.

XXV. The Three Wise Men

From Donald MacIntyre, Benbecula.

THERE was once a farmer, and he was very well off, but he had never cast an eye on the women, though he was old enough to be married. So one day he took the horse and saddle, and rode to the house of another farmer, who bad a daughter, to see if she would suit him for a wife, and when he got there the farmer asked him to come in, and gave him food and drink, and he saw the daughter, and he thought she would suit him well. So he said to the father, "I am thinking it is time for me to be married, I am going to look for a wife"--(here there was along conversation, which I forget). So the man told his wife what the other had said, and she told her daughter to make haste and set the house in order, for that such a man was come and he was looking for a wife, and she had better show how handy she was. Well never mind, the daughter was willing enough, so she began to set the house in order, and the first thing she thought of was to make up the fire, so she ran out of the house to the peat-stack. Well, while she was bent down filling her apron with peats, what should fall but a great heap from the top of the stack on her head and shoulders. So she thought to herself, "Oh, now, if I were married to that man, and about to be a mother, and all these peats fallen on my head, I should now be finished and all my posterity;" and she gave a great burst of weeping, and sat down lamenting and bewailing. The mother was longing for her daughter to come back, so she went out and found her sitting crying in the end of the peat-stack, and she said, "What is on thee?" and the daughter said, "Oh, mother, the peat-stack fell on my head, and I thought if I were now married to that man, and about to be a mother, I was done, and all my posterity;" and the mother said, "That is true for thee, my daughter; that is true, indeed," and she sat down and cried too. Then the father was getting cold, so he too went out, wondering what kept the women, and when he found them, they told him what happened, and he said, "That would have been unfortunate indeed," and he began to roar and cry too. The wooer at last came out himself, and found them all crying in the end of the peat-stack, and when they had told him why they were lamenting, he said, "Never you mind. It may be that this may never happen at all. Go you in-doors, and cry no more." Then he took his horse and saddle, and rode home; and as he went, he thought, "What a fool I am to be stopping here all my life. Here I sit, and know no more of the world than a stock. I know how to grow corn, and that is all I know. I will go and see the world, and I will never come home till I find thee as wise as those were foolish whom I left crying in the peat-stack." And so when he got home, he set everything in order, and took the horse and went away. And he travelled the Gældom and the Galldom Highlands and strange lands for many a day, and got much knowledge. At last, one fine evening he came to a pretty plot of green ground in a glen, by a river; and on it there were three men standing. They were like each other, and dressed alike. Their dress was a long coat with short brigis, and a broad belt about the middle, and caps on their heads. (What dress is that? That is the dress they used to wear here. I remember my father well; he always wore it.) So he put Failte on them (saluted them). The three men never answered a word. They looked at him, and then they bent their heads slowly towards each other--(here the narrator bent his own head, and spoke solemnly)-and there they staid with their heads bowed for ten minutes. Then they raised their heads, and one said, "If I had without what I have within, I would give thee a night's share;" the second said, "If I had done what is undone, I would give thee a night's share;" and the third said, "I have nothing more than usual, come with me." So the farmer followed the old man to his house, wondering what all this should mean. When they had gone in and sat down, he wondered still more, for his host never offered him a drink till he had told him all about his journey. Then he said, "Quicker is a drink than a tale;" and the

old man gave a laugh, and struck the board, and a fine woman came and gave him a great cup of ale, and that was good. And he drank it, and thought to himself, “if I had that woman for my wife, she would be better than the one I left weeping in the peat-stack.” The old man laughed again, and he said, “If two were willing that might be.” The farmer wondered that this old man should know his thoughts, and answer them, but he held his tongue. Then the old man struck the board, and a girl came in, and he thought, “If I had that one for my wife, she would be better than the girl I left howling in the peat-stack.” The old man gave another little laugh, and he said, “If three were willing that might be too,” and the girl set a small pot on the fire. The farmer looked at it, and thought, “This man must have a small company.” “Ah,” said the man, “it will go about.”

“Now,” said the farmer, “I must know what all this means. I will neither eat nor drink in this house unless you tell me. I saluted you, and you bent your heads, and never answered for ten minutes. When you did speak, I could not understand you, and now you seem to understand my thoughts.” Then the old man said, “Sit down, and I will explain it all. Our father was a very wise man. We never knew how wise he was till long after he went away. We are three brothers, and on the bed of death our father left us this pretty place, and we have it amongst us, and plenty besides. Our father made us swear that we would never talk on important matters but in whispers. When thou camest, we bent our heads and whispered, as we always do, for men cannot dispute in a whisper, and we never quarrel. My first brother had the corpse of his mother-in-law within; he was unwilling to ask a stranger to a house of sorrow. She is to be buried to-morrow--If that were out which he had within, he had given thee a night’s share. My second brother has a wife who will do nothing till she gets three blows of a stick. Then she is like other women, and a good wife; he did not like a stranger to see the blows given, and he knew she would do nothing without them--If he had done what was undone, he had given thee a night’s share. I had nothing to do more than usual. Thou didst tell thy news, and when my wife came in, I knew thy thought. If I were dead, and thou and she were willing, you might be married. So if I, and thou, and my daughter were willing, you might be married too. Now, then, said the old man, sit and eat. The little pot will go about; it will serve for us. My company eat without.” On the morrow, the old man said, “I must go to the funeral to my brother’s house, do thou stay here.” But he said, “I will not stay in any man’s house when he is away. I will go with you to the funeral.” When came back he staid some time in the old man’s house. He married the daughter, and got a good share of the property. And, now, was not that a lucky peat-stack for the farmer.

This story and No. 19 were told to me on the 6th of September 1859, in the inn at the Sound of Benbecula, by a man whose name would sound to Saxon ears like Dolicolichyarlich; a Celt would know it for Donald MacDonald MacCharles, and his surname is MacIntyre; he is a cotter, and lives in Benbecula.

Donald is known as a good teller of tales, so I walked six miles to his house and heard him tell a long version of the tale of Conal Gulbanach.

It lasted an hour, and I hope to get it written some day; I have other versions of the same incidents. There was an audience of all the people of the village who were within reach, including Mr. Torrie, who lives there near Baile nan Cailleach, which is probably so called from an old nunnery. After the story, the same man recited a fragment of a poem about Fionn and his companions. A man returning from battle with a vast number of heads on a withy, meets a lady who questions him, he recites the history of the heads, and how their owners died. The poem was given rapidly and fluently. The story was partly told in measured prose; but it was very much spun out, and would have gained by condensation.

I told the old man that he had too many leaves on his tree, which he acknowledged to be a fair criticism. He followed me to the inn afterwards, and told me other stories; the household being assembled about the door, and in the room, and taking a warm interest in the proceedings. After a couple of glasses of hot whisky and water, my friend, who was well up in years, walked off home in the dark; and I noted down the heads of his stories in English, because my education, as respects Gaelic writing, was never completed. They are given as I got them, condensed, but unaltered. Donald says he has many more of the same kind.

XXVI. A Puzzle

From Kenneth M’Lennan, Turnaid, Ross-shire.

THERE was a custom once through the Gældom, when a man would die, that the whole people of the place would gather together to the house in which the dead man was--Tigh aire faire (the shealing of watching), and they would be at drinking, and singing, and telling tales, till the white day should come. At this time they were gathered together in the house of watching, and there was a man in this house, and when the tale went about, he had neither tale nor song, and as he had not, he was put out at the door. When he was put out he stood at the end of the barn; he was afraid to go farther. He was but a short time standing when he saw nine, dressed in red garments, going past, and shortly after that he saw other nine going past in green dresses; shortly after this he saw other nine going past in blue dresses. A while after that came a horse, and a woman and a man on him. Said the woman to the man, “I will go to speak to that man who is there at the end of the barn.” She asked him what he was doing standing there? He told her? “Sawest thou any man going past since the night fell?” said she. He said that he had; he told her all he had seen. “Thou sawest all that went past since the night fell,” said she. “Well then,” said she, “the first nine thou sawest, these were brothers of my father, and the second nine brothers of my mother, and the third nine, these were my own sons, and they are altogether sons to that man who is on the horse. That is my husband; and there is no law in Eirinn, nor in Alaba, nor in Sasunn that can find fault with us. Go thou in, and I myself will not believe but that a puzzle is on them till day;” and she went and she left him.

(Gaelic omitted)

Written by Hector Urquhart. The answer is founded on a mistaken belief that it is lawful for a woman to marry her grandmother’s husband. I am told that there are numerous puzzles of the same kind now current in India.

XXVII. The Ridere (Knight) Of Riddles

From John Mackenzie, fisherman, near Inverary.

THERE was a king once, and he married a great lady, and she departed on the birth of her first son. And a little after this the king married another one, and he had a son by this one too. The two lads were growing up. Then it struck in the queen's head that it was not her son who would come into the kingdom; and she set it before her that she would poison the eldest son. And so she sent advice to the cook that they would put poison in the drink of the heir; but as luck was in it, so it was that the youngest brother heard them, and he said to his brother not to take the draught, nor to drink it at all; and so he did. But the queen wondered that the lad was not dead; and she thought that there was not enough of poison in the drink, and she asked the cook to put more in the drink on this night. It was thus they did: and when the cook made up the drink, she said that he would not be long alive after this draught. But his brother heard this also, and he told this likewise. The eldest thought he would put the draught into a little bottle, and he said to his brother--"If I stay in this house I have no doubt she will do for me some way or other, and the quicker I leave the house the better. I will take the world for my pillow, and there is no knowing what fortune will be on me." His brother said that he would go with him, and they took themselves off to the stable, and they put saddles on two horses and they took their soles out of that.

They had not gone very far from the house when the eldest one said--"There is no knowing if poison was in the drink at all, though we went away. Try it in the horse's ear and we shall see." The horse went not far when he fell. "That was only a rattle-bones of a horse at all events," said the eldest one, and together they got up on the one horse, and so they went forwards. "But," said he, "I can scarce believe that there is any poison in the drink, let's try it on this horse." That he did, and they went not far when the horse fell cold dead. They thought to take the hide off him, and that it would keep them warm on this night for it was close at hand. In the morning when they woke they saw twelve ravens coming and lighting on the carcase of the horse, and they were not long there when they fell over dead.

They went and lifted the ravens, and they took them with them, and the first town they reached they gave the ravens to a baker, and they asked him to make a dozen pies of the ravens. They took the pies with them, and they went on their journey. About the mouth of night, and when they were in a great thick wood that was there, there came four and twenty robbers out of the wood, and they said to them to deliver their purses; but they said that they had no purse, but that they had a little food which they were carrying with them. "Good is even meat!" and the robbers began to eat it, but they had not eaten too boldly when they fell hither and thither. When they saw that the robbers were dead, they ransacked their pockets, and they got much gold and silver on the robbers. They went forward till they reached the Knight of Riddles.

The house of the Knight of Riddles was in the finest place in that country, and if his house was pretty, it was his daughter was pretty (indeed). Her like was not on the surface of the world altogether; so handsome was she, and no one would get her to marry but the man who would put a question to this knight that he could not solve. The chaps thought that they would go and they would try to put a question to him; and the youngest one was to stand in place of gillie to his eldest brother. They reached the house of the Knight of Riddles with this question--"One killed two, and two killed twelve, and twelve killed four and twenty, and two

got out of it;" and they were to be in great majesty and high honour till he should solve the riddle.

They were thus a while with the Ridere, but on a day of days came one of the knight's daughter's maidens of company to the gillie, and asked him to tell her the question. He took her plaid from her and let her go, but he did not tell her, and so did the twelve maidens, day after day, and he said to the last one that no creature had the answer to the riddle but his master down below. No matter! The gillie told his master each thing as it happened. But one day after this came the knight's daughter to the eldest brother, and she was so fine, and she asked him to tell her the question. And now there was no refusing her, and so it was that he told her, but he kept her plaid. And the Knight of Riddles sent for him, and he solved the riddle. And he said that he had two choices: to lose his head, or to be let go in a crazy boat without food or drink, without oar or scoop. The chap spoke and he said--"I have another question to put to thee before all these things happen." "Say on," said the knight. "Myself and my gillie were on a day in the forest shooting. My gillie fired at a hare, and she fell, and he took her skin off, and let her go; and so he did to twelve, he took their skins off and let them go. And at last came a great fine hare, and I myself fired at her, and I took her skin off and I let her go." "Indeed thy riddle is not hard to solve, my lad," said the knight. And so the lad got the knight's daughter to wife, and they made a great hearty wedding that lasted a day and a year. The youngest one went home now that his brother had got so well on his way, and the eldest brother gave him every right over the kingdom that was at home.

There were near the march of the kingdom of the Knight of Riddles three giants, and they were always murdering and slaying some of the knight's people, and taking the spoil from them. On a day of days the Knight of Riddles said to his son-in-law, that if the spirit of a man were in him, he would go to kill the giants, as they were always bringing such losses on the country. And thus it was, he went and he met the giants, and he came home with the three giants' heads, and he threw them at the knight's feet. "Thou art an able lad doubtless, and thy name hereafter is the Hero of the White Shield." The name of the Hero of the White Shield went far and near.

The brother of the Hero of the White Shield was exceedingly strong and clever, and without knowing what the Hero of the White Shield was, he thought he would try a trick with him. The Hero of the White Shield was now dwelling on the lands of the Giants, and the knight's daughter with him. His brother came and he asked to make a comhrag (fight as a bull) with him. The men began at each other, and they took to wrestling from morning till evening. At last and at length, when they were tired, weak, and given up, the Hero of the White Shield jumped over a great rampart, and he asked him to meet him in the morning. This leap put the other to shame, and he said to him "Well may it be that thou wilt not be so supple about this time to-morrow." The young brother now went to a poor little bothy that was near to the house of the Hero of the White Shield tired and drowsy, and in the morning they dared the fight again. And the Hero of the White Shield began to go back, till he went backwards into a river. "There must be some of my blood in thee before that was done to me." "Of what blood art thou?" said the youngest. "'Tis I am son of Ardan, great King of the Albann." "'Tis I am thy brother." It was now they knew each other. They gave luck and welcome to each other, and the Hero of the White Shield now took him into the palace, and she it was that was pleased to see him--the knight's daughter. He stayed a while with them, and after that he thought that he would go home to his own kingdom; and when he was going past a great palace that was there he saw twelve men playing at shinny over against the palace. He thought he would go for a while and play shinny with them; but they were not long playing shinny when they fell out, and the weakest of them caught him and he shook him as he would a child. He thought it was no use for him to lift a hand amongst these twelve worthies, and he

asked them to whom they were sons. They said they were children of the one father, the brother of the Hero of the White Shield, but that no one of them had the same mother. “I am your father,” said he; and he asked them if their mothers were all alive. They said that they were. He went with them till he found the mothers, and when they were all for going, he took home with him the twelve wives and the twelve sons; and I don’t know but that his seed are kings on Alba till this very day.

(Gaelic omitted)

Written down from the recitation of John Mackenzie, fisherman at Inverary, who says that he learned the tale from an old man in Lorn many years ago. He has been thirty-six years at Inverary. He first told me the tale fluently, and afterwards dictated it to me; and the words written are, as nearly as possible, those used by Mackenzie on the first occasion.

HECTOR URQUHART.

April, 1859.

The word pronounced Rēēt-djĕ-rĕ, and variously spelt Ridir, Righdir, and Righdeire, is explained in a manuscript history of the Campbells, written about 1827, as Righ, king--dei, after--Ri, king. If this be correct, the word would mean a following or minor king. It may equally be a corruption of Ritter, or Reiter; and I have translated it by *knight*, because it is now applied to all knights.

The author of the manuscript says:--The term is handed down even in Gaelic tales, and mentions several which were then current, Righdiere nan Spleugh, and an Righdeiri Ruadh; he adds, that Righdeirin dubh Loch Oigh (the Black Knights of Loch Awe) was the name then used by old Highlanders in mentioning the chiefs of the Duin (Campbells), and that the ruins of Eredin Castle were then known by no other name than Larach tai nan Righdeirin--the ruins of the house of the knights.

The writer argues from old manuscript histories, charters, etc., that the term was brought from Ireland by the colony who settled in Cantire at a very early period, and, who spread thence over Argyllshire, and founded a kingdom, of which frequent mention is made in Irish annals as the Dalreudinan, or Scoto-Irish colonization of Argyll, Cantire, Lorn, and Islay. It is supposed to have taken place about A.D. 503, under Laorn, Fergus, and Angus, three sons of Eric, the descendant of Cairbre Ruadh, a son of Conary II., who ruled as chief king of Ireland A.D. 212. Be that as it may, all the Gaelic traditions now current in the Isles point at an Irish migration which took place in the year of grace *once upon a time*, and the word Righdeire occurs continually, where it seems to mean a small king, and a king of Erin; for example, “there was a king (Ree) and a Reet-djer--as there was and will be and, as grows the fir-tree, some of them crooked and some of them straight--and he was a king of Erin.” Even the word Albanach, now used for Scotchman, means Wanderer. When the king’s son changes his name, after killing the giants, it seems as if he were made a knight.

This tale, then, would seem to be some mythological account of events which may be traced in Grimm’s stories, in the Classics, and elsewhere, mixed up with names and titles belonging to the colonization of Argyllshire by Irish tribes, and all applied to the kings of Scotland in the last sentence. It is a fair representation of the strange confusion of reality and fancy, history and mythology, of which I believe these stories to be composed.

The nearest story to it which I know is Das Räthsel, in Grimm, No. 22. Several versions are given in the third volume, which seem to vary from each other, about as much as this Gaelic version varies from them all.

There is something like the fight between Romulus and his brother. Alba means Scotland.

XXVIII. The Burgh

From Alexander M'Donald, tenant, and others, Barra, July 1859.

FOUR were watching cattle in Baileburgh (Burgh F Farm). They were in a fold. The four were Domhnull MacGhilleathain, Domhnull Mac-an-t-Saoir, Calum MacNill, and Domhnull Domhnullach. They saw a dog. Calum MacNill said that they should strike the dog. Said Domhnull MacGhilleathain, "We will not strike. If thou strikest him thou wilt repent it." Calum MacNill struck the dog, and his hand and his arm lost their power. He felt a great pain in his hand and his arm, and one of the other lads carried his stick home; he could not carry it himself. He was lamenting his hand, and he went where there was an old woman, Nic a Phi, to get knowledge about his hand. She said to him that he would be so till the end of a day and a year; and at the end of a day and year, to go to the knoll and say to it, "If thou dost not let with me the strength of my hand, I or my race will leave neither stick nor stone of thee that we will not drive to pieces."

At the end of a day and year his comrades said, "There is now a day and year since thou hast lost the power of thy hand, come to the knoll till thy hand get its power, as the woman said." He went himself and his comrades. They reached the hill. He drew his stick, and he said to the knoll, "If thou dost not let with me the strength of my hand, I myself or my race will leave neither stick nor stone of thee that we will not drive to pieces." And he got the power of his hand.

(Gaelic omitted)

Written by Hector MacLean, from the telling of a man in Barra. This may be compared with the Manks tradition about the Black Dog, at Peel Castle.

XXIX. The Tulman

From Alexander M’Donald, tenant, and others, Barra. July 1859.

HERE was a woman in Baile Thangusdail, and she was out seeking a couple of calves; and the night and lateness caught her, and there came rain and tempest, and she was seeking shelter. She went to a knoll with the couple of calves, and she was striking a tether-peg into it. The knoll opened. She heard a gleegashing as if a pot-hook were clashing beside a pot. She took wonder, and she stopped striking the tether-peg. A woman put out her head and all above her middle, and she said, “What business hast thou to be troubling this tulman in which I make my dwelling?” “I am taking care of this couple of calves, and I am but weak. Where shall I go with them?” “Thou shalt go with them to that breast down yonder. Thou wilt see a tuft of grass. If thy couple of calves eat that tuft of grass, thou wilt not be a day without a milk cow as long as thou art alive, because thou hast taken my counsel.”

As she said, she never was without a milk cow after that, and she was alive fourscore and fifteen years after the night that was there.

(Gaelic omitted)

Written by Hector MacLean, from the dictation of a man in Barra.

XXX. The Isle Of Pabaidh

From Alexander M’Donald, tenant, and others, Barra. July 1859.

THERE came a woman of peace (a fairy) the way of the house of a man in the island of Pabaidh, and she had the hunger of motherhood on her. He gave her food, and that went well with her. She staid that night. When she went away, she said to him, “I am making a desire that none of the people of this island may go in childbed after this.” None of these people, and none others that would make their dwelling in the island ever departed in childbed from that time.

(Gaelic omitted)

Written by Hector MacLean, from the telling of a man in Barra.

XXXI. Sanntraigh

From Alexander M'Donald, tenant, and others, Barra. July 1859.

THERE was a herd's wife in the island of Sanntraigh, and she had a kettle. A woman of peace (fairy) would come every day to seek the kettle. She would not say a word when she came, but she would catch hold of the kettle. When she would catch the kettle, the woman of the house would say--

A smith is able to make
Cold iron hot with coal.
The due of a kettle is bones,
And to bring it back again whole.

The woman of peace would come back every day with the kettle and flesh and bones in it. On a day that was there, the housewife was for going over the ferry to Baile a Chaisteil, and she said to her man, "If thou wilt say to the woman of peace as I say, I will go to Baile Castle." "Oo! I will say it. Surely it's I that will say it." He was spinning a heather rope to be set on the house. He saw a woman coming and a shadow from her feet, and he took fear of her. He shut the door. He stopped his work. When she came to the door she did not find the door open, and he did not open it for her. She went above a hole that was in the house. The kettle gave two jumps, and at the third leap it went out at the ridge of the house. The night came, and the kettle came not. The wife came back over the ferry, and she did not see a bit of the kettle within, and she asked, "Where was the kettle?" "Well then I don't care where it is," said the man; "I never took such a fright as I took at it. I shut the door, and she did not come any more with it." "Good-for-nothing wretch, what didst thou do? There are two that will be ill off--thyself and I." "She will come to-morrow with it." "She will not come."

She hasted herself and she went away. She reached the knoll, and there was no man within. It was after dinner, and they were out in the mouth of the night. She went in. She saw the kettle, and she lifted it with her. It was heavy for her with the remnants that they left in it. When the old carle that was within saw her going out, he said,

Silent wife, silent wife,
That came on us from the land of chase,
Thou man on the surface of the "Bruth,"
Loose the black, and slip the Fierce.

The two dogs were let loose; and she was not long away when she heard the clatter of the dogs coming. She kept the remnant that was in the kettle, so that if she could get it with her, well, and if the dogs should come that she might throw it at them. She perceived the dogs coming. She put her hand in the kettle. She took the board out of it, and she threw at them a quarter of what was in it. They noticed it there for a while. She perceived them again, and she threw another piece at them when they closed upon her. She went away walking as well as she might; when she came near the farm, she threw the mouth of the pot downwards, and there she left them all that was in it. The dogs of the town struck (up) a barking when they saw the dogs of peace stopping. The woman of peace never came more to seek the kettle.

(Gaelic omitted)

Written by Hector MacLean, from the telling of a man in Barra.

XXXII. Cailliach Mhor Chlibhrich

From W. Ross, stalker.

THIS celebrated witch was accused of having enchanted the deer of the Reay forest, so that they avoided pursuit. Lord Reay was exceedingly angry, but at a loss how to remedy the evil. His man, William (the same who braved the witch and sat down in her hut) promised to find out if this was the case. He watched her for a whole night, and by some counter enchantments managed to be present when in the early morning she was busy milking the hinds. They were standing all about the door of the hut till one of them ate a hank of blue worsted hanging from a nail in it. The witch struck the animal, and said, “The spell is off you; and Lord Reay’s bullet will be your death to-day.” William repeated this to his master to confirm the tale of his having passed the night in the hut of the great hag, which no one would believe. And the event justified it, for a fine yellow hind was killed that day, and the hank of blue yarn was found in its stomach.

This is one of nearly a hundred stories, gathered amongst the people of Sutherland by a very talented collector, whose numerous accomplishments unfortunately do not include Gaelic. This resembles an account of a Lapp camp (see Introduction). It also bears some affinity to a story published by Grant Stewart, in which a ghost uses a herd of deer to carry her furniture.

XXXIII. The Smith And The Fairies

From the Rev. Thomas Pattieson, Islay.

YEARS ago there lived in Crossbrig a smith of the name of MacEachern. This man had an only child, a boy of about thirteen or fourteen years of age, cheerful, strong, and healthy. All of a sudden he fell ill; took to his bed and moped whole days away. No one could tell what was the matter with him, and the boy himself could not, or would not, tell how he felt. He was wasting away fast; getting thin, old, and yellow; and his father and all his friends were afraid that he would die.

At last one day, after the boy had been lying in this condition for a long time, getting neither better nor worse, always confined to bed, but with an extraordinary appetite,--one day, while sadly revolving these things, and standing idly at his forge, with no heart to work, the smith was agreeably surprised to see an old man, well known to him for his sagacity and knowledge of out-of-the-way things, walk into his workshop. Forthwith he told him the occurrence which had clouded his life.

The old man looked grave as he listened; and after sitting a long time pondering over all he had heard, gave his opinion thus--"It is not your son you have got. The boy has been carried away by the 'Daoine Sith,' and they have left a *Sibhreach* in his place." "Alas! and what then am I to do?" said the smith. "How am I ever to see my own son again?" "I will tell you how," answered the old man. "But, first, to make sure that it is not your own son you have got, take as many empty egg shells as you can get, go with them into the room, spread them out carefully before his sight, then proceed to draw water with them, carrying them two and two in your hands as if they were a great weight, and arrange when full, with every sort of earnestness round the fire." The smith accordingly gathered as many broken egg-shells as he could get, went into the room, and proceeded to carry out all his instructions.

He had not been long at work before there arose from the bed a shout of laughter, and the voice of the seeming sick boy exclaimed, "I am now 800 years of age, and I have never seen the like of that before."

The smith returned and told the old man. "Well, now," said the sage to him, "did I not tell you that it was not your son you had: your son is in Brorra-cheill in a digh there (that is, a round green hill frequented by fairies). Get rid as soon as possible of this intruder, and I think I may promise you your son."

"You must light a very large and bright fire before the bed on which this stranger is lying. He will ask you 'What is the use of such a fire as that?' Answer him at once, 'You will see that presently!' and then seize him, and throw him into the middle of it. If it is your own son you have got, he will call out to save him; but if not, this thing will fly through the roof.

The smith again followed the old man's advice, kindled a large fire, answered the question put to him as he had been directed to do, and seizing the child flung him in without hesitation. The "Sibhreach" gave an awful yell, and sprung through the roof, where a hole was left to let the smoke out.

On a certain night the old man told him the green round hill, where the fairies kept the boy, would be open. And on that night the smith, having provided himself with a bible, a dirk, and a crowing cock, was to proceed to the hill. He would hear singing and dancing and much merriment going on, but he was to advance boldly; the bible he carried would be a certain

safeguard to him against any danger from the fairies. On entering the hill he was. to stick the dirk in the threshold, to prevent the hill from closing upon him; “and then,” continued the old man, “on entering you will see a spacious apartment before you, beautifully clean, and there, standing far within, working at a forge, you will also see your own son. When you are questioned, say you come to seek him, and will not go without him.”

Not long after this, the time came round, and the smith sallied forth, prepared as instructed. Sure enough as he approached the hill, there was a light where light was seldom seen before. Soon after a sound of piping, dancing, and joyous merriment reached the anxious father on the night wind.

Overcoming every impulse to fear, the smith approached the threshold steadily, stuck the dirk into it as directed, and entered. Protected by the bible he carried on his breast, the fairies could not touch him; but they asked him, with a good deal of displeasure, what he wanted there. He answered, “I want my son, whom I see down there, and I will not go without him.”

Upon hearing this, the whole company before him gave a loud laugh, which wakened up the cock he carried dozing in his arms, who at once leaped up on his shoulders, clapped his wings lustily, and crowed loud and long.

The fairies, incensed, seized the smith and his son, and throwing them out of the hill, flung the dirk after them, “and in an instant a’ was dark.”

For a year and a day the boy never did a turn of work, and hardly ever spoke a word; but at last one day, sitting by his father and watching him finishing a sword he was making for some chief, and which he was very particular about, he suddenly exclaimed, “That is not the way to do it;” and taking the tools from his father’s hands he set to work himself in his place, and soon fashioned a sword, the like of which was never seen in the country before.

From that day the young man wrought constantly with his father, and became the inventor of a peculiarly fine and well-tempered weapon, the making of which kept the two smiths, father and son, in constant employment, spread their fame far and wide, and gave them the means in abundance, as they before had the disposition to live content with all the world and very happily with one another.

The walls of the house where this celebrated smith, the artificer of the ‘Claidheamh Ceann-Ileach,” lived and wrought, are standing to this day, not far from the parish church of Kilchoman, Islay, in a place called Caonis gall.

Many of the incidents in this story are common in other collections; but I do not know any published story of the kind in which the hero is a smith. This smith was a famous character, and probably a real personage, to whom the story has attached itself.

The gentleman who has been kind enough to send me this tale, does not say from whom he got it, but I have heard of the Islay smith, who could make wonderful swords, all my life, and of the “Swords of the Head of Islay.” The Brewery of Eggshells, and the Throwing of the Fairy Changeling into the Fire, are well-known popular tales in collections from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and, I think, Brittany. The man carried into the hill and there remaining for a long time, is also an incident common to many races, including the Jews, and one which I have heard in the Highlands ever since I can remember, though I do not remember to have heard any of the peasantry tell it as a story.

The belief that “the hill” opened on a certain night, and that a light shone from the inside, where little people might be seen dancing, was too deeply grounded some years ago to be lightly spoken of; even now, on this subject, my kind friend Mrs. MacTavish writes--”You may perhaps remember an old servant we had at the manse who was much offended if any

one doubted these stories--(*I remember her perfectly*). I used to ask her the reason why such wonders do not occur in our day, to which she replied, that religious knowledge having increased, people's faith was stronger than it was in the olden time. In the glebe of Kilbrandon in Lorn is a hill called Crocan Corr--the good or beautiful hill where the fairies even in my young days were often seen dancing around their fire. I sometimes went out with others to look, but never succeeded in seeing them at their gambols.

"Are you aware that ------'s mother was carried away by the fairies--(*I know ------ well*). So convinced were many of this absurdity, which I remember perfectly well, that it was with difficulty they got a nurse for his brother ------, who being a delicate child, was believed to have been conveyed away along with his mother, and a fairy left instead of him during his father's absence * * * The child however throve when he got a good nurse, and grew up to be a man, which, I suppose, convinced them of their folly. Mr. ------ minister, of ------ had some difficulty in convincing a man whose wife was removed in a similar manner (*she died in childbed*), that his son, a boy twelve years of age, must have been under some hallucination when he maintained that his mother had come to him, saying she was taken by fairies to a certain hill in Muckairn, known to be the residence of the fairies.

"If any one is so unfortunate as to go into one of these hills, which are open at night, they never get out unless some one goes in quest of them, who uses the precaution of leaving a GUN or SWORD across the opening, which the fairies cannot remove. A certain young woman was decoyed into one of these openings, who was seen by an acquaintance dancing with the merry race. He resolved on trying to rescue her, and leaving his gun at the entrance, went forward, and seizing the young woman by the hand, dragged her out before they could prevent him. They pursued them, but having got her beyond the gun, they had no longer power to keep her. She told him she had nearly dropped down with fatigue, but she could not cease dancing, though she felt it would soon kill her. The young man restored her to her friends, to their great joy."

(*I remember exactly the same incident told of a hill called Bencnock in Islay, and one similar of another hill called Cnock-donn*.) "When poor women are confined, it is unsafe to leave them alone till their children are baptised. If through any necessity they must be left alone, the Bible left beside them is sufficient protection.

"Many were the freaks fairies were guilty of. A family who lived in Gaolin Castle, Kerrera, near Oban, had, as they supposed, a delicate child; it was advancing in years but not growing a bit; at length a visitor from Ireland came to the castle, and recognized her as the fairy sweetheart of an Irish gentleman of his acquaintance. He addressed her in Gaelic or Irish, saying--'THA THUSA SIN A SHIRACH BHEAG LEANNAN BRIAN MACBRAODH.'--There thou art, little fairy sweetheart of Brian MacBroadh. So offended was the elf at being exposed, that she ran out of the castle and leaped into the sea from the point called RUTHADH NA SIRACH, the fairies' point, to this day.

"Fairies were very friendly to some people whom they favoured, but equally mischievous where they took a dislike. A hill in the farm of Dunvuilg in Craignish was one of their favourite haunts, and on a certain occasion they offered to assist an honest tenant's wife in the neighbourhood, for whom they had a kindness, to manufacture a quantity of wool she had for clothing for her family. She was very glad to have their services, and being always an active race, they set to work directly, repeating 'CIRADH, CARDADH, TLAMADH, CUIGEAL, BEARTIGHE GU LUATH BURN LUAIDH AIR TEINE CORR IONNDRAIDH MHOR MHAITH BEAN AN TIGHE FHIN.' Teazing, carding, mixing, distaff, weaving loom, water for waulking on the fire, the thrifty housewife herself is the best at sitting up late.

“In the heat of their operations an envious neighbour came to the door crying--’DUNBHUILG IRA THEINE,’ Dunvuilg on fire! Dunvuilg is on fire! Dunvuilg is on fire! was re-echoed by all the little company. ‘M’ UIRD IS M’ INNEAN! M’ UIRD IS’ M’ INEANN! MO CHLANN BHEAG S’ MO DHAOINE MORA! MO CHLANN BHEAG S’ MO DHAOINE MORA!’--’Dunvuilg on fire; my hammers and my anvil--my hammers and my anvil; my little children and my grown men--my little children and my grown men!’ and they all scampered off, but not till they had nearly finished the housewife’s web.

There is a field in the farm in which I was born, said to have been the scene of fairy operations. They were seen at work, and heard encouraging each other with ‘CAOL ACHADH MHAIDH BUANADH GU TETH.’ The corn in the field was found in stooks in the morning.

“It is quite common to remark, that the fairies are at some meal as the time of day may indicate when there is rain with sunshine, but I never heard the reason why.--(*In England it is the d---l beating his wife*.)

“The night following the 13th of May, or May-day, old style, is a particularly busy season with both fairies and witches. Then every herd and dairy-maid and cannie housewife uses various arts to ward off the many evils the enemy has the power of inflicting. One device which I have seen used was putting a little tar in the right ear of each cow beast in the byre; but all these charms or giosragan, as they are called, had always some reason. Tar has a disinfecting quality, as is well known, and used to he put on clothing under the arms when a person had to go into a house where there was any infectious disease.”

The Dunbhulaig story is all over the Highlands, and there seem to be many places so called. Mr. John MacLean, Kilchamaig, Tarbert, Argyle, has sent me a version which varies but little from that told by Mrs. MacTavish. The scene is laid on the Largie side of Kintyre. The farmer’s wife was idle, and called for the fairies, who wove a web for her and shouted for more work. She first set them to put each other out, and at last got rid of them by shouting “Dunbhulaig on fire!” The fairies’ rhyme when working was--

“Is fad abhras ‘n aon laimh air dheradh,
Ciradh cardadh tlamadh cuigel,
Feath a bhearst fithidh gu luath,
‘S uisge luaidh air teine
Obair, obair, obair, obair,
Is fad abhras ‘n son laimh air dheradh.

Which Mr. MacLean translates freely--

“Work, work, for a single hand
Can but little work command,
Some to tease, and card, and spin;
Some to oil and weave begin;
Some the water for waulking heat,
That we may her web complete.
Work, work, for a single hand
Can but little work command.”

The rhyme, when they depart in hot haste, is--

“Mo mhullachan caise m’ord a’s m innean,
Mo bhean ‘s mo phaisde s’ mo gogan ima,

Mo bho a' mo gobhair s' mo chiste beag mine,
Och, och, ochone gur truagh tha mise!"

Freely translated thus by Mr. MacLean--

"My wife, my child, alas, with these,
My butter pail and little cheese,
My cow, my goat, my meal-chest gone,
My hammers too, och, och, ochone!"

Or more closely thus--

"My mould of cheese, my hammer, and anvil,
My wife and my child, and my butter crock;
My cow and my goat, and my little meal kist;
Och, och, ochone, how wretched am I!"

I heard another version of the same story in Lewis from a medical gentleman, who got it from an old woman, who told it as a fact, with some curious variations unfit for printing. And my landlady in Benbecula knew the story, and talked it over with me in September this year. The versions which I have of this story vary in the telling as much as is possible, and each is evidently the production of a different mind, but the incidents are nearly the same in all, and the rhyme varies only in a few points. Dunbhulaig is the same in Kintyre, Lorn, Lewis, and Benbecula. I am not aware that the story has ever before been reduced to writing.

The Man in the Hill is equally well known in Kirkcudbright, but the *hill*, has become a *mill*, and the fairies Brownies. The fairies of Kirkcudbright seem to have carried off children, like the Island Elves; to have borrowed meal, like those of Sutherland, and to have behaved like their brethren elsewhere. The following four stories were got for me by the sisters of Miss Mary Lindsay, who has lived so long with us as to have become one of the family.

XXXIV. Kirkcudbright

Kirkcudbright, *Tuesday*, *Feb*. 1859.

MY DEAR MARY,--I went to Johnny Nicholson last night, and he told me the following fairy story. I must give it in his own words:--

1. “You have been often at the Gatehouse,” said he, “well, you’ll mind a flat piece of land near Enrick farm; well, that was once a large loch; a long way down from there is still the ruin of a mill, which at that time was fed from this loch. Well, one night about the Hallowe’en times, two young ploughmen went to a smiddy to get their socks (of their ploughs) and colters repaired, and in passing the said mill on their way home again they heard music and dancing, and fiddling, and singing, and laughing, and talking; so one of the lads would be in to see what was going on; the other waited outside for hours, but his companion never came out again, so he went home assured that the brownies had got hold of him. About the same time the following year, the same lad went again to the smiddy on the same errand, and this time he took another lad with him, but had the precaution to put the Bible in his pocket. Well, in passing the mill the second time, he heard the same sounds of music and dancing. This time, having the Bible in his band, he ventured to look in, when who should he see but his companion whom he had left standing there that day twelvemonths. He handed him the Bible, and the moment he did so, the music and dancing ceased, the lights went out, and all was darkness; but it is not said what his companion had seen, or had been doing all that time.”

2. Another story he told me was about a boy of the name of Williamson, whose father, an Irish linen packman, was drowned on his way from Ireland, where he had gone to purchase linen; so the boy was brought up by his mother and grandfather, an old man of the name of Sproat, who lived in Borgue. The boy disappeared often for two and three, and often ten days at a time, and no one knew where he went, as he never told when he returned, though it was understood the fairies took him away. Upon one occasion the Laird of Barmagachan, was getting his peats cast, and all the neighbours round were assisting. At this time the boy had been away for ten days, and they were all wondering where he could be, when lo and behold, the boy is sitting in the midst of them. “Johnny,” said one of the company, who were all seated in a ring, eating their dinner, “where did ye come from?” “I came with our folks,” said the boy (meaning the fairies). “Your folks; who are they?” “Do you see yon barrow of peats a couping into yon hole? there’s where I came from.” An old man of the name of Brown, ancestor of the Browns of Langlands, who are still living in Borgue, advised the grandfather to send the boy to the Papist priest, and he would give him something that would frighten away the fairies; so they accordingly sent the boy, and when he returned home he wore a cross hung round his neck by a bit of black ribbon. When the minister and kirk-session heard of it they excommunicated the old grandfather and old Brown for advising such a thing. They believed in fairies, but not in anything a Papist priest could do. However, the boy was never after taken away; and some of the oldest men now alive remember that boy as an old man. The whole affair is recorded in the books of the kirk-session of Borgue, and can be seen any day.

3. One day as a mother was sitting rocking her baby to sleep, she was surprised, on looking up, to see a lady of elegant and courtly demeanour, so unlike any one she had ever seen in that part of the country, standing in the middle of the room. She had not heard any one enter, therefore you may judge it was with no little surprise, not unmingled with curiosity, that she

rose to welcome her strange visitor. She handed her a chair, but she very politely declined to be seated. She was very magnificently attired; her dress was of the richest green, embroidered round with spangles of gold, and on her head was a small coronet of pearls. The woman was still more surprised at her strange request. She asked, in a rich musical voice, if she would oblige her with a basin of oatmeal. A basinful to overflowing was immediately handed to her, for the woman's husband being both a farmer and miller, had plenty of meal at command. The lady promised to return it, and named the day she would do so. One of the children put out her hand to get hold of the grand lady's spangles, but told her mother afterwards that she felt nothing. The mother was afraid the child would lose the use of her hands, but no such calamity ensued. It would have been very ungrateful in her fairy majesty if she had struck the child powerless for touching her dress, if indeed such power were hers. But to return to our story, the very day mentioned, the oatmeal was returned, not by the same lady, but by a curious little figure with a yelping voice; she was likewise dressed in green. After handing the meal she yelped out, "Braw meal, it's the top pickle of the sin corn." It was excellent; and what was very strange, all the family were advised to partake of it but one servant lad, who spurned the fairy's meal; and he dying shortly after, the miller and his wife firmly believed it was because he refused to eat of the meal. They also firmly believed their first visitor was no less a personage than the Queen of the Fairies, who having dismissed her court, had not one maid of honour in waiting to obey her commands. A few nights after this strange visit, as the miller was going to bed, a gentle tap was heard at the door, and on its being opened by him, with a light in his hand, there stood a little figure dressed in green, who, in a shrill voice, but very polite manner, requested him to let on the water and set the mill in order, for she was going to grind some corn. The miller did not dare to refuse, so did as she desired him. She told him to go to bed again, and he would find all as he had left it. He found everything in the morning as she said he would. So much for the honesty of fairies.

4. A tailor was going to work at a farm-house early one morning. He had just reached it, and was going to enter, when he heard a shrill voice call out, "Kep fast, will ye?" and on looking quickly round, he was just in time to receive in his arms a sweet, little, smiling baby of a month old, instead of a little lady in green, who was standing to receive the child. The tailor turned and ran home as fast as he could, for tailors are generally nimble kind of folks, and giving the baby to his wife, ran off again to his work, leaving his better half in no pleasant mood with the little intruder, as she very politely termed the little innocent. Having reached the farm-house, the tailor found the inhabitants all thrown into confusion by the screaming, yelping, little pest, as they called their little nurseling, for the little woman in green had given in exchange this little hopeful for their own sweet little one, which was safe with the tailor's wife. They found out afterwards it was the nurse who had done it. The doctor was sent for, but all was in vain; day nor night rest they got none. At last one day, all being absent but the tailor, who was there following his trade, he commenced a discourse with the child in the cradle. "Will hae ye your pipes?" says the tailor. "They're below my head," says the tenant of the cradle. "Play me a spring," says the tailor. Like thought, the little man, jumping from the cradle, played round the room with great glee. A curious noise was heard meantime outside; and the tailor asked what it meant. The little elf called out, "It's my folk wanting me," and away he fled up the chimney, leaving the tailor more dead than alive. Their own child was brought home, the guilty nurse dismissed, and the tailor's wife amply rewarded for the care of the child. She was heard to say, "It was a glad sight the wee bit bairn."

5. The Macgowans of Grayscroft in Tongland, and latterly of Bogra, had the power of witchcraft to a considerable extent, and it descended from one generation to another. At the time we refer to, Abraham Macgowan and his daughter Jenny resided at Grayscroft. Jenny had an unlimited power from Old Nick to act as she pleased. The ploughmen at that time in

their employ were Harry Dew and Davie Gordon, young men about twenty-two years of age; they had been there for the last twelve months; and conversing one day together, the following took place:--

Harry--"Losh man, Davie, what makes ye sae drowsy, lazy, and sleepy-like the day, for I am verra sure ye work nae mair than I do; ye eat the same and sleep the same as I do, and yet ye are so thin and wearied and hungry-like, I dinna ken ava what ails ye; are ye weel eneugh, Davie?" "I'm weel eneugh, Harry, but it's a' ye ken about it; sleep a night or twa at the bedside, and maybe you'll no be sae apt to ask me sic questions again. Harry--"The bedside, Davie! what differ will that make? I hae nae mair objections to sleep there than at the wa'." This being agreed to, they exchanged places. Nothing occurred to disturb either of them till the third night, although Harry kept watch: their bed was on the stable loft, when, about midnight, the stable door was opened cautiously, and some one was heard (by Harry only) coming up the ladder and to the bedside, with a quiet step. A bridle was held above the one next the bedside, and the words, "Up horsey," whispered in his ear; in one moment Harry was transformed into a horse at the stable door. The saddle was got on with some kicking and plunging, but Jenny gets mounted, and off they set by the Elfcraigs, Auld Brig o' Tongland, the March Cleughs, and on till they reach the Auld Kirk of Buittle. Harry was tied to the gate along with others. Meg o' Glengap was there on her dairymaid, now a bonny mare, neat in all her proportions. "Tib" o' Criffle came on her auld ploughman, rather wind-broken. "Lizzy," frae the Bennan, came on her cot wife, limping with a swelled knee. "Moll o' the Wood" came on a herd callant frae the "How o'Siddick." When all the horses were mustered, there was some snorting and kicking and neighing amongst them. Fairies, witches, brownies, and all met in the kirk and had a blithe holiday, under the patronage of his Satanic majesty, which continued till the crowing of the cock. Wearied with his gallop, Harry, when the charmed bridle was taken off, found himself in his own bed and in his own shape. Harry is determined to be revenged; he finds the charmed bridle in a hole in the kitchen in a week after; he tries it on Jenny, using the same words, when Jenny is transformed into the auld brown mare of the farm; he takes her to the neighbouring smithy, and gets her, after much ado, shod all round, when he returns and leaves her, after securing the wonderful bridle.

Next morning Harry is ordered to go for a doctor, as his mistress is taken ill. He goes into the house to ask for her; pulls the bed clothes off her, and discovers there was a horse shoe on each hand and foot, when Harry says, "Jenny, my lass, that did ye." Jenny played many more similar tricks on her neighbour lads and lasses.

XXXV. Sutherland

In Sutherland the fairy creed is much the same as elsewhere in Scotland, but there is a generic term for supernatural beings, which is rarely used in West Country Gaelic. Here are a few of a large and very good collection of Sutherland stories.

1. Duncan, surnamed More, a respectable farmer in Badenoch, states as follows:--"A matter of thirty summers ago, when I was cutting peats on the hill, my old mother that was, was keeping the house. It was sowens she had in her hand for our supper, when a little woman walked in and begged a lippie of meal of her. My mother, not knowing her face, said, 'And where do you come from?' 'I come from my own place and am short of meal.' My mother, who had plenty by her in the house, spoke her civil, and bound her meal on her back, following her a few steps from the door. She noticed that a little kiln in the hill side was smoking. The wife saw this too, and said, 'Take back your meal, we shall soon have meal of our own.' My mother pressed ours on her; but she left the pock lying; and when she came to the running burn went out of sight; and my mother just judged it was a fairy."

2. Once upon a time there was a tailor and his wife, who owned a small croft or farm, and were well to do in the world; but had only one son, a child, that was more pain than pleasure to them, for it cried incessantly and was so cross that nothing could be done with it. One day the tailor and his helpmeet meant to go to a place some miles distant and after giving the child its breakfast, they put it to bed in the kitchen, and bid their farm servant look to it from time to time; desiring him also to thrash out a small quantity of straw in the barn before their return. The lad was late of setting to work, but recollected before going off to the barn, that he must see if the child wanted for anything. "What are you going to do now?" said the bairn sharply to Donald, as he opened the kitchen door. "Thrash out a pickle of straw for your father; lie still and do not *girr*, like a good bairn." But the bairn got out of bed, and insisted then and there in being allowed to accompany the servant. "Go east, Donald," said the little master, authoritatively, "Go east, and when ye come to the big brae, chap ye (anglicè *rap*) three times; and when they come, say ye are seeking Johnnie's flail." The astonished Donald did as he was bid, and by rapping three times, called up a fairy ("little man") who, giving him the flail, sent him off with it in an unenviable state of terror.

Johnny set to with a will, and in an hour's time, he and Donald had thrashed the whole of the straw in the barn; he then sent Donald back to the brae, where the flail was restored with the same ceremony, and went quietly back to bed. At dusk the parents returned; and the admiration of the tailor at the quantity and quality of the work done, was so great, that he questioned Donald as to which of the neighbours had helped him to thrash out so much straw. Donald, trembling, confessed the truth; and it became painfully evident to the tailor and his wife that the child was none of theirs. They agreed to dislodge it as soon as possible, and chose as the best and quickest way of doing so, to put it into a creel (open basket), and set it on the fire. No sooner said than done; but no sooner had the child felt the fire, than starting from the creel, it vanished up the chimney. A low crying noise at the door attracted their attention; they opened, and a bonny little bairn (which the mother recognised by its frock to be her own), stood shivering outside. It was welcomed with rapture from its sojourn among "the little people," and grew up to be a douse and wise-like *lad*, says my informant.

3. The burn of Invernauld, and the hill of Durchâ, on the estate of Rosehall, are still believed to be haunted by the fairies, who once chased a man into the sea, and destroyed a new mill,

because the earth for the embankment of the mill-dam had been dug from the side of their hill. The hill of Durchâ is also the locality assigned for the following tale:--

4. A man, whose wife had just been delivered of her first-born, set off with a friend to the town of Lairg, to have the child's birth entered in the session-books, and to buy a cask of whisky for the christening fête. As they returned, weary with a day's walk, or as it is called in the Highlands "*travelling*," they sat down to rest at the foot of this hill, near a large hole, from which they were, ere long, astonished to hear a sound of piping and dancing. The father feeling very curious, entered the cavern, went a few steps in and disappeared. The story of his fate sounded less improbable *then* than it would now; but his companion was severely animadverted on; and when a week elapsed, and the baptism was over, and still no signs of the lost one's return, he was accused of having murdered his friend. He denied it, and again and again repeated the tale of his friend's disappearance down the cavern's mouth. He begged a year and a day's law to vindicate himself, if possible; and used to repair at dusk to the fatal spot, and call and pray. The term allowed him had but one more day to run, and as usual, he sat in the gloaming by the cavern, when, what seemed his friend's *shadow*, passed within it. He went down, heard reel tunes and pipes, and suddenly descried the missing man tripping merrily him, and pulled him out. "Bless me! why could you not let me finish my reel, Sandy?" "Bless me!" rejoined Sandy, have you not had enough of reeling this last twelvemonth?" "Last twelvemonth!" cried the other, in amazement; nor would he believe the truth concerning himself till he found his wife sitting by the door with a yearling child in her arms, so quickly does time pass in the company of THE "*good people*."

5. Of the Drocht na Vougha or Fuoah--the bridge of the fairies or kelpies, now called the Gissen Briggs, a bar across the mouth of the Dornoch Firth--it is said that the Voughas being tired of crossing the estuary in cockle shells, resolved to build a bridge across its mouth. It was a work of great magnificence, the piers and posts, and all the piles being headed and mounted with pure gold. Unfortunately, a passer by lifted up his hands and blessed the workmen and the work; the former vanished; the latter sank beneath the green waves, where the sand accumulating, formed the dangerous quicksands which are there to this day.

6. The Highlanders distinguish between the water and land or *dressed* fairies. I have given one story which shows that they are supposed to be "spirits in prison;" it is not the only legend of the kind. In a Ross-shire narrative, a beautiful green lady is represented as appearing to an old man reading the Bible, and seeking to know, if for such as her, Holy Scripture held out any hope of salvation. The old man spoke kindly to her; but said, that in these pages there was no mention of salvation for any but the sinful sons of Adam. She flung her arms over her head, screamed, and plunged into the sea. They will not steal a baptized child; and "Bless you!" said to an unbaptized one, is a charm with the fairies. He caught him by the sleeve, stopped against them. A woman out shearing had laid her baby down under a hedge, and went back from time to time to look at it. She was going once to give it suck, when it began to yell and cry in such a frightful way that she was quite alarmed. "Lay it down and leave it, as you value your child," said a man reaping near her; half an hour later she came back, and finding the child apparently in its right mind again, she gave it the breast. The man smiled, told her that he had seen her own infant carried off by the "good people," and a fairy changeling left in its place. When the "folk" saw that their screaming little imp was not noticed, and got nothing, they thought it best to take it back and replace the little boy.

As fairies are represented as having always food, and riches, and power, and merriment at command, it cannot be *temporal* advantages that they seek for their children, probably some spiritual ones are hoped for by adoption or marriage with human beings, as in the romantic

legend of Undine; and that this tempts them to foist their evil disposed little ones on us. They never maltreat those whom they carry away.

XXXVI. Badenoch

The Badenoch account of the fairies is much the same. I have received eight stories from a Highland minister, who has been kind enough to interest himself in the matter, at the request of the Countess of Seafield. These show, that according to popular belief, fairies commonly carried off men, women, and children, who seemed to die, but really lived underground. In short, that mortals were separated from fairies by a very narrow line.

1. A man sees fairies carding and spinning in a shealing where he is living at the time. Amongst them is Miss Emma MacPherson of Cluny, who had been dead about one hundred years.

2. A woman, benighted, gets into a fairy hill, where she promises to give her child, on condition that she is let out. She gives her child when it is born, and is allowed to visit it "till such time as the child, upon one occasion, looked at her sternly in the face, and in a very displeased mood and tone upbraided her for the manner in which she had acted in giving her child over unto those amongst whom it was now doomed to dwell." The mother scolded, found herself standing on the hillock outside, and never got in again.

3. A lad recognizes his mother, who had been carried off by fairies, but who was believed to be dead. She was recovered from the fairies by a man who threw his bonnet to a passing party, and demanded an exchange. The rescuer gave up the wife, and she returned home. Of this story I have several versions in Gaelic and in English, and I believe it is in print somewhere.

4. An old woman meets her deceased landlord and landlady, who tell her that the fairies have just carried off a young man, who is supposed to be dead. They advise her not to be out so late.

5. The young Baron of Kincardine is entertained by fairies, who steal his father's snuff for him when he asks for a pinch.

6. The young baron meets a bogle with a red hand, tells, and is punished.

7. The baron's dairymaid, when at a shealing, has a visit from a company of fairies, who dance and steal milk.

8. "A man, once upon a time, coming up from Inverness late at night, coming through a solitary part called Slockmuic, was met by crowds of people, none of whom he could recognize, nor did they seem to take any notice of him. They engaged in close conversation, talked on subjects not a word of which he could pick up. At length accosting one individual of them, he asked who they were? 'None of the seed of Abram nor of Adam's race; but men of that party who lost favour at the Court of Grace." He was advised not to practise late at night travelling in future.

Thomas MacDonald, gamekeeper at Dunrobin, also gives me a fairy tale, which is "*now commonly believed in Badenoch*."

9. A man went from home, leaving his wife in childbed. Her temper had never been ruffled. He found her a wicked scold. Thinking all was not right, he piled up a great fire, and threatened to throw in the occupant of the bed, unless she told him "where his own wife had been brought." She told him that his wife had been carried to Cnoc Fraing, a mountain on the borders of Badenoch and Strathdearn, and that she was. appointed successor.

The man went to Cnoc Fraing. He was suspected before of having something supernatural about him; and he soon found the fairies, who told him his wife had been taken to Shiathan Mor, a neighbouring mountain. He went there and was sent to Tom na Shirich, near Inverness. There he went, and at the “Fairy Knoll” found his wife and brought her back. “The person who related this story pretended to have seen people who knew distant descendants of the woman.”

XXXVII. Ross

The Ross-shire account of fairies is again much the same. The people say very little about them, and those who have been kind enough to note stories picked up amongst their less instructed neighbours, have only sent fresh evidence to prove that the fairy creed is the same there as everywhere, and that it is not quite extinct.

1. I have a story, got through the kindness of Mr. Osgood Mackenzie, in which a Lowland minister speaks slightingly of the fairies. “He was riding home through a dark glen, and through an oak wood, where there was many a green tolman (mound). He was surrounded by a squad of little men, leaping before him and dancing behind him. They took him off the horse and carried him up through the skies, his head under him now, and his feet under again, the world running round; and at last they dropped him near his own house.

2. In another story, a lot of fairies borrow a weaver’s loom at night, without his leave, and make a web of green cloth from stolen wool.

XXXVIII. Bearnairidh

There was in Bearnairidh in the Harris, a man coming past a knoll, and taking the road, and he heard churning in the hill. Thirst struck him. “I had rather,” said he, “that my thirst was on the herdswoman.” He had not gone but about twenty rods away when a woman met him, and she had a fine green petticoat on tied about her waist, and she had a vessel of warm milk between her two hands. She offered him a draught, and he would not take it.

“Thou one that sought my draught, and took not my draught, mayest thou not be long alive.”

He went to the narrows, and he took a boat there over; and coming over the narrows he was drowned.

(Gaelic omitted)

From Malcolm MacLean, who learnt it from his grandfather, Hugh MacLean.

North Uist, August 11, 1859.

The Argyllshire stories, which I can well remember as a child, are of the same stamp. The fairies lived in hills, they came out now and then and carried people away; and they spent their time inside their dwellings in dancing to the pipes. They stole milk, and they were overcome by charms, which men sold to those who believed in them. They could not withstand a rowan-tree cross; nor could they follow over a running stream.

There is a small waterfall in a wood which I know, where it used to be said that the fairies might be seen on moonlight nights, fishing for a magic chain from boats of sedge leaves. They used to drag this chain through the meadows where the cattle fed, and the milk came all to them, till a lad, by the advice of a seer, seized one end of the chain and ran for his life, with the fairy troop in pursuit; he leaped the lin and dropped the chain; and the lin is called the chain lin still.

XXXIX. Isle Of Man

The Manks fairy creed is again the same. Similar beings are supposed to exist, and are known by the name of FERISH, which a Manksman assured me was a genuine Manks word. If so, fairy may be old Celtic, and derived from the same root as Peri, instead of being derived from it.

The fairies in the Isle of Man are believed to be spirits. They are not supposed to throw arrows as they are said still to do in the Highlands. None of the old peasants seemed to take the least interest in “elf shots,” the flint arrows, which generally lead to a story when shown elsewhere. One old man said, “The ferish have no body, no bones and scorned the arrow heads. It is stated in Train’s history, that no flint-arrow heads have ever been found in the Isle of Man; but as there are numerous barrows, flint weapons may yet be discovered when some one looks for them.

Still these Manks fairies are much the same as their neighbours on the main land. They go into mills at night and grind stolen corn; they steal milk from the cattle; they live in green mounds; in short, they axe like little mortals invested with supernatural power, thus: There was a man who lived not long ago near Port Erin, who had a LHIANNAN RHEE. “He was like other people, but he had a fairy sweetheart; but he noticed her, and they do not like being noticed, the fairies, and so he lost his mind. Well, he was quite quiet like other people, but at night he slept in the barn; and they used to hear him talking to his sweetheart, and scolding her sometimes; but if any one made a noise he would be quiet at once.”

Now, the truth of this story is clear enough; the man went mad; but this madness took the form of the popular belief, and that again attributed his madness to the fairy mistress. I am convinced that this was believed to be a case of genuine fairy intercourse; and it shows that the fairy creed still survives in the Isle of Man.

XL. Devonshire

The same is true of Devonshire. In May 1860 I was told that many of the farmers “are so superstitious as to believe in PISKIES;” they are “never seen, but they are often heard laughing at people in the dark, and they lead them away.” My informant said that when he was young he used to hear so many stories about piskies from the old women about the fireside, that he used to be frightened to go out at night.

“When the young colts are out running wild, their manes get rough and hang down on both sides, and get tangled with the wind like; not like manes of horses that are well kept (here the speaker pointed with his whip at the sleek pair which he was driving); and when the farmers find stirrups like in the hair of the mane, they say the piskies has been a ridin’ of them.”

XLI. Conclusion: Fairy Beliefs

In short, this notice of fairy belief might be extended to fill volumes; every green knoll, every well, every hill in the Highlands, has some fairy legend attached to it. In the west, amongst the unlearned, the legends are firmly believed. Peasants never talk about fairies, for they live amongst them and about them. In the east the belief is less strong, or the believers are more ashamed of their creed. In the Lowlands, and even in England, the stories survive, and the belief exists, though men have less time to think about it. In the south the fairy creed of the peasants has been altered, but it still exists, as is proved occasionally in courts of law. There is a ghost which walks under the North Bridge in Edinburgh; and even in the cultivated upper strata of society in this our country, in France, and elsewhere, fairy superstition has only gone down before other stronger beliefs, in which a table is made the sole partition between this world and the next, Whether we are separated from the other world by a deal board or a green mound, does not seem to make much difference; and yet that is the chief difference between the vagrant beliefs of the learned and unlearned.

An old highlander declared to me that he was once in a boat with a man who was struck by a fairy arrow. He had the arrow for a long time; it was slender like a straw for thickness. He himself drew it out of the temple of the other man, where it was stuck in the skin through the bonnet. They were then miles from the shore, fishing. A man, whom the fairies were in the habit of carrying about from island to island, told him that he had himself thrown the dart at the man in the boat by desire of *them*; "*they made him do it*."

My informant evidently believed he was speaking truth, as my more educated friends do when they tell me sgeulachd about Mr. Hume.

For my own part, I believe *all* my friends; but I cannot believe in fairies, or that my forbears have become slaves of a table to be summoned at the will of a quack. I believe that there is a stock of old credulity smouldering near a store of old legends, in some corner of every mind, and that the one acts on the other, and produces a fresh legend and a new belief whenever circumstances are favourable to the growth of such weeds. At all events, I am quite sure that the fairy creed of the peasantry, as I have learned it from them, is not a whit more unreasonable than the bodily appearance of the hand of Napoleon the First to Napoleon the Third in 1860, as it is described in print; and the grave books which are written on "Spiritual Manifestations" at home and abroad. What is to be said of the table which became so familiar with a young lady, that it followed her upstairs and jumped on to the sofa!

XLII. The Fine

THE Feen were once, and their hunting failed, and they did not know what they should do. They were going about strands and shores gathering limpets, and to try if they should fall in with a pigeon or a plover. They were holding counsel together how they should go to get game. They reached a hill, and sleep came on them. What should Fionn see but a dream. That it was at yon crag of rock that be would be, the longest night that came or will come; that he would be driven backwards till he should set his back to the crag of rock. He gave a spring out of his sleep. He struck his foot on Diarmid's mouth, and he drove out three of his teeth. Diarmid caught hold of the foot of Fionn, and he drove an ounce of blood from every nail he had. "Ud! what didst thou to me?"--"What didst thou thyself to me?"--"Be not angry, thou son of my sister. When I tell thee the reason, thou wilt not take it ill."--"What reason?"--"I saw a dream that at yonder crag I would pass the hardest night I ever passed; that I should be driven backwards till I should set my back to the crag, and there was no getting off from there." "What's our fear! Who should frighten us! Who will come!" "I fear, as we are in straits just now, that if this lasts we may become useless." They went and they cast lots who should go and who should stay. The Feinn altogether wished to go. Fionn was not willing to go, for fear the place should be taken out before they should come (back). "I will not go," said Fionn. "Whether thou goest or stayest, we will go," said they.

The rest went, but Fionn did not go. They stopped, on the night when they went, at the root of a tree; they made a booth, and they began to play at cards. Said Fionn, when the rest were gone, "I put him from amongst heroes and warriors any man that will follow me out." They followed after Fionn. They saw a light before them, and they went forward where the light was. Who were here but the others playing at cards, and some asleep; and it was a fine frosty night. Fionn hailed them so stately and bravely. When they heard. the speaking of Fionn, those who were laid down tried to rise, and the hair was stuck to the ground. They were pleased to see their master. Pleasant to have a stray hunting night. They went home. Going past a place where they used to house, they saw a house. They asked what house was that. They told them there was the house of a hunter. They reached the house, and there was but a woman within, the wife of the fine green kirtle. She said to them, "Fionn, son of Cumal, thou art welcome here." They went in. There were seven doors to the house. Fionn asked his gillies to sit in the seven doors. They did that. Fionn and his company sat on the one side of the house to breathe. The woman went out. When she came in, she said, "Fionn, son of Cumal, it is long since I was wishing thy welfare, but its little I can do for thee to-night. The son of the king of the people of Danan is coming here, with his eight hundred full heroes, this night." "Yonder side of the house be theirs, and this side ours, unless there come men of Eirinn." Then they came, and they sat within. "You will not let a man on our side," said Fionn, "unless there comes one that belongs to our own company." The woman came in again, saying, "The middle son of the king of the people of Danan is coming, and his five hundred brave heroes with him." They came, and more of them staid without on a knoll. She came in again, saying, "The youngest son of the king of the people of Danan is coming, and his five hundred swift heroes with him." She came in again, saying, "That Gallaidh was coming, and five hundred full heroes."--"This side of the house be ours, and that be theirs, unless there come of the men of Eirinn." The people of Danan made seven ranks of themselves, and the fourth part of them could not cram in. They were still without a word. There came a gillie home with a boar that had found death from leanness and without a good seeming, and he throws that in front of Fionn with an insult. One of Fionn's gillies caught hold of him, and he tied his four smalls, and threw him below the board, and they spat on

him. “Loose me, and let me stand up; I was not in fault, though it was I that did it, and I will bring thee to a boar as good as thou ever ate.”--”I will do that,” said Fionn; “but though thou shouldst travel the five-fifths of Eirinn, unless thou comest before the day comes, I will catch thee.” They loosed him; he went away, and gillies with him. They were not long when they got a good boar. They came with it, and they cooked it, and they were eating it. “A bad provider of flesh art thou,” said Gallaidh to Fionn. “Thou shalt not have that any longer to say;” and the jawbone was in his hand. He raised the bone, and he killed seven men from every row of the people of Danan, and this made them stop. Then a gillie came home, and the black dog of the people of Danan with him, seeking a battle of dogs. Every one of them had a pack of dogs, and a dozen in every pack. The first one of them went and slipped the first dozen. The black dog killed the dozen; he killed them by the way of dozen and dozen, till there was left but Bran in loneliness. Said Fionn to Conan, “Let slip Bran, and, unless Bran makes it out, we are done.” He loosed him. The two dogs began at each other. It was not long till Bran began to take driving; they took fear when they saw that; but what was on Bran but a venomous claw. There was a golden shoe on the claw of Venom, and they had not taken off the shoe. Bran was looking at Conan, and now Conan took off the shoe; and now he went to meet the black dog again; and at the third “spoch” he struck on him; he took his throat out. Then he took the heart and the liver out of his chest. The dog took out to the knoll; he knew that foes were there. He began at them. A message came in to Fionn that the dog was doing much harm to the people without. “Come,” said Fionn to one of the gillies, “and check the dog.” The gillie went out, and (was) together with the dog; a message came in that the gillie was working worse than the dog. From man to man they went out till Fionn was left within alone. The Feen killed the people of Danan altogether. The lads of the Feen went out altogether, and they did not remember that they had left Fionn within. When the children of the king saw that the rest were gone, they said that they would get the head of Fionn and his heart. They began at him, and they drove him backwards till he reached a crag of rock. At the end of the house he set his back to it, and he was keeping them off. Now he remembered the dream He was tightly tried. Fionn had the “Ord Fianna,” and when he was in extremity it would sound of itself, and it would be heard in the five-fifths of Eirinn. The gillies heard it; they gathered and returned. He was alive, and he was no more. They raised him on the point of their spears: he got better. They killed the sons of the king, and all that were alive of the people, and they got the chase as it ever was.

(Gaelic omitted)

This story is one of the kind usually called SEANACHAS NA FEINE,--that is, the tradition, conversation, or tale or old stories, or ancient history, history or biography (Macalpine) of the people, best known to English readers as the Fingalians. These are called by a collective name, and are spoken of as *the* Feen or Fain. They are generally represented as hunters and warriors in Eirinn, but their country is the Feen. Bran’s battle and his venomous claw in a golden shoe, is more like the fight of a tiger or cheetah than an Irish deer-hound.

The people of Danan are called Tuatha de danan, in manuscripts and books, and are supposed to be Scandinavians. The name, by a slight change in pronunciation, might mean the daring Northerns, the tenants of Danan, or the people of Danan, as here. Fionn, in various inflections, is pronounced Feeun, Een, Eeun. ORD FIANNA would seem to mean hammer of the Feean; if so, Fin may have acquired some of his gear of Thor, or he may be the same personage. The “ord Fiannar” is generally supposed to be a whistle, which sounded of itself, and was heard over the five-fifths of Erin.

This tale, and No. 24, 25, 26, 27, and the two which follow, were told to Hector MacLean “by four individuals, ALEXANDER MACDONALD, tenant, Barra, BAILEBHUIRGH, who

heard them from his grandmother, Mary Gillies, about forty years ago, when she was more than eighty; NEILL MACLEAN, tenant, ditto, who learnt them from Donald MacNeill, who died about five years ago, about eighty years of age; JOHN CAMERON, ditto, who heard them from many, but cannot name any in particular. They state that these tales were very common in their younger days. They are pretty common still. They can tell nothing respecting the tales beyond the persons from whom they learnt them; of those from whom they learnt them they know nothing."

There are numerous prose tales of the Fingalians in Gaelic manuscripts, now in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh (according to an abstract lent by W. F. Skene, Esq.) One is probably the same as this tale; it is No. 4 of the manuscript numbered 4, called THE BOOTH OF EOCHAIDH DEARG--a tale of Fingal decoyed into a tent, and his combats with monsters, giants, armies, etc.

Of this manuscript the author of the abstract, Ewen MacLachlan, says (1812):--"This volume is evidently a transcript, perhaps not older than half a century. The language bespeaks high antiquity."

With the exception of a few words, the language in this Barra tale is the ordinary language of the people of the island. It seems then, that this is a remnant of an old tale, rapidly fading from memory and mixing with the manners of the day, but similar to tales in manuscripts about one hundred years old, and to tales now told in Ireland. See Poems of Ossin, Bard of Erin, 1857.

XLIII. The Two Shepherds

THERE were out between Lochaber and Baideanach two shepherds who were neighbours to each other, and the one would often be going to see the other. One was on the east side of a river, and another on the west. The one who was on the west side of the river came to the house of the one who was on the east of it on an evening visit. He staid till it was pretty late, and then he wished to go home. “It is time to go home,” said he. “It is not that which thou shalt do, but thou shalt stay to-night,” said the other, “since it is so long in the night.” “I will not stay at all events; if I were over the river I don’t care more.” The houseman had a pretty strong son, and he said, “I will go with thee, and I will set thee over the river, but thou hadst better stay.”--”I will not stay at all events.”--”If thou wilt not stay I will go with thee.” The son of the houseman called a dog which he had herding. The dog went with him. When he set the man on the other side of the river, the man said to him, “Be returning now, I am far in thy debt.” The strong lad returned, and the dog with him. When he reached the river as he was returning back home, he was thinking whether he should take the stepping-stones, or put off his foot-clothes and take below. He put off his foot-clothes for fear of taking the stepping-stones, and when he was over there in the river, the dog that was with him leaped at the back of his head. He threw her off him; she leaped again; he did the same thing. When he was on the other side of the river, he put his hand on his head, and there was not a bit of a bonnet on it. He was saying, whether should he return to seek the bonnet, or should he go home without it. “It’s disgusting for me to return home without my bonnet; I will return over yet to the place where I put my foot-clothes off me; I doubt it is there that I left it.” So he returned to the other side of the river. He saw a right big man seated where he had been, and his own bonnet in his hand. He caught hold of the bonnet, and he took it from him. “What business hast thou there with that?--It is mine, and thou hadst no business to take it from me, though thou hast got it.” Over the river then they went, without a word for each other, fiercely, hatingly. When they went over, then, on the river, the big man put his hand under the arm of the shepherd, and he began to drag the lad down to a loch that was there, against his will and against his strength. They stood front to front, bravely, firmly on either side. In spite of the strength of the shepherd’s son, the big man was about to conquer. It was so that the shepherd’s son thought of putting his hand about an oak tree that was in the place. The big man was striving to take him with him, and the tree was bending and twisting. At last the tree was loosening in the earth. She loosened all but one of her roots. At the time when the last root of the tree slipped, the cocks that were about the wood crowed. The shepherd’s son understood that when he heard the cocks crowing that it was on the short side of day. When they heard between them the cocks crowing, the big man said, “Thou has stood well, and thou hadst need, or thy bonnet had been dear for thee.” The big man left him, and they never more noticed a thing near the river.

Gaelic omitted

There is a bogle story in W. Grant Stewart’s “Highland Superstitions” (published 1823 and 1851), in which a man is dragged towards a river by a supernatural being, whom he kills with his dirk.

2. I have another story like this, which was sent to me by a young gentleman, a member of the Ossianic Society of Glasgow. It has some likeness to No. 28, The Smith, and is a good illustration of this part of popular mythology. When the people of Kintyre, MUINTIR CHEAN TIREADH were coming home from the northern airt from fighting against Prince Charles, under their chieftain, the man of Skipnish, they were going together, each band that

was nearest as neighbours. So one little company staid behind the great band, in CEAN LOCH GILP, Lochgilphead. The one who was hindmost of this company, who was called by the nickname of IAN DUBH MOR, Big Black John, heard an unearthly noise, when he was come in front of a fall that was at A MHAOIL DUBH, on the northern side of TAIRBAIRT CHEANTIREAIDH, Tarbert (which may be rendered Land's-end drawboat.)

He went on, and in a burn below the fall, a terrible being met him; he drew his blade. Said the being to him, "Strike me." "I will not strike, thou monster, " said John; but BRODAIDH MI THU, "I will prod thee."

"Prod me," the being would say. "I will not prod thee, monster, but I will strike thee," John would say.

They fought thus for a great time till the cock crew; and the being said to Ian, "Thou wilt now be going, but before thou goest, take thy choice of the two following things--EALAN GUN RATH NO, RATH GUN EALAIN, speechless art, or artless speech."

John chose speechless art, and so it happened. He was a blacksmith, as skilful as ever drew hammer on anvil; but he was not much better for that; there was no penny he earned that he would not spoil, and that would not go in some way that was not easily explained. As an instance of art, he could mend a saw, though thou hadst a bit in either hand, in such a way that it could not be seen where it was broken; and a gun in the same way. There would be a covering on the smithy windows when he would be mending such things.

Big Black John got great power over witchcraft, BUITSEACHAS, and evil eye.

There was a man in Skipnish who had made money by smuggling, but he began to lose his money, for his malt refused to yield its product, till at last he lost the whole of what he had made; and he was a poor man. He went at last to IONARAIR, Ayr, where John was dwelling at that time. John told him that it was enmity that was doing the ill. He did not learn who was spoiling him. He said to him, "Go home and thou wilt get back the produce of the malt;" and so he did. Each TOGAIL (mashing) he made began to give more than the other, till the produce he got frightened him. He followed on thus till the loss was made up, and after that he got but the usual product.

The following are stories of the same kind. The prevailing notions are, that supernatural beings exist which cannot withstand the power of iron, and that there are men and women who deal with them. These are from Mr. Hector Urquhart, written in English, and given in his own words.

3. One day last week, as I was walking up Glenfyne, I overtook an old man who was carting coals up to the Lodge. "Good day to you, John." "Good day to yourself," says John. From good days to showery days, I asked John if there was any virtue in iron against witchcraft or fairy spells. "Indeed, and that's what there is," says John. So, when we came to the Lodge, I wrote the following story from his telling:--"On a certain year and me a young lad, all our cows lost the milk, one after one; we guessed what was wrong with them, and my big brother lost no time in going to Appin, to consult the man of the RED BOOK. He no sooner entered his house than the man told him what moved him from home. 'It's your own neighbour's wife,' says he, 'that spoilt your cows; she is this moment in your house, inquiring whether you went from home to-day, and where did you go to; and to make it double sure to you, that it's her who spoilt your cows, she will meet you under the lintel of your door coming out as you are going in. Go you now home, and take a shoe of an entire horse, and nail it to your byre-door; but let no living person know of it.'

“My brother came home, and as the man of the red book told him, this identical woman met him on the threshold as he was going in to the house. I do not know how he managed to get hold of the laird’s stallion, but the shoe was nailed on our byre door before sunrise next morning, so our cows had plenty milk from that day forth.”

4. “This must be a wonderful book, John,” says I; “do you know how this man came to have it? Well,” says John, “I’ll tell you that.”

“Once upon a time, there lived a man at Appin, Argyllshire, and he took to his house an orphan boy. When the boy was grown up, he was sent to herd; and upon a day of days, and him herding, there came a fine gentleman where he was, who asked him to become his servant, and that he would give him plenty to eat and drink, clothes, and great wages. The boy told him that he would like very much to get a good suit of clothes, but that he would not engage till he would see his master; but the fine gentleman would have him engaged without any delay; this the boy would not do upon any terms till he would see his master. ‘Well, says the gentleman, ‘in the meantime write your name in this book.’ Saying this, he put his hand into his outer pocket, and pulling out a large red book, he told the boy to write his name in the book. This the boy would not do; neither would he tell his name, till he would acquaint his master first. ‘Now,’ says the gentleman, ‘since you will neither engage, or tell your name, till you see your present master, be sure to meet me about sunset to-morrow, at a certain place.’ The boy promised that he would be sure to meet him at the place about sunsetting. When the boy came home he told his master what the gentleman said to him. ‘Poor boy,’ says he, ‘a fine master he would make; lucky for you that you neither engaged nor wrote your name in his book; but since you promised to meet him, you must go; but as you value your life, do as I tell you.’ His master gave him a sword, and at the same time he told him to be sure and be at the place mentioned a while before sunset, and to draw a circle round himself with the point of the sword in the name of the Trinity. ‘When you do this, draw a cross in the centre of the circle, upon which you will stand yourself; and do not move out of that position till the rising of the sun next morning.’ He also told him that he would wish him to come out of the circle to put his name in the book; but that upon no account he was to leave the circle; I but ask the book till you would write your name yourself, and when once you get hold of the book keep it, he cannot touch a hair of you head, if you keep inside the circle.’

“So the boy was at the place long before the gentleman made his appearance; but sure enough he came after sunset; he tried all his arts to get the boy outside the circle, to sign his name in the red book, but the boy would not move one foot out of where he stood; but, at the long last, he handed the book to the boy, so as to write his name therein. The book was no sooner inside the circle than it fell out of the gentleman’s hand inside the circle; the boy cautiously stretches out his hand for the book, and as soon as he got hold of it, he put it in his oxter. When the fine gentleman saw that he did not mean to give him back the book, he got furious; and at last he transformed himself into a great many likenesses, blowing fire and brimstone out of his mouth and nostrils; at times he would appear as a horse, other times a huge cat, and a fearful beast (uille bheast); he was going round the circle the length of the night; when day was beginning to break he let out one fearful screech; he put himself in the likeness of a large raven, and he was soon out of the boy’s sight. The boy still remained where he was till he saw the sun in the morning, which no sooner he observed, than he took to his soles home as fast as he could. He gave the book to his master; and this is how the far-famed red book of Appin was got.”

I have heard many old people say that they went from all parts to consult the red book of Appin, though this is the best story I heard about it. You ask if there were virtue in iron; you

must know that iron was the principal safeguard against evil spirits, etc., etc.; which I shall show in my next letter on the fairies.

5. The next is from the telling of a dancing master, a north country highlander, and written by my friend Mr. John Campbell of Kilberry, in Argyllshire. The supernatural being described as Bauchan, is probably BOCAN, a little buck, a hobgoblin, a ghost, a sprite, spectre (Armstrong and other Die.); and he seems but a half-tamed specimen of the same genus as the terrible being before described.

COLUINN GUN CHEANN, The Headless Trunk. Coluinn gun Cheann was a very celebrated Bauchkan, who favoured the family of the Macdonals of Morar, for ages immemorial, and was frequently seen about their residence, Morar House; which is situated on the main land, opposite the point of Slaate, in the Island of Skye. Though a protector of the family, he was particularly hostile to the neighbourhood, and waged war, especially with all the strong men he could meet with; for this purpose he particularly haunted the "Mile Reith," or "Smooth Mile," one end of which was not above 200 yards from the Mansion (I know the place well); the other end of the Mile terminated at a large stream, called the River Morar, famed in history for salmon fishing; after sunset, people did wisely to avoid that part, for then the "COLUINN GUN CHEANN" was sure to keep his vigils; and any stray man who passed was sure to become a victim, the bodies being always found dead, and in the majority of instances mutilated also. As he took care never to appear, except to a solitary passenger, it was in vain to send a party against him. He was seldom, if ever, seen by women, and did no harm either to them or to children. Once it happened that a distant relative, but intimate friend of *Raasay's*, dared his fate, and remained a victim on the ground. This came to the ears of "IAN GARBH, MACGILLIE CHALLUM, RAASAY," "Big John, the son of M'Leod of Raasay;" he was celebrated for his prowess and strength, and never had been vanquished in any fight, though he had tried with the strongest. He told his step-mother of the news he had heard from the Mainland, and asked her advice, as he usually did, before he undertook any exploit of the kind. She advised him to go, and avenge the blood of his friend. After his preparations were made, and not without a blessing from the Oracle, he set out on his circuitous journey, and met the "COLUINN" after sunset, on the Mile Reith, and a battle did ensue, and I daresay it was a very stiff one. Before sunrise it was necessary for the Coluinn to be off, as he never could be seen in daylight. Whether finding he made no progress discouraged him or not, we can't say, but Ian got the victory. Being determined to get a sight of the Coluinn, and also to prove his Victory to others, Ian tucked him under his arm, to carry him to the nearest light. The Coluinn had never been heard to speak; but being in this predicament, called out, "LEIG AS MI," "Let me go." "CHA LEIG MI AS THU," "I will not let thee go." Leig as mi, he repeated; but still the answer was Cha leig mi as thu. "Leig as mi, agus chan fheachear an so mi gu brath tuileadh." "Let me go, and I shall never be seen here any more." "Ma bhoidachais thu air a leobhar, air a chonail, agus air a stocaidh dhubh, bi falbh.' "If thou swear that on the book, on the candle, and on the black stocking, begone!" After making the Coluinn promise this on his knees, Ian liberated him. The Coluinn flew off, singing the following doleful words--"S fada uam fein bonn beinn Hederin, s fada uam fein bealach a bhorbhan," which we can only translate by--

"Far from me is the bill of Ben Hederin,
Far from me is the pass of murmuring."

This lament was repeated as long as Ian could bear, and these words are still sung by women in that country to their children, to the following notes, which tradition says was the very air:-

(IMAGE OF MUSIC SHEET)

In the next, from the same source, the same being appears fully tamed; still supernatural, still possessed of extraordinary: strength, but attached to a family, and a regular brownie.

6. In the neighbourhood of Loch Traig, in Lochaber, Callum Mor MacIntosh held a little farm. There were rumours of his having intercourse with a mysterious personage called a bauchan, but of his first acquaintance with him there are no authentic accounts. One thing, however, is certain, that on some occasions he was supernaturally aided by this bauchan, while at others, having in some way excited his displeasure, Callum was opposed in all his schemes, and on several occasions they came the length of fighting hand to hand, Callum never suffering much injury. On one occasion, as Callum was returning from Fort-William market, he met his friend the bauchan within a short distance of his own house, and one of these contests took place, during which Callum lost his pocket-handkerchief, which, having been blessed and presented to him by the priest, was possessed of a peculiar charm. The fight being ended, Callum hurried home; but, to his dismay, found that he had lost his charmed handkerchief, for which he and his wife in vain sought. Callum felt certain he had to thank the bauchan for this mishap, and hurried back to the scene of action. The first object that met his view was the bauchan, busily engaged in rubbing a flat stone with the identical handkerchief. On seeing Callum, he called out, “Ah you are back; it is well for you, for if I had rubbed a hole into this before your return you were a dead man. No doctor on earth or power could save you; but you shall never have this handkerchief till you have won it in a fair fight.” “*Done*,” said Callum, and at it they went again, and Callum recovered his handkerchief. Peats were almost unknown at that time, and Callum, when the weather grew cold, took his axe, and felled a large birch tree in the neighbouring forest, the branches supplied wood for the fire for several days, and Callum did not trouble himself to lay in a store nearer hand-when, lo! a snow storm came on, and blocked up the country, so that he was cut off from his supply. There was no means of access to the tree; and careful as Callum’s wife was, the last branch was almost consumed, and the fire burnt low. Up started Callum with an exclamation, “Oh! wife, would that we had the tree I felled in the forest! it would keep us warm this night.” Hardly had he spoken when the house was shaken and the door rattled; a heavy weight had fallen near the door. Callum rushed to see what the cause was, and there was the wished-for tree, with the Bauchan grinning at him--”S ma am Bauchan fathast, ged a sgain an Sagart”--(the Bauchan is still kind, though the Priest should burst)--said the wife. On another occasion it happened that Callum left the farm he was in and went to one adjoining which he had taken carrying with him his wife and all his furniture. In the nighttime Callum turned to his wife and said, “Well, it is well we have all with us; only one thing have we forgotten, the hogshead in which the hides are being barked; *that* we have forgotten” “No matter for that,” said the wife; “there is no one to occupy the place yet a while, and we have time to get it home safe enough;” and so the matter rested; but on going round the end of the house next morning, what did Callum see but his own identical hogshead, hides and all. It had been transported the distance of five miles of most rugged, rocky district. None but a goat could have crossed the place, and in the time it would have bothered one to do it, but the Bauchan managed it, and saved Callum a most troublesome journey. If you will go and take a look at it--the spot is there yet--and I would like to see how soon you would manage it, let alone the hogshead.

Poor Callum, however, was obliged, with many of his neighhours, to leave Lochaber; indeed, he was amongst the first embarking at Arisaig for New York. The passage was a tedious one, but it ended at last, and without any particular adventures but on arriving they had to perform a quarantine of many days. On getting pratique, Callum was in the first boat which landed, and happened to have stowed himself in the bows of the boat, and when she grounded, was the first man to jump on shore. Directly his feet touched the ground, who should meet him in

the shape of a goat but the Bauchan, “Ha, ha Callum, ha mi sho air thoseach orst.” Ha, Malcolm, I am here before thee. Here ends our story; but rumour says that Callum was the better of the Bauchan’s help in clearing the lands of his new settlement, and that, till he was fairly in the way of prosperity, the Bauchan abstained from teasing and provoking poor Callum.

The next makes the supernatural beings robbers, and is a further argument in favour of the theory that all these traditions are fictions founded on fact; recollections of wild savages living in mountain fastnesses, whose power, and strength, and cavern dwellings were enlarged and distorted into magic arts, gigantic stature, and the under-ground world. I translate the story from Gaelic, written by Rector MacLean from the telling Of JOHANNA MACCRIMMON in Berneray, August 1859. This woman is a native of Skye, and descended from the celebrated pipers. Her father, grandfather, and uncles were pipers. She learned the story from her grand-uncle Angus MacCrimmon.

7. A gentleman had AIREACH, a herd’s dwelling, and he was out in a far-off glen long in the year with his herd women and his calf herd. They had every man they needed, and they were there till the middle of summer was. Then the herd woman said that she must go to seek things that she wanted.

The herd woman went away, and she had a great distance to go before she should reach the farm.

She said to the herd, in spite of the length of the path, that she would try to be back that night. When the evening was coming, the herd was wearying that the herd woman was not coming. Then he put the cattle to rights AGUS BHLIGH E EUD, and he milked them, and there were wild showers of snow in the beginning of the night. He went home when the beginning of night was, and he set in order his own food, after he had taken a thought--DUIL A THOIRT DETH--that the herd woman would not come. He took his foods and he shut the door as well as he could, thinking that no man would come near him that night. He put NA BEAIRTEAN FRAOICHE (the bundles of heather) behind the CÒMHLA (door),[29] and then he sat to toast himself at the fire because the SIDE (weather) was so cold. He was taking his dinner there, when he heard a great TARTAR (noise) coming towards the door. Then he got up from the door with great fear, and he noticed a being striking the door again. He was thinking, and he did not know what to do, that if the door were struck a third time it would be in.

He got up, and the door was struck a third time. Then he crouched in a corner at the lower end of the shealing when he saw the door being driven in.

He did not know now whether he should stay as he was or hide himself. When he noticed the door being pushed in, there came in a beast, and she went up to the fire.

The heather took fire and he saw this nasty beast standing at the fire. And she had a great long hair, and that creature was--A CNAMH A CIR--chewing the cud, as though there were a sheep or a cow. The horns that were on her were up to the top of the shealing. The poor man that was within thought that it was time for him to take his legs along with him, and he went out through the night and the winnowing and snow in it.

He found one of the horses, and he reached his master’s house before the day came. Here there he struck in the door of his master furiously, and his master awoke and be went where

[29] It is quite common in Highland cottages to keep a large bundle of heather or brushwood to stuff into the doorway on the windward side; sometimes it is the sole door.

he was, and he told his master the UAMHAS--terrible wonder that had come upon him since the herd woman left him.

The master went, and the eldest son he had and himself, and they took a gun with them. They went as fast as they could to try to catch the beast to kill her. There was the worth of much money in the shealing, and they thought it a loss that they should want it. Then when they were coming near the shealing the gentleman put a charge in the gun, to be all ready--DEISEAL.--(This word is said to be derived from South--about the old practice being to make a turn sun-wise before doing anything of importance).

They reached the shealing, and they let off a shot in. Though he let off the shot he did not notice a thing, and fear would not let one of them search within. They were thus at the door and they perceived the beast showing herself out. It was hardly that she dragged herself out of the door of the shealing.

There out went they--the gentleman and his son! They went in such a great perturbation, that they did not remember the horses; but they stretched out on foot, fleeing before the beast that was there. What but that the beast followed after them till they reached the house, and they thought she would have finished them before they should arrive. When they reached the farm, one of the gentlemen's men met him, and the gentleman told him that he was almost dead at all events, that he had hopes of reaching the house, and that he should go to try to meet the beast, and keep her back a space.

The man went to meet the beast that was here, and she full of the snow; and he looked keenly at her. He returned to his master to tell him what sort of beast it was, and he said, "Come out here that you may come and see the beast."

When they went out to see the beast, what was here but the buck goat, full of the snow, and the master was shamed that be should have fled from the like of that beast.

The herd fled by the way of the banks of the shore; when he saw his master running away, and they had no tale of him. Three of the servants were sent about the glen to try if they could find him; and they were not finding him at all.

He was lost thus for three days and three nights, and they had no hope that they would find him for ever. On the third day he was going at the side of the shore, and water-horses and wild beasts coming on land on the shores. What should he fall in with but a dwelling-place there. He went in. There was no man there but a little russet man. The little russet man put welcome on him, and he asked him to come forward-that he was welcome. He asked of the little russet man what was the meaning of his staying in such a place, that there was no man with him.

"Oh," said the little russet man, "it is not allowed me to tell anything."

"I will tell thee," said the herd, "what sent me in here. It is that I fled from UAMHAS--a terrible wonder."

"This is the thing thou shalt do," said the little russet man. "Thou shalt stretch thyself on this bed up here, and thing or thing that thou seest in thy sleep, remember on thy death that thou dost not tell it."

Then when he went to stretch himself in the bed, what should meet him in the bed but the body of a man; and he took to trembling with fear, but he did not move. He thought he would stay as he was; that the dead man was not to touch him at all events. Then he heard great speaking coming towards the house; he was not long so till he noticed a great clatter coming, and what was this but--SEISEAR FEAR (collective singular noun of number, six man)--six

men coming in and a cow with them. The master that was over the six, said to the little russet man, Didst thou see or perceive a man coming this way since early earliness."

"I did not see," said he, "he might come the way unknown to me."

"Shut the door," said the big man, "and all without be they without, and all within within."

Then they put the cow on the fire in a great caldron after they had torn it asunder in quarters. When they had put this on the fire it was not long till they noticed the next clatter, and what was here but another band coming.

What should this band have but another cow flayed, and they had a pit within, and there they salted her. When the flesh that was in the kettle was cooked, they took their supper all together.

The poor man that was here in the bed did not know on earth what he should do for fear. Here when it was coming near on the mouth of the day, the little russet man went out to look what likeness was on the night.

When he came in, said they to him, "What seeming is on the night?" "There is a middling seeming," said he; but it is I who saw the terrible man DUINE FUATHASACH since I went out, as though he were listening to you. I think that it is FHUAMHAIR CHREIG DALLAIG the giant of crag dallag, who is there.

There out went every man of them, and the one that would not wait on his bow he would seize on his sword to kill him.

When the little russet man, who was within, thought that they had hurried well from the house, he said to the one who was in the bed, "Thou one that art up come down as fast as thou didst ever." Then he stretched to the poor man who was in the bed, as fast as ever he did, a stocking full of dollars, and he gave him bread and cheese. "If thou ever didst it, do it now," said the little russet man to the herdsman. The herdsman went, and he reached the house of his master whole and healthy.

The moral of this tale seems to be, that he who runs away from fancied danger may fall into real peril; but what bears upon the theory of the origin of such stories is, that the real peril is from "water-horses" and "robbers," who have a little red (RUAGH) man who plays the part of the enchanted princess, and the friendly cat, and the woman who is the slave of the giants, and the robbers; the character which appears in all collections of popular tales to befriend the benighted stranger, or the wandering prince. And what is more, the fancied danger was from a creature under the form of a goat. Why a man should be frightened by a goat, appears from the last of following two stories, translated from the Gaelic of Hector Urquhart, and written from the telling of John Campbell in Strath-Gairloch, Ross-shire. He is now (1859) sixty-three.

8. At some time of the world the load of Gearloch TIGHEARNA GHEARLOCH had a CEATHEARNACH, who used to be slaying FUATHAN, bogles, and routing out the spoilers. The name of this stalwart man was UISTEAN MOR MAC GHILLE PHADRIG. Uistean was on a day hunting, and he saw a great wreath of mist above him, and heard the sweetest music he ever heard, but he was not seeing a thing but the mist itself. He cast a shot that was in his gun at the wreath of mist, and the very finest woman he ever saw fell down at his side. He took her with him to his own house, but there was not a word of speech in her; and she was thus for a year with him, and she never saw a thing that she could not do. And Uistean was thus in the mountain as usual slaying the bogles, FUATHAN, and on a day at the end of a year, and he in the mountain, the night come on him as he was coming home. There he saw a light in a hill; he reached where the light was, and he stood in the door, and NA

SITHICHEAN, the fairies, were within making music and dancing, and the butler that they had going round about amongst them and giving them the drink. Uistean was looking at this: and the butler said, “It is a year from this night’s night that we lost the daughter of Iarla Anndrum, the Earl of Antrim. She has the power of the draught on her that she does not speak a word, till she gets a drink from the cup that is in my hand. And the butler was going round about till he reached where Uistean was, and he gave the CORN (cup) to Uistean. No sooner got Uistean a hold of the cup in his hand than he took his soles out (of that), and they after him. They were here coming close to (shearing on) Uistean, and when they were come within sight of the town the cock crowed. One said, “It is as well for us to return;” but another said, “It is but BOGAG FOGHAIR, a Spring soft one.” At the end of a while another cook crowed. “But it is time to return now; this is the black cook of March”--and they returned; but Uistean did not let go the cup till they reached his own house, and till he had given a draught to her from the cup, and as soon as she had drunk a draught from the cup, she had speech as well as another. And Uistean went on the spot, back with the cap, and he left it on the hill; and when Uistean came back to his own house she told him that she was the daughter of the Earl of Antrim, and that the fairies had taken her from childbed. Uistean gave her two choices, whether would she rather stay by him, or be sent back to Eirinn; and she had rather go home. They went, and when they reached the house of the Earl of Antrim, she stayed in a little house that was near upon the castle for that night, and when they began to give them news, the housewife told them that the daughter of the Earl of Antrim was exceedingly ill, and that there was no leech in Eirinn that could do her good. Uistean said that he was the great doctor of the King of the Gaeldom, and that he would heal her, and that he would not ask payment till she should be healed.

The Earl was right well pleased his like to become about, and it was told to the one who was on the bed, that a great Scottish doctor was come to her town that could cure her. But this did not please her at all, and she would not let him come near her. But Uistean said that he would go there though it was ill with her; and he went where she was, with his naked sword in his hand. She who was in the bed cast an eye on him, and she said, “If I had been to put my thumb on the apple of thy throat on the night that thou wert born, thou couldest not do this to me this day.”

And when Uistean went to the bed, she went as a flame of fire out at the end of the house.

Then Uistean gave his own daughter by the hand to the Earl of Antrim, whole and healthy. The Earl of Antrim gave Uistean his two choices, that he should stay with him, or a bag of gold and go home. Uistean took the bag of gold, and he came home; and he began at killing Fuathan, as he was before.

This story joins Fairies and Fuathan, and has many relations in other languages, and the next joins the whole to the French Loup Garou, of which I heard from a peasant in France in November 1859, but the wolf is a goat in the Highlands.

9. Some time after this, word went to Uistean that there was a Fuath on TOMBUIDHE GHEARRLOCH on the yellow knoll of Gairloch, and this Fuath was killing much people, and sending others out of the husk (or the gates) of their hearts, A COCRAIL AN CRIDHE, because no man could take the path after the night or darkness should come.

Uistean came, and on the way at the foot of the knoll Uistean went into the house of a yellow-footed weaver that was living there. Said the weaver to Uistean, “Thou hadst best stop the night.”

“Well, I will do that,” said Uistean; “I am going to kill the Fuath of Tombuidh to-night.”

“Perhaps that is not so easy,” said the weaver; “with what wilt thou kill Gabhair Mhoil-Bhui, the goat of Maol-buidh?”

“With the gun,” said Uistean.

“What,” said the weaver, “if the gun will not suit?”

“If it will not suit,” said he, “I will try the sword on her.”

“What,” said the weaver, “if the sword will not come out of the sheath?”

“Well,” said Uistean, “I will try my mother’s sister on her.”

And on every arm that Uistean named, the weaver laid ROSAD, a spell, but on the dirk which he called his mother’s sister the weaver could not lay a spell. Then Uistean went up to the top of the knoll, and on the top of the knoll was a pit in which the goat used to dwell.

She let out a MEIGAID bleat, and Uistean said, “Dost thou want thy kid thou skulker?”

“If I do, I have got it now,” said she. Then Uistean laid hands on his gun, but she would not give a spark. Then he laid hands on his sword, but it would not come out of the sheath. “Where now is thy mother’s sister?” said the goat.

When Uistean heard this he sprang on the goat, and the first thrust he gave her with the BIODAG dirk, she let out a roar.

“It seems odd to me, poor beast, if I do not give thy kid milk now.”

And he did not see the goat any more. Uistean turned back to the weaver’s house, and when he kindled a light, he found the weaver under the loom pouring blood.

“If it was thou who madest so much loss on the yellow knoll, thou shalt not get off any farther,” said Uistean.

Then he killed the weaver under the loom, and no man was slain on the yellow knoll since then, by the goat or bogle.

These two stories are certain enough. It was by my mother I heard them, and many a tale there is of Uistean, if I had mind of them.

JOHN CAMPBELL, Strath Gairloch, Ross-shire.

10. I have another version of this same tale written by a school-master, at the request of Mr. Osgood Mackenzie. It is in very good Gaelic, but to translate it would be repetition, for it is almost the identical. I do not mention the name of the writer, for it might be displeasing to him. The narrator is Alexander Macdonald, Inverasdale. The goat is called GABHAR MHOR RHIBEAGACH FHEUSAGACH, a great hairy-bearded goat; and the dirk is called CATRIONA PUITHAR MO SHEANA MHATHAIR, Catherine, my grandmother’s sister. He finds the BREABADAIR weaver in bed, with a wound in his thigh, and gives him his death thrust there.

I have given these specimens of a particular class of tales which are common enough, as they came to me, because they seem to be fair illustrations of the popular creed as to spirits; and to show that the so-called spirits are generally very near mortal men. My belief is, that bocan, bodach, fuath, and all their tribe, were once savages, dressed in skins, and that gruagach was a half-tamed savage banging about the houses, with his long hair and skin clothing; that these have gradually acquired the attributes of divinities, river gods, or forest nymphs, or that they have been condemned as pagan superstitions, and degraded into demons; and I know that they are now remembered, and still somewhat dreaded, in their last character. The tales told of them partake of the natural and supernatural, and bring fiction nearer to fact than any class

of tales current in the Highlands, unless it be the fairy stories of which a few are given under number 28, etc.

XLIV. Osean After The Feen

From Barra.

OISEAN was an old man after the (time of the) Feen, and he (was) dwelling in the house of his daughter. He was blind, deaf, and limping, and there were nine oaken skewers in his belly, and he ate the tribute that Padraig had over Eirinn. They were then writing the old histories that he was telling them.

They killed a right big stag; they stripped the shank, and brought him the bone. “Didst thou ever see a shank that was thicker than that in the Feen?” “I saw a bone of the black bird’s chick in which it would go round about.”--”In that there are but lies.” When he heard this, he caught hold of the books with rage, and he set them in the fire. His daughter took them out and quenched them, and she kept them. Ossian asked, with wailing, that the worst lad and dog in the Feen should lay weight on his chest. He felt a weight on his chest. “What’s this?”--”I MacRuaghadh” (son of the red, or auburn one). “What is that weight which I feel at my feet?” “There is MacBuidheig” (the son of the little yellow). They stayed as they were till the day came. They arose. He asked the lad to take him to such a glen. The lad reached the glen with him. He took out a whistle from his pocket, and he played it. “Seest thou anything going past on yonder mountain?”--”I see deer on it.”--”What sort dost thou see on it “I see some slender and grey on it.”--”Those are the seed of the Lon Luath, swift elk; let them pass.”--”What kind seest thou now?”--”I see some gaunt and grizzled.”--”Those are the seed of Dearg dasdanach, the red Fierce: let them pass.”--”What kind seest thou now?”--”I see some heavy and sleek.”--”Let the dog at them Vic Vuiaig!” MacBhuieig went. “Is he dragging down plenty?”--”He is.”--”Now, when thou seest that he has a dozen thou shalt check him.” When he thought he had them, he played the whistle, and he checked the dog. “Now if the pup is sated with chase, he will come quietly, gently; if not, he will come with his gape open.” He was coming with his gape open, and his tongue out of his mouth. “Bad is the thing which thou hast done to cheek the pup unsated with chase.”--”When he comes, catch my hand, and try to put it in his gape, or he will have us.” He put the hand of Oisean in his gape, and he shook his throat out. “Come, gather the stags to that knoll of rushes.” He went, and that is done; and it was nine stags that were there, and that was but enough for Oisean alone; the lad’s share was lost. “Put my two hands about the rushy knoll that is here;” he did that, and the great caldron that the Feen used to have was in it. “Now, make ready, and put the stags in the caldron, and set fire under it.” The lad did that. When they were here ready to take it, Oisean said to him, “Touch thou them not till I take my fill first.” Oisean began upon them, and as he ate each one, he took one of the skewers out of his belly. When Oisean had six eaten, the lad had three taken from him. “Hast thou done this to me?” said Oisean. “I did it,” said he I would need a few when thou thyself hadst so many of them.”--”Try if thou wilt take me to such a rock.” He went down there, and he brought out the chick of a blackbird out of the rock. “Let us come to be going home.” The lad caught him under the arm, and they went away. When be thought that they were nearing the house, he said, “Are we very near the house?” “We are,” said the lad. “Would the shout of a man reach the house where we are just now?”[30] --”It would reach it.”--”Set my front straight on the house.” The lad did thus. When he was coming on the house, he caught the lad, and he put his hand in his throat, and he killed him. “Now,” said he, “neither thou nor another will tell tales of me.” He went home with his hands on the wall, and he left the blackbird’s chick within. They were asking him where he

[30] A Lapp measure of distance is “a dog’s bark.”

had been since the day came; he said he had been where he had often passed pleasant happy days. “How didst thou go there when thou art blind?”--”I got a chance to go there this day at all events. There is a little pet yonder that I brought home, and bring it in.” They went out to look, and if they went, there did not go out so many as could bring it home. He himself arose, and he brought it in. He asked for a knife. He caught the shank, he stripped it, and then took the flesh off it. He broke the two ends of the bone. “Get now the shank of the dun deer that you said I never saw the like of in the Feen.” They got this for him, and be threw it out through the marrow hole. Now he was made truthful. They began to ask more tales from him, but it beat them ever to make him begin at them any more.

(Gaelic omitted)

2. A version of this was told to me by an old tinker at Inverary, but, according to him, the books were destroyed. I took it to be the popular account of the Ossian controversy. Ossian, MacPherson, Dr. Smith, and their party, fused into “Ossian,” Dr. Johnson, and his followers, condensed into “Padraig.” The famous Red Book of Clanrannald has also become mythical. Its true history will be found in the book by the Highland Society. I was told in Benbecula how a man had found a book, containing the history of the Feen, in a moss; and how he had parted with it to a blind beggar, who had sold part to a clergyman, the rest was in America. “The book was not dug up; it was on the moss. It seemed as if the ancestors had sent it.”

3. This story of the Blackbird’s bone is common. I heard it myself from several men in South Uist, with variations. According to one, the deer’s bone was to turn round on end in the blackbird’s shank. Another version has been sent to me from Sutherland. According to J. H. Simpson, a similar tale is now told by the peasantry of Mayo. (Poems of Ossin, Bard of Erin, from the Irish, 1857, page 191.) Mr. MACLEAN very ingeniously suggests that the word which now means Blackbird (Londubh) may originally have meant Black-ELK. Armstrong’s Dictionary gives LÒN, a meadow; LÒN, a diet, a dinner, a store, provision, food; LON, an ousel, a blackbird, an *Elk*; LON, greed, prattle, hunger; also, a rope of raw hides used by the people of St. Kilda. The word, then, may mean almost anything that can be eaten by man or beast in general; and an elk in particular.

There are plenty of elks still living in Scandinavia. Their gigantic fossil bones are found in Irish bogs, and in the Isle of Man; a whole skeleton is to be seen in the British Museum; and it is supposed that men and elks existed together in Ireland. (See Wilson’s Pre-historic Annals of Scotland, page 22: 1851.) The story probably rests on a foundation of fact--namely, the discovery of fossil bones-mixed up with the floating traditions about the Feen which pervade both Ireland and Scotland, and which have been woven into poems for centuries in both countries. These may date from the days when men hunted elks in Erin, as they now do in Scandinavia. “Padraig” probably slipped in when that curious dialogue was composed, of which several versions are still extant in old manuscripts.

4. The Sutherland version is as follows:--

The last of the giants lived among the Fearn Hills (Ross-shire, and within sight of the windows of Skibo); he had an only daughter, married not to a giant, but to a common man.

His son-in-law did not always treat him well, for he was sometimes very hungry, and had to wear a hunger-belt.

One day at dinner his son-in-law said to him, “Did you ever, amongst the giants, eat such good beef, or from so large an ox?”

“Amongst us,” said the last of the giants, “the legs of the birds were heavier than the hind quarters of your ox.”

They laughed him to scorn, and said, that it was because he was blind that he made such mistakes; so he called to a servant and bid him bring his bow and three arrows, and lead him by the hand to a corrie which he named in the Balnagowan forest.

“Now,” said he, “do you see such and such a rock?”

“Yes,” said the servant.

“And is there a step in the face of it?”

“Yes,” said the servant.

“Are there rushes at the foot of it?”

“Yes,” said the servant.

“Then, take me to the steps, and put me on the first of them.”

The servant did so.

“Look now, and tell me what comes.”

“I see birds,” said the fellow.

“Are they bigger than common?”

“No bigger than in Fearn,” said the servant.

A little after, “What do you see?”

“Birds still,” said the servant.

“And are they no bigger than usual?”

“They are three times bigger than eagles.”

A little later, “Do you see any more birds?” said the giant.

“Yes, birds that the air is black with them, and the biggest is three times as big as an ox.”

“Then guide my hand to the bow,” said the blind giant; and the boy guided him so well that the biggest bird fell at the foot of the rock amongst the rushes.

“Take home a hind quarter,” said the giant, and they carried. it home between them.

When they came to the house of his son-in-law, he walked in with it, and aimed a tremendous blow at the place where his son-in-law usually sat. Being blind he did not see that the chair was empty; it was broken to pieces; but the son-in-law lived to repent, and treat the blind giant better.

I have another version written in English by Mr. Hugh MacColl, gardener at Ardkinglass, from which it appears that the blind old giant was Ossian, and that his father-in-law was Paul na nooi clerach, Paul of the nine clerks (whom I strongly suspect to be St. Patrick). They questioned him about deer; and this shows how stories alter, for DAMH means ox and stag, and in Sutherland it has become ox.

5. They would not believe that Ossian’s black birds were so large. He got a boy and went to a hill, and pulled a tuft of rushes, and here again is another change in the translation from Gaelic to English; for TOM means a *knoll* and a *bush*. Under the tuft they find a yellow dog, and under another, firelocks and spades; which is another curious change from the bow and arrows. Then they go to a *hill* covered with wood, which suits the country about Stirling; and the lad is made to dig a hole with the spade, and put his head into it. The old giant whistles, and nearly splits the boy’s head; and he does this thrice. The first time the boy sees deer as

big as peat-stacks; the second, as large as house; the third, as large as hills; and they slip “cue baie mac kill e buiach,” the yellow dog after them.

Then they kindle a fire and roast the deer. Here the bettle has dropped out, and the boy eats some, and old giant is furious; for if he had eaten all he could have recovered his sight. Then he took the boy to a wood, and made him shoot a blackbird on its nest, and he took home a leg, which was so heavy that it broke the table.

Then they tried to get the old man to tell them more about the Faen, but he would not, because they would not believe him; and the next day they went with the boy to a well, and wrung his neck, to keep him silent also.

Here, as in all the versions which I have got, the blackbird seems to be hauled in to account for the Gaelic word, which is but rarely used, and whose meaning is forgotten. LON DUBH means black*bird* or black *Elk*; and surely deer as big as hills might have done to prove the wonders of the olden time. These three versions of the same story show, as well as any which I have, how the same tale changes in various localities, and why.

In Stirling and in Sutherland Gaelic is fading rapidly. Elks have ceased to exist in Scotland; and the tradition has changed with the times, and shapes itself to suit the ideas of the narrators, and the country about them.

XLV. The Barra Widow's Son

From Alexander MacNeill, tenant and fisherman, then at Tangual, Barra.

THERE was a poor widow in Barra, and she had a babe of a son, and Iain was his name. She would be going to the strand to gather shell-fish to feed herself and her babe. When she was on the strand on a day, what did she see but a vessel on the west of Barra. Three of those who were on board put out a boat, and they were not long coming on shore.

She went to the shore and she emptied out the shell-fish beside her. The master of the vessel put a question to her, "What thing was that?" She said that it was strand shell-fish the food that she had. "What little fair lad is this?"--"A son of mine."--"Give him to me and I will give thee gold and silver, and he will get schooling and teaching, and he will be better off than to be herewith thee."--"I had rather suffer death than give the child away."--"Thou art silly. The child and thyself will be well off if thou lettest him (go) with me." With the love of the money she said that she would give him the child. "Come hither, lads, go on board; here's for you the key. Open a press in the cabin, and you will bring me hither a box that you will find in it." They went away, they did that, and they came. He caught the box, he opened it, he emptied it with a gush (or into her skirt), and he did not count it all, and he took the child with him.

She staid as she was, and when she saw the child going on board she would have given all she ever saw that she had him. He sailed away, and he went to England. He gave schooling and teaching to the boy till he was eighteen years on the vessel. It was Iain Albanach the boy was called at first, he gave him the name of Iain Mac a Maighstir (John, master's son), because he himself was master of the vessel. The "*owner*" of the vessel had seven ships on sea, and seven shops[31] on shore--each one going to her own shop with her cargo. It happened to the seven ships to be at home together. The *owner* took with him the seven skippers to the house, "I am growing heavy and aged," said he; "you are there seven masters; I had none altogether that I would rather than thou. I am without a man of clan though I am married; I know not with whom I will leave my goods, and I have a great share; there was none I would rather give it to than thee, but that thou art without clan as I am myself." "I," said the skipper, "have a son eighteen years of age in the ship, who has never been let out of her at all."--"Is not that wonderful for me, and that I did not hear of it!"--"Many a thing might the like of me have, and not tell it to you."--"Go and bring him down hither to me that I may see him." He went and he brought him down, and he set him in order. "Is this thy son?"--"It is," said the skipper. "Whether wouldst thou rather stay with me, or go with thy father on the sea as thou wert before, and that I should make thee an heir for ever Well then, it was ever at sea that I was raised, and I never got much on shore from my youth; so at sea I would rather be; but as you are determined to keep me, let me stay with yourself."

"I have seven shops on shore, and thou must take thy hand in the seven shops. There are clerks at every one of the shops," said he. "No one of them will hold bad opinion of himself that he is not as good as I. If you insist that I take them, I will take the seventh one of them."

He took the seventh one of the shops, and the first day of his going in he sent word through the town, the thing that was before a pound would be at fifteen shillings; so that everything in the shop was down, and the shop was empty before the ships came. He (the owner) went in,

[31] Buthanan, Booths.

he counted his money, and he said that the shop was empty. “It is not wonderful though it were, when the thing that was before a pound is let down to fifteen shillings.”--”And, My OIDE, are you taking that ill? Do you not see that I would put out all in the shop seven times before they could put it out once.”--”With that thou must take the rest in hand, and let them out so.” Then he took the rest in hand, and he was a master above the other clerks. When the ships came the shops altogether were empty. Then his master said, “Whether wouldst thou rather be master over the shops or go with one of the seven ships? Thou wilt get thy choice of the seven ships.”--”It is at sea I was ever raised and I will take a ship.” He got a ship. “Come, send hither here to me the seven skippers.” The seven skippers came. “Now,” said he to the six skippers that were going with Iain, “Iain is going with you, you will set three ships before and three behind, and he will be in the middle, and unless you bring him whole hither to me, there is but to seize you and hang you.”--”Well, then, my adopted father,” said Iain, “that is not right. The ships are going together, a storm may come and drive us from each other; let each do as best he may.” The ships went, they sailed, and it was a cargo of coal that Iain put in his own. There came on them a great day of storm. They were driven from each other. Where did Iain sail but to Turkey. He took anchorage in Turkey at early day, and he thought to go on shore to take a walk. He was going before him walking; he saw two out of their shirts working, and as though they had two iron flails. What had they but a man’s corpse! “What are you doing to the corpse?”--”It was a Christian; we had eight marks against him, and since he did not pay us while he was alive, we will take it out of his corpse with the flails.”--”Well then, leave him with me and I will pay you the eight marks.” He seized him, he took him from them, he paid them, and he put mould and earth on him. It was soon for him to return till he should see more of the land of the Turk. He went on a bit and what should he see there but a great crowd of men together. He took over where they were. What did he see but a gaping red fire of a great hot fire, and a woman stripped between the fire and them. “What,” said he, “are you doing here?” “There are,” said they, “two Christian women that the great Turk got; they were caught on the ocean; he has had them from the end of eight years. This one was promising him that she would marry him every year: when the time came to marry him she would not marry him a bit. He ordered herself and the woman that was with her to be burnt. One of them was burnt, and this one is as yet unburnt.”

“I will give you a good lot of silver and gold if you will leave her with me, and you may say to him that you burnt her.” They looked at each other. They said that he would get that. He went and he took her with him on board, and he clothed her in cloth and linen.

“Now,” said she, “thou hast saved my life for me; thou must take care of thyself in this place. Thou shalt go up now to yonder change-house. The man of the inn will put a question to thee what cargo thou hast. Say thou a cargo of coal. He will say that would be well worth selling in the place where thou art. Say thou it is for selling it that thou art come; what offer will he make for it. He will say, to-morrow at six o’clock there would be a *waggon* of gold going down, and a waggon of coal coming up, so that the ship might be kept in the same *trim*,[32] till six o’clock on the next night. Say thou that thou wilt take that; but unless thou art watchful they will come in the night when every man is asleep, with muskets and pistols; they will set the ship on the ground; they will kill every man, and they will take the gold with them.”

He went to the man of the inn, and agreed with him as she had taught him. They began on the morrow, in the morning, to put down the gold, and take up the coal. The skipper had a man standing looking out that the vessel should be in trim. When the coal was out, and the ship was as heavy with the gold as she was with the coal; and when he was on shore, she got an order for the sailors to take her advice till he should come. “Put up,” said she, “the sails, and

[32] Trump

draw the anchors. Put a rope on shore." They did that. He came on board; the ship sailed away through the night; they heard a shot, but they were out, and they never caught them more.

They sailed till they reached England. Three ships had returned, and the three skippers were in prison till Iain should come back. Iain went up and he reached his adopted father. The gold was taken on shore, and the old man had two thirds and Iain a third. He got chambers for the woman, where she should not be troubled.

"Art thou thinking that thou wilt go yet?" said the woman to him. "I am thinking that I have enough of the world with that same."--"Thou wentest before for thine own will, if thou wouldst be so good as to go now with my will."--"I will do that."--"Come to that shop without; take from it a coat, and a brigis, and a waistcoat; try if thou canst got a cargo of herring and thou shalt go with it to Spain. When the cargo is in, come where I am before thou goest."

When he got the cargo on board he went where she was. "Hast thou got the cargo on board?"--"I have got it."

"There is a dress here, and the first Sunday after thou hast reached the Spain thou wilt put it on, and thou wilt go to the church with it. Here is a whistle, and a ring, and a book. Let there be a horse and a servant with thee. Thou shalt put the ring on thy finger; let the book be in thine hand; thou wilt see in the church three seats, two twisted chairs of gold, and a chair of silver. Thou shalt take hold of the book and be reading it, and the first man that goes out of the church be thou out. Wait not for man alive, unless the King or the Queen meet thee."

He sailed till he reached the Spain; he took anchorage, and he went up to the change-house. He asked for a dinner to be set in order. The dinner was set on the board. They went about to seek him. A trencher was set on the board, and a cover on it, and the housewife said to him--"There is meat and drink enough on the board before you, take enough, but do not lift the cover that is on the top of the trencher." She drew the door with her. He began at his dinner. He thought to himself, though it were its fill of gold that were in the trencher, or a fill of "daoimean,"[33] nothing ever went on board that he might not pay. He lifted the cover of the trencher, and what was on the trencher but a couple of herring. "If this be the thing she was hiding from me she need not," and he ate one herring and the one side of the other. 'When the housewife saw that the herring was eaten,--"Mo chreach mhor! my great ruin" said she; "how it has fallen out! Was I never a day that I could not keep the people of the realm till to-day?"--"What has befallen thee?"--"It is, that I never was a day that I might not put a herring before them till to-day."--"What wouldst thou give for a barrel of herrings?"--"Twenty Saxon pounds."--"What wouldst thou give for a ship load?"--"That is a thing that I could not buy."--"Well, then, I will give thee two hundred herring for the two herring, and I wish the ship were away and the herrings sold."

On the first Sunday he got a horse with a bridle and saddle,[34] and a gillie. He went to the church; he saw the three chairs. The queen sat on the right hand of the king, and he himself sat on the left; he took the book out of his pocket, and he began reading. It was not on the sermon that the king's looks were, nor the queen's, but raining tears. When the sermon skailed he went out. There were three nobles after him, shouting that the king had a matter for him. He would not return. He betook himself to the change-house that night. He staid as he was till the next Sunday, and he went to sermon; he would not stay for any one, and he

[33] Diamonds
[34] All riders have not these luxuries.

returned to the change-house. The third Sunday he went to the church. In the middle of the sermon the king and queen came out; they stood at each side of the (bridle) rein. When the king saw him coming out he let go the rein; he took his hat off to the ground, and he made manners at him. “By your leave; you needn’t make such manners at me. It is I that should make them to yourself.”--”If it were your will that you should go with me to the palace to take dinner.”--”Ud! Ud! it is a man below you with whom I would go to dinner.” They reached the palace. Food was set in the place of eating, drink in the place of drinking, music in the place of hearing. They were plying the feast and the company with joy and gladness,[35] because they had hopes that they would get news of their daughter. “Oh, skipper of the ship,” said the queen, hide not from me a thing that I am going to ask thee.” Any thing that I have that I can tell I will not hide it from you.” “And hide not from me that a woman’s hand set that dress about your back, your coat, your brigis, and your waistcoat, and gave you the ring about your finger, and the book that was in your hand,, and the whistle that you were playing.” “I will not hide it. With a woman’s right hand every whit of them was reached to me.” “And where didst thou find her? ‘Tis a daughter of mine that is there.” “I know not to whom she is daughter. I found her in Turkey about to be burned in a great gaping fire.” “Sawest thou a woman along with her?” “I did not see her; she was burned before I arrived. I bought her with gold and silver. I took her with me, and I have got her in a chamber in England.” “The king had a great general,” said the queen, “and what should he do but fall in love with her. Her father was asking her to marry him, and she would not marry him. She went away herself and the daughter of her father’s brother with a vessel, to try if he would forget her. They went over to Turkey; the Turk caught them, and we had not hope to see her alive for ever.”

If it be your pleasure, and that you yourself are willing, I will set a ship with you to seek her; you will get herself to marry, half the realm so long as the king lives, and the whole realm when he is dead.” “I scorn to do that; but send a ship and a skipper away, and I will take her home; and if that be her own will, perhaps I will not be against it.”

A ship was made ready; what should the general do but pay a lad to have him taken on board unknown to the skipper; he got himself hidden in a barrel. They sailed far; short time they were in reaching England. They took her on board, and they sailed back for Spain. In the midst of the sea, on a fine day, he and she came up on deck, and what should he see but an island beyond him; it was pretty calm at the time. “Lads, take me to the island for a while to hunt, till there comes on us the likeness of a breeze.” “We will.” They set him on shore on the island; when they left him on the island the boat returned. When the general saw that he was on the island, he promised more wages to the skipper and to the crew, for that they should leave him there; and they left Iain on the island.

When she perceived that they had left Iain on the island, she went mad, and they were forced to bind her. They sailed to Spain. They sent word to the king that his daughter had grown silly, as it seemed, for the loss of the form of her husband and lover. The king betook himself to sorrow, to black melancholy, and to woe, and to heart-breaking, because of what had arisen; and (because) he had but her of son or daughter.

Iain was in the island, hair and beard grown over him; the hair of his head down between his two shoulders, his shoes worn to pulp, without a thread of clothes on that was not gone to rags; without a bite of flesh on him, his bones but sticking together.

[35] This passage is one common to many reciters, and spoiled by translation.

On a night of nights, what should he hear but the rowing of a boat coming to the island. “Art thou there, Iain Albanich?” said the one in the boat. Though he was, he answered not. He would rather find death at the side of a hill than be killed.

“I know that thou hearest me, and answer; it is just as well for thee to answer me, as that I should go up and take thee down by force.” He went, and he took himself down. “Art thou willing to go out of the island?” “Well, then, I am; it is I that am that, if I could get myself taken out of it.” “What wouldst thou give to a man that would take thee out of this?” “There was a time when I might give something to a man that would take me out of this; but to day I have not a thing.” “Wouldst thou give one half of thy wife to a man that would take thee out of this?” “I have not that.” “I do not say if thou hadst, that thou wouldst give her away.” “I would give her.” “Wouldst thou give half thy children to a man that would take thee out of this.” “I would give them.” “Down hither; sit in the stern of the boat.” He sat in the stern of the boat. “Whether wouldst thou rather go to England or Spain?” “To Spain.” He went with him, and before the day came he was in Spain.

He went up to the change-house; the housewife knew him in a moment. “Is this Iain!” said she. “It is the sheath of all that there was of him that is here.”

“Poorly has it befallen thee!” said she. She went and she sent a message to a barber’s booth, and he was cleansed; and word to a tailor’s booth, and clothes were got for him; she sent word to a shoemaker’s booth, and shoes were got for him. On the morrow when he was properly cleansed and arrayed, he went to the palace of the king, and he played the whistle. When the king’s daughter heard the whistle she gave a spring, and she broke the third part of the cord that bound her. They asked her to keep still, and they tied more cords on her. On the morrow he gave a blast on the whistle, and she broke two parts of all that were on her. On the third day when she heard his whistle, she broke three quarters; on the fourth day she broke what was on her altogether. She rose and she went out to meet him, and there never was a woman more sane than she. Word was sent up to the king of Spain, that there never was a girl more sane than she; and that the bodily presence of her husband and lover had come to her.

A “coach “ was sent to fetch Iain; the king and his great gentles were with him; he was taken up on the deadly points.[36] Music was raised, and lament laid down; meat was set in the place of eating, drink in the place of drinking, music in the place for hearing; a cheery, hearty, jolly wedding was made. Iain got one half of the realm; after the king’s death he got it altogether. The general was seized; he was torn amongst horses; he was burned amongst fires; and the ashes were let (fly) with the wind.

After the death of the king and queen, Iain was king over Spain. Three sons were born to him. On a night he heard a knocking in the door. “The asker is come,” said he. Who was there but the very man that took him out of the island. “Art thou for keeping thy promise?” said the one who came, “I am,” said Iain. “Thine own be thy realm, and thy children and my blessing! Dost thou remember when thou didst pay eight merks for the corpse of a man in Turkey; that was my body; health be thine; thou wilt see me no more.

(Gaelic omitted)

Got this tale from Alexander MacNeill, tenant and fisherman, then at Tangval, Barra. Heard his father, Roderick MacNeill, often recite it. Roderick MacNeill died about twenty years

[36] This I take to be a phrase wrongly used; an old phrase, meaning that the personage was raised on spears. The passage is common.

ago, about the age of eighty years. Heard it from many other old men in youth, and says it was pretty common then.

H. MACLEAN.

July, 1859.

The landscape, and the ways of the poor of Barra, are painted from nature: the flat strand, the shell-fish, the ship in the offing, the boat at the edge of the sea. Then comes the popular romance, in which the poor man is to become a prince. The life of shops and ships, dimly seen, but evident enough. Turkey and Spain fairly lost in a distant haze. The commercial principle laid down, that small profits make quick returns; and that men should buy in the cheapest, and sell in the dearest market; and all this woven with a love story, and mixed up with an old tale which Grimm found in Germany, and which Hans Andersen has made the foundation of one of his best tales. Alas! why did not the King of Spain send for the Barra widow to make it complete.

XLVI. The Tale Of The Queen Who Sought A Drink From A Certain Well

From Mrs. MacTavish, Port Ellen, Islay.

THERE was before now, a queen who was sick, and she had three daughters. Said she to the one who was eldest, “Go to the well of true water, and bring to me a drink to heal me.”

The daughter went, and she reached the well. A LOSGANN (frog or toad) came up to ask her if she would wed him, if she should get a drink for her mother. “I will not wed thee, hideous creature! on any account,” said she. “Well then,” said he, “thou shalt not get the water.”

She went away home, and her mother sent away her sister that was nearest to her, to seek a drink of the water. She reached the well; and the toad came up and asked her “if she would marry him if she should get the water.” “I wont marry thee, hideous creature!” said she. “Thou shalt not get the water, then,” said he.

She went home, and her sister that was youngest went to seek the water. When she reached the well the toad came up as he used, and asked her “if she would marry him if she should get the water.” “If I have no other way to get healing for my mother, I will marry thee,” said she; and she got the water, and she healed her mother.

They had betaken themselves to rest in the night when the toad came to the door saying:--

“A CHAOMHAG, A CHAOMHAG,
AN CUIMHNEACH LEAT
AN GEALLADH BEAG
A THUG THU AIG
AN TOBAR DHOMH,
A GHAOIL, A GHAOIL.”

“Gentle one, gentle one,
Rememberest thou
The little pledge
Thou gavest me
Beside the well,
My love, my love.”

When he was ceaselessly saying this, the girl rose and took him in, and put him behind the door, and she went to bed; but she was not long laid down, when he began again saying, everlastingly:--

“A hàovaig, a hàovaig,
An cuineach leat
An geallug beag
A hoog oo aig
An tobar gaw,
A géule, a géule.”

Then she got up and she put him under a noggin; that kept him quiet a while; but she was not long laid down when he began again, saying --

“A hàovaig, a hàovaig,
An cuineach leat
An geallug beag
A hoog oo aig
An tobar gaw,
A géule, a géule.”

She rose again, and she made him a little bed at the fireside; but he was not pleased, and he began again saying, “A chaoimheag, a chaoimheag, an cuimhneach leat an gealladh beag a thug thu aig an tobar dhomb, a ghaoil, a ghaoil.” Then she got up and made him a bed beside her own bed; but he was without ceasing, saying, “A chaoimheag, a chaoimheag, an cuimhneach leat an gealladh beag a thug a thug thu aig an tobar dhomb, a ghaoil, a ghaoil.” But she took no notice of his complaining, till he said to her, “There is an old rusted glave behind thy bed, with which thou hadst better take off my head, than be holding me longer in torture.”

She took the glave and cut the head off him. When the steel touched him, he grew a handsome youth; and he gave many thanks to the young wife, who had been the means of putting off him the spells, under which he had endured for a long time. Then he got his kingdom, for he was a king; and he married the princess, and they were long alive and merry together.

(Gaelic omitted)

The lady who has been so kind as to write down this, and other stories, is one of my oldest friends. She has brought up a large family, and her excellent memory now enables her to remember tales, which she had gathered during a long life passed in the West Highlands, where her husband was a respected minister. The story is evidently a Celtic version of the Wearie Well at the Warldis End, of which Chambers has published one Scotch version, to which Grimm refers in notes “Der Froschkônig,” in his third volume. There are many versions still current in Scotland, told in broad Scots; and it can be traced back to 1548. According to Grimm, it belongs to the oldest in Germany. This version clearly belongs to the Gaelic language, for the speech of the frog is an imitation of the gurgling and quarking, of spring frogs in a pond, which I have vainly endeavoured to convey to an English reader by English letters; but which is absurdly like, when repeated in Gaelic with this intention. The persevering, obstinate repetition of the same sounds is also exceedingly like the habit of frogs, when disturbed, but not much frightened. Let any one try the experiment of throwing a stone into the midst of a frog concert, and he will hear the songsters, after a moment of stillness, begin again. First a half. smothered GUARK GUARK; then another begins, half under water, with a gurgle, and then more and more join in till the pond is in full chorus once again. GUARK, GUARK, GOOILL~~~~~ GOOARK GOOILL~~~~~

Holy healing wells are common all over the Highlands; and people still leave offerings of pins and nails, and bits of rag, though few would confess it. There is a well in Islay where I myself have, after drinking, deposited copper caps amongst a hoard of pins and buttons, and similar gear, placed in chinks in the rocks and trees at the edge of the “Witches’ Well.” There is another well with similar offerings, freshly placed beside it in an island in Loch Maree, in Ross-shire; and similar wells are to be found in many other places in Scotland. For example, I learn from Sutherland, that “a well in the black Isle of Cromarty, near Rosehaugh, has miraculous healing powers. A country woman tells me, that about forty years ago, she remembers it being surrounded by a crowd of people every first Tuesday in June, who bathed or drank of it *before* sunrise. Each patient tied a string or rag to one of the trees that overhung

it before leaving. It was sovereign for headaches. Mr. ------ remembers to have seen a well here called Mary's Well, hung round with votive rags."

Well worship is mentioned by Martin. The custom in his day, in the Hebrides, was to walk south about round the well.

Sir William Betham in his Gael and Cymbiri (Dublin: W. Curry, jun., & Co., 1834), says at page 235, "The Celtæ were much addicted to the worship of fountains and rivers as divinities. They had a deity called Divona, or the river god."

Divona Celtarum lingua fons addite Divii (*Ausonius*).

He quotes from "The Book of Armagh, a MS. of the seventh century,"--"And he (St. Patrick) came to *Fina Malge*, which is called *Slane*, because it was intimated to him that the *Magi honoured this fountain*, and made donations to it as gifts to a god." *For they sacrificed gifts to the fountain, and worshipped it like a god*.

The learned author explains how wells are now venerated in Ireland, and traces their worship back to remote ages; and to the East, by way of Spain, Carthage, and Egypt, Tyre and Sidon, Arabia, Chaldea, and Persia, where men still hang bits of rag on trees near wells. Baal, according to some of the authorities quoted, is mixed up with the well worship of the Irish Sceligs. Divona, the river god, or Baal, may therefore have degenerated into a toad; and the princess who married him may once have been a Celtic divinity, whose story survives as a popular tale in Germany and in Scotland.

The following story bears on the same subject, and may explain why gifts were left when a drink was taken from a well. The story was told to me long ago, while seated under shelter of a big stone waiting for ducks on the shore. It was told in Gaelic, and the pun upon the name of the lake is lost in any other language. The meaning of the name might be the weasel lake, or the lake of the falls; or perhaps the lake of the island; but the legend gives a meaning, which the sound of the name will bear, and it ought to be right if it is not.

XLVII. The Origin Of Loch Ness

From Mr. Thomas MacDonald, now gamekeeper at Dunrobin.

WHERE Loch Ness now is, there was long ago a fine glen. A woman went one day to the well to fetch water, and she found the spring flowing so fast that she got frightened, and left her pitcher and ran for her life; she never stopped till she got to the top of a high hill; and when there, she turned about and saw the glen filled with water. Not a house or a field was to be seen! “Aha!” said she, “Tha Loch ann a nis.” (Ha Loch an a neesh). There is a lake in it now; and so the lake was called Loch Ness (neesh).

XLVIII. Conall

From Alexander MacNeill, tenant and fisherman, Barra.

THERE was an old king before now in Erin,[37] and a sister of his, whose name was MAOBH, had three sons. The eldest of them was Ferghus, the middlemost Lagh an Laidh, and the youngest one Conall.

He thought he would make an heir of the eldest one, Ferghus. He gave him the schooling of the son of a king and a "ridere," and when he was satisfied with school and learning he brought him home to the palace. Now they were in the palace.

Said the king, "I have passed this year well; the end of the year is coming now, and trouble and care are coming on with it."

"What trouble or care is coming on thee?" said the young man. "The vassals of the country are coming to reckon with me to-day." "Thou hast no need to be in trouble. It is proclaimed that I am the young heir, and it is set down in papers and in letters in each end of the realm. I will build a fine castle in front of the palace for thee. I will get carpenters, and stonemasons, and smiths to build that castle."

"Is that thy thought, son of my sister?" said the king. "Thou hadst neither claim nor right to the realm unless I myself had chosen to give it to thee with my own free will. Thou wilt not see thyself handling Erin till I go first under the mould."

"There will be a day of battle and combat before I let this go on," said the young man.

He went away, and he sailed to Alba. A message was sent up to the king of Alba that the young king of Erin was come to Alba to see him. He was taken up on the deadly points.[38] Meat was set in the place for eating; drink in the place for drinking; and music in the place for hearing; and they were plying the feast and the company.

"Oh! young king of Erin," said the king of Alba, "it was not without the beginning of some matter that thou art come to Alba."

"I should not wish to let out the knowledge of my matter till I should first know whether I may get it."

"Anything I have thou gettest it, for if I were seeking help, perhaps I would go to thee to get it."

"There came a word with trouble between me and my mother's brother. It was proclaimed out that I was king of Erin; and he said to me that I should have nothing to do with anything till a clod should first go on him. I wish to stand my right, and to get help from thee."

"I will give thee that," said the king; "three hundred swift heroes, three hundred brave heroes, three hundred full heroes; and that is not bad helping."

"I am without a chief over them, and I am as ill off as I was before; but I have another small request, and if I might get it, I would wish to let it out."

[37] In this tale Erin is spelt instead of Eirinn and Eireann; Alba and Sassun, *Scotland* and *England*, express the sound of the Gaelic words.
[38] Probably lifted on spears.

“Anything I have that I can part from, thou shalt get it,” said the king; “but the thing I have not, I cannot give it to thee. Let out thy speech, and thou shalt have it.”

“It is Boinne Breat, thy son, at their head.”

“My torture to thee! had I not promised him to thee, thou hadst not got him. But there were not born in Alba, nor in Erin, nor in Sassun, nor in any one place (those) who would gain victory over my son if they keep to fair play. If my son does not come back as be went, the word of an Eriannach is never again to be taken, for it is by treachery he will be overcome.”

They went away on the morrow, and they sailed to the king of Sassun. A message went up to the king of Sassun that the young king of Erin had come to the place. The king of Sassun took out to meet him. He was taken up on the deadly points; music was raised, and lament laid down in the palace of the king of Sassun; meat was set in the place for eating; drink in the place for drinking; music in the place of hearing; and they were plying the feast and the company with joy and pleasure of mind.

“Oh! young king of Erin,” said the king of Sassun, “it is not without the end of a matter that thou art come here.”

“I got the schooling of the son of a king and a ridere. My mother’s brother took me home. He began to speak about the vassals of the country and the people of the realm; that care and trouble were on him; and that he had rather the end of the year had not come at all. Said I to him, ‘I will build thee a palace, so that thou shalt have but to wash thy face, and stretch thy feet in thy shoes.’ Said he, ‘My sister’s son, thou hadst no right to the realm, and thou gettest it not till a clod goes on me, in spite of everything.’ Said I, ‘There will be a day of battle and combat between thee and me, before the matter is so.’ I went away; I took my ship; I took a skipper with me; and I sailed to Alba. I reached Alba, and I got three hundred swift heroes, three hundred brave heroes, and three hundred full heroes; now I am come to thee to see what help thou wilt give me.”

“I will give thee as many more, and a hero at their head,” said the king of Sassun.

They went away, and they sailed to Erin. They went on shore on a crag in Erin, and the name of Carrig Fhearghuis is on that rock still. He reached the king. “Brother of my mother, art thou now ready?”--”Well, then, Fhearghuis, though I said that, I thought thou wouldst not take anger; but I have not gathered my lot of people yet.”--”That is no answer for me. Thou hast Erin under thy rule. I am here with my men, and I have neither place, nor meat, nor drink for them.”

“Oo!” said the king, “the storehouses of Erin are open beneath thee, and I will go away and gather my people.”

He went away. He went all round Erin. He came to a place which they called “An t’ Iubhar “ (Newry). There was but one man in Iubhar, who was called Goibhlean Gobba (Goivlan Smith). He thought to go in, for thirst was on him; and that he would quench his thirst, and breathe a while. He went in. There was within but the smith’s daughter. She brought him a chair in which he might sit. He asked for a drink. The smith’s daughter did not know what she should do, for the smith had but one cow, which was called the Glas Ghoibhlean (Grey Goivlan), with the vessel he had for the milk of the cow; three times in the day it would go beneath the cow; three times in the day thirst would be on him; and he would drink the vessel each time, and unless the daughter had the vessel full she was not to get off. She was afraid, when the king asked for a drink, that unless she had the vessel full her head would be taken off. It was so that she thought the vessel should be set before the king at all hazards. She brought down the vessel, and she set it before him. He drank a draught; he took out the fourth

part, and he left three quarters in it. “I would rather you should take it out altogether than leave it. My father has made an oath that unless I have the vessel full, I have but to die.”

“Well, then,” said the king, “it is a spell of my spells to leave the vessel as full as it was before.”

He set the vessel on the board, he struck his palm on it, and he struck off as much as was above the milk, and the vessel was full; and before he went away, the girl was his own.

“Now, thou art going, oh king of Erin, and I am shamed; what wilt thou leave with me?”

“I would give thee a thousand of each hue, a thousand of each kind, a thousand of each creature.”

“What should I do with that, for I wilt not find salt in Erin to salt them?”

“I would give thee glens and high moors to feed them from year to year.”

“What should I do with that? for if Fearghus should kill you, he will take it from me, unless I have it with writing, and a drop of blood to bind it.”

“I am in haste this night, but go to-morrow to the camp to Croc Maol Nam Muc,” said the king; and he left his blessing with her.

Her father came.

“Far from thee--far from thee be it, my daughter! I think that a stranger has been to see thee here this day.”

“How dost thou know that?

“Thou hadst a maiden’s slow eyelash when I went out; thou hast the brisk eyelash of a wife now.”

“Whom wouldst thou rather had been here?”

“I never saw the man I would rather be here than the king of Erin.”

“Well, it was he; he left me a thousand of each hue, a thousand of each kind, a thousand of each creature.

“‘What,’ said I, ‘shall I do with them, as I cannot get in Erin as much salt as will salt them?’

“Said he, ‘I would give thee glens and high moors to feed them from year to year.’

“‘What shall I do if Fearghus should kill you? I will not get them.’

“He said, ‘I should have writing and a drop of his own blood to bind it.’”

They slept that night as they were. If it was early that the day came, it was earlier that the smith arose. “Come, daughter, and let us be going.” She went, herself and the smith, and they reached the king in his camp.

“Wert thou not in the Iubhar yesterday?” said the smith to the king, “I was; and hast thou mind of thy words to the girl?”

“I have; but the battle will not be till to-morrow. I will give thee, as I said, to the girl; but leave her.”

The smith got that, and he went away.

That night, when she had slept a while, she awoke, for she had seen a dream. “Art thou waking?”

“I am; what wilt thou with me? I saw a dream there: a shoot of fir growing from the heart of the king, one from my own heart, and they were twining about each other.” “That is our babe son.” They slept, and it was not long till she saw the next dream.

“Art thou waking, king of Erin?” “I am; what wilt thou with me?” “I saw another dream. Fearghus, coming down, and taking the head and the neck out of me.”

“That is, Fearghus killing me, and taking out my head and neck.”

She slept again, and she saw another dream.

“Art thou sleeping, king of Erin?”

“I am not; what wilt thou with me now?

“I saw Erin, from side to side, and from end to end, covered with sheaves of barley and oats. There came a blast of wind from the east, from the west, from the north; every tree was swept away, and no more of them were seen.”

“Fearghus will kill me, and he will take the head and neck out of me. As quickly as ever thou didst (anything), seize my set of arms, and keep them. A baby boy is begotten between thee and me. Thou shalt suckle and nurse him, and thou shalt set him in order. Keep the arms. When thou seest that he has speech, and can help himself, thou shalt send him away through the world a wandering, till he find out who he is. He will get to be king over Erin; his son will be king over Erin; his grandson will be king over Erin. His race will be kings over Erin till it reaches the ninth knee. A child will be born from that one. A farmer will come in with a fish; he will cook the fish; a bone will stick in his throat, and he will be choked.”

Maobh, the king’s sister, the mother of Fearghus, had two other sons, and the battle was to be on the morrow. Lagh an Laidh and Connal; and Lagh an Laidh was the eldest.

“Whether,” said Lagh an Laidh, “shall we be with our mother’s brother or with Fearghus?”

“I know not. If our mother’s brother wins, and we are with Fearghus, it is a stone in our shoe for ever; but if Fearghus wins, he will turn his back to us, because we were on the other side.”

“Well, then, it is not thus it shall be; but be thou with Fearghus, and I will be with our mother’s brother.”

“It shall not be so; we will leave it to our mother.”

“Were I a man,” said Maobh, “I would set the field with my own brother.”

“Well, then, I will be with Fearghus,” said Lagh an Laidh, “and be thou with Fearghus, oh Connal!”

Fearghus went to Fionn; he blessed him in calm, soft words. Fionn blessed him in better words; and if no better, they were no worse.

“I heard that there was a day of battle and combat between thyself and thy mother’s brother,” said he.

“That is to be, and I came to you for help.”

“It is but bold for me to go against thy mother’s brother, since it was on his land that I got my keep. If thy mother’s brother should win, we shall get neither furrow nor clod of the land of Erin as long as we live. I will do thus. I will not strike a blow with thee, and I will not strike a blow against thee.”

Fearghus went home on the morrow, and they set in order for the battle. The king’s company was on one side, and the company of Fearghus on the other. Fearghus had no GAISGICH

heroes but Boinne Breat and his company. The great Saxon hero and his company, and Lagh an Laidh. Boinne Breat drew out to the skirt of the company; he put on his harness of battle and hard combat. He set his silken netted coat above his surety[39] shirt; a booming shield on his left side; how many deaths were in his tanned sheath!

He strode out on the stern steps like a sudden blaze; each pace he put from him was less than a hill, and greater than a knoll on the mountain side. He turned on them, cloven and cringing. Three ranks would he drive of them, dashing them from their shields, to their blood and their flesh in the skies.[40] Would he not leave one to tell the tale, or report bad news; to put in a land of holes or a shelf of rock. There was one little one-eyed russet man, one-eyed, and on one knee and one handed. "Thou shalt not be to tell a tale of me;" he went and he took his head off. Then Boinne Breat shunned the fight, and he took his armour off.

"Go down, Fearghus, and take off the head of thy mother's brother, or I will take it off."

Fearghus went down, he caught hold of his mother's brother, and he took his head off. The smith's daughter went to the arms, and she took them with her.

Lagh an Laidh kept on his armour. When he saw Fearghus going to take off the head of his mother's brother, he took a frenzy. Lagh and Laidh went about the hill to try if he could see Boinne Breat, who was unarmed. Boinne Breat thought that man was drunk with battle. He thought that he would turn on the other side of the hill to try if he could come to his own place. Lagh an Laidh turned on the other side against him. He thought to turn again to try if the battle frenzy would abate. The third time he said he would not turn for all who were in Albuin, or Eirinn, or Sassun. "It is strange thou, man, that wert with me throughout the battle, to be against me?" "I will not believe but that thou hast taken the drunkenness of battle," said Boinne Breat.

"I am quite beside myself."

"Well, then," said he, "though I am unarmed, and thou under arms, remember that thou art no more to me than what I can hold between these two fingers."

"I will not be a traiter to thee, there behind thee are three of the best heroes in Albuin, or Eirinn, or Sassun."

He gave a turn to see the three heroes, and when he turned Lagh an Laigh struck off his head.

"My torture," said Fearghus, "I had rather my own head were there. An Eireannach is not to be taken at his word as long as a man shall live. It is a stone in thy shoe every day for ever, and a pinch of the land of Eirinn thou shalt not have."

Lagh and Laidh went away and he went to the mountain. He made a castle for himself there, and he stayed in it.

The smith's daughter came on well till she bore a babe-son. She gave him the name of Conal Mac Righ Eirinn. She nourished him well, and right well. When speech came and he could walk well, she took him with her on a wet misty day to the mountain amongst high moors and forests. She left him there astray to make out a way for himself, and she went home. He did not know in the world what he should do, as he did not know where to go, but he found a finger of a road. He followed the road. What should he see but a little hut at the evening of the day at the wayside. He went into the hut: there was no man within: he let himself down at

[39] CORR, the epithet applied to a shirt, is a word which gives the meaning of greatness or excess; and in corran, means an iron weapon, or a sickle. "A shirt of armour."
[40] This passage is common; I am not certain that it is correctly rendered.

the fire-side. There he was till a woman came at the end of the night, and she had six sheep. She saw a great slip of a man beside the fire, who seemed to be a fool. She took great wonder when she saw him, and she said that he had better go out of that, and go down to the king's house, and that he would get something amongst the servants in the kitchen. He said he would not go, but if she would give him something that he might eat, that he would go to herd the sheep for herself. What should be the name of the woman but CAOMHAG Gentle. "If I thought that, I would give thee meat and drink," said she. On the morrow he went away with the sheep. "I have not a bite of grass for them," said she, "but a road; and thou shalt keep them at the edge of the road, and thou shalt not let them off it."

At the time of night he came home with them; on the morrow he went away with the sheep. There were near to the place where he was with them three fields of wheat that belonged to three gentlemen. The sheep were wearing him out. He went and he levelled the dyke, and he let them in from one to the other till they had eaten the three fields. On a day of days, the three gentlemen gathered. When they came, he had let the fields be eaten by the sheep.

"Who art thou? Thou hast eaten the fields?"

"It was not I that ate them at all; it was the sheep that ate them."

"We will not be talking to him at all; he is but a fool. We will reach Caomhag to see if the sheep are hers."

They reached Caomhag. They took her with them to the court. This was the first court that Fearghus had made after he got the crown.

The kings had a heritage at that time. When they did not know how to split justice properly, the judgment-seat would begin to kick, and the king's neck would take a twist when he did not do justice as he ought.

"I can make nothing of it," said the king, "but that they should have the tooth that did the damage."

The judgment-seat would begin to kick, and the king's neck took a turn. "Come here one of you and loose me; try if you can do justice better than that." Though there were thousands within, none would go in the king's place. They would not give the king such bad respect, as that any one of them would go before him.

"Is there a man that will loose me?"

"There is not, unless the herd of Caomhag himself will loose thee."

Caomhag's herd was set down.

"Loose for me, my little hero, and do justice as it should (be done), and let me out of this."

"(Nor) right nor justice will I do before I get something that I may eat."

Then he got something which he ate.

"What justice didst thou do thyself?" said he.

"I did but (doom) the tooth that did the damage to be theirs."

"What was in the way that thou didst not give death to Caomhag? This is what I would do:--Caomhag has six sheep, and though the six sheep were taken from her, they would not pay the gentlemen. Caomhag will have six lambs, the gentlemen shall have the six lambs, and she herself shall have the sheep to keep."

The turn went out of the king's neck. He went away, and they did not ask who he was, and he got no skaith.

There was another gentleman, and he had a horse, and he sent him to a smithy to be shod. The smith had a young son and a nurse under the child. What should it be but a fine day, and it was without that the horse was being shod, and she never saw a horse shod before; and she went out to see the shoeing of the horse. She sat opposite to the horse, and he took the nail and the shoe, and he did not hit the hoof with the nail but he put it in the flesh, and the horse struck the child, and drove the cup of his head off. They had but to go to justice again to the king, and the justice the king made for them was, that the leg should be taken off the horse. The judgment-seat began to kick again, and the king's neck took a twist. The herd of Caomhag was there, and they asked him to loose the king. He said that he would not do a thing till he should first get something to eat.

He got that. He went where the king was.

"What law didst thou make?"

"The leg to be taken off the horse?

"That will not pay the smith. Send hither to me the groom that broke the horse, and the gentleman to whom he belongs. Send over here the smith and the nurse."

The gentleman and the groom came.

"Well then, my gentleman, didst thou make this groom break this horse as he should?"

The groom said that he had done that as well as he knew (how to do it).

"No more could be asked of thee. Well, smith, didst thou give an order to the nurse to stay within without coming out of her chamber?"

"I did not give it," said the smith, "but (she might do) as she chose herself."

"My gentleman," said he, "since thou art best kept, I will put a third of the EIRIC of the smith's son on thee, and another third on the smith himself, because he did not measure the nail before he put it to use, and another third on the nurse and the groom because she did not stay within in her chamber, and in case he left some word or other untaught to the horse."

The gentleman went away and the smith; the judgment-seat stopped, and she hadn't a kick; the turn came out of the king's neck, and they let him go as usual.

Said the king--"If he has travelled over the universe and the world, there is a drop of king's blood in that lad; he could not split the law so well as that if it were not in him. Let the three best heroes I have go, and let them bring me his head."

They went after him. He gave a glance from him and what should he see coming but they. They came where he was. "Where are you going?"--"We are going to kill thyself. The king sent us to thee."

"Well, then, that was but a word that came into his mouth, and it is not worth your while to kill me."

"He is but a fool," said they.

"Since he sent you to kill me, why don't you kill me?"

"Wilt thou thyself kill thyself, my little hero?" said they.

"How shall I kill myself?"

“Here’s for thee a sword and strike it on thee about the neck, and cast the head off thyself,” said they.

He seized on the sword, and gave it a twirl in his fist. “Fall to killing thyself, my little hero.”

“Begone,” said he, “and return home, and do not hide from the king that you did not kill me.”

“Well, then, give me the sword,” said one of them.

“I will not give it; there are not in Erin as many as will take it from my fist,” said he.

They went and they returned home. As he was going by himself, he said, “I was not born without a mother, and I was not begotten without a father. I have no mind (of) ever coming to Erin, and I know that it was in Erin I was born. I will not leave a house in which there is smoke or fire in Erin till I know who (am).”

He went to the Iubhar. What was it but a fine warm day. Whom did he see but his mother washing. He was coming to a sort of understanding, so that he was thinking that it was his mother who was there. He went and he went behind her, and he put his hand on her breast. “Indeed,” said he, “a, foster son of thy right breast am I.” She gave her head a toss. “Thy like of a *tarlaid* drudge, I never had as a son or a foster son.”--”My left hand is behind thy head, and a sword in my right hand, and I will strike off thy head unless thou tell me who I am.”--”Still be thy hand, Conall, son of the king of Erin.”

“I knew myself I was that, and that there was a drop of the blood of a king’s son in me; but who killed my father?”

Fearghus killed him; and a loss as great as thy father was slain on the same day--that was Boinne Breat, son of the king of Alba.”

“Who slew Boinne Breat?”--”It is a brother of Fearghus, whom they call Lagh an Laidh.”

And where is that man dwelling?

He could not get a bit on the land of Erin when once he had slain Boinne Breat; he went to the hills, and he made him a ‘còs’[41] in the forest, amongst ‘*uille biaste*,’ monsters, and untamed creatures.”

“Who kept my father’s arms?”--”It is I.”

“Go fetch them, and bring them hither to me.” She brought them.

He went and put the arms on him, and they became him as well as though they had been made for himself.

“I eat not a bit, and I drink not a draught, and I make no stop but this night, until I reach where that man is, wheresoever he may be.”

He passed that night where he was. In the morning, on the morrow he went away; he went on till there was black upon his soles and holes in his shoes. The white clouds of day were going, and the black clouds of night coming, and without his finding a place of staying or rest for him. There he saw a great wood. He made a “còs,” in one of the trees above in which he might stay that night. In the morning, on the morrow he cast a glance from him. What should he see but the very *uile bheist*, whose like was never seen under the sun, stretched without clothing, without foot coverings, or head covering, hair and beard gone over him. He thought, though he should go down, that he could not do for him. He put an arrow in a “*crois*,” and he “fired “ at him. He struck him with it on the right fore-arm, and the one who was below gave

[41] Còs, a hollow or cave; here a kind of dwelling scooped out in the side of a hill.

a start. “Move not a sinew of thy sinews, nor a vein of thy veins, nor a bit of thy flesh, nor a hair of thy locks, till thou promise to see me a king over Erin, or I will send down of slender oaken darts enough to sew thee to the earth.” The uile bheist did not give him yielding for that. He went and he fired again, and he struck him in the left fore-arm. “ Did I not tell thee before, not to stir a vein of thy veins nor a bit of thy flesh, nor a hair of thy locks till thou shouldst promise to see me king over Erin.”--”Come down then, and I will see thyself or myself that before this time to morrow night.” He came down.

“If I had known that it was thy like of a drudge that should dictate thus to me, I would not do it for thee for anything; but since I promised thee I will do it, and we will be going.”

They went to the palace of the king. They shouted Battle or Combat to be sent out, or else the head of Fearghus, or himself a captive.

Battle and combat they should get, and not his head at all, and they could not get himself a captive.

There were sent out four hundred swift heroes, four hundred full heroes, and four hundred strong heroes.

They began at them. The one could not put from the other’s hand as they were killed.

They shouted battle or combat again, or else the head of Fearghus to be sent out, or himself a captive.

“It is battle and combat thou shalt have, and not at all my head, and no more shalt thou get myself a captive.”

There were sent out twelve hundred swift heroes, twelve hundred full heroes, and twelve hundred stout heroes.

The one could not put from the other’s hand as they killed of them.

They shouted battle and combat, or else the head of Fearghus, or himself a captive.

Battle and combat they should have, and not the head of Fearghus at all, nor himself a captive.

There were sent out four hundred score to them. The one could not put from the other as they killed.

They shouted battle and combat.

“Those who are without,” said Fearghus, “are so hard (to please) that they will take but my head, and unless they get (it) they will kill all there are in Erin and myself after them. Take one of you a head from one of those who were slain, and when Lagh an Laidh comes and asks my head, or myself a captive, give it to him, and he will think it is my head.”

The head was given to Lagh an Laidh. He went where Conall was with it.

“What hast thou there?” said Conall.

“The head of Fearghus.”

“That is not the head of Fearghus yet. I saw him a shorter (time) than thyself, but turn and bring hither to me the head of Fearghus.”

Lagh an Laidh returned.

Let another go to meet him in the king’s stead, and say that it is his head he shall get, not himself a captive.

This one went to meet Lagh an Laidh. He seized him and took the head out of his neck.

He reached Conall. “What hast thou there?”--”The head of Fearghus.”

“That is not the head of Fearghus yet; turn and bring to me the head of Fearghus.”

Lagh an Laidh returned.

“The one who is without is so watchful, and the other is so blind, that there is no man in Erin but they will kill unless they get. myself.”

“Where art thou going, Lagh an Laidh?” said Fearghus.

“I am going to seek thy head, or thyself as a captive.”

“It’s my head thou shalt get, and not myself as a captive; but what kindness art thou giving thy brother?

“The kindness that thou gavest thyself to me, I will give it to thee.”

He took the head out of his neck, and he took it with him. He came where Conall. was.

“What hast thou there?”--”The head of Fearghus.”--”It is not.”--”Truly it is.”--”Let me see it.”

He gave it to him. He drew it, and he struck him with it, and he made two heads of the one. Then they began at each other.

They would make a bog on the rock, and a rock on the bog. In the place where the least they would sink, they would sink to the knees, in the place where the most they would sink, they would sink to the eyes.

Conall thought it would be ill for him to fall after he had got so near the matter.

He drew his sword, and he threw the head off Lagh an Laidh.

“Now I am king over Erin, as I myself had a right to be.”

He took his mother and her father from the Iubhar, and took them to the palace; and his race were in it till the ninth knee. The last one was choked, as a babe, with a splinter of bone that went crosswise into his throat, and another tribe came in on EIRINN.

(Gaelic omitted)

ALEXANDER M’NEILL.

Heard it recited by his father and by several others in his youth.

This story is one of a number, all of which relate to a certain Conall, who was a natural son of a king of Eirinn, and came to be king himself.

There are generally two elder brothers born of the queen (instead of three uncles), who are less brave than the illegitimate brother. The mother is generally the daughter of an old man who has magical arts. The king stays in his house at first for a whole year, and fancies it one day; all sorts of adventures, and poetical ornaments, and descriptions of dress, and feats of skill are joined to this frame-work, and the stories are always told with a great deal of the measured prose which seems to belong to the particular class of which this is a specimen. They are always long. I think they are the remains of compositions similar to portions of the manuscripts in the Advocates’ Library and elsewhere--which are a curious jumble of classical and native allusions woven into a story; which, for want of a better illustration, may be compared with the old romances of other tongues.

The story, translated into English, loses part of its merit, which consists of the rapid utterance of a succession of words which convey, by their sound and rhythm alone, the idea of the fight which they describe; the sounds-

Dā chĕeăd djĕeăg Lān-gāsh-gāch
Dā chĕeăd djĕeăg Lōō-gāsh-gāch
Dā chĕeăd djĕeăg Trāin-gāsh-gāch

Gān cā'lchg-ăg ōn sgēē-ān
Gām fāil ăgŭs gām feō-īl
Ans ăn ēēăhr-māilt.

by the constant repetition of the sounds *djee*, *gash*, *gach*, suggest the singing, creaking, clashing, and hacking of blades and armour, and the rhythm, which varies continually, and must be heard to be understood, does the same.

The narrator heard it from his father and other old men in his youth. I have heard similar passages frequently from others, since the beginning of this year, and I remember to have heard something of the kind as a child.

One of the names, or one like it, occurs in a MS., said to be of the twelfth century, in a tale called "The Story of Art MacCuinn, King of Ireland, and the Battle of Magh Muckruinne," which extends to forty-three pages. Art MacCon wins a battle and becomes king of Ireland. All I know of the story is from an abstract; it is said to be mixed with poetry. The tales about Conall are all over the Highlands, and those who repeat them are generally old men. I have several versions written which differ materially from this.

XLIX. Maghach Colgar

From Alexander MacNeill, Barra.

FIONN, the son of Cumal. FIONN MAC CUMHAIL was in Eirinn, and the king of Lochlann in Lochlann. The king of Lochlann sent MAGHACH COLGAR to Fionn to be taught. The king of the SEALG sent to him his own son, whom they called INNSRIDH MACRIGH NAN SEALG. They were of age, six years (and) ten. Then they were in Erin with Fionn, and Fionn taught Maghach, son of the king of Lochlann, every learning he had.

There came a message from the king of Lochlann, that he was in the sickness of death for leaving the world; and that the Maghach must go home to be ready for his crowning. Maghach went away, and the chase failed with the FEINN, and they did not know what they should do.

Maghach wrote a letter to Fionn from Lochlann to Eirinn: “I heard that the chase failed with you in Eirinn. I have burghs on sea, and I have burghs on shore: I have food for a day and a year in every burgh of these--the meat thou thinkest not of, and the drink thou thinkest not of; come thou hither thyself and thy set of FIANTACHAN. The keep of a day and a year is on thy head.”

Fionn got the letter, and he opened it: “He is pitiable who would not do a good thing in the beginning of youth; he might get a good share of it again in the beginning of his age. Here is a letter came from my foster-son from Lochlann that he has burghs on sea and burghs on shore, food for a day and a year in every one of them--the drink that we can think of, and the drink that we do not think of; the meat we can think of, and the meat that we do not think of--and it is best for us to be going.”

“Whom shall we leave,” said FIACHERE MACFHINN (the trier son of Fionn) his son, “to keep the darlings and little sons of Eireann.”

“I will stay,” said FIACHERE MACFHINN.

“I will stay,” said DIARMID O’DUIBHNE, his sister’s son.

“I will stay,” said INNSRIDH MACRIGH NAN SEALG, his foster-son.

“I will stay,” said CATH CONAN MAC MHIC CON.

“We will stay now,” said they--the four.

“Thou art going, my father,” said Fiachere, “and it is as well for thee to stay; how then shall we get word how it befalls thee in Lochlainn?”

“I will strike the ORD FIANNT (hammer of Fiant) in Lochlainn, and it will be known by the blow I strike in Lochlainn, or in Eirinn, how we shall be.”

Fionn and his company went, they reached Lochlainn. Maghach Colgar, son of the king of Lochlainn, went before to meet them.

“Hail to thee, my foster father,” said Maghach.

“Hail to thyself, my foster-son,” said Fionn.

“There is the business I had with thee; I heard that the chase had failed in Eirinn, and it was not well with me to let you die without meat. I have burghs on sea and burghs on shore, and food for a day and year in every one of them, and which kind wouldst thou rather choose?”

“It is on shore I used to always be, and it is not on sea; and I will take some on shore,” said Fionn.

They went into one of them. There was a door opposite to every day in the year on the house; every sort of drink and meat within it. They sat on chairs; they caught every man hold of a fork and of a knife, They gave a glance from them, and what should they see in the “araich” (great half-ruined building), but not a hole open but frozen rime. They gave themselves that lift to rise. The chairs stuck to the earth. They themselves stuck to the chairs. Their hands stuck to the knives, and there was no way of rising out of that.

It was day about that Fiachaire MacFhinn and Innsridh MacRigh nan Sealg were going to keep the chase, and Diarmid O’Duibhne and Conan were going on the other day. On their returning back, what should they hear but a blow of the hammer of Fionn being struck in Lochlainn.

“If he has wandered the universe and the world, my foster-father is in pledge of his body and soul.”

Fiachaire MacFhinn and Innsridh MacRigh nan Sealg went from Eirinn, and they reached Lochlainn.

“Who is that without on the burgh?”

“I am,” said Fiachaire MacFhinn and Innsridh MacRigh nan Sealg.

“Who is there on the place of combat?”

“There are two hundred score of the GREUGACHAIBH (Greeks) come out and great IALL at their head coming to seek my head to be his at his great meal to morrow.”

Fiachaire MacFhinn and Innsridh MacRigh nan Sealg went and they reached the place of combat.

“Where are ye going? “ said Fiachaire MacFhinn.

“We are going to seek the head of Mhic Cumhail to be ours at our great meal to-morrow.”

“It is often that man’s head might be sought and be on my own breast at early morning.”

“Close up,” said Iall, “and leave way for the people.”

“There is a small delay on that,” said Fiachaire.

Fiachaire, son of Fhinn, pressed out on the one end of them. Innsridh, son of the king of the Sealg, began in the other end, till the two glaves clashed against each other. They returned, and they reached the burgh.

Co aig a bha ‘n càth grannda
A bha air an àth chomhrag
An diugh?

“With whom was the hideous fight
That was on the battle-place
to-day?”

said Fionn.

“With me,” said Fiachaire, “and with the son of the king of the Sealg.”

“How was my foster-son off there?”

“Man upon man,” said Fiachaire. “And if he had not another man, he had lacked none.”

“Over the field, to my foster-son,” said Fionn; “and his bones but soft yet! but mind the place of combat. Yonder are three hundred score of the Greeks coming out seeking my head to be theirs at their great meal tomorrow.”

Fiachaire MacFhinn, and Innsridh MacRigh nan Sealg went, and they reached the place of combat.

“Where are you going?” said Fiachaire MacFhinn.

“Going to seek the head of Mhic Cumhail to be ours at our great meal to-morrow.”

“It’s often that very man’s head might be sought, and be on my own breast at early morning.”

“Close up and leave way for the people.”

“There is still a small delay on that.”

Fiachaire began in the one end of the company, and Innsridh MacRigh nan Sealg in the other, till the two glaves clashed on each other. They returned to the burgh.

“Who is that?” said Fionn.

“I am Fiachaire, thy son, and Innsridh, son of the king of the Sealg, thy foster son,

With whom was the hideous fight
That was on the battle place (battle ford)
To-day.

It was with me and with three hundred score of Greeks.”

“Mind the place of battle; there are four hundred score of the Greeks, and a great warrior at their head coming to seek my head to be theirs at their great meal to-morrow.”

They went and they reached the place of battle.

“Where are you going?” said Fiachaire MacFhinn to the Greeks.

“Going to seek the head of Mhic Cumhail, to be ours at our great meal to-morrow.”

“It’s often that man’s head might be sought, and be on my own breast at early morning.”

“Close up from the way, and leave way for the people.”

“There is a small delay on that yet.”

He himself and Innsridh MacRigh nan Sealg began at them till they had killed every man of them, and till the two glaves clashed on each other. They returned home, and they reached the burgh.

“Who’s that without?” said Fionn.

“I am Fiachaire, thy son, and Innsridh, son of the king of the Sealg, thy foster-son,

With whom was the hideous fight
That was at the battle place (ford)
To-day.”

“It was with me and so many of the Greeks.”

“How was my foster-son off there?”

“Man upon man, and if there had been no one besides, he had lacked none.”

“Mind the place of battle. There are twice as many as came out, a good and heedless warrior at their head, coming to seek my head, to be theirs at their great meal to-morrow.”

They reached the place of battle; and when they reached it, there came not a man of the people.

“I won’t believe,” said Fiachaire MacFhinn, “that there are not remnants of meat in a place whence such bands are coming. Hunger is on myself, and that we ate but a morsel since we ate it in Eirinn. And come thou, Innsridh, and reach the place where they were. They will not know man from another man, and try if thou canst get scraps of bread, and of cheese, and of flesh, that thou wilt bring to us; and I myself will stay to keep the people, in case that they should come unawares.”

“Well, then, I know not the place. I know not the way,” said Innsridh, son of the king of Sealg, “but go thyself and I will stay.”

Fiachaire went, and Innsridh staid, and what should they do but come unawares.

“Where are ye going,” said Innsridh?

“Going to seek the head of Mhic Cumhail, to be ours at our great meal to-morrow.”

“It is often that man’s head might be sought, and be on my own breast at early morning.”

“Close up, and leave way for the people

“There is a small delay on that yet.” Innsridh began at them, and he left not one alone.

“What good did it do thee to slay the people, and that I will kill thee,” said the great warrior at their head.

“If I had come out, from my meat and from my warmth, from my warmth and from my fire, thou shouldst not kill me.” He and the warrior began at each other. They would make a bog of the crag, and a crag of the bog, in the place where the least they would sink they would sink to the knees, in the place that the most they would sink they would sink to the eyes. The great warrior gave a sweep with his glave, and he cut the head off Innsridh MacRigh nan Sealg.

Fiachaire came. The warrior met him, and with him was the head of Innsridh.

Said Fiachaire to the great warrior, “What thing hast thou there?”

“I have here the head of Mhic Cumhail.”

“Hand it to me.”

He reached him the head. Fiachaire gave a kiss to the mouth, and a kiss to the back of the head.

“Dost thou know to whom thou gavest it?” said Fiachaire to the warrior.

“I do not,” said he. “It well became the body on which it was before.”

He went and he drew back the head, and strikes it on the warrior’s head while he was speaking, and makes one head of the two. He went and he reached (the place) where Fionn was again.

“Who is that without?” said Fionn.

“I am Fiachaire, thy son,

With whom was the hideous fight
That was at the battle place
To-day.”

“It was with Innsridh, thy foster-son, and with the Greeks.”

“How is my foster-son from that?”

“He is dead without a soul. Thy foster-son killed the Greeks first, and the great Greek killed him afterwards, and then I killed the great Greek.”

“Mind the place of combat. There is Maghach, son of the king of Lochlann, and every one that was in the Greek burgh with him.”

He went and he reached the place of combat.

“Thou art there, Fiachaire?” said Maghach Colgar.

“I am.”

“Let hither thy father’s head, and I will give thee a free bridge in Lochlainn.”

“My father gave thee school and teaching, and every kind of DRAOCHD (Magic) he had, and though he taught that, thou wouldst take the head off him now, and with that thou shalt not get my father’s head, until thou gettest my own head first.”

Fiachaire began at the people, and he killed every man of the people.

“Thou has killed the people,” said Maghach, “and I will kill thee.”

They began at each other.

They would make a bog of the crag, and a crag of the bog, in the place where the least they would sink they would sink to the knees; in the place where the most they would sink, they would sink to the eyes. On a time of the times the spear of Mhaghach struck Fiachaire, and he gave a roar. What time should he give the roar but when Diarmid was turning step from the chase in Eirinn.

“If he has travelled the universe and the world,” said Diarmid, “the spear of the Maghach is endured by Fiachaire.”

“Wailing be on thee,” said Conan. “Cast thy spear and hit thy foe.”

“If I cast my spear, I know not but I may kill my own man.”

“If it were a yellow-haired woman, well wouldst thou aim at her.”

“Wailing be on thee now; urge me no longer.”

He shook the spear, and struck under the shield (chromastaich).

“Who would come on me from behind in the evening, that would not come on me from the front in the morning?” said Maghach.

“‘Tis I would come on thee,” said Diarmid, “early and late, and at noon.”

“What good is that to thee,” said Maghach, “and that I will take the head off Fiachaire before thou comest.”

“If thou takest the head off him,” said Diarmid, “I will take off thy head when I reach thee.”

Diarmid reached Lochlann. Maghach took the head off Fiachaire. Diarmid took the head off the Maghach. Diarmid reached Fionn.

“Who’s that without?” said Fionn.

“It is I, Diarmid,

With whom was the hideous fight
That was on the battle place
To-day."

"It was with so many of the Greeks, and with the Maghach, son of the king of Lochlann, and with Fiachaire, thy son; Fiachaire killed all the Greeks, Maghach killed Fiachaire, and then I killed Maghach."

"Though Maghach killed Fiachaire, why didst thou kill Maghach, and not let him have his life? But mind the place of combat, and all that are in the burghs of the Greeks coming out together."

"Whether wouldst thou rather, Cath Conan, go with me or stay here?"

"I would rather go with thee."

They went, and when they reached the place of combat, no man met them. They reached where they were; they sat there, and what should Cath Conan do but fall asleep, they were so long coming out. It was not long after that till they began to come, and the doors to open. There was a door before every day in the year on every burgh, so that they burst forth all together about the head of Diarmid. Diarmid began at them, and with the sound of the glaves and return of the men, Cath Conan awoke, and he began thrusting his sword in the middle of the leg of Diarmid. Then Diarmid felt a tickling in the middle of his leg. He cast a glance from him, and what should he see but Cath Conan working with his own sword.

"Wailing be on thee, Cath Conan," said Diarmid; "pass by thy own man and hit thy foe, for it is as well for thee to thrust it into yonder bundle[42] as to be cramming it into my leg. Do not thou plague me now till I hit my foe!"

They killed every man of the people.

They thought of those who were in the burgh, and they without food; each one of them took with him the full of his napkin, and his breast, and his pouches.

"Who's that without?" said Fionn.

"I am Diarmid, thy sister's son."

"How are the Greeks?"

"Every man of them is dead, without a soul."

"Oh, come and bring hither to me a deliverance of food."

"Though I should give thee food, how shouldst thou eat it, and thou there and thee bound?"

He had no way of giving them food, but to make a hole in the burgh above them, and let the food down to them.

"What is there to loose thee from that said Diarmid.

"Well, that is hard to get," said Fionn; "and it is not every man that will get it; and it is not to be got at all."

"Tell thou me," said Diarmid, "and I will get it."

"I know that thou wilt subdue the world till thou gettest it; and my healing is not to be got, nor my loosing from this, but with the one thing."

[42] There is a pun here, which cannot be rendered; a boot or a bundle, as of hay, or a crowd of men.

“What thing is it that thou shouldst not tell it to me, and that I might get it?”

“The three daughters of a king, whom they call King Gil; the daughters are in a castle in the midst of an anchorage, without maid, without sgalag (servant), without a living man but themselves. To get them, and to wring every drop of blood that is in them out on plates and in cups; to take every drop of blood out of them, and to leave them as white as linen.”

Diarmid went, and he was going till there were holes in his shoes and black on his soles, the white clouds of day going, and the black clouds of night coming, without finding a place to stay or rest in. He reached the anchorage, and he put the small end of his spear under his chest, and he cut a leap, and he was in the castle that night. On the morrow he returned, and he took with him two on the one shoulder and one on the other shoulder; he put the small end of his spear under his chest, and at the first spring he was on shore. He reached Fionn; he took the girls to him; he wrung every drop of blood that was in every one of them out at the finger ends of her feet and bands; he put a black cloth above them, and he began to spill the blood on those who were within, and every one as he spilt the blood on him, he would rise and go. The blood failed, and every one was loosed but one, whom they called Conan.

“Art thou about to leave me here, oh Diarmid.”

“Wailing be on thee; the blood has failed.”

“If I were a fine yellow-haired woman, its well thou wouldst aim at me?”

“If thy skin stick to thyself, or thy bones to thy flesh, I will take thee out.”

He caught him by the hand and he got him loose, but that his skin stuck to the seat, and the skin of his soles to the earth. “It were well now,” said they, “if the children of the good king were alive, but they should be buried under the earth.” They went where they were, and they found them laughing and fondling each other, and alive. Diarmid went, and took them with him on the shower top of his shoulder, and he left them in the castle as they were before, and they all came home to EIRINN.

(Gaelic omitted)

Got this tale from Alexander MacNeill, fisherman, then Tangval, Barra; says he learnt it from his father, and that he heard it recited by him and others ever since he remembers; says it has been handed down orally from one person to another from time immemorial. MacNeill is about sixty years of age, and can neither read, write, nor speak English. His father died twenty years ago, aged eighty years.

Barra, July 1859.

I know nothing like this anywhere out of the Highlands, but I have heard similar wild rambling stories there all my life.

The heroes are the heroes of Ossian, with the characters always assigned to them in Gaelic story. Fionn, the head of the band, but not the most successful; Diarmaid, the brown-haired admirer of the fair sex; Conan, the wicked, mischievous character, who would be the clown in a pantomime, or Loki in Norse mythology. They are enchanted in a BRUGH, which I have translated burgh, on the authority of Armstrong; and they fight crowds of Greeks on a place, if it be A for AITE; or at a ford, if it be ATH, which is pronounced in the same way. Greeks, GREUGACHIBH, may possibly be GRUAGACH-ibh, the long-haired people mentioned in the first story, changed into Greeks in modern times; or “GRUAGACH” may be a corruption from “Greugach,” and this story compounded by some old bard from all the knowledge he had gathered, including Greeks, just as the fore-word to the Edda is compounded of Tyrkland, and Troja, and Odin, and Thor, the Asia men and the Asa, and all that the writer

knew. The story as told is extravagant. Men in Eirinn and in Lochlainn, Ireland, and Scandinavia, converse and throw spears at each other. The hammer of Fionn is heard in Ireland when struck in Lochlan. But one of the manuscripts in the Advocates' Library throws some light on this part of the tale. If the scene were an island in the Shannon, men might converse and fight in the ford well enough. The MS. is a quarto on paper, with no date, containing five tales in prose, a vocabulary, and poems, and is attributed to the twelfth century. "Keating considers the subject of Tale 2, which contains forty-two pages, as authentic history." One of the people mentioned is Aol or Æul, a son of Donald, king of Scotland, who is probably "Great Iall," unless Iall is Iarl, an Earl. Tale 3 sends Cuchullin first to Scotland to learn feats of agility from Doiream, daughter of King Donald, thence to Scythia, where a seminary is crowded with pupils from Asia, Africa, and Europe. He beats them all, goes through wonderful adventures, goes to Greece, returns with certain Irish chiefs, arrives in Ireland, and is followed by his son, a half Scythian, whom be kills at a ford. No. 4, the story of the children of Lir, changed into swans, is very curious.

No. 5 is called the rebellion Of MIODACH, son of COLGAR, against Fingal, and seems to resemble Maghach Colgar.

Colgar, king of Lochlin, proposes to assume the title of Sovereign of the Isles, and to subjugate Ireland. He is beaten by Fingal, who gives him a residence *in an island in the Shannon*. After eighteen years he comes to propose riddles to Fingal, and invites him to an entertainment. They, the Fingalians, go, and *are enchanted*, sing their own dirge, are overheard by a friend sent by Ossian. *Some Greek Earls* (Gaelic, Iarla) appear, and there is a great deal of fighting. Ossian dispatches DIARMAD O DUIBHNE and FATHACH CANNACH, who *guard a ford* and perform feats. Oscar, son of Ossian, performs prodigies of valour, and kills Sinnsir.

This abstract of an abstract, lent me by Mr. Skene, is sufficient to shew that this old manuscript tale still exists in fragments, as tradition, amongst the people of the Isles.

The transcriber who copied it into the Roman hand in 1813, considers the MS. to be written in very pure Gaelic. It is referred to the twelfth or thirteenth century, is characterized by exuberant diction, groups of poetical adjectives, each beginning with the same letter as the substantive. In short, Tale 5 seems to be a much longer, better, and older version of the tale of Maghach Colgar. The transcriber makes a kind of apology for the want of truth in these tales at the end of his abstract. He was probably impressed with the idea that Ossian and his heroes sang and fought in Scotland, and that Uirsgeul meant a *new* tale or novel, unworthy of notice. My opinion is that the prose tales and the poems, and this especially, are alike old compositions, founded on old traditions common to all Celts, and perhaps to all Indo-European races, but altered and ornamented, and twisted into compositions by bards and reciters of all ages, and every branch of the race; altered to suit the time and place--adorned with any ornament that the bard or reciter had at his disposal; and now a mere remnant of the past.

It is a great pity that these MSS. in the Advocates' Library are still unpublished. They could not fail to throw light on the period when they were written.

It is remarkable that the so-called Greeks in this story seem to want the head of Fionn for dinner.

L. The Brollachan

From Widow M. Calder, a pauper, Sutherland.

IN the mill of the Glens, MUILION NA GLEANNAN, lived long ago a cripple of the name of Murray, better known as “Ally” na Muilinn. He was maintained by the charity of the miller and his neighbours, who, when they removed their meal, put each a handful into the lamiter’s bag. The lad slept usually at the mill; and it came to pass that one night, who should enter but the BROLLACHAN,[43] son of the FUATH.

Now the Brollachan had eyes and a mouth, and can say two words only, MI-FHEIN, myself, and THU-FHEIN, thyself; besides that, he has no speech, and alas no shape. He lay all his lubber-length by the dying fire; and Murray threw a fresh peat on the embers, which made them fly about red hot, and Brollachan was severely burnt. So he screamed in an awful way, and soon comes the “Vough,” very fierce, crying, “Och, my Brollachan, who then burnt you?” but all he could say was “mee!” and then he said “oo!” (me and thou, mi thu) and she replied, “Were it any other, wouldn’t I be revenged.”

Murray slipped the peck measure over himself, and hid among the machinery, so as to look as like a sack as possible, ejaculating at times, “May the Lord preserve me,” so he escaped unhurt; and the “Vough” and her Brollachan left the mill. That same night a woman going by the place, was chased by the still furious parent, and could have been saved had she not been nimble to reach her own door in time, to leave nothing for the “Vough” to catch but her heel; this heel was torn off, and the woman went lame all the rest of her days.

The word spelt Vough, is probably spelt from ear; but it is the Gaelic word Fuath, which is spelt Fouah in the map of the estate where the mill is. The story was told in Gaelic to D. M., gamekeeper, and written by him in English.

Of the same mill another story was got from the same source, called--

1. MOULION NA FUADH. One of John Bethune’s forebears, who lived in Tubernan, laid a bet that he would seize the kelpie of Moulin na Fouah and bring her bound to the inn at Inveran. He procured a brown, right-sided, maned horse, and a brown black-muzzled dog; and, by the help of the latter, having secured the Vough, he tied her on the horse behind him, and galloped away. She was very fierce, but he kept her quiet by pinning her down with an awl and a needle. Crossing the burn at the further side of Loch Midgal, she became so restless that he stuck the shoemaker’s and the tailor’s weapons into her with great violence. She cried out, “Pierce me with the awl, but keep that slender hair-like slave (the needle) out of me. When he reached the clachan of Inveran, where his companions were anxiously waiting for him, he called to them to come out and see the Vough. Then they came out with lights, but as the light fell upon her she dropt off, and fell to earth like the remains of a fallen star--a small lump of jelly. (These jellies are often seen on the moors; dropt stars resembling the medusie on the shore--COLLECTOR. They are white, do not seem to be attached to the ground, and are always attributed to the stars. They are common on moors, and I do not know what they are.--J. F. C.)

The same creature, or one of her kind.

[43] Brollachan is a Gaelic expression for any shapeless deformed creature.--COLLECTOR. I should translate it breastling, or bantling.--J. F. C.

2. In Beann na Caltuinn, one day called to Donald MacRobb, “Will you eat any charcoal, Donald?” “No,” he said; “my wife will give me supper when I go home.”

3. And it is said, that a family of Munroes had, many generations ago, married with the Vougha of Beann na Caltuinn. Their descendants had manes and tails till within the last four generations.

4. Four or five miles from Skibo Castle is Loch Nigdal, with a great granite rock of the same name to the north of it; at one and is a burn which passes the mill where the Brollachan entered. It is haunted with a Banshee (that is, female fairy), which the miller’s wife saw about three years ago. She was sitting on a stone, quiet, and beautifully dressed in a green silk dress, the sleeves of which were curiously puffed from the wrists to the shoulder. Her long hair was yellow, like ripe corn; but on nearer view she had no nose.

5. A very old, coarse, and dirty Banshee belongs to a small sheep-farm of Mr. Dempster’s. A shepherd found her apparently crippled at the edge of the moss, and offered her a lift on his back. In going, he espied her feet, which were dangling down, and seeing that she was web-footed, he threw her off, flung away the plaid on which she had lain, and ran for his life.

From all these it appears that the Fuath in Sutherland is a water-spirit; that there are males and females; that they have web-feet, Yellow hair, green dresses, tails, manes, and no noses; that they marry men, and are killed by light, and hurt with steel weapons that in crossing a stream they become restless. From the following stories it appears that they are hairy, have bare skin on their faces, and have two large round eyes.

The Rev. Mr. Thomas Pattieson has sent me a story from Islay, which he has written in English, but which he picked up amongst the people. It is as follows; but I have ventured to shorten it a little:--

6. *The Water Horse*.--There is a small island off the Rhinns of Islay, where there is a light-house now, but which was formerly used for grazing cattle only. There is a fearful tide, and it is dangerous to cross the Sound in bad weather. A man and a woman bad charge of a large herd of cattle there, and the woman was left alone one night, for the man had to go to the mainland, and a storm coming on, he could not return. She sat at her peat fire in her cabin, when suddenly she heard a sound as of living creatures all about the hut. She knew her fellow-servant could not have returned, and, thinking it might be the cows, she glanced at the window which she had left open. She saw a pair of large round eyes fastened upon her malignantly, and heard a low whining laugh. The door opened, and an unearthly creature walked in. He was very tall and large, rough and hairy, with no skin upon his face but a dark livid covering. He advanced to the fire and asked the girl what her name was. She answered as confidently as she could, “MISE MI FHIN”--me myself. The creature seized the girl, and she threw a large ladle full of boiling water about him, and he, yelling, bounded out. A great noise ensued of wild unearthly tongues, questioning their yelling companion as to what was the matter with him, and who had hurt him. “Mise mi Fhin, Mise mi Fhin--me myself, me myself,” shouted the savage; and thereupon arose a great shout of laughter. No sooner did that pass than the girl rushed out in terror, turned one of the cows that was lying outside from its resting-place, and having made a circle about her, lay there herself. The storm raged, and she heard the rushing of many footsteps, loud laughter, and sounds of strife. When morning dawned, she was safe, protected by the consecrated circle, but the cow she had disturbed was dead.

An Islay pilot told me this year that water-horses still haunt a glen near the island. Rattling chains are heard there. An account was published some years ago in newspapers of the appearance of a mermaid near the spot.

7. I myself heard the groundwork of this story long ago from John Piper; and I heard a similar story this year in Man. (See Introduction.) It is the same as the Brollachan. The creature was scalded by a woman (who had said her name was MI FHIN when he came in), because he wanted to eat her porridge and when he told his friends Myself had burned him, they said, "Ma 's thu fhin a losg thu fhin bi gad' leigheas fhin thu fhin--If it was thyself burnt thyself, be thyself healing thyself."

8. I again heard a similar story this year from a gentleman whom I met in an inn at Gairloch. He had a large knowledge of Highland tales, and we spent several pleasant evenings together. He has every right to stories, for one of his ancestors was a clever doctor in his day, and is now a magician in legends. Some of his MSS. are in the Advocates' Library.

Mr. Pattieson points out the resemblance which this bear to part of the story of Ulysses, and, for the sake of comparison, here it is from the ninth book of Pope's Odyssey:--

9. Ulysses goes into the cave of the Cyclop with some of his companions. The Cyclop was a one-eyed shepherd, and his cave is described as a dairy; his flocks were goats and sheep, which he milked when he came home:--

Scarce twenty-four wheeled cars compact and strong.
The massy load could bear or roll along."

He was a giant, therefore, living under ground; and he ate two of the strangers raw. He spoke Greek, but claimed to be of a race superior to the Greek gods. He ate two more Greeks for breakfast, and two for supper. Then got drunk on wine given him by Ulysses, which was better than his own. Ulysses said, "No man is my name;" and the giant promised to eat him last, as a return for his gift of rosy wine, and went to sleep.

Then they heated a stake in the fire, and drilled his eye out. The Cyclops assembled at his "well-known roar," asked what was the matter, and were told--

"Friends, no man kills me, no man in the hour
Of sleep oppresses me with fraudful power.
If no man hurt thee, but the hand divine
Inflicts disease, it fits thee to resign.
To Jove or to thy father Neptune pray,
The brethren cried, and instant strode away."

It seems, then, that the Cyclop was a water-being as well as the Fuath and water-horse of Gaelic story, and the kelpie. There is no word in Gaelic that could be corrupted into Kelpie, but he is the same as Each uisge. The Gaelic tradition may have been taken from Homer; but if so, the plagiarist must have lived some time ago, for the story is now widely spread, and his edition must have had some other reading for ουτις, because the Gaelic word is "myself," in all versions I know.

10. THE CAILLEACH MHORE OF CLIBRICK was a very rich and wicked old woman (I have already shown that there is some reason to suppose she was a Lapp; and no Lapp ever offered me anything, often as I have been amongst them), who, though she had plenty of the good things of this world, never gave anything away, and never asked a traveller to sit down in her house. A bold man once laid a wager that he would circumvent her. He accordingly walked into her kitchen, when she craved to know whence he came and what was his destination. "I come from the south and am going north," said he. "And what is your name?" said the hag of Greyside. "My name is WILLIAM DEAN SUIDHE." "WILLIAM dean Suidhe!" (sit down) she repeated; when he flung himself into a chair, and making her a bow, said, "That will I when the mistress bids me." She was very angry, and, taking out an

enormous bannock as round as the moon, began to eat without taking any notice of him. “Your piece seems a dry one, mistress,” said William. “The fat side is to me,” said the witch. And indeed she had one side spread with butter about an inch thick. “The side that is to you shall be to me,” he retorted; and caught at the cake. He called her a satanic old Cailleach, and left the hut carrying his piece away as a trophy. The old woman was left cursing, and praying that the cake might kill him; but he had too much sense to touch it, and his ill-wisher (the hag) foolishly finishing the remainder, died of its unhallowed effects, to the great relief of her neighbours.

Those who maintain popular stories are as old as the races who tell them, will probably consider the Brollachan, and the Water-horse, and the Greek story, as so many versions of an older original. In this case Homer has a strong claim; but he has an equal claim to several other stories in this collection, which Grimm and the Arabian Nights claim as popular lore. Sindbad, and Conal Crobhi, and Grimms’ Robber, if plagiarists, are far more guilty than the Brollachan; and Murachadh Mac Brian, who follows, is quite as bad.

LI. Murachadh Mac Brian

From Donald Shaw, old soldier, Ballygrant, Islay.

THERE were three men in the land of Ceann Coire, in Erin--that was Moorchug MacBreean, and Donachug MacBreean, and Breean Borr, their father. They got a call to go to dine in a place which they called MAGH O DORNA. They took with them threescore knives, threescore bridles, and threescore red-eared white horses. They sat at the feast, and no sooner sat they at the feast than they saw the maid of Knock Seanan, in Erin, passing by. Then out would go Moorchug, then out would go Donachug, and then out would go Brian Borr, their father, after them.

They were not long gone when they saw a great lad coming to meet them.

Brian Borr blessed him in the FISNICHE FAISNICHE--soft, flowing, peaceful words of wisdom.

He answered in better words, and if they were no better they were no worse.

"What man art thou?" said Brian Borr. "A good lad am I, seeking a master." "Almighty of the world against thee, beast! Dost thou wish to be hanged with a sea of blood about thine eyes! 'Tis long I would be ere I would hire thee at thy size." "I care not, may be Murachadh would hire me." He reached Murachadh. Murachadh blessed him in the FISNICHE FAISNICHE--soft, flowing, peaceful words of wisdom. The lad answered him in better words, and if no better they were no worse.

"What man art thou?" says Murachadh. "A good lad am I, seeking a master," said he. "What wages will thou be asking?" "Two-thirds of thy counsel to be mine,[44] and thyself to have but one, till we come from chasing the maiden."

"If thou gett'st that," said Murachadh, "man got it not before, and no man will get it after thee, but sure if thou wouldst not honour it, thou wouldst not ask it."

When they had agreed he took a race after the maiden, and he was not long gone when he came back. "Almighty of the world against thee," said Brian Borr. "Dost thou wish to be hanged with a sea of blood about thine eyes? I knew he was without a gillie in the first of the day the man that hired thee, and had be taken my counsel he had not hired thee."

"I will not do a good turn to-day till the buttons come off my bigcoat." Then they got a tailor, and the tailor had not as much skill as would take the buttons off the greatcoat. Then he took shears out of the rim of his little hat, and he took the buttons off his greatcoat in a trice.

Then he took another race after the maiden, and he was not long away when he came back. "Almighty of the great world against thee," said Brian Borr. "Dost thou wish to be hanged with a sea of blood about thine eyes? I knew that he was without a gillie in the first of the day the man that hired thee, and had he taken my counsel he had not hired thee."

"I wont do a good turn to-day till the buttons go on the bigcoat again, for the women will chase me." They got a tailor, and the shears would not cut a grain, and the needle would not sew a stitch. Then he got shears and a needle himself out of the rim of his little hat, and he

[44] "Da dhrian de d' comhairle." I am not sure of this translation.

sewed the buttons on the bigcoat again. He took another little race after the maiden, and he was not long gone when he came back. “Almighty, &c. . . . ,” said Brian Borr.

“I will not do a good turn to-day till the thorn in my foot comes out.” Then they got a leech, but the leech had not skill enough to take the thorn out of the foot. Then he himself took out a little iron that he had in the rim of his little hat, and he took the thorn out of his foot, and the thorn was a foot longer than the shank.

“Oov! oov!” said Brian Borr, “that is a wondrous matter, the thorn to be longer than the shank.” “Many a thing,” said he, “is more wondrous than that; there is good stretching at the end of the joints and bones.” Then he took a little race away, and he was not long gone when he came back, and he had a wild duck roasted on the fire, not a bit burned or raw in her, and she was enough for every one within. “This is the best turn thou hast done yet,” said Brian Borr.

“I will not do a good turn to-day till I get a little wink of sleep.” They went to the back of Knock Seanan, in Erin, behind the wind and before the sun, where they could see each man, and man could not see them. He slept there; and when he awoke, what but the maid of Knock Seanan was on the top of the hill! He rose, he struck her a blow of his palm on the ear, and he set her head back foremost. “Almighty, &c. . . . ,” said Brian Borr.

“Set the head right on the maiden.”--”If my master asks me that, I will do it, and if he does not ask, I will not do it to-day for thee.”

“There she is,” said Murachadh, “and do to her as thou wilt.” Then struck he a fist on her, and he knocked her brains out. They were not long there when they saw a deer and a dog chasing it. Out after it went they, and the sparks that the hound sent from his toes were hitting Murachadh’s gillie right in the face. The sparks that Murachadh’s gillie sent from his toes were striking Murachadh right in the face, and the sparks that Murachadh sent from. his toes were hitting Donachadh right in the face, and the sparks that Donachadh sent from his toes were hitting Brian Borr right in the face. In the time of lateness Murachadh lost his set of men; nor father, nor brother, nor gillie, nor deer, nor dog, was to be seen, and he did not know to what side he, should go to seek them. Mist came on them.

He thought he would go into the wood to gather nuts till the mist should go. He heard the stroke of an axe in the wood, and he thought that it was the man of the little cap and the bio, bonnet. He went down and it was the man of the little cap who was there. Murachadh blessed him; in the fisniche foisniche, soft flowing peaceful words of wisdom; and the youth blessed him in better words; and if no better they were no worse. “I am thinking, then,” said the lad, “that it is of the company of Murachadh Mae Brian thou art.” “It is,” said he. “Well! I would give thee a night’s share for the sake of that man, though there should be a man’s head at thy belt.” Murachadh feared that be would ask him to put the faggot on his back, and he was right feared that he would ask him to carry the axe home for its size. “Good lad,” said he, “I am sure thou art tired enough thyself after thy trouble and wandering. It is much me to ask thee to lift the faggot on my back; and it is too much to ask thee to take the axe home.”

He went and he lifted the faggot of fuel on his own back, he took the axe with him in his hand; they went the two to the house of that man; and that was the grand house! Then the wife of that man brought up a chair of gold, and she gave it to her own man; and she brought up a chair of silver, and she gave it to Murachadh; she brought up a stoup of wine, and she gave it to Murachadh, and he took a drink out of it; he stretched it to the other, and after he had drunk what was in it he broke it against the wall. They were chatting together, and Murachadh was always looking at the house-wife. “I am thinking myself,” said the man of the house, “that thou art Murachadh Mac Brian’s self.”--”Well, I am.”--”I have done thee two

discourtesies since thou camest to the house, and thou hast done one, to me. I sat myself in the chair of gold, and I set thee in the silver chair; I broke the drinking cup; I failed in that I drank a draught from a half-empty vessel. Thou didst me another discourtesy: thou art gazing at my wife there since thou camest into the house, and if thou didst but know the trouble I had about her, thou wouldst not wonder though I should not like another man to be looking at her." "What," said Murachadh, "is the trouble that thou hast had about her that man had not before, and that another man will not have again after thee?"--"Sleep to-night and I will tell thee that to-morrow."--"Not a cloud of sleep shall go on mine eye this night till thou tellest me the trouble that thou hast had."

"I was here seven years with no man with me but myself. The seanagal (soothsayer) came the way one day, and he said to me, if I would go so far as the white Sibearta, that I would get knowledge in it. I went there one fine summer's day, and who was there but the Gruagach of the island and the Gruagach of the dog setting a combat. The Gruagach of the island said to me, if I would go in before her to help her, that she would give me her daughter to marry when we should go home. I went in on her side, I struck a fist on the Gruagach of the dog, and I knocked her brains out. Myself and the Gruagach of the island went home, and a wedding and a marriage was made between myself and her daughter that very night; but, with the hero's fatigue, and the reek of the bowl, I never got to her chamber door. If the day came early on the morrow, 'twas earlier still that my father-in-law arose shouting to me to go to the hunting hill to hunt badgers, and vermin, and foxes. At the time of lifting the game and laying it down, I thought that I had left my own wife without a watchman to look on her. I went home a hero, stout and seemly, and I found my mother-in-law weeping; and I said to her, 'What ails thee?' 'Much ails me, that three monks have just taken away the woman thou didst marry thyself.'

"Then took I the good and ill of that on myself, and I took the track of the duck on the ninth morn. I fell in with my ship, and she was drawn her own seven lengths on dried dry land, where no wind could stain, or sun could burn, or the scholars of the big town could mock or launch her. I set my back to her, and she was too heavy; but I thought it was death before or behind me if I did not get my wife, and I set my pith to her, and I put her out. I gave her prow to the sea, and her stern to the land; helm in her stern, sails in her prow, tackle to her ropes, each rope fast and loose, that could make port and anchorage of the sea isle that was there. I anchored my ship, and I went up, and what was there but the three monks casting lots for my wife. I swept their three heads off, I took my wife me and I set her in the stern of the ship; I hoisted the three speckled flapping sails against the tall tough splintery masts. My music was the plunging of eels and the screaming of gulls; the biggest beast eating the beast that was least, and the beast that was least doing as she might. The bent brown buckie that was in the bottom of ocean would play haig on its mouth, while she would cut a slender corn straw before her prow, with the excellence of the steering. There was no stop or rest for me, while I drove her on till I reached the big town of my mother and father-in-law. Music was raised and lament laid down. There were smooth drunken drinks, and coarse drinks drunken. Music in fiddle-strings to the ever-healing of each disease, would set men under evil eye, and women in travail, fast asleep in the great town that night. With the hero's fatigue and the reek of the bowl, I slept far from the wife's chamber.

If it was early that the day came on the morrow, 'twas still earlier that my father-in-law arose shouting to me to go to the hunting hill to hunt badgers, and vermin, and foxes. At the time of lifting the game and laying it down, I thought that I had left my own wife without a watchman to look on her. I went home a hero, stout and seemly, and I found my mother-in-law weeping. 'What ails thee to-night?' 'Much ails me, that the wet-cloaked warrior has just taken away the bride thou didst marry thyself.'

“Then took I the good and ill of that on myself, and I took the track of the duck on the ninth morn. I fell in with my ship; I set my back to her, and she was too heavy: and I set my pith to her and I put her out. I gave her prow to the sea, and her stern to the land; helm in her stern, sails in her prow, tackle to her ropes, each rope fast and loose, that could make a choice port and anchorage of the big town of the wet-cloaked warrior. I drew my ship her own seven lengths on dried dry land, where wind could not stain, or sun burn her; and where the scholars of the big town could not play pranks or launch her. I left my harness and my spears under the side of the ship; I went up, and a herd fell in with me. ‘What’s thy news to-day, herd?’ said I to him. ‘Almighty, etc.,’ said the herd, ‘if my news is not good, a wedding and a marriage between the wet-cloaked warrior and the daughter of the Island Gruagach: and that there is neither glad nor sorry in the realm that is not asked to the wedding.’ ‘If thou wouldst give me the patched cloak on thee, I would give thee this good coat that I have on, and good day besides for that.’ ‘Almighty, etc . . . . .’ ‘That is not the joy and wonder that I have to take in it before the sun rises to sky to-morrow.” I struck him a blow of my fist in the midst of his face, and I drove the brains in fiery slivers through the back of his head, I put on the patched cloak, and up I went, and the men had just assembled to the wedding. I thought it was lucky to find them gathered. I went amongst them as falcon through flock, or as goat up rock, or as a great dog on a cold spring day going through a drove of sheep. So I would make little bands of large bands, hardy[45] castles which might be heard in the four airts of heaven, slashing of blades, shearing heroic shields, till I left not one would tell a tale or withhold bad news; how one would be one-legged, and one one-handed; and though there were ten tongues in their heads, it is telling their own ills and the ills of others that they would be. I took with me my wife, and I set her in the stern of the boat. I gave her prow to sea and her stern to land; I would make sail before, and set helm behind. I hoisted the three speckled flapping sails against the tall tough splintery masts. My music was the plunging of eels and the screaming of gulls; the beast that was biggest eating the beast that was least, and the beast that was least doing as she might; the bent brown buckie that was at the bottom of the sea would play HAIG! on her great mouth, as she would split a slender oat stubble straw with the excellence of the steering.

“We returned to the big town of my father-in-law. Music was raised, and lament laid down. There were smooth drunken drinks and coarse, drinks drunken. Music on strings for ever healing each kind of ill, would set wounded men and women in travail asleep in the big town that night. With the hero’s fatigue and the reek of the bowl, I never got to my bride’s chamber that night.

If it was early that the day came on the morrow, earlier than that my father-in-law arose shouting to me to go to the hunting hill, to go to hunt brocks, and vermin, and foxes. At the time of lifting the game, and of laying it down, I thought that I had left my own bride without a watchman to watch over her. I went home a hero, stout and seemly, and I found-my mother-in-law weeping. ‘What ails thee?’ said I. ‘Much ails me,’ said she, ‘that the great hero, son of the King of SORCHA (light), has just taken the bride that thou didst wed, away; and he was the worst of them all for me.’ Let it be taken well and ill, that was for me. I took the track of the duck on the ninth morn. I fell in with my ship; I set my back to her, and she was too heavy for me; I set my back to her again and I set her out. I gave prow to sea, and stern to land; I’d set helm in her stern, and sails in her prow, and tackles in her middle against each rope that was in her loose and fast, to make choice port and anchorage of the big town of the great hero king of Sorcha. I drew my ship her own seven lengths from ebb, on dry land,

[45] I cannot make sense of this phrase.

where wind would not stain, and sun would not burn, the scholars of the big town could make neither plaything or mocking, or launching of her.

“I went up and a beggar fell in with me. ‘What’s thy tale to day, A beggar?’ ‘Mighty of the world be against thee! dost wish to be hanged with a sea of blood about thine eyes; great and good is my tale; wedding and a marrying between the great hero, son of the king of Sorcha, and the daughter of the island Gruagach; and that there is neither glad nor sorry in the land that is not called to the wedding.’ ‘If thou wouldst give me thy cloak, I would give thee good pay and this good coat that I have on for it.’ ‘Mighty of the world, thou beast, dost wish to be hanged with a sea of blood about thine eyes?’ ‘That is not the wonder and joy that I am to get from it, before the sun rises in heaven to-morrow.’ I struck him a blow of my fist in the midst of his face, and I drove the brain in flinders of flame through the back of his head. The bride knew somehow that I would be there, and she asked that the beggars should first be served. I sat myself amidst the beggars; and each that tried to take bit from me, I gave him, a bruise ‘twixt my hand and my side; and I’d leave him there, and I’d catch the meat with the one of my hands, and the drink with the other hand. Then some one said that the big beggar was not letting a bit to the heads of the other beggars. The bride said, to be good to the beggars, and they themselves would be finished at last. When all the beggars had enough they went away, but I lay myself where I was. Some one said that the big beggar had laid down drunk. The man of the wedding said, to throw the beast out at the back of a hill, or in the shelter of a dyke, till what was in his maw should ebb. Five men and ten came down, and they set their hand to lifting me. On thy two hands, oh Murachadh; but it was easier for them to set Cairn a Choinnich in Erin from its base, than to raise me from the earth. Then came down one of the men that was wiser than the rest; I had a beauty spot, and there never was man that saw me once but he would know me again. He raised the cap and he knew who it was, That fortune should help you here to-night! ‘Here is the upright of Glen feite, the savage[46] Macallain, pitiless, merciless, fearless of God or man, unless he would fear Murachadh Mae Brian.’ When I myself heard that, I rose to put on my tackling for battling and combat; I put on my charmed praying shirt of satin, and smooth yellow silk stretched to my skin, my cloudy coat above the golden shirt, my kindly coat of cotton above the kindly cloak, my boss-covered hindering sharp-pointed shield on my left side, my hero’s hard slasher in my right hand, my spawn of narrow knives in my belt, my helm of hardness about my head to cover my comely crown, to go in the front of strife, and the strife to go after it; I put on my hindering, dart-hindering resounding mail, without a flaw, or without outlet, blue-grey, bright blue, “LEUDAR LEOTHAR.” Lochliner, the long-light and high-minded; and I left not a man to tell a tale or withhold bad news. If there was not one on one foot, and one one-handed, and though there were ten tongues in their heads, it is telling their own ills, and the ills of the rest that they would be. I took my bride with me, I set her in the ship, I hoisted the three speckled flapping sails against the tall tough splintery trees. My music was the plunging of eels and screaming of gulls; the beast that was biggest eating the beast that was least, and the beast that was least doing as it might; the bent brown buckie that was in the bottom of the sea she would play Haig on her mouth as she would split a slender oat stubble before her prow, with the excellence of the steering. ‘Twas no stop or stay for me, as I drove her on till I reached the big town of my father-in-law.”

“That was my first rest, Murachadh, and is it wondrous that I dislike any man to be gazing at her?” “Indeed, it is not wonderful,” said Murachadh. Murachadh lay down that night, and he found himself on the morrow in the tower of CHINNECOIRE in Erin, where were his father

[46] FEAMANACH,--Feaman means a tail, but whether this means the man with the tail or not, I do not know.

and his grandfather; and the deer and the dog, and his father and his brother, were in before him.

(Gaelic omitted)

This tale was taken down in May 1859, from the recitation of Donald Shaw, then aged sixty-eight, a pauper, living at Ballygrant in Islay, who was in the 42nd Highlanders at Waterloo. He served in the army about three years. He said that he had learned it from one Duncan MacMillan, a Colonsay man, well advanced in years, about fifty years ago. On the 6th of July, Hector MacLean wrote:--"Shaw died a few days ago, and so far as I can ascertain, there is none in Islay, Jura, or Colonsay, that can recite the same tale now."

I have only met with one man who knew it by this name; MacPhie, at the Sound of Benbecula, a very old man, who gave me the outline of it. Some of the language is exceedingly difficult; some words none of us can make out; and MacPhie's version, and most of his stories, were full of such language.

The tale then is found in Islay and South Uist, and traced to Colonsay, and is certainly about fifty years old. I have several other tales which resemble it in some degree.

The little hat with everything in it, and the great coat and buttons, are Irish. There is much communication between Ireland and the Isles at this day. The language spoken on the opposite coasts is all but identical, and this is probably common to Ireland and the Isles.

There is something like it in Mr. Simpson's book; and some of his words resemble words in this story, and seem to have puzzled the Irish translators as much as they have puzzled me. The phrase, "As a falcon through a flock of birds," is in Mr. Simpson's work. The man with the bundle of wood is something like the giant in Grimm's Valiant Tailor. The servant who drew a thorn longer than his leg out of his foot, may be some supernatural personage. The measured prose descriptions of sailing, arming, and fighting, are common all over the West Highlands amongst the eldest and poorest men, and similar passages occur in manuscripts.

For descriptions of costume and for language, the tale is very curious, and worth the labour bestowed on it, which is considerable. I have endeavoured to translate closely, and at the same time to imitate this tale; but it is a very weak attempt, I well know.

The manners described are partly those of the day. The politeness and discourtesy in the house of the man with the little hat, are purely Highland. The breaking of the tumbler is a mark of great respect; no meaner lip should touch the glass drained to an honoured guest; but the glass must be first filled and emptied--no half cups are allowed. The best seat should be the guest's. The telling of the story in the evening is the real amusement of the poorer classes now, and used to be much more common.

The description of the sailing of a boat amongst the fish and birds is true to nature; so is the expression *the track of the duck*; none but a man familiar with the habits of birds on a sea-coast could think of such a phrase. Ducks feed on shore, and return to the sea at daylight.

The experience of the old soldier probably makes the drink wine, not whisky; and *Sibearta* is probably white Siberia, derived from the same source; If not, I can make nothing of it.

The dress described may be the old dress of the Isles, as depicted on tombstones, with a cotton coat slipped in. In an account of the Danes and Norwegians in England and Ireland, by J. J. A. Worsaae, London, 1852, it is stated that Magnus Barfod sat himself at the helm while his ship was drawn over the Peninsula of Tarbet (draw-boat); acquired the sovereignty of the Western Isles; and adopted the dress generally worn there. "They went about the streets (in Norway) with bare legs, and wore short coats and cloaks, whence Magnus was called by his

men, Barfod or Barbeen (barefoot or barelegs), says the Icelandic historian, Snorro Sturleson, who, as well known, lived in the first half of the thirteenth century. It is remarkable enough that this is the oldest account extant of the well-known Scotch Highland dress, whose antiquity is thus proved."

The tale might be taken partly from the Odyssey. The man disguised as a beggar, going to a wedding where his own wife was the bride, and where he knocks out the brains of a beggar with a single blow, and makes a general slaughter afterwards, is very like Ulysses, Penelope, Irus, and the Suitors, but similar incidents are common in popular tales. There is a story in the Decameron which somewhat resembles the incident of the wife carried away. On the whole, I think this story is a remnant of an old bardic composition, of which very little remains.

The word GRUAGACH is here used both for a maiden and for a woman with a daughter; it usually means a maiden, rarely a chief; sometimes it seems to mean a conjuror, or philosopher, or instructor; often the being called Brownie. It probably means any one with long hair; from GRUAG, the hair of the head.

GLOSSARY.

ALLABAN ANRADH, painful, wandering.

ATHAR NA POIT, the evil effect of drinking

BEART NA BUIL, tackle in her ropes.

BEUCARSAICH, screaming.

BROCHD AGUS OLC, badgers and evil creatures, vermin.

BUCAIDACH, pimply, *boss* covered, or perhaps hollow.

CALA AGUS ACARSAID, port and anchorage.

CNOCK SEANAN, (?) Hill of Jewels, from sean or Seun, a jewel.

CRANNA FADA FULANNACH, trees or masts, long-enduring.

FILE, MILE, soft, fluent.

FISNICHE FAISNICHE, words whose meaning is lost in the islands; probably Irish; perhaps knowing, delaying, that is wise, eloquent.

LEUDAR LEOTHAR LOCHLANNACH, (?) perhaps a description of the man; the epithet Lochlannach is the only one of the three which is comprehensible, and this line probably belongs to something else.

LORG NA LACH, the track of the duck; path, towards the sea.

LURACH, a coat of mail, also a patched cloak.

MAGH O DORNA, (?) plain of pebbles, from dornag, a stone, that can be held in dorn, the fist.

NEAM-A-LACH, (?) not to be found in dictionaries.

PLUBARSAICH, an expressive word for plunging about.

LII. The Three Widows

From Hector Boyd, Fisherman, Barra.

THERE were three widows, and every one of them had a son apiece. Dòmhnull was the name of the son of one of them.[47]

Dòmhnull had four stots, and the rest had but two each. They were always scolding, saying that he had more grass than they had themselves. On a night of the nights they went to the fold, and they seized on the stots of Dòmhnull and they killed them. When Dòmhnull rose and went out in the morning to see the stots, he found them dead.

He flayed the stots, and he salted them, and he took one of the hides with him to the big town to sell. The way was so long, that the night came on him before he reached the big town. He went into a wood and he put the hide about his head. There came a heap of birds, and they lighted on the hide; he put out his hand and he seized on one of them. About the brightening of day he went away; he betook himself to the house of a gentleman.

The gentleman came to the door, and he asked what he had there in his oxter. He said that he had a soothsayer. "What divination will he be doing?"

"He will be doing every sort of divination," said Dòmhnull. "Make him do divination," said the gentleman.

He went and he wrung him, and the bird gave a RAN.[48] "What is he saying?" said the gentleman. "He says that thou hast a wish to buy him, and that thou wilt give two hundred pounds Saxon for him," said Dòmhnull. "Well, surely!--it is true, doubtless; and if I were thinking that he would do divination, I would give that for him," said the gentleman.

So now the gentleman bought the bird from Dòmhnull, and he gave him two hundred pounds Saxon for him.

"Try that thou do not sell him to any man, and that there is no knowing that I might not come myself to seek him yet. I would not give him to thee for three thousand pounds Saxon were it not that I am in extremity."

Dòmhnull went home, and the bird did not do a pinch of divination ever after.

When he took his meat he began at counting the money. Who were looking at him but those who killed the stots. They came in.

"Ah, Dòmhnull," said they, "How didst thou get all the money that is there?"

"I got it as you may get it too. It's I that am pleased that you killed the stots for me," said be. "Kill you your own stots and flay them, and take with you' the hides to the big town, and be shouting, 'Who will buy a stot's hide,' and you will get plenty of money."

They killed the stots, and they flayed them. They took with them the hides to the big town, and they began at shouting, "Who will buy a stot's hide." They were at that work the length of the day; and when the people of the big town were tired making sport of them, they returned home.

[47] (*Lit.*) It was Domhnull that was on the son of one of them.
[48] There seems to be a pun here. RAN is a roar, a hoarse noise. RANN is a rhyme, a verse, a stanza.

Now they did not know what they should do. They were vexed because of the stots that were killed. They saw the mother of Dòmhnull going to the well, and they seized on her and they choked her.

When Dòmhnull was taking sorrow, so long was his mother coming, he looked out to try if he could see her. He reached the well, and he found her dead there.

He did not know what he should do. Then he took her with him home.

On the morrow he arrayed her in the best clothes she had, and he took her to the big town. He walked up to the king's house with her on the top of him. When he came to the king's house he met with a large well.

He went and he stuck the stick into the bank of the well, and he set her standing with her chest on the stick. He reached the door and he struck at it, and the maidservant came down.[49]

"Say to the king," said he, "that there is a respectable woman yonder, and that she has business with him."

The maidservant told that to the king.

"Say to him to say to her to come over," said the king.

"The king is asking thee to say to her to come over," said the maidservant to Dòmhnull.

"I won't go there; go there thyself; I am tired enough."

The maid went up, and she told the king that not a bit of the man would go there.

"Go there thyself," said the king.

"If she will not answer thee," said Dòmhnull to the maidservant, "thou shalt push her; she is deaf."

The maidservant reached where she was.

"Good woman," said the maidservant to her, "the king is asking yourself to come over."

She took no notice. She pushed her and she said not a word. Dòmhnull was seeing how it was without.

"Draw the stick from her chest," said Dòmhnull; "it's asleep she is."

She drew the stick from her chest, and there she went head foremost into the well.

Then he shouted out, "Oh my cattle! my cattle! my mother drowned in the well! What shall I do this day?" Then he struck his two palms against each other, and there was no howl he gave that could not be heard at three miles' distance.

The king came out. "Oh, my lad, never give it voice for ever, and I will pay for thy mother. How much wilt thou be asking for thy mother?"

"Five hundred pounds Saxon," said Dòmhnull.

"Thou shalt get that within the minute," said the king.

Dòmhnull got the five hundred Saxon pounds. He went where his mother was; he took the clothes off that were on her, and he threw her into the well.

[49] The manners and customs of kings, according to west country fishermen, were primitive.

He came home, and he was counting the money. They came--the two--where he was, to see if he should be lamenting his mother. They put a question to him--"Where had he got all the money that was there?"

"I got it," said he, "where you may get it if you yourselves should choose."

"How shall we get it?"

"Kill you your mothers, and take them with you on top of you, and take them about the big town, and be shouting, 'Who will buy old dead carlins?' and you get your fortunes."

When they heard that they went home, and each one of them began upon his mother with a stone in a stocking till he killed her.

They went on the morrow to the big town. They began at shouting, "Who will buy old carlins dead?"

And there was no man who would buy *that*.

When the people of the big town were tired making sport of them, they set the dogs at them home.

When they came home that night they laid down and they slept. On the morrow, when they rose, they went where Dòmhnull was, and they seized on him and they put him into a barrel. They went with it to reel it down from a peak of rock. They were thus, and they had time about carrying it. The one said to the other, "Since the way was so long, and the day so hot, that they should go in to take a dram." They went in, and they left him in the barrel on the great road without. He heard a "TRISTRICH"[50] coming, and who was there but the shepherd, and a hundred sheep with him. He came down, and he began to play a "trump" (Jew's harp) which he had in the barrel. The shepherd struck a stroke of his stick on a barrel. "Who's in here?" said he. "It's me," said Dòmhnull. "What art thou doing in it?" said the shepherd. "I am making a fortune in it," said Dòmhnull, "and no man ever saw such a place with gold and silver. I have just filled a thousand purses here, and the fortune is nearly made." "It's a pity," said the shepherd, "that thou shouldest not let myself in a while."

"I won't let thee. It is much that would make me."

"And wilt thou let me in? Mightest thou not let me in for one minute, and mightest thou not have enough thyself nevertheless?"

"By the books, poor man, since thou art needful, I will not let thee in. (Do) thou thyself drive the head out of the barrel and come here; but thou shalt not get (leave) to be long in it," said Dòmhnull.

The shepherd took the head out of the barrel, and he came out; he seized on the shepherd by the two shanks, and he set him head foremost in the barrel.

"There is neither silver nor gold here," said the shepherd.

"Thou wilt not see a thing till the head goes on the barrel," said Dòmhnull.

"Oh, I don't see a shadow in here," said he.

"If thou seest not, so be it with thee," said Dòmhnull.

[50] TRISTRICH: a word which exactly describes the tripping sound of a lot of sheep on hard ground.

Dòmhnull went and he put on the plaid that the shepherd had, and when he put on the plaid the dog followed him. Then they came out and they seized the barrel, and they raised it on their shoulders. They went away with it.

The shepherd would say at the end of every minute, “It’s me that’s in it--it’s me that’s in it.” “Oh, it’s thou, roguey! belike it’s thou?”

They reached the peak of the rock, and they let down the barrel with the rock and shepherd in its inside.

When they returned, whom did they see but Dòmhnull, with his plaid and his dog, and his hundred of sheep with him in a park.

They went over to him.

“Oh, Dòmhnull,” said they, “how gottest thou to come hither?”

“I got as you might get if you would try it. After that I had reached the world over yonder, they said to me that I had plenty of time for going over there, and they set me over here, and a hundred sheep with me to make money for myself.”

“And would they give the like of that to us if we should go there?” said they.

“They would give (that.) It’s they that would give,” said Dòmhnull.

“(By) what means shall we get going there?” said they.

“Exactly the very means by which you yourselves sent me there,” said he.

They went and they took with them two barrels to set themselves into up above.

When they reached the place one of them went into one of the barrels, and the other sent him down with the rock. That one gave a roar below, and his brains just after going out with the blow he got.

The other one asked Dòmhnull. what he was saying?

“He is shouting. ‘Cattle and sheep, wealth and profit,’” said Dòmhnull.

“Down with me, down with me!” said the other one.

He did not stay to go into the barrel. He cut a caper down, and the brains went out of him.

Dòmhnull went home, and he had the land to himself.

(Gaelic omitted)

This story is marvellously like Big Peter and Little Peter (Norse Tales, p. 387), published in 1859. That, again, is equally like Grimm’s “Little Farmer,” p. 179 of the English translation, 1857; and that, again, resembles an Italian tale printed in 1567. The incident of the man in the cupboard is common to German and Norse, it is not in the Gaelic tale, but it is the whole subject of the “Monk and the Miller’s Wife” by Allan Ramsay, p. 520, vol. ii. of the edition published in 1800; and that has a much older relative in “the Friars of Berwick,” published in “Scottish Ballads” by John Gilchrist, 1815, p. 327. That tale is said to be from Sibbald’s Chronicle of Scottish Poetry, and Pinkerton’s Scottish Poets, collated with the Bannatyne MS. That poem, of rather questionable propriety, contains none of the incidents in this Gaelic tale; and it is clearly not derived from any of these modern books. The version translated was written down in Barra by Hector MacLean, in July, from the mouth of a fisherman.

In December, the following version was written down by the Rev. Mr. MacLauchlan of Edinburgh, a very highly respected gentleman, well known as one of the best Gaelic scholars

of his day; while he is also a zealous and active minister. He has interested himself in the collection of the popular lore of his country; and he has been kind enough to write down several tales for me from the dictation of one of his parishioners. He gives the following pedigree, with his translation of the Gaelic, which be was good enough to send, and which was returned to him:--

2d. From Donald MacLean, born in Ardnamurchan, brought up from the age of 3 years in Mull (Jarvisfield), 69 years of age. Heard this from an old man in Ardnamurchan, Angus MacPhie, who died forty-five years ago. Reads a little English; has never seen any of these stories in a book; cannot write; reads no Gaelic; lives in the Grassmarket; came to Edinburgh thirty-five years ago.

RIBIN, ROBIN, AND LEVI THE: DUN (LEVI-OUR).

Once in a time there lived three men in the same place, whose names were Ribin, Robin, and Levi-our. The men were not on friendly terms together, as the other two disliked Levi-our. On one occasion Levi-our was from home, when the other two, out of revenge, killed one of his cows. On his return, he flayed the cow, and dried the hide. He made two pockets, which he sewed to the hide, and put in there several pieces of money of different value. He went with the hide to the market town. He was trying at his leisure whether he could find any one to buy it. He saw a man, who had the appearance of being rich, come to the place in which he stood, and he made an offer for the hide; but Levi-our thought the price too small. Levi-our said that they had better go into the inn and have a dram. The gentleman assented, and they entered the inn. Levi-our called for such a dram as was suitable in the circumstances, and they got it. When they were about to pay for the dram Levi-our struck a stroke of his stick on the hide, and said, “Pay this, hide.” The coin of money that was necessary to pay the dram leaped out on the floor. The gentleman asked him whether the hide would always pay in that way. He said it would. “Whatever a man drinks in an inn the hide will pay it.” “Do you think,” said the gentleman, “it will do that for me if I buy it?” “Oh, yes, the very same,” said the other. “If it will, I’ll give you a hundred merks for it,” said he. “It is yours,” said Levi-our, “if you give me that sum for it.” The other paid the money and got the hide. The gentleman called for another dram which they drank together. Levi-our bade him strike the hide as he had done, and he would see that the hide would pay as it did for him. The other struck the hide and it did pay the money. Levi-our went away and left it there, and so pleased was the other with his purchase that he called for more drink in the inn. He struck the hide, and bade it pay for the drink, but nothing would come out of it; it would pay no more. Levi-our went home, and next morning he saw Ribin and Robin, his neighbours, coming to the house. He was engaged counting the money he got for the hide when the men came into his house. “Oh, Levi- our,” said they, “where did you get all that money?” “One of my cows died,” said he, “I flayed her, and carried the hide to the market town; I sold the hide and got all this money for it. There is a great price,” said he, “to be had for raw hides.” They went away home, and killed each of them a cow; they took the hides off them, and dried them. They went with them to the market town, and were then walking backwards and forwards asking who would buy raw hides. Several people came their way, and were offering, some half-a-crown, and some a crown for each hide. They were resolved not to sell them, unless they got the same price for them that Levi-our got for his. They saw that they could not succeed in that, so they were just obliged at last to return home with the hides. They went to Levi-our’s house. Levi-our left, and went out of their way. There was nobody to be found within but an old woman, his mother. It was this they did--they killed Levi-our’s mother out of revenge towards himself. When he returned home, he found his mother dead. He took the body, and instead of dressing it in grave-clothes, he put on his mother’s usual dress, and went away with it to the market town. When he reached the market town, he looked about for a well, and he saw a great deep

well there. He took two sticks, and propped the body of his mother, with the two sticks, at the side of the well. He saw a number of fine looking scholars flocking out from a school in the neighbourhood. He asked a boy, who seemed to be the son of a great influential and distinguished man, if he would be so good as go and tell the old woman who was standing near the well, that he was wishful to leave, and to ask her to come to him. The boy agreed, and went to the old woman. She took no notice of him. He returned to Levi-our, and said that she did not answer him. "Ud," said Levi-our, "go again and speak loud and resolutely to her, and tell her it is her own son wants her." The boy returned, and went up close to her, and as he thought she was deaf, he spoke loud to her. As she made no reply, he gave her a push, when down she tumbled into the well. Levi-our called out for the town-guard, and told them to seize the boy that had drowned his mother. The officers came immediately, arrested the boy, and put him in prison. Notice was given through the town, with the ringing of a bell, that such a young man had been imprisoned for drowning an old woman in a well. Who did the boy happen to be but the son of the provost of the town. The provost came to Levi-our and asked what he would take on condition of letting his son off, and as an equivalent for the life of his mother. Levi-our said it was not an easy matter to say, seeing he had so great a regard for his mother. "Oh," said the provost, "I will see your mother decently buried, and will give you besides five hundred merks in consideration of her having been drowned as happened." "Very well," said Levi-our, "as you are a respectable gentleman, I will accept that." Levi-our returned home. Next day he saw his two neighbours coming towards his house. He commenced counting the money he had got for his mother. "Oh," said they, "where did you get all that money?" "My mother died," said he, "and I went with her to the market town and sold her. There is a high price given for dead old women, to make powder of their bones. "Then," said they, "we, ourselves, will try the same thing. He who had no mother had a mother-in-law; so they killed an old woman each. Off they go next day to the market town, with the old women on their shoulders. They walked backwards and forwards through the streets, crying out who would buy dead old women. All the loose fellows and dogs in the town soon gathered around them. As they carried the dead women they had their feet around their necks, and their bodies hanging down along their backs. When they saw the number of people likely to gather round them, they began to get out of the way as fast as possible. Before they got to the other end of the town, there was nothing remaining of the old women but the feet, which hung around their necks. They threw these at last to the people, and made off as fast as they could. Levi-our, when he thought that they were likely to do him an injury, resolved that, by the time of their return home, he and his wife would have a great feast for them. He did so. He spread a splendid table, covered with meat and drink for them. He filled a portion of a sheep's gut with blood, and tied it round his wife's neck. "Now," said he, "when they come, I will call to you to place more upon the table, and when you don't lay down enough, I will rise and take my knife, and stick it into the piece of gut that is around your neck, and I will let you fall gently to the ground. Afterwards I will sound a horn. You will then rise and wash yourself, and be as you were--living and well." Ribin and Robin came to the house. "Come away, neighbours," said he, "you will be hungry after being in the market town." There was as much meat and drink before them as would serve a dozen of men. He was always bidding his wife to put down more and more. On one of these occasions Levi-our rose and put his pointed knife into the piece of gut that was round his wife's neck. "Oh Levi-our, senseless man as thou ever wert, what made you kill your wife?" "Get you on with your dinner," said he, "I'll bring her alive whenever I choose." They took such alarm, and became so much afraid that they couldn't eat their food. Levi-our rose, seized the horn, and sounded it. His wife rose and shook herself. "Now," said he, "see to it that you behave well hereafter, and that you don't refuse anything I require of you." Ribin and Robin went away. When they saw the strange things he could do, they could not remain any longer in his

company. “Our own wives might very well provide us with such a feast as we had from Levi-our,” said they, “and if they do not we will treat them just as Levi-our did.” So soon as they returned home, they told their wives that they must prepare them a feast, and a better one than Levi-our gave them. Their wives did so, but they were not satisfied; they were always asking for more. “Oh,” said the women, “Levi-our has sent you home drunk, and you don’t know what you are saying.” Both of the men rose and cut the throats of their wives at once. They fell down and were shedding their blood. The men then rose and sounded a horn to raise them again. Though they should sound the horn to this very hour, the wives wouldn’t rise. When they saw that the wives would not rise, they resolved to pursue Levi-our. When he saw them coming, he took to his heels and ran away. They looked at nothing else; but after him they ran, determined to have his life. He hadn’t run far on his way when he met in with a man having a flock of sheep. He said to the man, “Put off your plaid, and put on what I am wearing, there are two men coming who are resolved to have your life. Run as fast as you can, or you will be a dead man immediately.” The man ran away as he was bidden, and they ran hard after him. They didn’t halt until they had pushed him into the deep black pool of Ty-an-leòban. The man fell in, and he was never seen afterwards. They returned home. Next day, what did they see on looking out but Levi-our herding a fine flock of sheep. They came to the place where he was. “Levi-our,” said they, “the whole world won’t satisfy you, didn’t we think that we had pitched you last night into the pool of Ty-an-leòban.” “Don’t you see the sheep I found there?” said he. “Would we find the same if we went in?” said they. “Yes, if I were to put you in,” said he. Off Ribin and Robin set, and off Levi-our set after them. They reached, and when they got to the hole they stood still. Levi-our came behind them, and pushed them both into the pool. “Fish for sheep there,” he said, “if you choose.” Levi-our came home, and got everything in the place for himself. I left them there.

I have a third version of this written by Hector MacLean, from the telling of Margaret MacKinnon in Berneray, in the Sound of Harris. It is called

3. BRIAN BRIAGACH--Bragging Brian.--What should happen but that a great merchant should come to the house of Lying Brian, and what should he have but a great grey mare, and he pretended that she made gold and silver; and what should the merchant do but covet this mare because she made gold and silver. Brian gave the mare money amongst her food, and the merchant found it when he looked for it, and he gave thousands for the mare, and when he got her she was coining money.

He took her with him, and he had her for a week, but a penny of money she did not coin. He let her alone till the end of a month, but money nor money she did not make.

Then he went at the end of the month, where Brian was, to talk to him (A CHAINEADH) for the lie, and to send the mare back again.

Brian killed a cow and filled the entrails with blood, and wrapped them about his wife, under her clothes; and when the merchant came, he and his wife began to scold, and the merchant struck her, and she fell over for dead, and the blood ran about the floor.

Then Brian went and he catches two horns that were in the top of the bed, BARR NA LEAPA, and he blew into his wife’s throat till he brought her alive again.

The merchant got the horns, and promised to say no more about the mare, and went home and killed his wife, and his sister, and his mother, and he began to blow into their throats with the horns, but though he were blowing for ever he had not brought them alive. Then he went where Lying Brian was to kill him. He got him into a sack, and was to beat him to death with flails, but Brian asked a little delay, and got out (it is not said how), and put in two big dogs. The men threw the sack out into the sea when they were tired of beating it.

What was more wonderful for the merchant at the end of a fortnight, than to see Brian and a lot of cattle with him.

“O CHIAL,” “oh, my reason,” said the merchant, “hast thou come back, O Brian!”

“I came,” said Brian. “It was you that did the good to me; when you put me out on the sea I saw thy mother, and thy wife, and thy sister, since I went away; and they asked thee to go out on the sea in the place where thou didst put me out, and that thou thyself shouldst get a lot of cattle like this.”

The merchant went and cuts a caper Out AIR A BHAD on the spot where he had put out Brian. He was drowned, and Brian got his house for himself.

I have a fourth version written by John Dewar, collected somewhere in Argyleshire, and sent May 1860.

4. EODHAN IURRACH.--The hero and two others were working a town-land, BAILE FEARAINN, together. The one staid at home, and the others drowned his cow. He took off the hide, and hung it on the rafters, and when it was dry, he put a piece of money into each knee and hoof, and took it to the town, and he would cry out “CO A CHANICHEAS SEICH NA’M BUINN AIRGIOD”--”who will buy the hide of the pieces of money?” and he would strike a blow on the hide, and the money would fall on the street, and each piece as it fell he picked up and put it into his pocket.

He sold it, of course; and when the bargain was made, he knocked out all the money, to prove that it was no cheat, and put the money into his pocket, and went home.

The others killed their cattle, and when they could not sell the hides, they decided on killing Hugh, but he was outside listening to all they said.

They pulled down his house, but he was in the barn, and his mother-in-law alone was killed; for be had offered his own bed to his mother-in-law, and she had said,--

“Oh, my little hero, thou usest always to be kind to me.”

Hugh took his mother-in-law’s body to a place that was far from his own house, and there was a well-spring near the hostel, TIGH OSD, and there he propped up his mother-in-law with a stick under her chin, to keep her standing.

Then he went in and began to buy a drove from a drover, and sent out the drover to ask his deaf mother in to have a drink of beer, because she was very hard and would scold him for spending money if *he* asked her, but she would take it kindly if the drover did. The drover went, and after a while pushed the Carlin, and she fell into the well. He got, CIAD MARG, a hundred marks from the drover by threatening him with the gallows.

He went home, told his friends that there Was MIADH MÒR AIR CAILLEACHAN MARBH, great value on dead carlins; and they killed their mothers-in-law, and were like to be put in prison for trying to sell them. So they determined to serve out their tricky neighbour, and asked him and his wife to a dance at an inn. But Hugh tied a pudding full of blood about his wife’s neck, and covered it up with a WEAPAIGIN, and when he and his wife got up to dance a reel he put the SKIAN DUBH, black knife, into the pudding, and the wife fell as dead.

Then Eobhan got a horn which hunters, MUINTER SEILGE, had at same time for the wood, and he put it to his wife, and he blew into the horn, and the horn gave a NUADULAN, lamentable groan and the wife of Hugh got up again, and she began to dance.

The neighbours bought the horn and tried FEARTAN NA HADHARC, the trick of the horn, on their own wives. They killed them, and blew, but though they were blowing still, their wives would not get up.

Then they caught Hugh and put him in a sack, to throw him over a fall. They went into an inn to drink beer. A drover came past, and Hugh in the sack began,--"I am going to the good place, I am going to the good place," etc. "Where art thou going?" said the drover. "It is," said Hugh, "they are going to put me where I will feel neither cold, nor weariness, nor hunger more. I shall not feel them, nor thirst." "Wilt thou let me there?" said the drover. And so the man was enticed into the sack, and thrown over the fall, and they heard him saying, "O CHOCH! O CHOCH! 'S O MO CHEANN MO CHEANN! alas, alas! and oh, my head! my head!"

When the neighbours came home and found Hugh counting money, and heard that he had got it at the bottom of the fall, they got sacks, and the one threw the other over the fall till there was but one left, and he tied the sack to his sides and threw himself over, and every one of them was killed; and Eobhan Iurach got the farms to himself, and the cattle that his neighbours had, and he took the possession of both artfully, AGUS GABH E SEILBH ANNDA GU SEOLDA.

The incident of getting riches by accusing people of killing a dead body is common to one of the African tales. Appendix to Norse tales--"The Ear of Corn and the Twelve Men."

The selling of something valueless, as a source of riches, is common to a story which I used to hear as a child, from John Piper my guardian, and which I lately found in another shape, in an English translation of Master Owlglass.

The story, as I remember it, was this:--A sailor who had got his money, and who knew that he would spend it all, went to visit his friends. On his way he paid double, and generously, for his board and lodging, and bargained that he should take off a certain old hat as payment on his way back.

A Jew accompanied him on his return, and seeing the effect of the hat, begged for it, offered for it, and finally bought it for a large sum. Then he tried it, got cudgelled by the innkeepers, and cursed the clever tar who had outwitted him.

Here, then, is a story known in the Highlands for many years, with incidents common to Gaelic, Norse, English, German, and some African tongue, and with a peculiar character of its own which distinguishes it from all the others. I am indebted to the author of Norse Tales for a loan of the rare book mentioned in the following reference, which may throw some light on the story and its history:--

In Le Piacevole Notte di Straparola, 1567, the story is told of a priest and three rogues who outwit him and whom he outwits in return.

First, they persuade him that a mule which he has bought is an ass, and get it; which incident is in another Gaelic story in another shape. Then he sells them a bargain in the shape of a goat, which is good for nothing.

Then he pretends to kill his house-keeper by sticking a knife into a bladder filled with blood, and brings her alive again with something which he sells to them for two hundred florins of gold, and they kill their three wives in earnest.

They are enraged, catch the priest, and put him into a sack, intending to drown him in a river. They set him down, and a shepherd comes, who hears a lamentable voice in a sack saying, "Me la vogliono pur dare, and io non la voglio"--They wish to give her to me, and I don't

want her. The priest explains that the Lord of that city wants to marry him to his daughter, and by that bait (not the bait of riches) entices the shepherd into the sack. The shepherd is drowned. The priest takes the sheep, and the rogues, when they find the priest with the sheep, beg to be put into three sacks. They get in, are carried to the river by three “facconi,” and disposed of; and pre-Scarpacifico, rich in money and flocks, returned home and lived pleasantly, etc.

By what process this story got from Italian into Gaelic, or who first invented it, seems worth inquiry. One thing is clear; the Italian version and the four Gaelic versions now given resemble each other very closely.

It seems possible that the amusements of the Court of Mary Queen of Scots, or of the foreigners whose morals so enraged John Knox, may have descended to the Grassmarket and to the fisher. men of the Western Isles. David Rizzio, a Turinese, has the credit of many Scotch airs. He was killed in 1567, and the edition of Straparola which I have before me, printed in Venice, 1567, if it be the first, may have found its way to Scotland through some of the countrymen of Rizzio. If that explanation be considered reasonable, it has still to be shewn how the story got to Germany and Norway: where the man in the cupboard went in: and whence came the soothsaying bird in the grey hide and the unsaleable dead carlins, for they are not in the Italian version.

Having carried the three widows’ sons from Barra to the Grassmarket, where they are named Ribin, and Robin, and Levi-our; thence to Norway, where they appear as Big and Little Peter; thence to Germany, where they have no name; and thence to the city of Postema in Italy in 1567,-as the narrator says, “There I left them.”

LIII. The Son Of The Scottish Yeoman Who Stole The Bishop's Horse And Daughter, And The Bishop Himself

From Donald MacLean, Grassmarket, Edinburgh. Written in Gaelic, and translated by the Rev. Mr. MacLauchlan.

THERE was once a Scottish yeoman who had three sons. When the youngest of them came to be of age to fellow a profession, he set apart three hundred marks for each of them. The youngest son asked that his portion might be given to himself, as he was going away to seek his fortune. He went to the great city of London. He was for a time there, and what was he doing but learning to be a gentleman's servant? He at last set about finding a master. He heard that the chief magistrate (provost[51]) of London wanted a servant. He applied to him, they agreed, and he entered his service. The chief magistrate was in the habit of going every day in the week to meet the Archbishop of London in a particular place. The servant attended his master, for he always went out along with him. When they had broken up their meeting on one occasion, they returned homewards, and the servant said to his master by the way,--

"That is a good brown horse of the bishop's," said he, "with your leave, master."

"Yes, my man," said the master, "he has the best horse in London."

"What think you," said the servant, "would be take for the horse, if he were to sell it?"

"Oh! you fool," said his master, "I thought you were a sensible fellow; many a man has tried to buy that horse, and it has defied them as yet."

"I'll return and try," said he.

His master returned along with him to see what would happen. This was on a Thursday. The young man asked the bishop, would he sell the horse? The bishop became amazed and angry, and said he did not expect that he could buy it.

"But what beast could you, or any man have," said the young man, "that might not be bought?"

"Senseless fellow," said the bishop; "how foolish you are I go away home, you shan't buy my horse."

"What will you wager," said the young man, "that I won't have the horse by this time to-morrow?"

"Is it my horse you mean?" said the bishop.

"Yes, your horse," said the young man. "What will you wager that I don't steal it?"

"I'll wager five hundred merks," said the bishop, "that you don't."

"Then," said the young man, "I have only one pound, but I'll wager that, and my head besides, that I do."

"Agreed," said the bishop.

[51] The Gaelic "Probhaisd" is an adaptation of the English "Provost," as the latter is of the Latin "Propositus."

“Observe,” said the young man, “that I have wagered my head and the pound with you, and if I steal the horse he will be my own property.”

“That he will, assuredly,” said the chief magistrate.

“I agree to that,” said the bishop.

They returned home that night.

“Poor fellow,” said the chief magistrate to his servant by the way, “I am very well satisfied with you since I got you. I am not willing to lose you now. You are foolish. The bishop will take care that neither you nor any other man will steal the horse. He’ll have him watched.”

When night came, the young man started, and set to work; he went to the bishop’s house. What did he find out there, but that they had the horse in a room, and men along with it, who were busy eating and drinking. He looked about him, and soon saw that he would require another clever fellow along with him. In looking about, who does he find but one of the loose fellows about the town.

“If you go along with me for a little time,” said he, I will give you something for your pains.”

“I’ll do that,” said the other.

He set off, and at the first start both he and his man reached the hangman of the city.

“Can you tell me,” said he to the hangman, “where I can get a dead man?”

“Yes,” said the hangman, “there was a man hanged this very day, after midday.”

“If you go and get him for me,” said the young man, “I’ll give you something for your pains.”

The hangman agreed, and went away with him to where the body was.

“Do you know now,” said the young man, “where I can get a long stout rope?”

“Yes,” said the hangman, “the rope that hanged the man is here quite convenient; you’ll get it.”

They set off with the body, both himself and his man. They reached the bishop’s house. He said to his man when they had reached--

“Stay you here and take charge of this, until I get up on the top of the house.”

He put both his mouth and his ear to the chimney in order to discover where the men were, as they were now speaking loud from having drunk so much. He discovered where they were.

“Place the end of the rope,” said he to his man, “round the dead man’s neck, and throw the other end up to me.”

He dragged the dead man up to the top of the chimney. The men in the room began to hear the rubbish in the chimney falling down. He let the body down by degrees, until at last he saw the bright light of the watchmen falling on the dead man’s feet.

“See,” said they, “what is this? Oh, the Scottish thief, what a shift! He preferred dying in this way to losing his head. He has destroyed himself.”

Down from the chimney came the young man in haste. In he went into the very middle of the men, and as the horse was led out by the door, his hand was the first to seize the bridle. He went with the horse to the stable, and said to them that they might now go and sleep, that they were safe enough.

“Now,” said he to the other man, “I believe you to be a clever fellow; be at hand here to-morrow evening, and I will see you again.”

He paid him at the same time, and the man was much pleased. He, himself, returned to his master's stable with the bishop's brown horse. He went to rest, and though the daylight came early, earlier than that did his master come to his door.

"I wouldn't grudge my pains," said he, if my poor Scotsman were here before me to-day."

"I am here, good master," said he, "and the bishop's brown horse beside me."

"Well done, my man," said his master, "you're a clever fellow. I had a high opinion of you before; I think much more of you now."

They prepared this day, too, to go and visit the bishop. It was Friday.

"Now," said the servant, "I left home without a horse, yesterday, but I won't leave in the same way to-day."

"Well, my man," said his master, "as you have got the horse, I'll give you a saddle."

So they set off this day again to meet the bishop, his master and himself riding their horses. They saw the bishop coming to meet them, apparently mad. When they came close together they observed that the bishop rode another horse, by no means so good as his own. The bishop and chief magistrate met with salutations. The bishop turned to the chief magistrate's servant,--

"Scroundel," said he, "and thorough thief!"

"You can't call me worse," said the other. "I don't know that you can call me that justly; for, you know, I told you what I was to do. Without more words, pay me my five hundred merks."

This had to be done, though not very willingly.

"What would you now say," says the lad, "if I were to steal your daughter to-night?"

"My daughter, you worthless fellow," said the bishop; "you shan't steal my daughter."

"I'll wager five hundred merks and the brown horse," said the lad, "that I'll steal her."

"I'll wager ten hundred merks that you don't," said the bishop.

The wager was laid. The lad and his master went home. "Young man," said his master, "I thought well of you at one time, but you have done a foolish thing now, just when you had made yourself all right."

"Never mind, good master," said he, "I'll make the attempt at any rate."

When night came, the chief magistrate's servant set off for the bishop's house. When he reached, he saw a gentleman coming out at the door.

"Oh," said he to the gentleman, "what is this going on at the bishop's house to-night?"

"A great and important matter," said the gentleman; "a rascally Scotsman who is threatening to steal the bishop's daughter, but I can tell you neither he nor any other man will steal her; she is well guarded."

"Oh, I'm sure of that," said the lad, and turned away. "There is a man in England, however," said he to himself, "who must try it."

He set off, and reached the king's tailors. He asked them whether they had any dresses ready for great people?

"No," said the tailor, "but a dress I have for the king's daughter and one for her maid of honour."

“What,” said the chief magistrate’s servant, “will you take for the use of these, for a couple of hours?”

“Oh,” said the tailor, “I fear I dare not give them to you.”

“Don’t be in the least afraid,” said the lad, “I’ll pay you, and I’ll return the two dresses without any injury or loss. You’ll get a hundred merks,” said he.

The tailor coveted so large a sum, and so he gave them to him. He returned, and found his man of the former night. They went to a private place, and got themselves fitted out in the dresses got from the tailor. When this was done as well as they could, they came to the bishop’s door. Before he arrived at the door he found out that when any of the royal family came to the bishop’s house they didn’t knock, but rubbed the bottom of the door with the point of the foot. He came to the door, and rubbed. There was a doorkeeper at the door that night, and he ran and told the bishop.

“There is some one of the royal family at the door,” said he.

“No,” said the bishop, “there is not. It’s the thief of a Scotsman that is there.”

The doorkeeper looked through the key-hole, and saw the appearance of two ladies who stood there. He went to his master and told him so. His master went to the door that he might see for himself. He who was outside would give another and another rub to the door, at the same time abusing the bishop for his folly. The bishop looked, and recognized the voice of the king’s daughter at the door. The door is quickly opened, and the bishop bows low to the lady. The king’s daughter began immediately to chide the bishop for laying any wager respecting his daughter, saying that he was much blamed for what he had done.

“It was very wrong of you,” said she, “to have done it without my knowledge, and you would not have required to have made such a stir or been so foolish as all this.”

“You will excuse me,” said the bishop. I can’t excuse you,” she said.

In to the chamber he led the king’s daughter, in which his own daughter was, and persons watching her. She was in the middle of the chamber, sitting on a chair, and the others sitting all around.

Said the king’s daughter to her, “My dear, your father is a very foolish man to place you in such great danger; for if he had given me notice, and placed you under my care, any man who might venture to approach you would assuredly not only be hanged, but burned alive. Go,” said she to the bishop, “to bed, and dismiss this large company, lest men laugh at you.”

He told the company that they might now go to rest, that the queen’s daughter and her maid of honour would take charge of his daughter. When the queen’s daughter had seen them all away, she said to the daughter of the bishop,--

“Come along with me, my dear, to the king’s palace.” He led her out, and then he had the brown horse all ready, and as soon as the Scotsman got her to where the horse stood, he threw off the dress he wore, in a dark place. He put a different dress above his own, and mounted the horse. The other man is sent home with the dresses to the tailor. He paid the man, and told him to meet him there next night. He leaped on the brown horse at the bishop’s house, and off he rode to the house of his master. Early as daylight came, earlier came his master to the stable. He had the bishop’s daughter in his bed. He wakened when he heard his master.

“I wouldn’t grudge my pains,” said the latter, “if my poor Scotsman were here before me to-day.”

“Eh, and so I am,” said the lad, “and the bishop’s daughter along with me here.”

“Oh,” said he, “I always thought well of you, but now I think more of you than ever.”

This was Saturday. He and his master had to go and meet the bishop this day also. The bishop and chief magistrate met as usual. If the bishop looked angry the former day, he looked much angrier this day. The chief magistrate’s servant rode on his horse and saddle behind his master. When he came near the bishop he could only call him “thief” and “scoundrel.”

“You may shut your mouth,” said he; “you cannot say that to me with justice. Send across here my five hundred merks. He paid the money. He was abusing the other.

“Oh man,” said he, “give up your abuse; I’ll lay you the ten hundred merks that I’ll steal yourself tonight.”

“That you steal me, you worthless fellow,” said the bishop. “You shan’t be allowed.”

He wagered the ten hundred merks.

“I’ll get these ten hundred merks back again,” said the bishop, “but I’ll lay you fifteen hundred merks that you don’t steal me.”

The chief magistrate fixed the bargain for them. The lad and his master went home.

“My man,” said the master, “I have always thought well of you till now; you will now lose the money you gained, and you can’t steal the man.”

“I have no fear of that,” said the servant.

When night came he set off, and got to the house of the bishop. Then he thought he would go where he could find the fishermen of the city, in order to see what might be seen with them. When he reached the fishermen he asked them whether they had any fresh-killed salmon? They said they had. He said to them--

“If you skin so many of them for me I will give you such and such a sum of money, or as much as will be just and right.”

The fishermen said they would do as he wished, and they did so. They gave him as many fish skins as he thought would make him a cloak of the length and breadth he wished. He then went to the tailors. He said to the tailors, would they make him a dress of the fish skins by twelve o’clock at night, and that they should be paid for it. They told him what sum they would take. They took the young man’s measure and began the dress. The dress was ready by twelve o’clock. They could not work any longer as the Sunday was coming in. He left with the dress, and when he found himself a short way from the bishop’s church he put it on. He had got a key to open the church and he went in. He at once went to the pulpit. The doorkeeper casting an eye in on an occasion, while a great watch was kept over the bishop, he went and said there was a light in the church.

“A light,” said his master, “go and see what light it is.” It was past twelve o’clock by this time.

“Oh,” said the doorkeeper, coming back, “there is a man preaching in it.”

The bishop drew out his time-piece, and he saw that it was the beginning of the Sunday. He went running to the church. When he saw the brightness that was in the church, and all the movements of the man that was preaching, he was seized with fear. He opened the door a little and put in his head that he might see what be was like. There was not a language under the stars that the man in the pulpit was not taking a while of. When he came to the languages which the bishop understood, he began to denounce the bishop as a man who had lost his senses. In the bishop ran, and down he is on his knees before the pulpit. There he began to pray, and when he saw the brightness that was about the pulpit, he took to heart the things

that were said to him. At length he said to him, if he would promise sincere repentance, and go along with him, he would grant him forgiveness. The bishop promised him that he would.

“Come with me till I have a little time of you,” said he.

“I will,” said the bishop, “though thou shouldst ask me to leave the world.”

He went along with him, and the young man walked before him. They reached the stable of the chief magistrate. He got a seat for the bishop, and he kept him sitting. He sat down himself. They required no light, for the servant’s clothes were shining bright where they were. He was then expounding to the bishop in some languages which he could understand, and in others which he could not. He went on in that way until it was time for his master to come in the morning. When the time drew near, he threw off the dress, bent down and hid it, for it was near daylight. The bishop was now silent, and the chief magistrate came.

“I wouldn’t grudge my pains,” said he, “if I had my poor Scotsman here before me to-day.”

“Eh, so I am here,” said he, “and the bishop along with me.”

“Hey, my man,” says his master, “you have done well.”

“Oh, you infamous scoundrel,” said the bishop, “is it thus you have got the better of me?”

“I’ll tell you what it is,” said the chief magistrate, “you had better be civil to him. Don’t abuse him. He has got your daughter, your horse, and your money, and as for yourself, you know that he cannot support you, so it is best for you to support him. Take himself and your daughter along with you and make them a respectable wedding.” The young man left and went home with the bishop, and he and the bishop’s daughter were lawfully married, and the father shewed him kindness. I left them there.

(Gaelic omitted)

I had the above tale from Donald M’Lean, now resident in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh. It is one of seven I took down from his recitation about the same time. M’Lean is a native of Ardnamurchan, but crossed at an early age to Glenforsa in Mull, where he spent several years. He heard this tale recited by an old man, Angus M’Phie, from Ardnamurchan, who died about fifty years ago, and he had received it also from tradition. M’Lean recites his tales without the slightest hesitation, although in some cases their recitation occupies a couple of hours. It will be manifest, too, from reading the original tale here given, that very little variation could be allowed in the words used, and that the very forms of expression and words must therefore be retained unchanged. M’Lean’s is a remarkable instance of the power of memory in the uneducated, shewing that it is quite possible to retain and recite, with perfect accuracy, compositions which would form a volume. He obtained his tales from different parties, and says they were recited in the winter evenings at the firesides of the old Highlanders as their chief amusements. Some of them he heard before he was fourteen years of age, and never heard since, and yet he retains them accurately.

It will be observed in the tale now given that some of the terms used are modem, as, for instance, “Probhaisd” (Provost), and not known in our older Gaelic. It is remarkable, also, that the bishop of London is the party fixed upon to have his effects stolen. This would seem to indicate that the tale originated at a time when the Highlanders were acquainted with bishops, and would carry it back to a period previous to the Reformation, the inhabitants, both of Ardnamurchan and Mull, having been Presbyterians since that period; unless, indeed, the story has been imported into the Highlands from some other quarter. Its resemblance to the “Master Thief” in Mr. Dasent’s “Tales from the Norse,” cannot fail to strike any one acquainted. with these interesting stories. The “Tuathanach” is translated “Yeoman,” not that

that term expresses with perfect accuracy the meaning of the Gaelic word, but it is the English term which comes nearest to it. The “Tuathanach” among the Celts is a “farmer,” or one who holds his lands from another, but the word implies a certain amount of consequence and dignity, which would indicate that he must hold land of considerable extent. The term is manifestly either the radix, or a relative of the Latin “tenoe,” whence the English “tenant,” and it would seem also to be the real source of the word “Thane,” or one who held as tenant the lands of the Crown. The tenants and their subholders were distinguished as “Tuath ‘us Ceatharn,” from which last is the Saxon “Kern.”

T. M’L.

EDINBURGH, *May*, 1860.

2. Another version of this was told to me by Donald MacCraw, drover, September 1859, as we walked along the road in North Uist. It was given in return for a bit of another story, which also treats of clever thieves, part of which I learned from my piper guardian long ago. This was the fly which raised the fish.

Two thieves once came to a gallows, and the one said to the other,

“We have often heard about this thing, now let us try how it feels. I will put the rope about my neck, and do thou hang me, and when I have had enough, I will grin and then thou shalt let me down.”

So the first thief was hanged, and when the rope tightened he grinned horribly, and was let down by his comrade as they had agreed.

“Well,” said he, “What was it like?”

“Not so bad as I expected,” said the other. “Now I will hang thee, and when thou hast enough, whistle.”

So the second agreed, and he as strung up in his turn, and he grinned too; but because he would not whistle, his friend let him hang, and when he was tired of waiting, he emptied his pockets and left him there.

“Have you any more of that story?” said I.

“No; but I have one about a smith’s servant,” said MacCraw.

There was once, long ago, a smith in Eirinn, and he had a servant who was very clever at stealing; he could steal anything. His master was working with an UACHDARAN, gentleman, and the gentleman came to the smithy to have his “powney” shod, (the English word powney is commonly used in Island Gaelic), and he and the smith were well with each other, and they began to talk, and the smith to boast of his apprentice, and how well he could steal. At last he offered to bet that the lad could steal the gentleman’s horse, and the gentleman wagered five notes that he would not. The smith laid down the money and the bet was made, and they told this to the lad.

Well, the gentleman went home, and he sent his gillies to watch the powney, and the lad went and he bought himself three bottles of whisky, and when the night came he went to the “square” (this word has also crept into Gaelic, and is applied to a set of farm buildings) of the gentleman, and he laid himself down amongst the litter, and he began to snore and snort and pretend to be drunk. So out came one of the watchmen to see what was the matter, and he began to handle the drunken man, and presently he felt a bottle in his pocket; then he drew it out, and he told the others, and they drank it all up. Then they said,

“Let us see if there is not another bottle in the other pocket.”

So they went and they rolled over the drunken man, who kept on snoring and snorting, and they found a second bottle, and then they went into the stable again. At the end of a little while the lad heard them getting very “wordy” within, and soon they came out again a third time, and they rolled him about, and found the third bottle, and that finished them off and they fell fast asleep. Then the lad got up and stole the powney, and went to the smithy and then he went to sleep himself.

In the morning the gentleman came to the smithy, and he had to pay the bet, for the powney was there before him.

“Well,” said the lad, “that is but a small matter, I will wager you now twenty notes that I will steal your daughter.”

“I will take the wager,” said the gentleman.

And the lad said, “Now master, lay down the twenty notes for me.” So the smith laid them down, and the gentleman laid down his, and the wager was made.

(The word “note” is almost always used in Gaelic, because very filthy one pound notes are common in Scotland. The value of the note is expressed by “pound saxon.” It seems to be necessary to produce the money, and to deposit it when a wager is laid.)

Now no time was fixed for stealing the daughter, so the gentleman went home and he set a watch on his daughter’s room, who were to go in and out all night long. The lad went about the country and he travelled till he came to BAILLE PUIRT, a seaport town on the other side, for it was in Eirinn; and there he remained till he made friends with a ship captain, and after much talk (which was given by the narrator) the captain agreed to help him. So the lad dressed himself up as a woman, and the captain said, “Now I will say that I have a sister on board, and if we are asked to the house of the gentleman when the ship arrives, do thou as best thou canst.”

So the ship sailed, and she sailed round Eirinn till she came to the gentleman’s house, and then the captain went up and told how he had been a long voyage to the Indies.

Then the gentleman asked if he had any one else on board, and he said that he had a sister, and that she was very unwell.

“Oh!” said the gentleman, “ask her to come up and she shall sleep in my daughter’s room.”

So the captain’s sister came up and they had a pleasant evening, and they all went to bed.

But the captain’s sister could not sleep, and she said to the gentleman’s daughter, “What are these men that are always walking about the room, and up and down before the windows?”

And the girl said, “There is a bad man who has laid a wager that he will steal me, and my father is afraid that he may come any night, and these are the watchmen who are guarding me. It is not for the money, but my father is so angry, because that bad man beat him once already.”

“Oh, “said the captain’s sister, I am so nervous after the sea. I have a sort of nerves (the narrator used the English word) that I shall never sleep all night. I shall never get a wink of sleep! I would be so much obliged to you if you would have the goodness to send them away.”

And so at last the men were sent away, but the captain’s sister could not sleep a bit better, and she said,

“When I was in the Indies I used to be so troubled with the heat, that I got a habit of walking out at night, perhaps I could sleep if I were to take a little walk now. Will you be so very kind as to come out for a little walk with me.

So the gentleman’s daughter got up, and out they went for a walk, but when they bad walked a little way, the lad carried her off bodily to the smithy.

In the morning the gentleman came and he paid the bet, and it is told that the lad married the daughter.

“And is that all he ever stole?” said I.

“That’s all I ever heard about it at all events,” said MacCraw.

3. In the Sutherland collection is this reference. “The Master Thief (see Dasent’s Tales, and Thorpe’s Tales). This was some twenty or thirty years ago a common schoolboy’s tale. I have tried in vain to get it written down in Gaelic, but they tell it with all that is in the Norwegian version, and more besides, such as the theft of some rabbits (how performed I cannot hear), and that of a lot of calves. The Master Thief stole these for the robbers, by imitating in the woods and upland pastures the cry of the cows.” C. D.

4. Another bit of the Master Thief, as given in the Norse Tales, forms part of a story which is referred to in No. 48. It is the incident of the man who is persuaded to put his finger into what he believes to be a cask full of liquor, while the clever rogue rides off on his horse, on pretence of catching himself.

5. I have heard another of the incidents, as a theft, accomplished by tempting a man to ran after broken-legged rabbits.

This story, then, is now widely spread in the Highlands, however it got there. The Rev. Mr. MacLauchlan, one of the best, known and most respected men in Edinburgh, gets one version from an old man in the Grassmarket, who gives it a pedigree of some fifty years; I got another myself from a drover in Uist; a very able collector in Sutherland says it was common there some twenty or thirty years ago, and is told still; and a scrap of the Norwegian version comes from Islay. They resemble other versions in other languages, but they resemble each other more than they do any published version which I know; and there seems to be but one explanation of the facts, namely, that this is some very old tradition, common to many races and languages, and derived from some original of unknown antiquity.

The incidents in the German of Grimm are shortly these:--

A poor old man is visited by a gentleman in a grand carriage, who turns out to be his son who had run away and become a master thief. They go to the Count, who sets him three tasks to try his skill: to steal his favourite horse; to take away from his wife and from him the counterpane of their bed, and the ring off the lady’s finger; and, thirdly, to steal the parson and clerk out of the church, on pain of his neck.

He makes the watch drunk, and steals the horse. He makes the Count shoot at a dead body, and while the Count is gone to bury the supposed thief, he appears as the Count, and gets the ring and bed-cover from the Countess.

And he entices the parson and clerk into a sack by pretending to be St. Peter.

The Norse story has many more incidents, but amongst them are five tasks set by a great man to try the skill of the Master Thief:--

(1.) To steal the roast from the spit on Sunday, which he does by enticing the servants to run after three hares which he lets out of a bag.

(2.) To steal father Laurence, the priest, which he does by pretending to be an angel, and so enticing him into a sack.

(3.) To steal twelve horses from the stable, which he does by appearing as an old woman, and making twelve grooms drunk with a sleepy drink in brandy.

(4.) To steal the horse from under the squire, which he does nearly in the same way as the clever weaver in the Islay story.

(5.) To steal the sheet of the gentleman's bed, and the shift off his wife's back, which he does in nearly the same way as it is done in the German version.

And though the daughter is not stolen in the Norse tale, it is to gain the daughter that all these tasks are performed.

Now all these are clearly the same as the second "Favola" in the first book of Straparola, printed in Venice, 1567. In this Italian story the scene is Perugia, the clever thief, a certain Cassandrino, and the man who tries his skill "Il Pretore," the Priest.

Cassandrino first steals the Priest's bed from under him, by breaking through the roof and throwing down the dead body of a recently buried doctor which he had dug up and dressed in his clothes. The Priest thinks that he has fallen down and killed himself, goes to bury him, and finds his bed gone when he returns.

Next he steals the horse from the stable. The watchman sleeps in the saddle; he props him up on sticks, and steals away the horse.

Lastly, he steals a country clergyman, whom he tempts into a sack by dressing as an angel and standing on an altar after matins, exclaiming, "Chi vuol andar in gloria entri nel sacco." He gets a hundred florins of gold each time, and is threatened with terrible punishment in case of failure. The disguise is a white robe, painted paper wings, and a shining diadem.

The Italian story again resembles, though in a less degree, the Egyptian story of Rhampsinitus, told in Herodotus. (Rawlinson's Herod., vol. ii., p. 191.)

The king had a treasure chamber built of hewn stone, but the builder contrived a turning-stone in the wall, and told the secret to his sons when he was about to die.

The sons plundered the treasury, and the king set a trap which caught one of them. The other cut his head off to prevent discovery, and went home with the head, leaving the body in the trap. The king, much puzzled, exposed the headless body, with guards beside it, to watch if any one should be seen weeping near it. The mother sent her son to get back the body, and he did very much as the clever thief in the modern stories, who stole the horses; he disguised himself, and enticed the guards into drinking till they fell asleep; then he shaved half their beards off, and took away the body.

Then the king sent his daughter to find out; and the clever thief went to her, and told her all about it; but when she tried to seize him, he gave her the hand of a dead man, which he had cut off and brought with him; and so he made his escape, leaving the hand.

Then the king proclaimed a free pardon for the clever thief who had outwitted him three times, and when he came he gave him his daughter in marriage.

Other references are given in Grimm's third volume (see page 260), from which it appears that this story is very widely spread in Europe. Now the Gaelic agrees with Herodotus, Straparola, and Grimm, in that there are three tasks accomplished by a clever thief; and the number three is almost universally used in Gaelic tales.

One of the Gaelic incidents, that of the drunken guards, agrees with the story in Herodotus, and is common to all those quoted.

The Gaelic agrees with the Italian, German, and Norse, in the theft of the horse and the clergyman.

The Gaelic alone has the theft of the daughter. The Norwegian version mentions the daughter, and so does the story of Rhampsinitus, and there seems to be fair ground for arguing that all this must have come from some original which it is vain to search for in any modern work or in any modern age. Such at least is my own opinion, and I have endeavoured to give others the means of judging for themselves so far as I am able, by giving all I get unaltered, and by naming all my authorities.

Another Gaelic story, the "Gillie Carrach," of which I lately (June 1860) received a long version from John Dewar, contains three incidents very like those in Herodotus; mixed with others which are new to me, and others which I have in Gaelic from other sources, one of which has a parallel in Italian and in Sanscrit.

It is curious to remark, that the very same ideas seem to have occurred to Herodotus, while on his travels, which now arise in the minds of worthy pedagogues in the Highlands. They object to old stories told by peasants, because they are "fictions," and not historically true. I have repeatedly met men who look on the telling of these tales as something almost wicked.

Thus wrote Herodotus, and those who object to traditionary fictions might take example by the father of history, and while they disbelieve the stories, write them down.

"Such as think the tales told by the Egyptians credible, are free to accept them for history. For my own part, I propose to myself, throughout my whole work, faithfully to record the traditions of the several nations."

Surely if Herodotus did not think it beneath him to record such frivolous things, and if men of the highest acquirements now make them a study, they are not wholly unworthy of notice.

LIV. The Widow And Her Daughters

From Mrs. MacGeachy, Farmer's Wife, Islay.

THERE was formerly a poor widow, and she had three daughters, and all she had to feed them was a kailyard. There was a great gray horse who was coming every day to the yard to eat the kail. Said the eldest of the daughters to her mother, "I will go to the yard to-day, and I will take the spinning-wheel with me, and I will keep the horse out of the kail." "Do," said her mother. She went out. The horse came; she took the distaff from the wheel and she struck him. The distaff stuck to the horse, and her hand stuck to the distaff. Away went the horse till, they reached a green hill, and he called out, "Open, open, oh green hill, and let in the king's son; open, open, oh green hill, and let in the widow's daughter." The hill opened, and they went in. He warmed water for her feet, and made a soft bed for her limbs, and she lay down that night. Early on the morrow, when he rose, he was going to hunt. He gave her the keys of the whole house, and he said to her that she might open every chamber inside but the one. "By all she ever saw not to open that one." That she should have his dinner ready when he should come back, and that if she would be a good woman that he would marry her. When he went away she began to open the chambers. Every one, as she opened it, was getting finer and finer, till she came to the one that was forbidden. It seemed to her, "What might be in it that she might not open it too." She opened it, and it was full of dead gentle women, and she went down to the knee in blood. Then she came out, and she was cleansing her foot; and though she were cleaning it, still she could not take a bit of the blood off it. A tiny cat came where she was, and she said to her, "If she would give a little drop of milk that she would clean her foot as well as it was before. "Thou! ugly beast! be off before thee. Dost thou suppose that I won't clean them better than thou?" "Yes, yes, take thine own away. Thou wilt see what will happen to thee when himself comes home." He came home, and she set the dinner on the board, and they sat down at it. Before they ate a bit he said to her, "Wert thou a good woman to-day was," said she. "Let me see thy foot, and I will tell thee whether thou wert or wert not." She let him see the one that was clean. "Let me see the other one," said he. When he saw the blood, "Oh! ho!" said he. He rose and took the axe and took her head off, and he threw her into the chamber with the other dead people. He laid down that night, and early on the morrow he went to the widow's yard again. Said the second one of the widow's daughters to her mother--"I will go out to-day, and I will keep the gray horse out of the yard." She went out sewing. She struck the thing she was sewing on the horse. The cloth stuck to the horse, and her hand stuck to the cloth. They reached the hill. He called as usual to the hill; the hill opened, and they went in. He warmed water for her feet, and made a soft bed for her limbs, and they lay down that night. Early in the morning he was going to hunt, and he said to her that she should open every chamber inside but one, and "by all she ever saw" not to open that one. She opened every chamber till she came to the little one, and because she thought "What might be in that one more than the rest that she might not open it?" She opened it, and it was full of dead gentlewomen, and her own sister amongst them. She went down to the knee in blood. She came out, and as she was cleaning herself, and the little cat came round about, and she said to her, "If thou wilt give me a tiny drop of milk I will clean thy foot is well as it ever was." "Thou! ugly beast! begone. Dost thou think that I will not clean it myself better than thou?" "Thou wilt see," said the cat, "what will happen to thee when himself comes home." When he came she set down the dinner, and they sat at it. Said he--"Wert thou a good woman to-day?" "I was," said she. "Let me see thy foot, and I will tell thee whether thou wert or wert not." She let him see the foot that was clean. "Let me see the other one," said he. She let him see it. "Oh! ho said he, and he took the axe and took her head off. He lay

down that night. Early on the morrow, said the youngest one to her mother, as she wove a stocking--"I will go out with my stocking to-day, and I will watch the gray horse. I will see what happened to my two sisters, and I will return to tell you." "Do," said her mother, "and see thou dost not stay away. She went out, and the horse came. She struck the stocking on the horse. The stocking stuck to the horse, and the hand stuck to the stocking. They went away, and they reached the green hill. He called out as usual, and they got in. He warmed water for her feet, and made a soft bed for her limbs, and they lay down that night. On the morrow he was going to hunt, and he said to her--"If she would behave herself as a good woman till he returned, that they would be married in a few days." He gave her the keys, and he said to her that she might open every chamber that was within but that little one, "but see that she should not open that one." She opened every one, and when she came to this one, because she thought "what might be in it that she might not open it more than the rest?" she opened it, and she saw her two sisters there dead, and she went down to the two knees in blood. She came out, and she was cleaning her feet, and she could not take a bit of the blood off them. The tiny cat came where she was, and she said to her--"Give me a tiny drop of milk, and I will clean thy feet as well as they were before." "I will give it thou creature; I will give thee thy desire of milk if thou will clean my feet." The cat licked her feet as well as they were before. Then the king came home, and they set down his dinner, and they sat at it. Before they ate a bit, he said to her, "Wert *thou* a good woman to-day?" "I was middlin," said she; "I have no boasting to make of myself." "Let me see thy feet," said he. She let him see her feet. "Thou wert a good woman," said he; "and if thou holdest on thus till the end of a few days, thyself and I will be married." On the morrow he went away to hunt. When he went away the little cat came where she was. "Now, I will tell thee in what way thou wilt be quickest married to him," said the cat. "There are," said she, "a lot of old chests within. Thou shalt take out three of them; thou shalt clean them. Thou shalt say to him next night, that he must leave these three chests, one about of them, in thy mother's house, as they are of no use here; that there are plenty here without them; thou shalt say to him that he must not open any of them on the road, or else, if he opens, that thou wilt leave him; that thou wilt go up into a tree top, and that thou wilt be looking, and that if he opens any of them that thou wilt see. Then when he goes hunting, thou shalt open the chamber, thou shalt bring out thy two sisters; thou shalt draw on them the magic club, and they will be as lively and whole as they were before; thou shalt clean them then, and thou shalt put one in each chest of them, and thou shalt go thyself into the third one. Thou shalt put of silver and of gold, as much in the chests as will keep thy mother and thy sisters right for their lives. When he leaves the chests in thy mother's house, and when he returns he will fly in a wild rage: he will then go to thy mother's house in this fury, and he will break in the door; be thou behind the door, and take off his head with the bar; and then he will be a king's son, as precious as he was before, and he will marry thee. Say to thy sisters, if he attempts the chests to open them by the way, to call out, 'I see thee, I see thee,' and that he wilt think that thou wilt be calling out in the tree." When he came home he went away with the chests, one after one, till he left them in her mother's house. When he came to a glen, where he thought she in the tree could not see him, he began to let the chest down to see what was in it; she that was in the chest called out, "I see thee, I see thee!"

"Good luck be on thy pretty little head," said he, "if thou canst not see a long way!"

This was the way with him each journey, till he left the chests altogether in her mother's house.

When he returned home on the last journey, and saw that she was not before him, he flew in a wild rage; he went back to the widow's house, and when he reached the door he drove it in before him. She was standing behind the door, and she took his head off with the bar. Then he grew a king's son, as precious as ever came; there he was within and they were in great

gladness, She and himself married, and they left with her mother and sisters, of gold and silver, as much as left them well for life.

(Gaelic omitted)

From Catherine Milloy, Kilmeny, Islay, March 1859.

An old woman of the name of *Hutton*, in Cowal, told this to *Catherine Milloy*, a Cowal woman, married to a farmer at Kilmeny, *Angus MacGeachy*, a Campbelltown man. Written down from her dictation by *Hector MacLean*, Islay, May 1859.

This story is something like The Hoodie and The Daughter of the King of the Skies; it has a bit like The Mermaid.

I have another version, told by Hugh Mac-in-deor, an old man at Bowmore, in Islay, who can recite a great many more stories; he borders upon eighty, is very poor, and has had but little education. He tells MacLean that he learnt his stories long ago from one Angus Brown, who was known by the soubriquet of Aonghas Gruama frowning Angus, of whom very queer anecdotes are told. Mac-in-deor was able to play the pipes in his day. His father was considered an excellent piper; and his son Dugald is allowed to be one of the best pipers in the island.

2d. A poor woman had three daughters and a kail-yard, and a horse used to come every day to eat the kail. The daughters went, one after the other, to drive him away with the distaff and the distaff stuck to the horse and to their hands, and he dragged them in turn to a castle. (*It is not said that the horse became a man*.) The first was the eldest who slept in the castle; on the morrow she got a key, and was told to look at all the rooms but one; and to milk the "Three Red-brown Hornless Cows." She looked into the room of course, and sank to her knee in blood; and "a grey great cat" came about and asked for a drop milk, and was refused.

When the "giant" came home he asked to see her foot, and it was red with blood; and he smote her with the "White Glave of Light," and killed her.

The very same thing happened to the second. The youngest milked the three Red-brown Hornless Cows; but peeped, and sank to her knee in blood, and saw her two dead sisters. The great grey cat asked for milk, and got it and drank it, and became a splendid woman, and told her that she was a king's daughter under spells; and she told her to take some of the milk and to clean her foot with it, and that it would not leave a speck of the blood on her; and so she did.

"Now," said the king's daughter, "when he comes in and sees that thy foot is clean, he will marry thee; but thou wilt not be long alive if thou art with him. When he goes to the hunting hill, thou shalt take with thee AM BALLAN IOC, vessel of balsam (*ballan is a teat*), and rub it against the mouth of thy big sister; and thou shalt put her into a sack, and gold and silver with her, and thou shalt stuff the sack with hay; and when he comes home tell him that there is a whisp for the cow, and to leave it with thy mother; and the next day do the same with thy second sister; and on the third day, I will put thyself and the white glave of light into the sack. When he knows that thou art not with him, he will go after thee; and when he is coming in at the door, "SGAP" the head off him with the sword, and hold the sword on the SMIOR CHAILLEACH (spinal marrow) till it cools, before the head goes on again."

The girl did as she was told; and he took the three sisters alive, and his gold and his sword, in the sacks with the hay on his back to the mother, and said each time, "SO A CHAILLEACH SIN AGUD SOP DO'N BHO," "Here carlin, there thou hast a whisp for the cow."

On the third day he went home, and when he lay down and found that she was not there, he went to the poor woman's house, and the youngest daughter chopped his head off as he went in it the door; and then she went back to the castle and stayed in it with the king's daughter.

3d. This is manifestly the same story as "The history of Mr. Greenwood," in Mr. Peter Buchan's unpublished MS. The scene of that story is laid in the Western Isles; it is brought down to a much later period than the Gaelic story; and the language is not that of peasants.

It is the same as the Old Dame and her Hen, Norse Tales, No. III., published. 1859, and it resembles bits of other tales in the same collection. It is the same as Fitcher's Vogel, Grimm, No. 46, and Old Rink Rank, 196. It is in French as Barbe Bleu; in English as Bluebeard; and according to the notes in Grimm's third volume, it is very old and very widely spread. Of all these the Norse and Gaelic resemble each other most.

The same idea pervades a number of other Gaelic stories, namely, that of a people living underground, who assumed the shape of various creatures, and lived by hunting; possessed gold and silver, and swords; carried off women and children; ate some, murdered others, and kept a larder of dead gentlewomen, whom it appears that they carried off, married, and murdered.

LV. The Tale Of The Soldier

From John MacDonald, travelling tinker.

THERE was an old soldier once, and he left the army. He went to the top of a hill that was at the upper end of the town land, and he said--

“Well, may it be that the mischief may come and take me with him on his back, the next time that I come again in sight of this town.”

Then he was walking till he came to the house of a gentleman that was there, John asked the gentleman if he would get leave to stay in his house that night. “Well, then,” said the gentleman, “since thou art an old soldier, and hast the look of a man of courage, without dread or fear in thy face, there is a castle at the side of yonder wood, and thou mayest stay in it till day. Thou shalt have a pipe and baccy, a cogie full of whisky, and a bible to read.”

When John got his supper, he took himself to the castle: he set on a great fire, and when a while of the night had come, there came two tawny women in, and a dead man’s kist between them. They threw it at the fireside, and they sprang out. John arose, and with the heel of his foot he drove out its end, and he dragged out an old hoary bodach, and he set him sitting in the great chair; he gave him a pipe and baccy, and a cogie of whisky, but the bodach lot them fall on the floor. “Poor man,” said John, “the cold is on thee.” John laid himself stretched in the bed, and he left the bodach to toast himself at the fireside; but about the crowing of the cock he went away.

The gentleman came well early in the morning.

“What rest didst thou find John?”

“Good rest,” said John “thy father was not the man that would frighten me.”

“Right, good John, thou shalt have two hundred ‘*pund*,’ and lie to-night in the castle.”

“I am the man that will do that,” said John; and that night it was the very like. There came three tawny women, and a dead man’s kist with them amongst them. They threw it up to the side of the fireplace, and they took their soles out (of that).

John arose, and with the heel of his foot he broke the head of the kist, and he dragged out of it the old hoary man; and as he did the night before he set him sitting in the big chair, and gave him pipe and baccy, and he let them fall. “Oh! poor man,” said John, “cold is on thee.” Then he gave him a cogie of drink, and he let that fall also. “Oh! poor man, thou art cold.”

The bodach went as he did the night before; “but,” said John to himself, “if I stay here this night, and that thou shouldst come, thou shalt pay my pipe and baccy, and my cogie of drink.”

The gentleman came early enough in the morning, and he asked, “What rest didst thou find last night, John?” “Good rest,” said John, “it was not the hoary bodach, thy father, that would put fear on me.”

“Och!” said the gentleman, “if thou stayest to-night -thou shalt have three hundred ‘*pund*.’”

“It’s a bargain,” said John.

When it was a while of the night there came four tawny women, and a dead man’s kist with them amongst them; and they let that down at the side of John.

John arose, and he drew his foot and he drove the head out of the kist, and he dragged out the old hoary man and he set him in the big chair. He reached him the pipe and the baccy, the cup and the drink, but the old man let them fall, and they were broken.

“Och,” said John, before thou goest this night thou shalt pay me all thou hast broken;” but word there came not from the head of the bodach. Then John took the belt of his “abersgaic,”[52] and he tied the bodach to his side, and he took him with him to bed. When the heath-cock crowed, the bodach asked him to let him go.

“Pay what thou hast broken first,” said John. “I will tell thee, then,” said the old man,” there is a cellar of drink under, below me, in which there is plenty of drink, tobacco, and pipes; there is another little chamber beside the cellar, in which there is a caldron full of gold; and under the threshold of the big door there is a crocky full of silver. Thou sawest the women that came with me to-night?”

“I saw,” said John.

“Well, there thou hast four women from whom I took the cows, and they in extremity; they are going with me every night thus, punishing me; but go thou and tell my son how I am being wearied out. Let him go and pay the cows, and let him not be heavy on the poor. Thou thyself and he may divide the gold and silver between you, and marry thyself my old girl; but mind, give plenty of gold of what is left to the poor, on whom I was too hard, and I will find rest in the world of worlds.”

The gentleman came, and John told him as I have told thee, but John would not marry the old girl of the hoary bodach.

At the end of a day or two John would not stay longer; he filled his pockets full of the gold, and he asked the gentleman to give plenty of gold to the poor. He reached the house (went home), but he was wearying at home, and he had rather be back with the regiment. He took himself off on a day of days, and he reached the hill above the town from which he went away; but who should come to him but the Mischief.

“Hoth! hoth! John, thou hast come back?”

“Hoth! on thyself,” quoth John, “I came; who art thou?”

“I am the Mischief; the man to whom thou gavest thyself when thou was here last.”

“Ai! ai!” said John, “it’s long since I heard tell of thee, but I never saw thee before. There is glamour on my eyes, I will not believe that it is thou at all; but make a snake of thyself, and I will believe thee.”

The Mischief did this.

“Make now a lion of roaring.”

The Mischief did this.

“Spit fire now seven miles behind thee, and seven miles before thee.”

The Mischief did this.

Well,” said John, “since I am to be a servant with thee, come into my ‘abersgaic,’ and I will carry thee; but thou must not come out till I ask thee, or else the bargain’s broke.”

The Mischief promised, and he did this.

[52] Haversack

“Now,” said John, “I am going to see a brother of mine that is in the regiment, but keep thou quiet.”

So now, John went into the town; and one yonder and one here, would cry, “There is John the ‘desairtair.’”

There was gripping of John, and a court held on him; and so it was that he was to be hanged about mid-day on the morrow, and John asked no favour but to be floored with a bullet.

The “Coirneal” said, “Since he was an old soldier, and in the army so long, that he should have his asking.”

On the morrow when John was to be shot, and the soldiers foursome round all about him, “What is that they are saying?” said the Mischief. “Let me amongst them and I wont be long scattering them.”

“Cuist! cuist!” said John.

“What’s that speaking to thee?” said the Coirneal.

“Oh! it’s but a white mouse,” said John.

“Black or white,” said the Coirneal, “don’t thou let her out of the ‘abersgaic’ and thou shalt have a letter of loosing, and let’s see thee no more.”

John went away, and in the mouth of night be went into a barn where there were twelve men threshing.

“Oh! lads,” said John, “here’s for you my old abersgaic, and take a while threshing it, it is so hard that it is taking the skin off my back.”

They took as much as two hours of the watch at the abersgaic with the twelve flails; and at last every blow they gave it, it would leap to the top of the barn, and it was casting one of the threshers now and again on his back. When they saw that, they asked him to be out of that, himself and his agersgaic; they would not believe but that the Mischief was in it.

Then he went on his journey, and he went into a smithy where there were twelve smiths striking their great hammers.

“Here’s for you, lads, an old abersgaic, and I will give you half-a-crown, and take a while at it with the twelve great hammers; it is so hard that it is taking the skin off my back.”

But that was fun for the smiths; it was good sport for them the abersgaic of the soldier; but every “sgailc” it got, it was bounding to the top of the smithy. “Go out of this, thyself and it,” said they; “we will not believe but that the ‘Bramman’[53] is in it.”

So then John went on and the Mischief on his back, and he reached a great furnace that was there.

“Where art thou going now, John?” said the Mischief.

“Patience a little, and thou’lt see that,” said John.

“Let me out,” said the Mischief, “and I will never put trouble on thee in this world.”

“Nor in the next?” said John.

“That’s it,” said the Mischief.

[53] This word I have never met before.

“Stop then,” said John, “till thou get a smoke;” and so saying, John cast the abersgaic and the Donas into the middle of the furnace, and himself and the furnace went as a green flame of fire to the skies.

(Gaelic omitted)

This was written by Hector Urquhart, from the dictation of John MacDonald, and sent January 1860.

It is clearly the same story as that of the man who travelled to learn what shivering meant (Grimm), though it has only a very few of the incidents which are in the German version.

Another version of the same story was told me in English by a man whom I met in London, and have never been able to find again. (See Introduction.)

It is a story very widely spread in Europe; and I believe this to be a genuine tradition, though I have but one Gaelic version of it.

John MacDonald, travelling tinker, has but a small stock of lore; and the tinker whom I met in London could not read the card which I gave him, with a promise of payment if he would come and repeat his stock of stories. His female companion, indeed, could both read the card and speak French. The whole lot seemed to suspect some evil design on my part; and I have never seen the one who told the story, or the woman since, though I met their comrade afterwards.

For the pedigree of Grimm’s version, see vol. iii., p. 15, edition 1856.

LVI. The Sharp Grey Sheep

From John Dewar, labourer, Glendaruail, Cowal.

THERE was a king and a queen, and they had a daughter, and the queen found death, and the king married another. And the last queen was bad to the daughter of the first queen, and she used to beat her and put her out of the door. She sent her to herd the sheep, and was not giving her what should suffice her. And there was a sharp (horned) grey sheep in the flock that was coming with meat to her.

The queen was taking wonder that she was keeping alive and that she was not getting meat enough from herself, and she told it to the henwife. The henwife thought that she would send her own daughter to watch how she was getting meat, and Ni Mhaol Charach,[54] the henwife's daughter, went to herd the sheep with the queen's daughter. The sheep would not come to her so long as Ni Mhaol Charach wag there, and Ni Mhaol Charach was staying all the day with her. The queen's daughter was longing for her meat, and she said--"Set thy head on my knee and I will dress thy hair."[55] And Ni Mhaol Charach set her head on the knee of the queen's daughter, and she slept.

The sheep came with meat to the queen's daughter, but the eye that was in the back of the head of the bald black-skinned girl, the henwife's daughter, was open, and she saw all that went on, and when she awoke she went home and told it to her mother, and the henwife told it to the queen, and when the queen understood how the girl was getting meat, nothing at all would serve her but that the sheep should be killed.

The sheep came to the queen's daughter and said to her--

"They are going to kill me, but steal thou my skin and gather my bones and roll them in my skin, and I will come alive again, and I will come to thee again."

The sheep was killed, and the queen's daughter stole her skin, and she gathered her bones and her hoofs and she rolled them in the skin; but she forgot the little hoofs. The sheep came alive again, but she was lame. She came to the king's daughter with a halting step, and she said, "Thou didst as I desired thee, but thou hast forgotten the little hoofs."

And she was keeping her in meat after that.

There was a young prince who was hunting and coming often past her, and he saw how pretty she was, and he asked, "Who's she?" And they told him, and he took love for her, and he was often coming the way; but the bald black-skinned girl, the henwife's daughter, took notice of him, and she told it to her mother, and the henwife told it to the queen.

The queen was wishful to get knowledge what man it was, and the henwife sought till she found out who he (was), and she told the queen. When the queen heard who it was she was wishful to send her own daughter in his way, and she brought in the first queen's daughter, and she sent her own daughter to herd in her place, and she was making the daughter of the first queen do the cooking and every service about the house.

[54] Bald scabby thing.
[55] Fasgabhaidh

The first queen's daughter was out a turn, and the prince met her, and he gave her a pair of golden shoes. And he was wishful to see her at the sermon, but her muime would not let her go there.

But when the rest would go she would make ready, and she would go after them, and she would sit where he might see her, but she would rise and go before the people would scatter, and she would be at the house and everything in order before her muime would come. But the third time she was there the prince was wishful to go with her, and he sat near to the door, and when she went he was keeping an eye on her, and he rose and went after her. She was running home, and she lost one of her shoes in the mud; and he got the shoe, and because he could not see her he said that the one who had the foot that would fit the shoe was the wife that would be his.

The queen was wishful that the shoe would fit her own daughter, and she put the daughter of the first queen in hiding, so that she should not be seen till she should try if the shoe should fit her own daughter.

When the prince came to try the shoe on her, her foot was too big, but she was very anxious that the shoe should fit her, and she spoke to the henwife about it. The henwife cut the points of her toes off that the shoe might fit her, and the shoe went on her when the points of the toes were cut.

When the wedding-day came the daughter of the first queen was set in hiding in a nook that was behind the fire.

When the people were all gathered together, a bird came to the window, and he cried--

"The blood's in the shoe, and the pretty foot's in the nook at the back of the fire."[56]

One of them said, "What is that creature saying?"

And the queen said--"It's no matter what that creature is saying; it is but a nasty, beaky, lying creature." The bird came again to the window; and the third time he came, the prince said--"We will go and see what he is saying."

And he rose and he went out, and the bird cried--

"The blood's in the shoe, and the pretty foot's in the nook that is at the back of the fire."

He returned in, and he ordered the nook at the back of the fire to be searched. And they searched it, and they found the first queen's daughter there, and the golden shoe on the one foot. They cleaned the blood out of the other shoe, and they tried it on her, and the shoe fitted her, and its like was on the other foot. The prince left the daughter of the last queen, and he married the daughter of the first queen, and he took her from them with him, and she was rich and lucky after that.

(Gaelic omitted)

"He has an eye in the back of his head," is a common saying for some one preternaturally sharp.

This story has some resemblance to Argus, who had a hundred eyes, and slept with two at a time; and was set by Juno (a queen) to watch Io, a human being changed into a heifer.

[56] The words in Gaelic have a sound that might be an imitation of the note of a singing bird; the vowel sounds are *ui* and *oi*, and there are many soft consonants.

The sheep that came alive and was lame, is like Norse mythology (*Edda*--Dasent's translation, p. 51). "Thorr took his he goats and killed them both, and after that they were flain and borne to the kettle. . . . Then laid Thorr the goatskins away from the fire, and told the husband and his household they should cast the bones into the goatskins. . . . Thor . . hallowed the goatskins, then stood up the goats, and one of them was halt in one of his hind feet."

One of the people had broken the thigh for the marrow.

I know nothing in any story quite like the first part, but it is like Cinderella (Grimm, English, p. 81), where the birds and the shoe appear; but with a wholly different set of incidents. It is like One Eye, Two Eyes, and Three Eyes (p. 387); but in that story the church and the golden shoe do not appear.

See Grimm, vol. iii., p. 34, for numerous references to versions of Cinderella in books of all ages.

It has some resemblance to Bellin the Ram of the Countess Daulnoy.

The second part is closer to the Norse versions of Cinderella than to the English story, and may be compared with part of Katie Woodencloak, where the birds and the shoe appear; and where there is a going to church.

I have many Gaelic versions of the incidents, all of which resemble each other; the golden shoe is sometimes transferred to a man, which I take to be some confusion in the memory of the person who tells the story.

LVII. The Widow's Son

From John MacPhie, South Uist, and Donald MacCraw, North Uist.

THERE was a poor fisher's widow in Eirinn, and she had one son; and one day he left his mother with a lump of a horse, and a man met him with a gun, a dog, and a falcon (gunna cu agus seobhag); and he said, "Wilt thou sell me the horse, son of the fisher in Eirinn?" and he said, "What wilt thou give me? Wilt thou give me thy gun and thy dog, and thy falcon?" And he said, "I will give them;" and the bargain was struck; and Iain, the fisher's son, went home. When his mother saw him she was enraged, and she beat him; and in the night he took the gun and went away to be a hunter.[57] He went and he went till he reached the house of a farmer, who was sitting there with his old wife. The farmer said, "It was fortune sent thee here with thy gun; there is a deer that comes every night to eat my corn, and she will not leave a straw." And they engaged Iain the fisherman's son to stay with them, and shoot the deer; and so he stayed; and on the morrow's day he went out, and when he saw the deer he put the gun to his eye to shoot her, and the lock was up; but when he would have fired, he saw the finest woman he ever saw before him, and he held his hand, and let down the gun, and let down the lock, and there was the deer eating the corn again.

Three times he did this, and then he ran after the deer to try to catch her.

(In the other version, he went out on three successive days. On the first, when he aimed he saw over the sight a woman's face and breast, while the rest remained a deer. "Don't fire at me, widow's son," said the deer; and he did not, and went home and did not tell what had happened. The next day when he aimed, the woman was free to the waist, but the rest was still deer; and on the third she was free; and she told the hunter that she was the king of Lochlin's daughter, enchanted by the old man, and that she would marry the hunter if he came to such a hill.)

The deer ran away, and he followed till they came to a house thatched with heather; and then the deer leaped on the house, and she said, "Go in now, thou fisher's son, and eat thy fill." He went in and there was a table spread with every kind of meat and drink, and no one within; for this was a robber's house, and they were away lifting spoil.

So the fisher's son went in, and as the deer had told him, he sat him down, and ate and drank; and when he had enough he went under a TOGSAID (hogshead).

He had not been long there when the twenty-four robbers came home, and they knew that some one had been at their food, and they began to grumble and dispute. Then the leader said, "Why will you dispute and quarrel? the man that has done this is here under the mouth of this hogshead, take him now, and let four of you go out and kill him."

So they took out Iain, the fisher's son, and four of them killed him; and then they had their food and slept, and in the morning they went out as usual.

When they had gone the deer came where Iain was, and she shook SOL (wax) from her ear on the dead man, and he was alive and whole as he was before. "Now," said she, "trust me, go in and eat as thou didst yesterday."

So Iain, the fisher's son, went in and ate and drank as he had done; and when he had enough he went in under the mouth of the hogshead; and when the robbers came home, there was

[57] MacCraw started him with a big bonnoch and a little one, and his mother's blessing.

more of their food eaten than on the day before, and they had a worse dispute. Then the captain said, “The man that did it is there, go out now with him four of you, and kill him; and let those who went last night be killed also, because he is now alive.” So the four robbers were slain, and Iain was killed again; and the rest of the robbers ate and drank, and slept; and on the morrow before dawn they were off again. Then the deer came, and she shook SOL from her right ear on Iain the fisher’s son, and he was alive as well as before; in a burst of sweat.

That day Iain ate and drank, and hid as before; and when the robbers came home, the captain ordered the four who had gone out to be slain; and now there were eight dead; and four more killed Iain the fisher’s son, and left him there. On the morrow the deer came as before, and Iain was brought alive; and the next day the robbers all killed each other.

On that day the deer came, and Iain followed her to the white house of a window, where there lived an old hag, and Gille Caol dubh, a slender dark lad, her son, and the deer said, “Meet me to-morrow at eleven in yonder church,” and she left him there.

On the morrow he went, but the carlin stuck a BIOR NIMH, Spike of hurt, in the outside of the door post; and when he came to the church he fell asleep, and the black lad was watching him. Then they heard the sweetest music they ever heard coming, and the finest lady that ever was came and tried to waken him; and when she could not, she wrote her name under his arm, NIGHEAN RIGH RIOGHACHD BAILLE FO’ THUINN, the daughter of the king of the kingdom of the town under waves; and she said that she would come to-morrow, and she went away. When she was gone he awoke, and the slim black lad told him what had happened, but did not tell him that her name was written under his arm.

On the next day it was the same, the sweetest of music was heard, and the lady came, and she laid his head on her knee and dressed his hair; and when she could not awaken him, she put a snuff-box in his pocket, and cried, and went away.

On the third day she said she would never come again, and she went away home; and when she was gone he awoke.

(“Now, John MacPhie,” said I, “did she not come in a chariot with white horses?”

“Do thou put in what I tell thee,” said the narrator.

“Did she put the box in his pocket?”

“Yes she did; now, go on, there is no one in Uist who can tell this story as I can; I have known it for more than sixty years.”)

(MacCraw had said that the old woman gave the lad a great pin to stick in his coat; that he went to meet the lady on a hill, and then he slept. Then came the lady dressed all in white in a chariot, “CARBAD,” drawn by four milk-white steeds; and she laid his head in her lap and dressed his hair, and tried to waken him, but in vain. Then she dragged him down the hill, but he slept on; and she left him, but bid the black rough-skinned lad tell him to be there on the morrow. When she was gone he awoke, and the lad told him. On the morrow he went as before, and the lad stuck the pin in his coat, and be slept; then came the lady with a sorrowful face, and she was dressed all in grey, and her chariot was drawn by grey steeds; and she did as before but could not rouse him. On the next day he would have none of the big pin; but the old wife gave the lad an apple, and when they sat on the hill thirst struck him, and the lad gave him the apple, and he ate it, and slept again. Then came the lady dressed all in black, with four black steeds in her chariot; and she laid his head in her lap and dressed his hair, and she put a ring on his finger, and she wept; and as she went away she said, “He will never see me again, for I must go home.”)

When the lad awoke (said John MacPhie), Bha e falbh gus an robh dubhadh air a bhonan, toladh air a chasan, neoil dubha doracha na oidhche a tighinn neoil sithe seamh an latha ga fhagail gus an robh eoin bhega an t-shleibh a gabhail an am bun gach preas a b'fhaisge dhaibh na chéile.

He was going till there was blackening on his soles, holes in his feet, the dark black clouds of the night coming, the quiet peaceful clouds of day leaving him, till the little mountain birds were betaking themselves about the root of each bush that was nearest to them; and he went till he reached the house of a wife, who said, "All hail! son of the great fisher in Eirinn, I know thy journey and thine errand; come in and I will do what I can for thee (*and here came in a lot of queer language which I could not catch*). So he went in, and on the morrow she said, "I have a sister who dwells on the road; it is a walk of a year and a day, but here are a pair of old brown shoes with holes in them, put them on and thou wilt be there in an instant; and when thou art there, turn their toes to the known, and their heels to the unknown, and they will come home; and so he did.

The second sister did the very same; but she said, "I have a third sister, and she has a son, who is herd to the birds of the air, and sets them asleep, perhaps he can help thee;" and then she gave him another pair of shoes, and he went to the third sister.

The third said she did not know how to help him farther, but perhaps her son might, when he came home; and he, when he came, proposed that the cow should be killed; and after some talk, that was done, and the meat was cooked, and a bag made of the hide, red side out; and John, the fisher's son, was put in with his son, but he left the dog and the falcon. He had not been long in the bag when the Creveenach[58] came, for she had a nest in an island, and she raised the red bag; but she had not gone far when she dropped it in the sea. Then the other one came, and she gripped to it firmly with her claws; and at last they left the bag on the island, where all the birds of the air were wont to sleep.[59] He came out of the bag; and he was for a day and year living on what he had, and on the birds which he killed with his gun; but at last there was nothing more to eat, and he thought he would die there. Then he searched his pockets for food, and found the box which the lady had put there; he opened it, and three came out, and they said, "Eege gu djeege,[60] master, good, what shall we do?" and he said, "Take me to the realm of the king under the waves;" and in a moment there he was.[61]

He went up to the house of a weaver; and after he had been there for some time, the weaver came home with flesh, and other things from the great town; and he gave him both meat and lodging.

On the morrow the weaver told him that there was to be a horse race in the town; and be bethought him of the box, and opened it; and three came out and said "Eege gu djeege, Master, good, what shall we do?" and he said, "Bring me the finest horse that ever was seen,

[58] This word is unknown to me. It was explained to mean a bird like a large eagle.
[59] MacCraw skipped all the old women and took him at once to an old man, who was herding a cow, and said he would rather do anything else, but his wife made him do it. He went home with him, and after much chaffering bought the cow for as much gold as would go from her nose to her tail. Then he and all that he had were put into the hide with the meat; and with the wind off the strand (traigh) he had himself thrown into the sea. The great birds pounced on the red bag, and carried him to their nest, where he killed the young ones, and rolled over the rock into the sea. He was lifted again by the birds and landed in Lochlinn.
[60] The explanation of these sounds was, that it was "as if they were asking." The sounds mean nothing that I know in any language.
[61] MacCraw said that the box had been given to him by his grandfather. It first appeared in Lochlann; and "he" that was within said, "Good master, good master, what shall 'we' do?" The hunter had then been recognized by the king's daughter; so he ordered a palace to be built.

and the grandest dress, and glass shoes;" and he had them all in a minute. Now he who won the races was to have the king's daughter to wife. Then he went, and won, and the king's daughter saw him; but he never stayed; he went back to the weaver, and threw three "mam" handsfull of gold into his apron, and said that a great gentleman, who won the race, had given him the gold; and then he broke the weaver's loom, and tore the cloth to bits.

Next day there was a dog race; and he got a finer dress, and a splendid dog, by the help of the box, and won, and threw handsfull of gold to the weaver, and did more mischief in his house.

On the third day it was a falcon race, and he did the very same; and he was the man who was to marry the princess, but he was nowhere to be found when the race was over.

Then (as happens in plenty of other stories) the whole kingdom was gathered, and the winner of the prize was nowhere to be found. At last they came to the weaver's house, and the hunter's beard was grown over his face, and he was dirty and travel-stained; and he had given all the gold to the weaver, and smashed everything; and he was so dirty and ugly, and good for nothing, that he was to be hanged. But when he was under the gallows. he was to make the gallows speech, SEARMOIN NA CROICHE; and he put up his arm, and the king's daughter saw the name which she had written there, and knew him; and she called out, "Hold your hands, for every one in the kingdom shall die if that man is hurt." And then she took him by the hand, and they were to be married.

Then she dressed him grandly, and asked how he had found her out; and he told her; and she asked where he had found the box; and he said, when he was in extremity in the island; and then she took him by the hand before her father, and all the kings, and she said she would marry the fisher's son, for he it was who had freed her from spells.[62]

"Oh kings," said she, "if one of you were killed to-day, the rest would fly; but this man put his trust in me, and had his head cut off three times. Because he has done so much for me, I will marry him rather than any one of the great men who have come to marry me; for many kings have tried to free me from the spells, and none could do it but Iain here, the fisher's son."

Then a great war ship was fitted up, and sent for the old carlin who had done all the evil, and for her black slim son; and seven fiery furnaces were set in order, and they were burnt, and the ashes were let fly with the wind; and a great wedding was made, and "I left them in the realm."

This story was first told to me on the 2d September 1859 by MacCraw, as we walked along the road. He said that he had learned it as a child from an old wife in North Uist, whose cottage was the resort of all the children for miles and miles. He has often gone himself six or seven miles in the snow, and he used to sit with dozens of other bairns about her fire, mute and motionless for the best part of the night. The children brought offerings of tobacco,

[62] Here, according to MacCraw, he built a palace; and one of the rivals stole the magic box, and carried off the princess and the palace to the realm of rats; and when the widow's son saw that the palace was gone he was very sorrowful, and went down to the shore; and there he met with an old man, who took pity on him, and offered to help him. He throw a rod into the sea, and it became a boat; and he said, "Here's for thee a he-cat, and he will sail with thee" and the cat sat at the helm, and they hoisted the three tall towering sails, etc., etc. (*The old passage descriptive of the voyage*.) When they reached the realm of rats, the first rat that the cat saw he caught; and the rat said, "Thine is my lying down and rising up; let me go and I will serve thee." So the cat let him go; and the man said, "Now steal for me the snuff-box that the man in the castle has." "That," said the rat, "is easy, for it is on the window ledge;" and the rat stole the box. Then the man opened it, and "they" said "Good master, good master, what shall 'we' do?" and he said, "Take me and my wife, and that castle, back to Lochlann; and be knocking each other's heads about till we arrive, for that you brought it here." So they were all carried back to Lochlann, and then the right wedding was held.

which they got from older people, as best they could, and for each bit the old woman gave a story. He “never heard her like.”

The story lasted for several miles, and my companion said that he had forgotten much of it. He had forgotten nearly all the measured prose phrases with which, as he said, the story was garnished, and he said he had not heard it for many years.

It seemed to resemble the story of Aladdin in some incidents, but my companion said that he had never heard of the Arabian Nights. He said that in Kinross and Perthshire it is the custom for the hinds and farm-labourers to assemble and repeat stories in broad Scotch, which closely resemble those told in the islands, but which are not garnished with measured prose. He thinks that as there are many Highland servants in the country, they tell the heads of their stories, and then others repeat them in Lowland Scotch. This may be, and in like manner the Highland servants may pick up and carry home, and repeat in Gaelic, scraps of such books as the Arabian Nights. Still, as such stories do resemble books quite beyond the reach of the people, the resemblance which this bore to the Arabian Nights *may* be due to common origin.

On the 5th I asked MacPhie if he knew the story. He did; and I got him to tell it twice over. It was vain to attempt to make him dictate, for he broke down directly he was stopped, or his pace altered; and I could not write Gaelic, at all events, fast enough to do any good; so I took notes in English. The Magic Box was in both versions, but the transport of the castle to a foreign country, and back by the help of the box, was not in old MacPhie’s story.

There is a long story about the country of rats, of which I have only heard part as yet.

BIOR NIMH, spike of hurt, and the big pin, may be “the thorn of sleep” referred to in the introduction to Norse Tales, as mentioned in the Volsung Tale.

The town under the waves is common in Gaelic stories; the phrase probably arose from the sinking of bills beneath the horizon as a boat sails away from the shore. In another story it is said, Thog eud Eilean--they “raised an Island”--when they were approaching one.

The bag of skin with the man inside, is remarkably like a tradition of the skin boats in which the old inhabitants of Caledonia used to invade England.

The great birds belong to popular tales of many lands, and are common in Gaelic. I have one story in which the hero is carried into a dragon’s nest, and does much the same as this one did.

LVIII. Mac-A-Rusgaich

From John Dewar, April 1860.

THERE was (at) some time a tenant, and he was right bad to his servants, and there was a pranky man who was called Gille Neumh Mac-a-Rusgaich (holy lad son of Skinner), and he heard tell of him, and he went to the fair, and he took a straw in his mouth, to shew that he was for taking service.

The dour tenant came the way, and he asked Mac-a-Rusgaich if he would take service; and Mac-a-Rusgaich said that he would take it if he could find a good master; and Mac-a-Rusgaich said,

“What shall I have to do if I take with thee?”

And the dour tenant said, “Thou wilt have to herd the mountain moor.”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “I will do that.”

And the tenant said, “And thou wilt have to hold the plough.”[63]

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “I will do that.”

“And thou wilt have ever so many other matters to do.”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “Will these matters be hard to do?”

And the other said, “They will not be (so), I will but ask thee to do the thing that thou art able to do but I will put into the covenant that if thou dost not answer, thou must pay me two wages.”[64]

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “I will put into the covenant, if thou askest me to do anything but the thing which I am able to do, thou must give me two wages.”

And they agreed about that.

And the dour tenant said, “I am putting it into the covenant that if either one of us takes the rue, that a thong shall be taken out of his skin, from the back of his head to his heel.”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “Mind that thou hast said that, old carle.”

And he took service with the hard tenant, and he went home to him.

The first work that Mac-a-Rusgaich was bidden to do, was to go to the moss to cast peats, and Mac-a-Rusgaich asked for his morning meal before he should go, so that he need not come for it, and he got as much meat as they used to allow the servants at one meal, and he ate that;

[63] Crann, a tree.

[64] The following was omitted by the collector, and inserted by him in his revise of the Gaelic:--”There was (at) some time a tenant, and he was right bad to his servants; and when the time of service was nearly ended, he used to fix a pretext for quarrelling with them. He would cast out with them and send them away without their wages. And be sent away many of his servants in this way. And there was a pranky man whose name was Saints servant, son of the fleecer (Gilleneaomh Mac-a-Rusgaich), and he said that he would take service with the dour tenant, and that he would give him trick about,* that he would be as far north as the dour tenant might be south, Mac-a-Rusgaich went to the fair of Peevish fair, and he took a straw in his month, to shew that he was for taking service.” (*The original meaning of the Gaelic phrase is to take a turn out of a man,--untwist his turns. The expression then conveys the idea of a man winding coils about another; and one with more craft unwinding them; and the next phrase is as metaphorical.)

and he asked for his dinner, so that he need no stop at mid-day, and he got the allowance which there was for dinner, and he ate that; and he asked for his supper, so that he need not come home at night, and they gave him that, and he ate that; and he went where his master was, and he asked him,

“What are thy servants wont to do after their supper?”

And his master said to him, “It is their wont to put off their clothes and go to lie down.”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich went where his bed was, and he put off his clothes, and he went to lie down.

The mistress went where the man of the town (the master) was and she asked him, “What sort of a servant he had got there, that he had eaten three meals at one meal, and had gone to lie down?” And the master went where Mac-a-Rusgaich was, and he said to him,

“Why art thou not at work?”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “It is that thou thyself saidst to me that it was thy servants’ wont, when they had got their supper, to put off their clothes and go to lie down.”

And the master said, “And why didst thou eat the three meals together?”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “It is that the three meals were little enough to make a man content.”

And the master said, “Get up and go to thy work.”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “I will get up, but I must get meat as I need, or my work will accord. I am but to do as I am able. See! art thou taking the rue, old carle?”

“I am not, I am not,” said the carle, and Mac-a-Rusgaich got his meat better after that.

And there was another day and the carle asked Mac-a-Rusgaich to go to hold the plough in a dale that was down from the house, and Mac-a-Rusgaich went away, and he reached (the place) where the plough was, and he caught the stilts in his hands and there he stood.

And his master came where he was, and his master said to him.

“Why art thou not making the red land?”[65] And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “It is not my bargain to make a thraive, but to hold the plough; and thou seest that I am not letting her go away.”

And his master said, “Adversity and calamities be upon thee!”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “Adversity and calamities be on thyself, old carle! Art thou taking the rue of the bargain that thou madest?”

Oh! I am not, I am not,” said the old carle.

“But if thou wilt give me another reward for it, I will make a ploughing,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

[65] Another way of telling this part:--Thainig an tuathanach do iounsaidh, ‘s dh’ fharraid e deth cia air-son nach eil thu a deanamh an deargadh: Agus Thubhairt Mac-a-Rusgaich ris, cha n è mo bhargansa deargadh a dheanamh, ach an crann a chumail, ‘s tha thu a faicinn nach eil mi e leigidh leatha falbh; na ‘m bithinn a deargadh an talamh, cha b’ ann a cu mail a chroinn a bhithinn.
The farmer came to him and asked him, why art thou not making the red land? And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, it was not my bargain to do the reddening, but to hold the plough; and thou seest that I am not letting her go away. If I were reddening the land, it would not be holding the plough that I would be.
In some districts, the farmers call the ploughed land the red land, and the unploughed land white land.

“Oh, I will give, I will give it!” said the carle; and they made a bargain about the thraive.

And there was a day, and the hard tenant asked Mac-a-Rusgaich to go to the mountain moor to look if he could see anything wrong, and Mac-a-Rusgaich went up to the mountain.[66] And when he saw his own time he came home, and his master asked him,

“Was each thing right in the mountain?” and Mac-a-Rusgaich said,

“The mountain himself was all right.”

And the hard tenant said, “That is not what I am asking; but were the neighbours’ cattle on their own side?”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “If they were they were, and if they were, not let-a-be. It is my bargain to herd the mountain, and I will keep the mountain where it is.”

And the carle said, “Adversity and calamities be upon thee, thou boy!”

And he said, “Adversity and calamities be on thyself, old carle! Art thou taking the rue that thou hast made such a bargain?”

“I am not, I am not!” said the dour tenant; “I will give thee another reward for herding the cattle.”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “If I get another reward, I will take in hand if I see the neighbours’ cattle on thy ground that I will turn them back, and if I see thy cattle on the neighbours’ ground I will turn them back to thine own ground; but though some of them should be lost, I will not take in hand to find them; but if thou askest me to go to seek them, I will go, and if I get them I will bring them home.”

And the dour tenant had for it but to agree with Mac-a-Rusgaich, and to give Mac-a-Rusgaich another reward for herding his cattle.

Next day the carle himself went to the hill, and he could not see his heifers; he sought for them, but could not find them. He went home, and be said to Mac-a-Rusgaich,

“Thou must go thyself to search for the heifers, Mac-a-Rusgaich, I could not find them this day; and go thou to search for them, and search for them until thou find them?”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “And where shall I go to seek them?”

The old carle said, “Go and search for them in the places where thou thinkest that they are; and search for them in places where thou dost not suppose them to be.”

Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “Well, then, I will do that.”

The old carte went into the house; and Mac-a-Rusgaich got a ladder, and set it up against the house; he went up upon the house, and he began at pulling the thatch off the house, and throwing it down. And before the carle came out again, the thatch was about to be all but a very little off the house, and the rafters bare; and Mac-a-Rusgaich was pulling the rest and throwing it down.

The old carle said, “Adversity and calamity be upon thee, boy; what made thee take the thatch off the louse in that way?”

Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “It is because that I am searching for the heifers in the thatch of the house.”

[66] Against, or at the mountain.

The old carle said, “How art thou seeking the heifers in the thatch of the house, where thou art sure that they are not.”

Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “Because thou thyself saidst to me to search for them in places where I thought that they were; and also in places where I did not suppose them to be; and there is no place where I have less notion that they might be in than in the thatch of the house.”

And the carle said, “Adversity and calamity be upon thee, lad.”

Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “Adversity and calamity be upon thyself, old carle; art thou taking the rue that thou desiredst me to search for the heifers in places where I did not suppose them to be?”

“I am not, I am not,” said the carle. “Go now and seek them in places where it is likely that they may be.”

“I will do so,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich; and Mac-a-Rusgaich went to seek the heifers, and he found them, and brought them home.

Then his master desired Mac-a-Rusgaich to go to put the thatch on the house, and to make the house as water-tight to keep out rain as he was able. Mac-a-Rusgaich did so, and they were pleasant for a while after that.

The dour tenant was going to a wedding, and he asked Mac-a-Rusgaich when the evening should come, to put a saddle on the horse, and to go to the house of the wedding to take him home; and he said to him

“When it is near the twelfth hour, cast an ox eye on the side where I am, and I will know that it is near the time to go home.”[67]

“I will do that,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

When the tenant went to the wedding, Mac-a-Rusgaich went to put the stots into the fang, and he took a knife and took their eyes out, and he put the eyes in his pocket: and when the night came, Mac-a-Rusgaich put the saddle on the horse, and he went to the wedding house to seek his master, and he reached the wedding house, and he went into the company, and he sat till it was near upon the twelfth hour.

And then he began at throwing the eye of a stot at the carle at the end of each while, and at last the old carle noticed him, and he said to him,

“What art thou doing?”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “I am casting an ox-eye on the side that thou art, for that it is now near upon the twelfth hour.”

And the old carle said, “Dost thou think thyself that thou hast gone to take the eyes out of the stots?”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “It is not thinking it I am at all; I am sure of it. Thou didst ask me thyself to cast an ox eye the side thou mightest be when it was near upon the twelfth hour, and how could I do that unless I should have taken the eyes out of the stots?”

And the tenant said, “Adversity and calamities be upon thee, thou boy.”

[67] Damh shuil--an ox eye. To cast an ox eye at any one means, according to Dewar, to look with a wry face, and open the eyes wide, and stare at a person--as a signal. The idiom, to cast an eye, is common to Gaelic and English; and so is the expression, to cast a sheep’s eye.

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “Adversity and calamities on thyself, old carle! Art thou taking the rue that thou didst ask me to do it?

“I am not, I am not!” said the carle; and they went home together, and there was no more about it that night.

And the end of a day or two after, his master asked Mac-a-Rusgaich to go up to the gates at the top and make a sheep footpath.[68]

“I will do that,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich; and he went, and he put the sheep into the fang, and he cut their feet off, and he made a stair with the sheeps’ legs, and he went back where his master was, and his master said to him,

“Didst thou that?”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “I did. Thou mayest go thyself and see.”

And the master went to see the sheep footpath that Mac-a-Rusgaich had made, and when he arrived and saw the sheeps’ legs in the path, he went into a rage, and he said, “Adversity and calamities be upon thee, boy; what made thee cut the legs off the sheep?”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “Didst thou not ask me thyself to make a sheep footpath; and how should I make a sheep footpath unless I should cut the legs of the sheep? See! Art thou taking the rue that thou didst ask me to do it, old carle?”

“I am not, I am not!” said his master.

“What have I to do again?” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

“It is,” said his master, “to clean and to wash the horses and the stable, both without and within.”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich went and he cleaned out the stable, and he washed the walls on the outside, and he washed the stable on the inside; he washed the horses, and he killed them, and he took their insides out of them, and he washed their insides, and he went where his master was, and he asked him what he was to do again; and his master said to him to put the horses in what concerned them (harness) in the plough, and to take a while at ploughing.

Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “The horses won’t answer me.”

“What ails them?” said his master.

“They won’t walk for me,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

“Go and try[69] them,” said his master.

And Mac-a-Rusgaich went where the horses were, and he put a morsel of one of them into his mouth, and he went back where his master was, and he said, “They have but a bad taste.”

“What art thou saying?” said his master.

[68] STAIR, a path or causeway in a wet bog.
CHASA, for the feet, or of the feet. CHAORACH, of sheep.
According to Dewar, a path made over a bog, when a gate happens to be where the ground is soft, or where peat moss is. If sheep be often driven through such a gate, the pathway soon gets soft, so that the sheep sink in it. It is repaired by cutting brushwood or heather, and laying it on the soft place with a covering of gravel, and is called “Stair chasa caorach.”
I know the kind of road meant, but I never heard the name.--J. F. C.
[69] Feuch, is either taste or try in the Gaelic.

The master went where his horses were, and when he saw them, and the inside taken out of them, and washed and cleaned, he said, “What is the reason of this?”

“It is,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich, “that thou thyself didst ask me to clean and to wash both the horses and

“The stable both without and within, and I did that. Art thou taking the rue?” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

“I had rather that I had never seen thee,” said the master.

“Well, then,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich “thou must give me three wages, or else a thong of thy skin shall be taken from the back of thy head down to thy heel.”

The dour tenant said that he had rather the thong to be taken out of his skin, from the back of his head to his heel, than give the money to a filthy clown like Mac-a-Rusgaich.

And according to law the dour tenant was tied, and a broad thong taken from the back of his head down his back. And he cried out that he had rather give even the money away than that the thong should be cut any longer; and he paid the money, and he was forced to be a while under the leeches, and he was a dour man no longer.

After that Mac-a-Rusgaich was set to be a servant to a giant that was bad to his servants.

Mac-a-Rusgaich reached the giant, and he said, “Thy servant is come.”

The giant said, “If thou be servant to me, thou must keep even work with me, or else I will break thy bones as fine as meal.”[70]

Said Mac-a-Rusgaich, “What if I beat thee?”

“If thou beatest me,” said the giant, “thou shalt have like wages.”

“What are we going to do, then?” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

“It is (this),” said the giant; “we will go to bring home faggots.”

And they went and they reached the wood, and the giant began to gather every root that was thicker than the rest, and Mac-a-Rusgaich began to gather every top that was slenderer than the others.

The giant looked and he said,

“What art thou doing so?”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich said, “I am for that we should take the whole wood with us instead of leaving a part of it useless behind us.”

Said the giant, “We are long enough at this work; we will take home these burdens, but we will get other work again.”

The next work they went to was to cut a swathe; and the giant asked Mac-a-Rusgaich to go first. Mac-a-Rusgaich would mow the swathe, and he began and he went round about short on the inner side, and the giant had to go a longer round on the outside of him.

“What art thou doing so?” said the giant.

“I,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich, “am for that we should mow the park at one cut instead of turning back every time we cut the swathe, and we shall have no time lost at all.”

[70] PRONNOIN, coarse, unsifted oatmeal; poundings.

The giant saw that his cut would be much longer than the cut of Mac-a-Rusgaich, and he said, "We are long enough at this work, we will go to another work. We will go and we will thresh the corn."

And they went to thresh the corn, and they got the flails, and they began to work. And when the giant would strike the sheaf, he would make it spring over the baulk (rafter), and when Mac-a-Rusgaich would strike it it would lie down on the floor.

He would strike, and Mac-a-Rusgaich would say to the giant,

"Thou art not half hitting it. Wilt thou not make it crouch as I am doing?"

But the stronger the giant struck, the higher leaped the sheaf, and Mac-a-Rusgaich was laughing at him; and the giant said,

"We are long enough at this work; I will try thee in another way. We will go and try which of us can cast a stone strongest in the face of a crag that is beyond the fall."

"I am willing," said Mac-a-Rusgaich; and the giant went and he gathered the hardest stones he could find. And Mac-a-Rusgaich went and he got clay, and he rolled it into little round balls, and they went to the side of the fall.

The giant threw a stone at the face of the crag, and the stone went in splinters, and he said to Mac-a-Rusgaich,

"Do that, boy."

Mac-a-Rusgaich threw a *dudan*, lump of the clay, and it stuck in the face of the crag, and he said to the giant,

"Do that, old carl."

And the giant would throw as strongly as he could, but the more pith the giant would send with the stone he would throw, the smaller it would break. And Mac-a-Rusgaich would throw another little ball of the clay, and he would say,

"Thou art not half throwing it. Wilt thou not make the stone stick in the crag as I am doing?"

And the giant said, "We are long enough at this work; we will go and take our dinner, and then we will see which of us can best throw the stone of force (putting stone)."

"I am willing," said Mac-a-Rusgaich, and they went home.

They began at their dinner, and the giant said to Mac-a-Rusgaich,

"Unless thou eatest of bread and cheese as much as I eat, a thong shall be taken out of thy skin, from the back of thy head to thy heel."

"Make seven of it," said Mac-a-Rusgaich, "on covenant that seven thongs shall be taken out of thy skin, from the back of thy head to thy heel, unless thou eatest as much as I eat."

"Try thee, then," said the giant.

"Stop then till I get a drink," said Mac-a-Rusgaich and he went out to get a drink, and he got a leathern bag, and he put the bag between his shirt and his skin, and he went in where the giant was, and he said to the giant, "Try thee now."

The two began to eat the bread and the cheese, and Mac-a-Rusgaich was putting the bread and the cheese into the bag that he had in under his shirt, but at last the giant said,

"It is better to cease than burst."

"It is better even to burst than to leave good meat," said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

“I will cease,” said the giant.

“The seven thongs shall be taken from the back of thy head to thy heel,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

“I will try thee yet,” said the giant.

“Thou hast thy two choices,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

The giant got curds and cream, and he filled a cup for himself and another cup for Mac-a-Rusgaich.

“Let’s try who of us is best now,” said the giant.

“It’s not long till that is seen,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich. “Let’s try who can soonest drink what is in the cup.”

And Mac-a-Rusgaich drank his fill, and he put the, rest in the bag, and he was done before the giant.

And he said to the giant, “Thou art behind.”

The giant looked at him, and he said, “Ceasing is better than bursting.”

“Better is bursting itself than to leave good meat,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

We will go out and try which of us can throw the stone of force the furthest, before we do more,” said the giant.

“I am willing,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich. And they went out where the stone was, but the giant was so full that he could not stoop to lift it.

“Lift that stone and throw it,” said the giant.

“The honour of beginning the beginning is to be thine own,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

The giant tried to lift the stone, but he could not stoop. Mac-a-Rusgaich tried to stoop, and he said,

“Such a belly as this shall not be hindering me,” and he drew a knife from a sheath that was at his side, and he put the knife in the bag that was in front of him, and he let out all that was within, and he said, “There is more room without than within,” and he lifted the stone and threw it, and he said to the giant, “Do that.”

“Canst thou not throw it further than that?” said the giant.

“Thou has not thrown it as far as that same,” said Mac-a-Rusgaich.

“Over here thy knife!” said the giant.

Mac-a-Rusgaich reached his knife to the giant. The giant took the knife, and he stabbed the knife into his belly, and he let out the meat; and the giant fell to earth, and Mac-a-Rusgaich laughed at him, and the giant found death.

Mac-a-Rusgaich went in to the giant’s house, and he got his gold and silver, then he was rich, and then he went home fully pleased.

GILLE, the servant of. NEUMH, a holy man, a saint. MAC, the son of. RUSGAICH, the peeler, or a rough man, a ruffler.

Gille Neumh is a name usually translated in English, NIVEN.

The whole might be rendered “ The story of Saint’s servant, Mac Skinner.”

Mr. Dewar writes:--"Tradition says that Gille Neumh Mae Rusgaich disguised himself in woman's apparel, went to Iona, passed for a nun, and caused some of the sisters to become frail sisters. There is a long tale about him and his sister. She would get into service to attend ladies, and Mac-a-Rusgaich would disguise himself in his sister's clothes--but that part of the sgeulachd was so unbecoming that I did not write it. I heard the part which I did write as early as 1810, from an old man of the name of Alexander Dewar in Arrochar."

The story of MacRuslaig, as it is sometimes called, is very widely spread, and, as Dewar says, part of it is "unbecoming." I believe it is printed in Gaelic, but I have been unable hitherto to see the book.--J. F. C.

A very similar story is known in Sutherland.

2. The Erse version of Jack the Giant Killer.

"The opening of the tale, and the deaths of Cormoran and Blunderbore, as told in our children's books, are unknown here; and the whole thing, as found in Sutherland, more nearly resembles the Scandinavian story of the Giant and the Herd Boy, given in Thorpe's Yule-tide stories. (Bohn's Lib. edit.) I cannot get it in Gaelic (that is to say, written down in Gaelic); but am told that it happened in this wise:--

"The giant appeared to the little herd boy and threatened to kill him; but the boy gave him to understand that he had better not try, as he was very strong, though small; and that he was an enchanter, and that if the giant ate him he would make him very ill.

"The giant did not quite believe him; and taking up a stone, he ground it to powder by closing his hand over it, and bid the herd do the same, or he would make short work with him.

"The lad had a lump of curds in his pocket, which he contrived to roll in the dust till it looked like a stone, then pressing it between his fingers, a stream of whey ran through them, and the giant could not do that.

"The next trial was with the heavy hammer; the giant threw to a great distance, telling the would-be-enchanter that unless he could match that he would knock his brains out.

"'I suppose,' said the boy, 'you have no regard for the hammer, and don't care whether you ever see it again or not?'

"'What do you mean?' growled the giant.

"'I mean, that if I take up the hammer, it goes out of sight in the twinkling of an eye, and into the sea.'

"'I beg you will let the hammer alone, then, for it was my great-grandfather's hammer,' replied the giant; and they were both well pleased with the bargain.

"'Then followed the hasty-pudding feat, called brose or brochan here; and the experiment with the black pudding which the boy had in his jacket, and which ran blood when he pierced it. The giant, trying to imitate him, plunged a knife into himself and died, as may be seen in all carefully compiled books for the use of young persons."--C. D.

LIX. Mac Iain Direach

From Angus Campbell, quarryman, Knockderry, Roseneath.

AT some time there was a king and a queen, and they had one son; but the queen died, and the king married another wife. The name of the son that the first queen had, was Iain Direach. He was a handsome lad; he was a hunter, and there was no bird at which he would cast his arrow, that he would not fell; and he would kill the deer and the roes at a great distance from him; there was no day that he would go out with his bow and his quiver, that he would not bring venison home.

He was one day in the hunting hill hunting, and he got no venison[71] at all; but there came a blue falcon past him, and he let an arrow at her, but he did but drive a feather from her wing. He raised the feather and he put it into his hunting bag, and he took it home; and when he came home his muime said to him, "Where is thy game to-day?" and he put his hand into the hunting bag, and he took out the feather and he gave it to her. And his muime took the feather in her hand, and she said, "I am setting it as crosses, and as spells, and as the decay of the year on thee; that thou be not without a pool in thy shoe, and that thou be wet, cold, and soiled, until thou gettest for me the bird from which that feather came."

And he said to his muime, "I am setting it as crosses and as spells, and as the decay of the year on thee; that thou be standing with the one foot on the great house, and the other foot on the castle; and that thy face be to the tempest whatever wind blows, until I return back."

And MacIain Direach went away as fast as he could to seek the bird from which the feather came, and his muime was standing with the one foot on the castle, and the other on the great house, till he should come back, and her front was to the face of the tempest, however long he might be without coming.

MacIain Direach was gone, travelling the waste to see if he could see the falcon, but the falcon he could not see; and much less than that, he could not get her; and he was going by himself through the waste, and it was coming near to the night. The little fluttering birds were going from the bush tops, from tuft to tuft, and to the briar roots, going to rest; and though they were, he was not going there, till the night came blind and dark; and he went and crouched at the root of a briar; and who came the way but AN GILLE MAIRTEAN, the fox; and he said to him, "Thou'rt down in the mouth a Mhic Iain Direach; thou camest on a bad night; I have myself but one wether's trotter and a sheep's cheek, but needs must do with it."

They kindled a fire, and they roasted flesh, and they ate the wether's trotter and the sheep's cheek; and in the morning Gille Mairtean said to the king's son, "Oh son of Iain Direach, the falcon thou seekest is by the great giant of the Five Heads, and the Five Humps, and the Five Throttles, and I will shew thee where his house is; and it is my advice to thee to go to be as his servant, and that thou be nimble and ready to do each thing, that is asked of thee, and each thing that is trusted thee; and be very good to his birds, and it well may be that he will trust thee with the falcon to feed and when thou gettest the falcon to feed be right good to her, till thou gettest a chance; at the time when the giant is not at home run away with her, but take care that so much as one feather of her does not touch any one thing that is within the house, or if it touches, it will not go (well) with thee."

[71] The Gaelic word means rather game than venison.

MacIain Direach said “That he would take care of that;” and he went to the giant’s house; he arrived, he struck at the door.

The giant shouted, “Who is there?”

“It is me,” said MacIain Direach, “one coming to see if thou has hast need of a lad.”

“What work canst thou do? “ said the giant.

“It is (this),” said MacIain Direach, “I can feed birds and swine, and feed and milk a cow, or goats or sheep.”

“It is the like of thee that I want,” said the giant.

The giant came out and he settled wages on MacIain Direach; and he was taking right good care of everything that the giant had, and he was very kind to the hens and to the ducks; and the giant took notice how well he was doing; and he said that his table was so good since MacIain Direach had come, by what it was before; that he had rather one hen of those which he got now, than two of those he used to get before. “My lad is so good that I begin to think I may trust him the falcon to feed;” and the giant gave the falcon to MacIain Direach to feed, and he took exceeding care of the falcon; and when the giant saw how well MacIain Direach was taking care of the falcon, he thought that he might trust her to him when he was (away) from the house; and the giant gave him the falcon to keep, and he was taking exceeding care of the falcon.

The giant thought each thing was going right, and he went from the house one day; and MacIain Direach thought that was the time to run away with the falcon, and he seized the falcon to go away with her; and when he opened the door and the falcon saw the light, she spread her wings to spring, and the point of one of the feathers of one of her wings touched one of the posts of the door, and the door post let out a screech. The giant came home running, and he caught MacIain Direach, and he took the falcon from him; and he said to him, “I would not give thee my falcon, unless thou shouldst get for me the White Glave of Light that the Big Women of Dhiurradh have;” and the giant sent MacIain away.

MacIain Direach went out again and through the waste, and the Gille Mairtean met with him, and he said--

“Thou art down in the mouth[72] MacIain Direach; thou didst not, and thou wilt not do as I tell thee; bad is the night on which thou hast come; I have but one wether’s trotter and one sheep’s cheek, but needs must do with that.”

They roused a fire, and they made ready the wether’s trotter and the sheep’s cheek, and they took their meat and sleep; and on the next day the Gille Mairtean said, “We will go to the side of the ocean.”

They went and they reached the side of the ocean, and the Gille Mairtean said,

“I will grow into a boat, and go thou on board of her, and I will take thee over to Dhiurradh; and go to the seven great women of Dhurrah and ask service, that thou be a servant with them; and when they ask thee what thou canst do, say to them that thou art good at brightening iron and steel, gold and silver, and that thou canst make them bright, clear, and shiny; and take exceeding care that thou dost each thing right, till they trust thee the White Glave of Light; and when thou gettest a chance run away with it, but take care that the sheath

[72] Dewar translates the phrase, “A down mouth on thee.”

does not touch a thing on the inner side of the house, or it will make a screech, and thy matter will not go with thee."[73]

The Gille Mairtean grew into a boat, and MacIain Direach went on board of her, and he came on shore at Creagan nan deargan,[74] on the northern side of Dhiurradh, and MacIain Direach leaped on shore, and he went to take service with the Seven Big Women of Dhiurradh. He reached, and he struck at the door; the Seven Big Women came out, and they asked what he was seeking. He said, "He could brighten, or make clear, white and shiny, gold and silver, or iron or steel." They said, "We have need of thy like;" and set wages on him. And he was right diligent for six weeks, and put everything in exceeding order; and the Big Women noticed it; and they kept saying to each other, "This is the best lad we have ever had; we may trust him the White Glave of Light."

They gave him the White Glave of Light to keep in order; and he was taking exceeding care of the White Glave of Light, till one day that the Big Women Were not at the house, he thought that was the time for him to run away with the White Glave of Light. He put it into the sheath, and he raised it on his shoulder; but when he was going out at the door the point of the sheath touched the lintel, and the lintel made a screech; and the Big Women ran home, and took the sword from him; and they said to him, "We would not give thee our White Glave of Light, unless thou shouldst get for us the Yellow (Bay) Filly of the King of Eirinn."

MacIain Direach went to the side of the ocean and the Gille Mairtean met him, and he said to him, "Thou'rt down in the mouth, MacIain Direach; thou didst not, and thou wilt not do as I ask thee; I have to-night but one wether's trotter and one sheep's cheek, but needs must do with it."

They kindled a fire, and they roasted flesh, and they were satisfied. On the next day the Gille Mairtean said to MacIain Direach, "I will grow into a barque, and go thou on board of her, and I will go to Eirinn with thee; and when we reach Eirinn go thou to the house of the king, and ask service to be a stable lad with him; and when thou gettest that, be nimble and ready to do each thing that is to be done, and keep the horses and the harness in right good order, till the king trusts the Yellow (Bay) Filly to thee; and when thou gettest a chance run away with her; but take care when thou art taking her out that no bit of her touches anything that is on the inner side of the gate, except the soles of her feet; or else thy matter will not prosper with thee."

And then the Gille Mairtean put himself into the form of a barque, MacIain Direach went on board, and the barque sailed with him to Eirinn. When they reached the shore of Eirinn, MacIain Direach leaped on land, and he went to the house of the king; and when he reached the gate, the gatekeeper asked where he was going; and he said, "That he was going to see if the king had need of a stable lad;" and the gate-keeper let him past, and he reached the king's house; he struck at the door and the king came out; and the king said, "What art thou seeking here?"

Said he, "With your leave, I came to see if you had need of a stable lad."

The king asked, "What canst thou do?"

Said he, "I can clean and feed the horses, and clean the silver work, and the steel work, and make them shiny."

[73] This may be compared with the theft of the sword in No. 1.
[74] DEARGAN, a fish called a breàm (Dewar), from DEARG, red. Perhaps a flea, for there were mystical fleas in Jura.--J. F. C.

The king settled wages on him, and he went to the stable; and he put each thing in good order; he took good care of the horses, he fed them well, and he kept them clean, and their skin was looking SLIOM, sleek; and the silver work and the steel work shiny to look at; and the king never saw them so well in order before. And he said, “This is the best stable lad I have ever had, I may trust the Yellow (Bay) Filly to him.”

The king gave the Yellow (Bay) Filly to MacIain Direach to keep; and MacIain Direach took very great care of the Yellow (Bay) Filly; and he kept her clean, till her skin was so sleek and slippery, and she so swift, that she would leave the one wind and catch the other. The king never saw her so good.

The king went one day to the hunting hill, and MacIain Direach thought that was the time to run away with the Yellow Bay Filly; and he set her in what belonged to her, with a bridle and saddle; and when he took her out of the stable, he was taking her through the gate, she gave a switch, SGUAISE, with her tail, and the point of her tail touched the post of the gate, and it let out a screech.

The king came running, and he took the filly from MacIain Direach; and he said to him, “I would not give thee the Yellow (Bay) Filly, unless thou shouldst get for me the daughter of the king of the Frainge.[75]

And MacIain Direach needs must go; and when he was within a little of the side of the sea the Gille Mairtean met him; and he said to him, “Thou art down in the mouth, oh son of Iain Direach; thou didst not, and thou wilt not do as I ask thee; we must now go to France, I will make myself a ship, and go thou on board, and I will not be long till I take thee to France.”

The Gille Mairtean put himself in the shape of a ship, and MacIain Direach went on board of her, and the Gille Mairtean sailed to France with him, and he ran himself on high up the face of a rock, on dry land; and he said to MacIain Direach “to go up to the king’s house and to ask help, and to say that his skipper had been lost, and his ship thrown on shore.”

MacIain Direach went to the king’s house, and he struck at the door; one came out to see who was there; he told his tale and he was taken into the fort. The king asked him whence he was, and what he was doing here.

He told them the tale of misery; “that a great storm had come on him, and the skipper he had was lost; and the ship he had thrown on dry land, and she was there, driven up on the face of a rock by the waves, and that he did not know how he should get her out.”

The king and the queen, and the family together, went to the shore to see the ship; and when they were looking at the ship, exceeding sweet music began on board; and the King of France’s daughter went on board to see the musical instrument, together with MacIain Direach; and when they were in one chamber, the music would be in another chamber; but at last they heard the music on the upper deck of the ship, and they went above on the upper deck of the ship, and (so) it was that the ship was out on the ocean, and out of sight of land.

And the King of France’s daughter said, “Bad is the trick thou hast done to me. Where art thou for going with me?”

“I am,” said MacIain Direach, “going with thee to Eirinn, to give thee as a wife to the King of Eirinn, so that I may get from him his Yellow (Bay) Filly, to give her to the Big Women of Dhiurradh, that I may get from them their White Glave of Light, to give it to the Great Giant of the Five Heads, and Five Humps, and Five Throttles, that I may get from him his Blue

[75] France is always meant by this word now--*The Frang*, AN FHRAING.

Falcon, to take her home to my muime, that I may be free from my crosses, and from my spells, and from the bad diseases of the year."

And the King of France's daughter said, "I had rather be as a wife to thyself."

And when they came to shore in Eirinn, the Gille Mairtean put himself in the shape of a fine woman, and he said to MacIain Direach, "Leave thou the King of France's daughter here till we return, and I will go with thee to the King of Eirinn; I will give him enough of a wife."

MacIain Direach went with the Gille Mairtean in the form of a fine maiden, with his hand in the oxter of MacIain Direach. When the King of Eirinn saw them coming he came to meet them; he took out the Yellow (Bay) Filly and a golden saddle on her back, and a silver bridle in her head.

MacIain Direach went with the filly where the King of France's daughter was. The King of Eirinn was right well pleased with the young wife he had got; . . but little did the King of Eirinn know that he had got Gille Mairtean; and they had not long been gone to rest, when the Gille Mairtean sprung on the king, and be did not leave a morsel of flesh between the back of his neck and his haunch that be did not take off him. And the Gille Mairtean left the King of Eirinn a pitiful wounded cripple; and he went running where MacIain Direach was, and the King of France's daughter, and the Yellow (Bay) Filly.

Said the Gille Mairtean, "I will go into the form of a ship, and go you on board of her, and I will take you to Diurradh; he grew into the form of a ship; and MacIain Direach put in the Yellow (Bay) Filly first, and he himself and the King of France's daughter went in after her; and the Gille Mairtean sailed with them to Diurradh, and they went on shore at Creagan nan deargan, at Cilla-mhoire, at the northern end of Diurradh; and when they went on shore, the Gille Mairtean said, "Leave thou the Yellow (Bay) Filly here, and the king's daughter, till thou return; and I will go in the form of a filly, and I will go with thee to the Big Women of Diurradh, and I will give them enough of filly-ing."

The Gille Mairtean went into the form of a filly, MacIain Direach put the golden saddle on his back, and the silver bridle in his head, and he went to the Seven Big Women of Diurradh with him. When the Seven Big Women saw him coming, they came to meet him with the White Glave of Light, and they gave it to him. MacIain Direach took the golden saddle off the back of the Gille Mairtean, and the silver bridle out of his head, and he left him with them: and he went away himself with the White Glave of Light, and he went where he left the King of France's daughter, and the Yellow Bay Filly which he got from the King of Eirinn; and the Big Women of Diurradh thought that it was the Yellow Bay Filly of the King of Eirinn that they had got, and they were in great haste to ride. They put a saddle on her back, and they bridled her head, and one of them went up on her back to ride her, another went up at the back of that one, and another at the back of that one, and there was always room for another one there, till one after one, the Seven Big Women went up on the back of the Gille Mairtean, thinking that they had got the Yellow Bay Filly.[76]

One of them gave a blow of a rod to the Gille Mairtean; and if she gave, he ran, and he raced backwards and forwards with them through the mountain moors; and at last he went bounding on high to the top of the MONADH mountain of Duirradh, and he reached the top of the face of the great crag, that is there, and he moved his front to the crag, and he put his two fore feet to the front of the crag, and he threw his aftermost end on high, and he threw the Seven Big women over the crag, and he went away laughing; and he reached where were

[76] This incident is told of a bay water-horse in Sutherland. "The Seven Herds of Sollochie."

MacIain Direach and the King of France's daughter, with the Yellow Bay Filly, and the White Glave of Light.

Said the Gille Mairtean, "I will put myself in the form of a boat, and go thyself, and the daughter of the King of France on board, and take with you the Yellow Baby Filly and the White Glave of Light, and I will take you to mainland."

The Gille Mairtean put himself in the shape of a boat; MacIain Direach put the White Glave of Light and the Yellow Bay Filly on board, and he went himself, and the King of France's daughter, in on board after them; and the Gille Mairtean went with them to the mainland. When they reached shore, the Gille Mairtean put himself into his own shape, and he said to MacIain Direach--

"Leave thou the King of France's daughter, the Yellow Bay Filly from the King of Eirinn, and the White Glave of Light there, and I will go into the shape of a White Glave of Light; and take thou me to the giant and give thou me to him for the falcon, and I will give him enough of swords."

The Gille Mairtean put himself into the form of a sword, and MacIain Direach took him to the giant; and when the giant saw him coming he put the blue falcon into a MUIRLAG,[77] and he gave it to MacIain Direach, and he went away with it to where he had left the King of France's daughter, the Yellow Bay Filly, and the White Glave of Light.

The giant went in with the Gille Mairtean in his hand, himself thinking that it was the White Glave of Light of the Big Women of Diurradh that he had, and he began at FIONNSAIREACH, fencing, and at SGUAISEAL, slashing with it; but at last the Gille Mairtean bent himself, and he swept the five heads off the giant, and he went where MacIain Direach was, and he said to him, "Son of John the Upright, put the saddle of gold on the filly, and the silver bridle in her head, and go thyself riding her, and take the King of France's daughter at thy back, and the White Glave of Light with its back against thy nose; or else if thou be not so, when thy muime sees thee, she has a glance that is so deadly that she will bewitch thee, and thou wilt fall a faggot of firewood; but if the back of the sword is against thy nose, and its edge to her, when she tries to bewitch thee, she will fall down herself as a faggot of sticks.

MacIain Direach did as the Gille Mairtean asked him; and when he came in sight of the house, and his muime looked at him with a deadly bewitching eye, she fell as a faggot of sticks, and MacIain Direach set fire to her, and then he was free from fear; and he had got the Best Wife in Albainn; and the Yellow Bay Filly was so swift that she could leave the one wind and she would catch the other wind, and the Blue Falcon would keep him in plenty of game, and the White Glave of Light would keep off each foe; and MacIain Direach was steadily, luckily off.

Said MacIain Direach to the Gille Mairtean, "Thou art welcome, thou Lad of March, to go through my ground, and to take any beast thou dost desire thyself to take with thee; and I will give word to my servants that they do not let an arrow at thee, and that they do not kill thee, nor any of thy race, whatever one of the flock thou takest with thee."

Said the Gille Mairtean, "Keep thou thy herds to thyself; there is many a one who has wethers and sheep as well as thou hast, and I will get plenty of flesh in another place without coming

[77] A basket, shaped like an egg, with a hole at the middle. (Dewer.) Such baskets, with hens in them, may be seen now-a-days.--J. F. C.

to put trouble on thee; and the Fox gave a blessing to the son of Upright John, and he went away; and the tale was spent.

(Gaelic omitted)

Told by Angus Campbell, quarryman, Knockderry, Roseneath. Written by John Dewar, whose language has been strictly followed. This dialect of Gaelic seems to contain English idioms; and varies from the island Gaelic, especially in grammatical construction.

In this form the intention of the story seems to be the same as that of Murchag or Mionachag, No. 8. Every incident gives rise to another till the whole unwinds as a chain of cause and effect; a single feather is the first link, and a Princess the last, and then the whole is run back again and the chain wound up, and it ends with Theirig an sgeul, which means that the story came to an end because there was no more of it.

It is worth remark, that the objects sought are those which have been valued from the very earliest of times; a Falcon, a Sword, a Horse, and a fair Lady. The story might belong to any country and to any age. The scene is as usual laid to the westward, as far as it will go, and then it turns back to the nearest and best known foreign country.

Only two spots are specified--one is close to the Gulf of Corrie Bhreacan, the most remarkable place in the Highlands; the other the most conspicuous rock on the top of one of the most conspicuous and peculiar mountains in the West Highlands.

It seems hopeless to speculate who these seven great women who guarded a shining sword may have been, but the worship of the scimitar may have some bearing on the incident. The wicked muime fell a faggot of sticks before the sword, and the temple of the Scythian sword-god was a heap of faggots, from which human victims were thrown when they were sacrificed.

People who are beaten to death, or enchanted in these Gaelic legends, are always falling like a faggot of sticks or twigs, CUAL CHRIONACH; so the expression here may be simply an illustration, but still the analogy is worth remark.

The language is peculiar in the absence of pronouns; the names are repeated over and over again, but this belongs rather to the writer than to the telling of stories in general. It is the way in which Dewar expresses himself with precision and accuracy. There can be no mistake about the meaning of anything which he has written for me. The effect is rather too much repetition, but a story so told would not be easily forgotten by those into whose heads the incidents had been so hammered.

The following stories may throw some light on the Big Women of Jura. The first I have known all my life. They were sent to me by Mrs. MacTavish from Islay.

2. CHAILEACH BHEINE MHORE lived in Jura, at Largic Breac, and had a ball of thread by which she could draw towards her any person or thing, if she could throw the ball beyond them.

She got MacPhie of Colonsay into her toils, and would not part with him. Every time he attempted to leave her, she used to intercept him, and even after he got into his BIORLINN, or barge, and got off from the shore, she would get him ashore again, by throwing the ball into the boat. (The giant in the story of Black White-red had a like magic clue). At last he pretended perfect contentment in his bondage, and got the secret from her that she had a hatchet which would cut the thread on the enchanting clue. He watched an opportunity and stole the hatchet, having previously ordered his boat to be in waiting at Cnoc Breac at the foot of Bean a Chaolis. He set out by the dawn of day, and was seated in his boat before the

Caileach got to the top of the hill, which she had climbed with speed, as soon as she missed him. When she saw him in the boat, she cried out most piteously--

A Mhic a Phie
A Ghaoils' thasgaidh
An d' fhag thu air a chladach mi?

Oh! Mac Phie
My love and treasure,
Hast thou left me on the strand?

And this she often repeated throwing at the same time the Cearsla dhruidheachd, magic clue, into the boat, and drawing it towards the shore. But when she saw the thread cut and the boat rowing off beyond her reach, she got desperate, and slid down what is called SGRIOB NA CAILICH, crying out,

A Mhic a Phie
Charrich, granda,
'An d' fhag thu air a chladach mi?

Oh! Mac Phie
Rough skinned and foul
Hast thou left me on the strand?

Sgriob na Cailich is a very curious and conspicuous mark on the north-western side of the highest of the Jura hills. Two rocky gorges begin at the very top of the hill, which were made by the Carlin's heels, and two strips of bare grey boulders extend across the side of lower hills almost to the sea. Unless these last are the marks of lightning, I cannot account for them. This is the place where Dewar's fox threw the big women over the rock.

In her time the Island of Jura was under the sway of MacDonald of Islay, but this Carlin was so powerful, that she would not allow the Islay post to pass through Jura, for she killed him as soon as he crossed the ferry.

MacDonald spoke to a Jura man of the name of Buie, who lived at the Ferry and promised the farm of Largie Breac where the Caileach lived, to him and his heirs for ever, if he would kin her.

He told his wife the offer that MacDonald had made him, remarking at the same time, that he never would attempt to encounter the giantess.

Their eldest son, however, overheard his father, and set off the next day to offer battle to the Caileach.

They had wrestled hard and long, when at length she brought him on his knees, and she said "Thou art in extremity, a Mhic Meadh Bhuie, and pity it is so." "My grandmother, on the hinderside of Alba, is here, and will come to help me if I be," said he, as he put his hand on his dirk.

They engaged again, and she brought him on his knees again, saying the same words, Tha thu at eigin a Mhic Meadh Bhuie s' b olc an arraidh e, when he drew his dirk and stabbed her to the heart.

MacDonald performed his promise of giving the Buies Largie Breac, which they held for centuries after.

3. There is a song about the same personage, whoever she may have been. I give it, though I do not quite understand it.

Caileach Bheinna Bhric horo
Bhric horo, Bhric horo
Caileach Bheinna Bhric horo
Caileach mhor leathan ard
Cha deachaidh mo bhuidheann fhiadh
Bhuidheann fhiadh bhuidheann fhiadh
Cha deachaidh mo bhuidheann riamh
A dh'iarraidh chlaba, do 'n traigh

Carlin of Ben Breac horo, &c.,
Carlin great broad high,
There went not my troop of deer, &c.
There went not my troop ever
To seek her clack to the strand.

Now this old woman, or set of old women guarding a sword, or owning magic clues, and living in an island, are surely the same as the Groach, of whom so many stories are told in Brittany, and these are presumed to have been a college of Druidesses. See Foyer Breton, vol. i. p. 157; and if so, the Carlin may be a fiction founded upon fact.

The spelling Diura, and Diurath for the Island of Jura, does not change the sound, but seems to indicate a reasonable derivation for the name which is common to the "Jura" mountains, and may well be an old Celtic name preserved, AN DIU RATH, the waste steep, the Jura.

There is a local rhyme in support of this view, said to have been composed by a poetess who was a native of some other island.

Dhiu Rath an domhain,
'S diu dath an domhain ann,
Buidhe Dugh a's Riabhach.

Waste steep of the world,
And waste hue of the world in it,
Yellow, black, and brindled.

These three colours being the most common family names, until very lately, in the island, as well as the distinguishing coloure of the landscape, according to the eye of the discontented lady.

4. I have another version of this, which gives such a very different view of the same incidents that I translate it, giving such bits of the Gaelic as seem best worth preservation.

AN SIONNACH, THE Fox, from John the tinker, Inveraray, written by Hector Urquhart, 1859.

Brian, the son of the king of Greece, fell in love with the henwife's daughter, and he would marry no other but she. His father said to him on a day of days, before that should happen that he must get first for him the most marvellous bird that there was in the world.

Then here went Brian, and he put the world under his head, till he went much farther than I can tell, or you can think, till he reached the house of CAILLEACH NAN CUARAN, the carlin of buskins. (A sock, a brogue of untanned leather or skin, commonly worn with the hairy side outward; *Lat*., Cothurnus; *Welsh*, Cwaran; *Fr*., Cothurne.) He got well taken to by the carlin that night, and in the morning she said to him, "It is time for thee to arise, the journey is far."

When he rose to the door, what was it but sowing and winnowing snow; he looked hither and thither, and what should he see but a fox drawing on his shoes and stockings.

“SHA! BHEATHAICH, Sha! beast,” said Brian, Thou hadst best leave my lot of shoes and stockings for myself.”

“Och,” said the fox, “it’s long since a shoe or a stocking was on me; and I am thinking that I shall put them to use this day itself.”

“Thou Ugly LADAMA (?) beast, art thou thinking to steal my foot webs, CHAISBEART, and I myself looking at thee?”

“Well,” said the fox, “if thou wilt take me to be thy servant, thou shalt get thy set of shoes and stockings.”

“Oh, poor beast,” said he, “thou wouldst find death with me from hunger.”

“O hoth!” said the fox, “there’s little good in the gille that will not do for his ownself, and for his master at times.”

“Yes! Yes,” said he, “I don’t mind, at all events; thou mayest follow me.”[78]

They had not gone far on their journey when the fox asked him if he was good at riding. He said he was, if it could be known what on.

“Come on top of me a turn of a while,” said the fox.

“On top of thee! poor beast, I would break thy back.”

“Ho! huth! son of the King of Greece,” said the fox, “thou didst not know me so well as I knew thee; take no care but that I am able to carry thee.”

But never mind; when Brian went on the top of the fox, CUIREADH IAD SAD AS GACH LODAN AGUS SRAD AS GACH CREAGAN S’ CHA DO CHABH IAD TAMH NA FOIS GUS AN D’ RAINIG IAD TIGH FAMHAIR NAN COIG CINN S’ NAN COIG MILL S’ NAN COIG MUINEAIL.

They would drive spray from each puddle, spark from each pebble; and they took no halt nor rest till they reached the house of the Giant of Five Heads, Five Humps, and Five Throttles.

“Here’s for thee,” said the fox, “the house of the giant who has the marvellous bird, AN T EUN IONGANTACH; and what wilt thou say to him when thou goest in?”

“What should I say, but that I came to steal the marvellous bird?”

“Hu! hu! said the fox, “thou wilt not return; but,” said the fox, “take thou (service) with this giant to be a stable lad, and there is no sort of bird FO SHEACHD RONAGAN RUADH AN T SAOGHAIL, under the seven russet rungs of the world (from RONG, a joining spar, a hoop, perhaps ring) that he has not got; and when he brings out the marvellous bird, say thou ‘Fuith! fuith!’ the nasty bird, throw it out of my sight, I could find braver birds than that on the middens at home.”

Brian did thus.

“S’ tia!” said the big one, “then I must go to thy country to gather a part of them.”

But Brian was pleasing the giant well; but on a night of the nights, Brian steals the marvellous bird, and drags himself out with it. When he was a good bit from the giant’s house, “S’ tia!” said Brian to himself, “I don’t know if it is the right bird I have after every

[78] So far, this is somewhat like the opening of Puss in Boots, mixed up with something else.

turn." Brian lifts the covering off the bird's head, and he lets out one screech, and the screech roused the giant.

"O! O! son of the King of Greece," said the giant, "that I have coming to steal the marvellous bird; the prophet FAIDH was saying that he would come to his GIRD."

Then here the giant put on the shoes that could make nine miles at every step, and he wasn't long catching poor Brian. They returned home to the giant's house, and the giant laid the binding of the three smalls on him, and he threw Brian into the peat corner, and he was there till the morning on the morrow's day.

"Now," said the giant, "son of the King of Greece, thou hast thy two rathers; whether wouldst thou rather thy head to be yonder stake, or go to steal for me the White Glave of Light that is in the realm of Big Women?"

"S' BAIGHEIL DUINE RI BHEATHA, a man is kind to his life," said Brian, "I will go to steal the White Glave of Light."

But never mind; Brian had not gone far from the giant's house when the fox met him.

"O DHUINE GUN TUR GUN TOINSG, Oh man, without mind or sense, thou didst not take my counsel, and what will now arise against thee! Thou art going to the realm of Big Women to steal the White Glave of Light; that is twenty times as hard for thee as the marvellous bird of that earl of a giant."

"But what help for it now, but that I must, IONNSAIDH A THURRAIRT AIR, betake myself to it," said poor Brian.

"Well, then," said the fox, "come thou on top of me, and I am in hopes thou wilt be wiser the next time."

They went then farther than I can remember, till they reached CNOCAN NA 'N AOINE AIR CUL GAOITHE 'S AIR AODAN GREINE, the knoll of the country at the back of the wind and the face of the sun, that was in the realm of big women.

"Now," said the Fox, "thou shalt sit here, and thou shalt begin at BURRALAICH blubbering, and CAOINEADH crying, and when the big women come out where thou art, they will lift thee N'AN ACHLAIS in their oxters, and when they reach the house with thee, they will try to coax thee, but never thou cease of crying until thou get the White Glave of Light, and they will leave it with thee in the cradle the length of the night, to keep thee quiet."

Worthy Brian was not long blubbering and crying when the big women came, and they took Brian with them as the fox had said, and when Brian found the house quiet, he went away with the White Glave of Light, and when lie thought he was a good way from the house, he thought he would see if he had the right sword. He took it out of the sheath, and the sword gave out BINN, a ring. This awoke the big women, and they were on their soles. "Whom have we here," said they, "but the son of the King of Greece coming to steal the White Glave of Light."

They took after Brian, and they were not long bringing him I back. CHEANGAIL IAD GU CRUIN E, they tied him roundly (like a ball), and they threw him into the peat corner, till the white morrow's day was. When the morning came they asked him CO B FHEARR LEIS A BHI FO SHRADAN A BHUILG SHEIDIDH[79] to be under the sparks of the bellows, or to go

[79] BOLG SEIDIDH, bag of blowing. The bellows used for melting copper in the mint at Tangiers in 1841, consisted of two sheepskins worked by two men. The neck of the hide was fastened to the end of an iron tube, and the legs sewn up. The and of each bag opened with two flat sticks, and the workmen, by a skilful action of

to steal AN DIA GREINE[80] NIGHEAN RIGH FEILL FIONN, the Sun Goddess, daughter of the King of the gathering of Fioun.

“A man is kind to his life,” said Brian, “I will go steal the Sun Goddess.”

Never mind. Brian went, but he was not long on the path AIR AN T SLIGHE when the fox met him.

“Oh! poor fool,” said the fox, thou art as FAOIN silly as thou wert ever. What good for me to be giving thee counsel, thou art now going to steal the Sun Goddess. Many a better thief than thou went on the same journey; but ever a man came never back. There are nine guards guarding her, and there is no dress under the seven russet rungs of the world that is like the dress that is on her but one other dress, and here is that dress for thee. And mind, said the fox, that thou dost as I ask thee, or, if thou dost not, thou wilt not come to the next SGEULA tale.”

Never mind. They went, and when they were near the guard the fox put the dress on Brian, and he said to him to go forward straight through them, and when he reached the Sun Goddess to do as he bid him. And, Brian, if thou gettest her out I will not be far from you.

But never mind. Brian took courage, and he went on, and each guard made way for him, till he went in where the Sun Goddess, daughter of the King of the Gathering of Fionn, was. She put all hail and good luck on him, and she it was who was pleased to see him, for her father was not letting man come near her.

And there they were; but how shall we get away at all at all, said she, in the morning. Brian lifted the window, and he put out the Sun Goddess through it.

The fox met them. “Thou wilt do yet,” said he; “leap you on top of me.”

And when they were far, far away, and near the country of big women,

“Now, Brian,” said the fox, “is it not a great pity for thyself to give away this Sun Goddess for the White Glave of Light?”

“Is it not that which is wounding me at this very time?” said Brian.

“It is that I will make a Sun Goddess of myself, and thou shalt give me to the big women,” said the fox.

“I had rather part with the Sun Goddess herself than thee.”

“But never thou mind, Brian, they wont keep me long.”

Here Brian went in with the fox as a Sun Goddess, and he got the White Glave of Light. Brian left the fox with the big women, and he went forward.

In a day or two the fox overtook them, and they got on him, and when they were nearing the house of the big giant,

“Is it not a great pity for thyself, oh Brian, to part with the White Glave of Light for that filth of a marvellous bird.”

“There is no help for it,” said Brian.

the hand, filled the bag with air as he raised it, and then squeezed it out by pressing downwards. By working the two bags turn about, a constant steady blast was kept on a crucible on the furnace, and the copper was soon melted. The Gaelic word clearly points to the use of some such apparatus. I believe something of the kind is used in India; but I saw the Tangier mint at work.

[80] DIA GREINE may perhaps be DEO GREINE, the sunbeam, the name given to Fionn’s banner, and here applied to his daughter.

“I will make myself a White Glave of Light,” said the fox; “it may be that thou wilt yet find a use for the White Glave of Light.”

Brian was not so much against the fox this time, since he saw that he had got off from the big women.

“Thou art come with it,” said the big man. “It was in the prophecies that I should cut this great oak tree, at one blow, which my father cut two hundred years ago with the same sword.”

Brian got the marvellous bird, and he went away.

He had gone but a short distance from the giant’s house, when the fox made up to him with his pad to his mouth.

“What’s this that befel thee,” said Brian. “Oh, the son of the great one!” said the fox, “when he seized me, with the first blow he cut the tree all but a small bit of bark; and look thyself there is no tooth in the door of my mouth which that filth of a Bodach has not broken.”

Brian was exceedingly sorrowful that the fox had lost the teeth, but there was no help for it.

They were going forward, walking at times, and at times riding, till they came to a spring that there was by the side of the road.

“Now, Brian,” said the fox, “unless thou dost strike off my head with one blow of the White Glave of Light into this spring, I will strike off thine.”

“S’tia!” said Brian, “a man is kind to his own life,” and he swept the head off him with one blow, and it fell into the well; and in the wink of an eye, what should rise up out of the well, but the son of the King that was father of the Sun Goddess?

They went on till they reached his father’s house, and his father made a great wedding with joy and gladness that lasted a day and a year, and there was no word about marrying the henwife daughter when I parted from them.

There can be no doubt that this is the same legend as the Golden Bird in Grimm, and it is evident that it is not derived from the printed story. From the notes in Grimm’s third volume, it appears to be very old and very widely spread. I am told that even now there is some trace of a veneration for birds amongst the Turks, who secretly worship parrots even at Constantinople.

The giant of many heads and ornithological tastes is not in the German version, and the tinker has omitted the horse, which seems to belong to the story.

On the 25th of April, 1859, John the tinker gave the beginning of this as part of his contribution to the evening’s entertainment. He not only told the story, but acted it, dandling a fancied baby when it came to the adventure of the big women, and rolling his eyes wildly. The story which he told varied from that which he dictated in several particulars. It began:--

BHA RIGH ANN AGUS BHA, RIGHDEIRE MAR A BHA S MAR A BHITHIS S’ MAR A CHINNIS AN GHIUTHAS, CUID DHE CAM S’ CUID DHE DIREACH AGUS SE RIGH EIRINN A BH’ ANN.

“There was a king and a knight, as there was and will be, and as grows the fir tree, some of it crooked and some of it straight, and it was the King of Eirinn, it was; and the Queen died with her first son, and the King married another woman. And the henwife came to her, and she said--A BHANRIGH DONA GHOLACH CHA NEIL THUSA COSAIL RIS A BHANRIGH SHONA. SHÒLACH A BH’ AGAIN ROIMHE SO. Oh! bad straddleing Queen, thou art not like the sonsy, cheery Queen that we had ere now. And here came a long

bit which the tinker put into another story, and which he seems to have condensed into the first sentence in the version which I have got and translated. He has also transferred the scene from Ireland to Greece, perhaps because the latter country sounds better, and is farther off, or perhaps he had got the original form of the story from his old father in the meantime."

Some of the things mentioned in the tinker's version have to do with Druidical worship--the magic well, the oak tree, the bird; for the Celtic tribes, as it is said, were all guided in their wanderings by the flight of birds. The Sun Goddess: for the Druids are supposed to have worshipped the sun, and the sun is feminine in Gaelic. These are all mixed up with Fionn, and the sword of light, and the big women, personages and things which do not appear out of the Highlands. Perhaps this is one of "the sermons" to which Dewar refers. (See introduction.)

LX. Fearachur Leigh

From Sutherland.

NOW Farquhar was one time a drover in the Reay country, and he went from Glen Gollich to England (some say Falkirk), to sell cattle; and the staff that he had in his hand was hazel (caltuinn). One day a doctor met him. “What’s that,” said he, “that ye have got in y’r hand?” “It is a staff of hazel.” “And where did ye cut that?” “In Glen Gollig: north, in Lord Reay’s country.” “Do ye mind the place and the tree?” “That do I.” “Could ye get the tree?” “Easy.” “Well, I will give ye gold more than ye can lift, if ye will go back there and bring me a wand of that hazel tree; and take this bottle and bring me something more, and I will give you as much gold again. Watch at the hole at the foot, and put the bottle to it; let the six serpents go that come out first, and put the seventh one into the bottle, and tell no man, but come back straight with it here.”

So Farquhar went back to the hazel glen, and when he had cut some boughs off the tree he looked about for the hole that the doctor had spoken of. And what should come out but six serpents, brown and barred like adders. These he let go, and clapped the bottle to the hole’s mouth, to see would any more come out. By and by a white snake came rolling through. Farquhar had him in the bottle in a minute, tied him down, and hurried back to England with him.

The doctor gave him siller enough to buy the Reay country, but asked him to stay and help him with the white snake. They lit a fire with the hazel sticks, and put the snake into a pot to boil. The doctor bid Farquhar watch it, and not let any one touch it, and not to let the steam escape, “for fear,” he said, “folk might know what they were at.”

He wrapped up paper round the pot lid, but he had not made all straight when the water began to boil, and the steam began to come out at one place.

Well, Farquhar saw this, and thought he would push the paper down round the thing; so he put his finger to the bit, and then his finger into his mouth, for it was wet with the bree.

Lo! he knew everything, and the eyes of his mind were opened. “I will keep it quiet though,” said he to himself.

Presently the doctor came back, and took the pot from the fire. He lifted the lid, and dipping his finger in the steam drops he sucked it; but the virtue had gone out of it, and it was no more than water to him.

“Who has done this!” he cried, and he saw in Farquhar’s face that it was he. “Since you have taken the bree of it, take the flesh too,” he said in a rage, and threw the pot at him--(ma dh’ ol thu ‘n sugh ith an fheoil). Now Farquhar had become allwise, and he set up as a doctor. [The collector who took this down, grammar and all, here remarks, that Michael Scott got his knowledge by serpent’s bree (brigh); and the wisdom of the mouth is said to have belonged to Fingal, who began life as a herd boy on the Shin. Some giants came to him one day and bade him roast a fish for them, threatening to kill him if he burnt it. He did so, all but one small spot. On this spot he quickly put his finger, and as quickly transferred the hot finger to his mouth, putting it under his teeth: a gift of omniscience was the result, and this became the foundation of his future greatness.

The very same incident with a dragon’s heart is in the Volsung tale, see Dasent’s introduction, p. 65. It is told in Chambers’ Nursery Songs, of some laird in Scotland. Mrs.

MacTavish tells it, and I have heard it in the west in various shapes ever since I can remember. Grimm found it in Germany in the story of the White, Snake; and there are varieties of the same incident scattered throughout Grimm; for instance in the TWO BROTHERS, where children eat the heart and liver of a golden bird, and find gold under their pillows; and this story has a relation in Gaelic also. But to return to Farquhar Leech.]

He set up as a doctor, and there was no secret bid from him, and nothing that be could not cure.

He went from place to place and healed men, and so they called him Farquhar Leigheach (the healer). Now he heard that the king was sick, and he went to the city of the king to know what would ail him. “It was his knee,” said all the folk, “and he has many doctors, and pays them all greatly; and whiles they can give him relief, but not for long, and then it is worse than ever with him, and you may hear him roar and cry with the pain that is in his knee, in the bones of it.” One day Farquhar walked up and down before the king’s house. And he cried--

“An daol dubh ris a chnamh gheal.”
The black beetle to the white bone.

And the people looked at him, and said that the strange man from the Reay country was through-other.

The next day Farquhar stood at the gate and cried, “The black beetle to the white bone!” and the king sent to know who it was that cried outside, and what was his business. The man, they said, was a stranger, and men called him the Physician. So the king, who was wild with pain, called him in; and Farquhar stood before the king, and aye “The black beetle to the white bone!” said he. And so it was proved. The doctors, to keep the king ill, and get their money, put at whiles a black beetle into the wound in the knee, and the beast was eating the bone and his flesh, and made him cry day and night. Then the doctors took it out again, for fear he should die; and when he was better they put it back again. This Farquhar knew by the serpent’s wisdom that he had, when he laid his finger under his teeth; and the king was cured, and had all his doctors hung.

Then the king said that he would give Farquhar lands or gold, or whatever he asked. Then Farquhar asked to have the king’s daughter, and all the isles that the sea runs round, from point of Storr to Stromness in the Orkneys; so the king gave him a grant of all the isles. But Farquhar the physician never came to be Farquhar the king,[81] for he had an ill-wisher that poisoned him, and he died.

I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Cosmo Innes for the following note, which joins a legend to an historical fact.

The names given are a curious instance of old Gaelic spelling. They are evidently spelt by ear, and so spelt as to be easily understood; but they are not spelt according to modern rule.

It is not often we can connect these wild legends with record or charter, but Farchar Leech receives a local habitation from authentic writs.

The “Reay country” of the legend is Strathnaver. One race of Mackays who inhabit it are called by their countrymen clan vie Farquhar--from what Farquhar, was unknown to Sir Robert Gordon and the local historians. The legend points to the man. In 1379 Farquhar, the King’s physician (*medicus Regis*) had a grant from the Prince Alexander Stuart (the wolf of Badenoch) of the lands of Mellenes and hope in that district; and in 1386 King Robert II.

[81] There is a kind of rhyme here, in Gaelic,--Fearachur Leigh, and Fearachur Righ.

granted to the same person, styled Ferchard Leech, in heritage, the islands of Jura (now Alderney), Calwa Sanda (*Handa*), Elangawne, Elanewillighe, Elanerone, Elanehoga, between Rowestorenastynghe (*i.e., the Rowe or point of Store, in Assynt*), and Rowearmadale (*i.e., Armidale Head in Farr*).

The writer of the old statistical account of the parish, speaking of these grants from hearsay or tradition, names the grantee "Ferchard Beton, a native of Isla, and a famous physician." Perhaps he was misled by the celebrity of the Isla Betons, several generations of whom were "mediciners," famous through all the Islands and West Highlands.

Whether Farchar Leech died by poison or otherwise, he seems to have left descendants who inherited his lands; for, so late as 1511, Donald M'Donacy M'Corrochie described as "descendit frae Farquhar Leiche;" resigned Melness, Hope, and all his lands of Strathnaver in favour of the chief family of the Mackays.

The marriage with the King's daughter, as well as the black beetle, want confirmation.

There is a west country version of this story which I have known all my life in part; and which agrees with the account of the writer who spoke from tradition long ago.

Mrs. MacTavish writes:--

2. The OLLADH ILEACH (Islay Doctor).

There were three brothers of the name of Beaton, natives of Islay, famed for their skill in medicine. One of the brothers, called John, went to Mull, and was known as the *Olladh Muilleach*, or Mull doctor. His tomb is to be seen in Iona., Another called Fergus remained in Islay, and was known as the OLLADH ILEACH. The third, GILLEADHA, was in the end the most famed of the three; he was the herbalist, and employed by his brother Fergus to gather herbs and prepare them for use.

When boiling a cauldron of herbs, in which a white snake had been put, in stirring, it bubbled up and spattered on his hand, this he licked off, and at once he got such a view of his profession as to make him unrivalled. He was summoned to attend one of the Scotch Kings, who was cured by him; but through the jealousy of other doctors, he never returned to Islay, having been poisoned.

(So far the Islay tradition very nearly accords with the Sutherland account of Farquhar Leech). He was called to see a young lady, daughter of Mackay of Kilmahumaig, near Crinan. When approaching the house, attended by a servant, the latter remarked a sweet female voice which he heard singing a song:--

"'S binn an guth cinn sin" ars' an gilleadh.
"'S binn" ars' an t-Olladh, "air uachdar Losguin."

"Sweet is that head's voice," said the lad;
"Sweet," said the doctor, "above a Toad."

The poor young woman had an enormous appetite, which could not be satisfied, but she was reduced to a skeleton. The doctor, on hearing her voice, knew what her disease was, and ordered a sheep to be killed and roasted.

The lady was prevented from getting any food, from which she was in great agony.

She was made to sit by the sheep while it was being roasted, and the flavour of the meat tempted the toad she had swallowed to come up her throat and out of her mouth, when she was completely cured. The reptile she had swallowed was called LON CRAOIS.

Now, something very like this part was told me in Norway as a fact by a Norwegian, the travelling interpreter of an English companion. My old friend Juil has since become a flourishing contractor. He had seen a young woman on board a steamer going with her friends to Christiania for advice. She had been reaping, and had fallen asleep on a sheaf of corn in the field. She slept with her mouth open, and a serpent had run down her throat. She had been in a state of terror and horror ever since, and they were taking her to the capital. "I saw her myself," said my informant; "I heard that the doctors could not cure her at Christiania, and that she went to Copenhagen. There all the great doctors were beat; but a young doctor made them put her in a dark room, lying on her side on the floor, with a saucer of milk before her. 'Serpents are very fond of milk you see.' The first time they opened the door the serpent had only put his head up, and he drew it in again when he heard the noise. The second time they moved the saucer a little further away, and he came out altogether, and the young doctor killed the serpent and shewed it to the young 'womans,'" and thus she got quite well. "And that is quite true."

Every word of it might be true, if we suppose a clever man and a woman possessed with an idea which had to be coaxed out of her; but the question is, when did that clever man live, and where?--in Copenhagen--in the West Highlands--or in Africa, where the creature swallowed was a baboon, and the bait a banana skilfully administered by a doctor to Anansi (Dasent, Norse Tales, p. 502); or in London, where a clever doctor tempted a serpent out of a patient with a mutton chop, according to a story told to a friend of mine in his childhood; or have there been many doctors and patients who have gone through the same adventure? But to go on with the west country wise men.

"The wife of a man who was suffering from rheumatism consulted the Olladh Muileach. He went to see him, bringing a birch rod, and having got his patient out of bed, ordered his wife to lay the birch rod smartly on his back, and chase him till the doctor would say it was enough. He would not allow her to cease till the poor man perspired freely and became supple, and free from pain."

This again might be true, every word; but when did the doctor live, and where? Was it in the country of King Voonan?

A learned doctor in the Arabian Nights, the sage Dooban, makes King Voonan play at ball till he perspires and absorbs some medicaments from the handle of the "Golfstick."

"Another man went to him for a cure for sore eyes. The doctor examined his eyes, but told him he was likely to suffer in a more serious manner from horns that would soon appear on his knees. The-man seemed much alarmed, and asked if there was any way in which he could prevent such a calamity. 'No way,' said the doctor, 'but by keeping your hands on your knees for three weeks. At the end of that period come to me, that I may see how you get on.' The man did as he was advised, and went to the doctor."

"Well," said the doctor, "have the horns made their appearance?" "No," said the man.

"Have you attended to my advice?" said the doctor. "Oh, yes," said the patient, "I have kept my hands continually, night and day, on my knees."

"How are your eyes?" said the doctor. "My eyes are quite well," said the man. "Very well," said the doctor, "go home and keep your mind easy about the horns, and don't rub your eyes."

"The descendants of both Fergus and Gilleadh are still in Islay."

The name of Malcolm Bethune is written on a curious old manuscript in the Advocates' Library. It is described at page 295 of the report of the Highland Society on the poems of

Ossian, 1805, with this note on the name:--"He was one of a family eminent for learning that supplied the Western Isles for many ages with physicians, whose diligence and skill are gratefully remembered in the traditionary record of their country."

It seems, then, that fifty-five years have not obliterated the popular tales clustered about the name of Bethune or Beaton, stored in the mind of one lady who may well remember the publication of the report, and to whose excellent memory this collection of stories owes so much.

Is the whole of this a remnant of Serpent worship and supposed possession by the god? In the Highlands now, as else. where, and from the earliest of times, serpents have something to do with healing. From the brazen serpent in the wilderness, to Æsculapius, and from Æsculapius to Farquhar Leech and Dr. Beaton, is a long stretch of time and space; but snakes are still associated with healing amongst Spartan shepherds, as well as Highland peasants, as the following extract from my journal will show:--

"1852, May 10.--Having turned some Indian corn out of a loft, took up our quarters for the night at a half-ruined house not far from Sparta. At the door were a lot of fellows in shaggy capotes drinking sour wine and making a row. One of them, dressed in a kind of sheepskin cloak, with a long crook in his hand, astonished me by pulling out a serpent a yard long, which he handled with perfect coolness.

I rattled down the ladder, to the risk of my neck, and found that he had a bag full. There might have been half a dozen. I made him turn them all out, and set the Greeks to catch them again. My friend ended by producing a number of white powders, which made the swallower independent of snake bites. I bought a dozen, and proceeded to test them in the candle. They were vegetable, and I suspect flour."

In Ceylon, according to Sir Emerson Torment (page 193), it is the same.

"There is a rare variety (of snakes) which the natives fancifully designate the King of the Cobras. It has the head and the anterior half of the body of so light a colour that at a distance it seems like a silvery white." . . . "Raja or King."

In the same page it appears that the snake charmers use a certain *stone* to cure snake bites, and that they also use a certain *root*. I do not know the word for snake, but Raja is not unlike RIGH, King. Snake charmers are also common in Northern Africa.

The serpent creed then is very widely spread, and the belief in the Highlands is worth illustration.

Widow Mary Calder (in Sutherland) tells, that "The great white snake is not uncommon in Sutherland, and has been sometimes, but not often, killed. It never rests by day or by night, and besides running along the ground, has a revolving motion peculiar to itself, turning over and over through an ivory ring which is loose on its body. This is formed from its own slime, and sometimes slips off, in which case the snake makes another, and the finder of the ring is safe against all diseases and enchantments,"--Vide adder beads in the Gallovidian Encyclopædia.

"Another great serpent has been seen by the natives. The last was nine feet long, and covered with hair; it had a mane, and was a bodily manifestation of the evil one."

It was a common belief in the West that "snakes' eggs" were lucky. I once owned one, but lost it. It was a bead of various colours, blue and white, apparently of glass, very like those figured in Wilson's Prehistoric Annals of Scotland, page 304. These are commonly found in tumuli, and are the adder stones of the Lowlands, and Druid's glass in Ireland. They are

supposed by Mr. Wilson to have been worn as charms by women of that unknown prehistoric race which once inhabited Scotland. At all events, the idea that they were produced by snakes is common. Mr. Wilson suggests “the probable means of accounting for their introduction into Britain is by the Phœnicians, or by traders in direct communication with that people.” If so, the same people may have brought the belief and the tales from the East, where a serpent has had to do with mythology from the earliest of times. (See Rawlinson’s Herodotus, under the head Serpent). But besides this white king of snakes, who has a brother Raja in Ceylon, there is the great eel which is always appearing in lakes and in the sea, and which is firmly believed to exist. It has no peculiarity that I know of but enormous size. A keeper used to tell me that he saw it repeatedly in a small but very deep lake. “It was as big as a saik” (sack). I am quite sure the man believed what he said, though I believe his eyes had but realized an old legend.

Mrs. MacTavish writes:--”An old man in Lorn used to tell that he went one summer morning to fish on a rock; he was not long there when he saw the head of an eel pass. He continued fishing for an hour, and the eel was still passing. He went home, worked in the field all day, and having returned to the same rock in the evening, the eel was still passing, and about dusk he saw her tail disappearing behind the rock on which he stood fishing.” The old man was nicknamed Donul n’ ro; Donald of the reef.

That eel was a bouncer, but not so big as the sea-serpent of the Edda, which went round the world.

A gentleman, in whose house I dined at Tromsoe, near the Arctic circle, told me that “the fishermen often saw the sea-worm in Salten Fjord.” All the world have heard of Capt. MacQuae’s sea-snake. I have a drawing of him done by a gentleman who was a midshipman on board the Dœdulus and saw him. I lately saw a master of a merchant vessel at Liverpool, who calmly and deliberately assured a royal commission that he had seen a large serpent “in the sea about the same place.” He said nothing about it in the papers, for no one would believe him; but he had no doubt about it--he saw the sea-snake.

I have no doubt that these men all believed what they said to be true. It is hard to believe that they were all mistaken. Few of them can have heard of Pontoppidan, Bishop of Bergen; but his book gives pictures of the sea-snake, and tells how it was seen and shot at in Norwegian Fjords in his day. There surely are some such creatures in the sea. Highland stories are full of sea monsters which are called Uille bheist and Draygan, and which have numerous heads. Surely there must be some foundation for so many fictions. St. George killed a Dragon; Perseus a sea monster; Bellerophon the Chimera; Hercules the Hydra; Apollo killed Pytho; Fraoch killed, and was killed by, a Behir (great snake); Vishnoo killed a serpent in India. “Sin, the giant Aphophis, as ‘the great serpent,’ often with a human head,” was represented pierced by the spear of Horns or of Atmoo (as Re the Sun) in Egypt.[82] In short, I believe that the Gaelic serpent stories, and the Highland beliefs concerning them, are old myths, a part of the history of the oldest feud in the world; the feud with the serpent who was “more subtle than any beast of the field that the Lord had made,” for the leading idea seems always to be that the holy, healing power overcomes the subtle destroyer. Thus Mrs. M’Tavish tells that St. Patrick coaxed the last Irish snake into a chest by the promise that he would let him out “to-morrow,” and then he put him into Lough Neagh, and there he is still. The serpent is always asking, “is it tomorrow?” but a “to-morrow” is never come; and no serpents are to be found on any place belonging to Ireland to this day.

[82] Rawlinson’s Herod., vol. ii., p. 261.

The same belief extends to numerous small islands on the coast of Scotland, and old ruined chapels with sculptured grave-stones are generally to be found in them. I know one such island where some boys (as I was told) once took a living serpent, and it died. It is named Texa, and this legend is attached to it:--”It is a portion of Ireland which a giant’s wife took a fancy to carry across the Channel in her apron. From a rent in the apron, Tarsgier fell through, and the rent getting larger, Texa fell from her, and so by degrees did all the other rocks and islets between Texa, and the point of Ardmore, where she left Eillan a chuirn, which she did not think worth taking any further, being so much annoyed at having lost the rest. Certain it is that neither serpents nor toads are found in these islands, though both are numerous in Islay. It is said that neither can live in any place which St. Columba blessed, or where he built chapels and monasteries, such as in Eillach a Naomh and Iona.”

So then, in the West Highlands now, the holy power overcomes the snake, as in mythology over great part of the world, and as seems to me the belief may perhaps be traced to holy writ.

LXI. The Tale Of Sgire Mo Chealag

From John Campbell, Strath Gairloch, Ross.

THERE was once a young lad, and he went to seek a wife to Sgire mo Chealag; and he married a farmer's daughter, and her father had but herself. And when the time of cutting the peats came on, they went to the peat hag, the four.

And the young wife was sent home to seek the food; and when she had gone in she saw the speckled filly's packsaddle over her head, and she began to cry, and to say to herself,--

"What should she do if the packsaddle should fall, and kill herself and all that were to follow."

When the people who were gathering the peats found that she was long without coming, they sent her mother away to see what was keeping her, and when the carlin arrived she found the bride crying,

"That it should come to me!"--Said she, "What came to thee?"

"Oh," said she, "when I came in I saw the speckled filly's packsaddle over my head, and what should I do if it should fall and kill myself and all that are to follow!"

The old woman struck her palms. "It came to me this day! If that should happen, what shouldst thou do, or I with thee!"

The men who were in the peat-hag were thinking it long that one of the women was not coming, for hunger had struck them. So it was that the old man went home to see what was keeping the women, and when he went in it was so that he found the two crying, and beating their palms.

"O, uvon!" said he, "what came upon you?"

"O!" said the old woman, "when thy daughter came home, did she not see the speckled filly's packsaddle over her head, and what should she do if it should fall and kill herself and all that were to follow!"

"It came upon me!" said the old man, as he struck his palms, "If that should happen!"

The young man came at the mouth of night, full of hunger, and he found a leash crying together.

"Oovoo!" said he, "what came upon you?" and when the old man told him;

"But," said he, "the packsaddle did not fall."

When he took his meat he went to lie down; and in the morning he said, "My foot shall not stay till I see other three as silly as ye."

Then he went through Sgire mo Chealag, and he went into a house in it, and there was no man within but a leash of women, and they were spinning on five wheels.

"I myself will not believe," said he, "that it is of the people of this place that you are."

"Well, then," said they, "it is not. We ourselves will not believe that it is of the people of the place that thou art thyself."

"It is not," said he.

“Weel,” said they, “the men that there are in this place are so silly, that we can make them believe anything that we please ourselves.”

“Weel,” said he, “I have here a gold ring, and I will give it to the one amongst you who will best make her husband believe.”

The first one that came home of the men, his wife said to him, “Thou art sick.”

“Am I,” said he.

“Oh thou art,” said she, “put off thee thy lot of clothes, and be going to lie down.”

He did this, and when he was in the bed she said to him, “Thou art now dead.”

“Oh, am I?” said he.

“Thou art,” said she, “shut thine eyes and stir not hand or foot.”

And now he was dead.

Then there came the second one home, and his wife said to him, “It is not thou.”

“O, is it not me?” said he.

And he went away and betook himself to the wood.

Then here came the third to his own house, and he and his wife went to lie down, and a summons went out on the morrow for the burial of the dead man, but this wife would not let her husband get up to go there.

When they saw the funeral going past the window, she told him to be rising. He arose in great haste, and he was seeking his set of lost clothes, and his wife said to him that his clothes were about him.

“Are they?” said he.

“They are,” said she: “Haste thee that thou mayest catch them.”

Here, then, he went, running hard. And when the funeral company saw the man who was stripped coming, they thought it was a man who was out of his reason, and they themselves fled away, and they left the funeral. And the naked man stood at the end of the dead-chest. And there came down a man out of the wood, and he said to the man who was naked,--

“Dost thou know me?”

“Not I,” said he, “I do not know thee.”

“Oh, thou dost not! if I were TOMAS My own wife would know me.”

“But why,” said he, “art thou naked?”

“Am I naked? If I am, my wife told me that the clothes were about me.”

“It was my wife that said to me that I myself was dead,” said the man in the chest.

And when the men heard the dead speaking, they took their soles out (of that), and the wives came and they took them home, and it was the wife of the man who was dead that got the ring.

And then he saw three as silly as the three he left at home, and returned home.

And then he saw a boat going to fish, and there were twelve men counted going into the boat, and when she came to land, there was within her but eleven men, and there was no knowing

which one was lost, for the one who was counting was not counting himself at all. And he was beholding this.

“What reward would you give me if I should find you the man that is lost by you?”

“Thou shalt get any reward if thou wilt find the man,” said they.

“Sit there,” said he, “beside each other;” and he seized a rung of a stick, and he struck the first one a sharp stroke.

“Mind thou that thou wert in her” (the boat).

He kept on striking them, till he had roused twelve men, and made them bleed on the grass.

And though they were pounded and wounded, it was no matter, they were pleased, because the man who was lost was found, and after the payment they made a feast for the one who had found the man who was lost.

The tenants of Sgire mo Chealag had a loch on which they used to put fish, and so it was that they needs must drain the loch, to get fresh fish for the feast; and when the loch was drained, there was not a single fish found on the loch but one great eel. Then they said,--

“This is the monster that ate our fish.” Then they caught her, and they went away with her to drown her in the sea. And when he saw this he went home; and on the way he saw four men putting a cow up to the top of a house that she might eat the grass that was growing on the house-top. Then he saw that the people of Sgire mo Chealag were men without intelligence; but said he, “What reward will you give me, and I will bring the grass down?”

He went and he cut the grass, and he gave it to the cow, and went on before him.

Then he saw a man coming with a cow in a cart, and the people of the town had found out that the man had stolen the cow, and that MOD a court should be held upon him, and so they did; and the justice they did was to put the horse to death for carrying the cow.

And to shew you that this tale is true, it was this that made Iain Lom the bard say:

“As law of ages that are not
As was Sgire mo Cheallag,
When doomed they the garron in mote.”

This story was written by Hector Urquhart, from the telling of John Campbell in Strathgairloch, in Ross-shire, in June 1859. The narrator is sixty-three, and he says he learned the story from his father about forty years ago. Iain Lom, the bard quoted was a famous Highland poet, and lived in the reigns of Charles the First and Second; he died at a very advanced age about 1710. His name was Macdonald; his country, Lochaber; and his nickname, Lom, means bare or keen, for it is applied to a beardless man like the poet, or a biting keen wind like his sarcastic genius.

He was pensioned by Charles the Second as his bard, brought Montrose and the Campbells together at Inverlochy, and kept out of the fight, saying to the commander of the Irish auxiliaries, “If I fall, who will sing thy praises?” He did sing the battle, in which the Campbells got the worst and the story goes, that Argyll was so nettled by the song that he offered a reward for his head.

He came himself and claimed the reward, and was courteously received, and conducted through the castle. On entering a room hung round with black-cocks’ heads, Argyll said, “Hast thou ever, John, seen so many black-cocks in one place?” “I have seen them,” said John. “Where?” “At Inmher Lochaidh.” “Ah! John, John, thou wilt never cease gnawing the Campbells.” “The worst for me is that I cannot swallow them,” said John.

This story, a short biography, and a selection from the poems of Iain Lom, will be found in John Mackenzie's "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," 1841 (Glasgow: MacGregor, Polson, & Co., 75 Argyll Street), a work which deserves to be better known. The verse quoted from memory by John Campbell, is in a song dedicated to the Macdugalds, and is this:--

"Cleas na binne nach mairean
Bha 'n sgire Cille-ma- Cheallaig
'Nuair a dhit iad an gearran 'sa mhòd;"

and the story told in the note is, that some women, as judges, doomed a horse to be hanged. The thief who stole him first got off, because it was his first offence; the horse went back to the house of the thief, because he was the better master, and was condemned for stealing himself the second time.

There is an ingenuity in this unreasonable decision, which proves the inventor of that story to be no fool.

The story had passed into a saving long ago:--

CHA TUGADH AN CILLE-MA-CHEALLAIG BREATH BU CHLAOINE.

There would not be given in Cille ma Cheallaig judgment more squint or perverted.

Part of this story, then, has a Gaelic pedigree of about 200 years. Part of it is nearly the same as the beginning of No. 20, and is like "Die kluge Else" in German, which has a German pedigree in Grimm's third volume, which dates from 1588. The story belongs to the same class as an old English rhyme, of which a version is given in Old Nurse's book, by C. Bennet, 1857.

"There was a little woman
As I've heard tell,
And she went to market
Her eggs for to sell," etc., etc.

She goes through adventures,--

"And she met a pedlar,
And his name was Stout,
And he cut her petticoats
All round about."

The little old woman got very cold, and when she awoke doubted her identity, and when her little dog at home barked at her, she ran away, sure it was not her (and this is like the Norse tale, "Goosy Grizzle.")

A lot of similar stories are common in the Highlands. The following are from Sutherland, and form part of the collections already referred to:--

2. The Assynt man's mistakes.

Assynt is looked on in Sutherland and Ross-shire as being in a state of barbarism resembling that which the people south of Stirling supposed to prevail north of it; and the mistakes of the Assyndiach are the groundwork of half the children's stories. I have seen nearly all these, and more, ascribed in German to two children, Kördel. und Michel, whose stupidity has become proverbial in their own land. I am told that schoolboys are conversant with a Greek version, and that they construe a tale of the man who, when asked if his house was a good one, brought one of the stones as a sample.

The Assyndiach was once sent by his wife to take her spinning-wheel to the turner's to get it mended. In coming back the wind set the wheel in motion, so he threw the whole thing down, saying, "Go, and welcome."

He struck across the hills, and reaching home, asked his wife if she had got her wheel yet.

"No," said she.

"Well, I thought not," said he, "for I took the short cut."

3. A very similar story was told me by an old Highlander in London.

An Inverness wife went to market with a creelful of balls of worsted, which she had spent a long time in spinning. As she walked along, one of the balls fell out, and the end being fast to the others, the ball followed, rolling and bumping along the road.

The wife turned round, and seeing the ball said, "Oh, you can go alone! Then you may all walk." And she emptied her creel, and tied the ends of the thread to it, and marched into Inverness without ever looking behind her; but when she got there, she had but a ravelled hesp.

4. A traveller stopped at his (the Assynt man) house to ask the hour. He lifted a large sun-dial from its stand, and put it into his lap, that he might see for himself.

5. Seeing a four-wheeled carriage, he exclaimed "Well done the little wheels, the big ones won't overtake them to-day." (Which story is told of Sir Andrew Wylie in Galt's novel).

6. He once took his child to be baptized; the minister said he doubted if he were fit to hold the child for baptism.

"Oh, to be sure I am, though it was as heavy as a stirk."

This answer shewing little wit, the minister asked him how many commandments there were.

"Twenty," he said boldly.

"Oh, that will never do; go back and learn your questions" (Shorter Catechism).

Half way home he met a man.

"How many commandments will there be? There must be thirty, for the minister was not content with twenty."

He was set to rights on this point, and turning back (it was winter), he thought the clergyman would not refuse him this time.

He had slipped the child into his great-coat sleeve; and tied up the cuff with a string; but the string got loose, and the bairn fell out, and the clever father never heard it, for it fell into a snow wreath. In the church he discovered his loss, and said to the clergyman, "I am very sorry, but not a bit of Kenneth have I" (no wise man will ever name an unchristened child). The unlucky infant nearly died in the snow, and I do not know that the sacrament was administered to it.

7. The Assynt man once went to Tain to buy meal. Outside the town, a man asked him if he knew what o'clock it was.

"Last time it was 12. If it is striking still, it must be at 50."

8. His wife, like the Mütter in the story of Michel and Cordelia, had all the wit of the family, and was much distressed at his stupidity and simplicity.

He was carrying two bags of cheeses to market for her one day; one bag burst, and he saw all the cheeses rolling fast down hill. Pleased at their newly discovered power of locomotion, he undid the second bag, and sent its contents after the first, and walked on himself to market. When be got there, he asked if his dairy stuff had not turned up yet?

“No,” said the neighbours. So he waited all day, and then returned to tell his wife, who, guessing his mistake, bid him look at the bottom of the hill, where he was enchanted to find the missing cheeses.

9. Seeing a hare for the first time, he backed from it, repeating the Lord’s Prayer, till he fell into a duck pond, from which his wife drew him with difficulty.

This last adventure is like the “Seven Swabians” in Grimm, and that is like the Hunting of the Hare, a very old ballad; and all this was gathered from people whose names are not given, but who belong to Sutherland, and whose occupations generally are such as to make it probable that their stories are what they profess to be--traditions.

They are a people whose native language is Gaelic, but who generally speak English.

10. I have another version of the story in Gaelic, from Islay, called “FIGHEADAIR MOR BAILE NA GAILLEARAIN,” The Big Weaver of the Strangers’ Town,” written by Hector MacLean, from which I translate the following extracts, told by Alexander Macalister, Bowmore:--

There was a poor woman before now, and she had a son, and he was reckoned a kind of LEITH-BHURRAIDH--half booby.

A ship was broken on the shore, and it was a cargo of wood that was on board, and he stole some PLANCAICHEN (planks, made into Gaelic), out of her, and he hid them in the sand. Much of the wood was stolen and there was RANNSACEADH, a ransacking going on. The carlin knew, NAM FEORACHADH EUD, if they should ask her son if he had stolen the planks, that he would say he had stolen them; so in the morning before he awoke, she put on a pot, and she made milk porridge, and she took the porridge with her, and she sprinkled it on the doors and the door-posts. When her son got up he went out, and he saw the porridge on the door.

“What is here?” said he.

“Is it thus thou art?” said his mother; “didst thou not notice the shower of milk porridge at all?”

“I did not notice it; this is a marvellous thing. A shower of milk porridge!” said the son.

On a day after that, all about the place was called on to be questioned about the wood. They asked him if he had stolen much; and he said that he had.

“When didst thou steal it?”

“Have you any knowledge of the day that the porridge shower was?”

“There is enough! there need not be any more speaking made to thee, be thou gone.”

At the end of a while, when all talk was past, he went and he took the wood and he made INNSREABH (?) for the house, and CREADHAL, a cradle, so that when he should marry and he should have children, that the cradle might be ready. He married, and he was a while married, and he had no children at all.

His wife, and his mother, and his mother-in-law were in with him. On a day that there was, he was weaving, and what should SPAL, the shuttle, do, but cast MEID (?) a weight into the

cradle. His wife got up, and she belaboured her palms, and she roared and she cried. His mother got up, and his mother-in-law, and they belaboured their palms, and they roared and they cried, “The booby! without reason. If he were there he were dead; was there ever heard tell of a man GUN MOHATHACHADH without perception like him!”

He got up at last, when he was SEARBH, worn out, with the roaring and the scolding. “There shall not come a stop on my foot, or rest on my head, till I hit upon three more silly than you.” And he went away.

The first fools he met were the same as in the Ross-shire version, a man and a woman trying to put a cow on a house top to eat GOIRT, corn, which was growing on the roof. He asked what they would give him if he would make the cow eat it below; and when they said that could not be done, he cut the corn with his knife and threw it down, and got fifty marks.

And here let me point out that there is nothing impossible in this nonsense. In the first place, corn and hay do grow on thatched houses in the West Highlands, in Norway, and in Lapland, and it is by no means uncommon to see goats browsing there. I have seen a Lapp mowing his crop of hay on the top of the best house in the village of Karasjok, a log-house which is occupied in winter and deserted in summer.

I helped the people at their hay harvest one day, and tried to teach them the use of a fork. Their manner was to gather as much of the short grass as they could grasp in their arms, and carry it to the end of the field. I and my comrade cut two forked sticks, and, beginning at the end of the swathe, pushed the heap before us, doing as much at one journey as the Lapps at half-a-dozen trips. But we had fallen in with one of the old school. He was an old fellow with long tangled elf-locks and a scanty beard, dressed in a deerskin shirt full of holes, and exceedingly mangy, for the hair had been worn off in patches all over. He realized my idea of a seedy brownie, a gruagach with long hair on his head; an old wrinkled face, and his body covered with hair. He gave us one glance of sovereign contempt, his daughter a condescending smile, and then they each gathered another armful of grass, and toddled away, leaving the forked sticks where they were, as new-fangled contrivances, unworthy of the notice of sensible men.

And let any inventor say whether this is not human nature all over the world: but to go on.

He went on till he came to some men who were building a dyke, with their feet bare. There came a shower of rain, and he sat in the shelter of a dyke, and when it was clear they sat there, and there was no talk of getting up.

“It is astonishing to me,” said he, “that you should keep on sitting, now that it is dry. It did not astonish me that you should go to shelter in the rain, but it must be that you are not diligent for your master when you are sitting while you ought to be working.”

“That is not it,” said they; “it is that our legs are all mingled together, and not one of us can recognize our own legs.”

“What will you give me if I make you recognize your own legs.”

“What wilt thou ask?”

“Half a hundred MARG, marks.”

“Thou shalt have that CHA BU GHEAMHA DHUINN AIR MORAN BARRACHD. It were no pledge for us by much more to be thus away from our work.”

He went down to a bramble bush, and he cut one as long and as strong as he could see. He came up and THUG E RALLSADH GU MATH TEANN ORRA, and he gave a good tight raking at them about their legs, and it was not long till every one knew his own legs.

(There is a double meaning in this which cannot be translated. To know means also to feel).

“Though our legs are sore and scratched,” said they, “it is well for us to be able to go to our work rather than be seated thus.”

“You are strange enough,” said he, “but I will go further.”

And then he goes on to a house, and plays tricks to some people there, and says his name is SAW YE EVER MY LIKE. And when the old man of the house came home, he found his people tied upon tables, and said, “What’s the reason of this?” “Saw ye ever my like?” said the first. “No, never,” said he. And went to the second, “What’s the reason of this?” said he.

“Saw ye ever my like? “ said the second.

“I saw thy like in the kitchen,” said he; and he went to the third. “What is the reason of this?” said he. “Saw ye ever my like?” said the other. “I have seen plenty of thy likes,” said he, “I but never before this day.” And then he understood that some one had been playing tricks on his people, and pursued; but the weaver played him a trick, which is almost the same as that which is given in Norse Tales as part of the adventures of the Master Thief, at page 286, second edition.

And so here, as in almost every case, the popular tales of the West Highlands join in with those of other countries, and turn out to be as old as the hills.

Now surely this has some reason and some foundation in fact. When so many popular tales agree in describing a set of strangers, who were fools, does it not seem as if each land had once been occupied by a race who appeared to the new comers as foolish as the old Lapp haymaker seemed to me.

LXII. The Cat And The Mouse

You speak of Nursery Rhymes. The following is a very trifling one, which I remember myself, and have never been able to forget. HECTOR MACLEAN, Islay.

From Hector MacLean, Islay.

1.

THUIRT an luch bheag ‘s i ‘san toll,
“Dé ‘m fonn a th’ air a’ chat ghlas?”
“Fonn math is deagh shaod
Gum faodadh thusa tighinn a mach.”

2.

“‘S mor m’ eagal romh na dubhain chrom,
A th’ agad ann am bonn do chas
Mharbh thu mo phiuthrag an dé
‘S fhuair mi fein air eigin as.”

3.

Cha mhis’ a bha ‘sin ach cat mhic Iain Ruaigh
A b’ àbhaist a bhi ruagadh chearc,
Ghoid i ‘n caise ‘bha ‘s a’ chliabh,
‘S dh’ith i ‘n t-iasg a bha ‘s a’ phreas.”

TRANSLATION.

1.

Said the mousie in the hole,
“What is that purr of the grey cat?”
“A good purr and a pleasant mood,
That thou mightest come out of that.”

2.

“Great is my fear for the crooked hooks
That thou hast got in the sole of thy feet;
Thou killedst my sister yesterday,
And I myself got hardly quit.”

3.

“That was not me, but John Roy’s cat,
That used to be the hen’s distress:
She stole the cheese that was in the creel,
And ate the fish that was in the press.”

This old rhyme has become proverbial. A part of it was sent as a proverb from Inverary.

LXIII. The Three Questions

From the Brothers MacCraw, North Uist, 1859.

THERE was once, long ago, a scholar; and when he had done learning, his master said that he must now answer three questions, or have his head taken off. The scholar was to have time to make ready, and being in a great fright, he went to a miller who was the master's brother, and asked his aid.

The miller disguised himself and went instead of the scholar, and the first question put to him was this:--"How many ladders would reach the sky?"

"Now," said the narrator, "can *you* answer that?"

"One, if it were long enough."

"That's right." The second was:--

"Where is the middle of the world?"

So the miller laid down a rod, and he said:--"Here, set a hoop about the world, and thou will find the middle here."

The third was:--"What is the world's worth?"

"Well," said the miller, "the Saviour was sold for thirty pieces of silver, I am sure the world is worth no more."

"Oh," said the brother who was riding beside us, "that's not the way I have heard it. The second was,"

"How long will it take to go round the world?" And the miller said:--

"If I were as swift as the sun and moon, I would run it in twenty-four hours."

And the third was:--

"What is my thought?"

And the miller answered:--

"I can tell: Thou thinkest that I am thy scholar, but I am thy brother, the miller."

This was told to me September 1, 1859, in North Uist, as I walked along the road. There are a great many similar wise saws current which are generally fathered on George Buchanan, the tutor of James VI.

The following are a few riddles of the same kind, collected at Gairloch, for Osgood Mackenzie, Esq., by Mr. Donald MacDonald:

1. Whether is older, the man or the beard?

The beard is the older, for the work of creation was all finished before the man, and the beard was on the goat before the man was.

2. What is the wood that is not bent nor straight?

Sawdust. It is neither bent nor straight.

This riddle forms part of a very long and curious story which I heard told at Inverary, at Easter, 1859, and which is written down.

3. What is the thing which the Creator never saw, and that kings see but seldom, and that I see every day?

There is but one Creator, for that he never saw his like. Kings are but scarce, for that they see each other but rarely; but I see my own like every day that I get up,--other sinners like myself.

The riddle is very well known; but this is another view of it.

4. There were three soldiers coming home on furlough, and their three wives with them; they came to a river over which there was a ferry, but the boat would take with it but two together. The question is, how did they make the passage, for no one of them would trust his wife with another man, unless he was himself beside her?

Two women went over first, one went on shore, and the other came back with the boat, and she took the third with her, one of them went back and she stood beside her own husband, and the two husbands of the women who were over went back with the boat; one of them went on shore, and the wife of the man who was in the boat went into her along with him, and they went to the other side. His wife went on shore, and the man who was yonder came in the boat; then the two men went over; then there were three men over, and a woman; this woman took over the other women by the way of one and one; and there seem to be more solutions than one for the problem.

This puzzle, in various shapes, is well known, *e.g.* the Fox, the Goose, and the Bag of Corn.

(Gaelic omitted)

The following are a few riddles, collected by Hector MacLean; most of them from a little school-girl in Islay:--

1.

Row and noise and racket
About the market town,
It is no bigger than a flea,
An' money it brings home.
Lint seed.

St-ioram starum stararaich
Air feadh a bhaile mhargaidh
Cha mhoth' e na deargann
Is bheir e dhachaidh airgiod.
Fras lìn-Linseed.

2.

Two feet down and three feet up,
And the head of the living in the mouth of the dead.
A man with a porridge pot on his head.

Da 'chas shìos 's tri chasan shuas
'S ceann a' bheo am beul a' mhairbh.
H-aon agus poit air a cheann.

3.

I see to me, over the hill,
A little one with a cut in his nose,
Two very long teeth in his jaw,

And a tatter of tow about his tail.
A hare.

Chi mi thugam thar a' bheinn
Fear beag 's beum as a shròin
Da fhiacaill fhada 'na chìr
'S cirb de bhlaigh lin ma thòin.
Gearraidh.

4.

I see to me, over the fall,
A little curly hasty one;
A tuck of his shirt under his belt,
And the full of the world under his power.
Death.--This portrait varies from the usual sketches.

Chi mi thugam thar an eas
Fear beag cuirneanach cas
Cirb d'a léine fo a chrios
'S làn an t-saoghail fo a los.
Am bàs.

5.

I see to me, I see from me,
Two miles and ten over the sea,
The man of the green boatie,
And his shirt sewn with a thread of red.
The rainbow.

Chi mi thugam, chi mi bhuam,
Da mhìle dheug thar a' chuain,
Fear a' choitilein uaine,
Is snàthainn dearg a' fuaghal a léine.
Am bogha frois.

6.

Sheep small, and very small,
That have been thrice shorn of all,
On the hill that is furthest out,
Where every little saint will be.
The stars.

Caora mhion, mhionachag,
Air an treas lomachag,
Air an t-sliabh is fhaide muigh,
Far am bi gach ionachag.
Na reultan.

7.

The bard, the bard, the Frenchman,
Behind the house a wheezing.
The nettle.

(The meaning of this is not very clear.)

An fhile ‘n Mile Fhrangach
Cul an tighe ‘s sreann aice.
An fheanndagach.

8.

A bent crooked stick between two glens,
When moves the crooked bent stick
Then move the two glens.
Scales and balance.

Maide crom cam eadar da ghleann,
Ma charachas am maide crom cam
Carachaidh an da ghleann.
Meidh is sgàlain.

9.

Three red kine on the bank of the sea,
That never drank a drop of the water of Alba.
Three dogrose-hips.

Tri ba dearga ‘chois na fairge,
Nach d’ òl deur do dh’ uisg’ Alba riabh.
Tri mucagan failm.

There seems to be a pun in this Alba of Scotland or wandering.

10.

Three spotted kine under a stone,
A drop of their milk never was milked.
Three snakes.

Tri ba breaca chois na leaca,
Nach do bhleodhnadh deur d’am bainne riabh.
Tri nathraichean.

11.

Four shaking and four running,
Two finding the way,
And one roaring.
A cow--feet udder, eyes, and mouth.

Ceathrar air chrith ‘s ceathrar ‘nan riuth,
Dithisd a’ deanadh an rathaid
‘S h-aon a’ glaodhaich.
A’ bhò. Ceithir casan, ceithir ballain, da shuil ‘a a beul.

12.

A little clear house, and its two doors shut.
An egg.

Tigh beag soillear ‘s a dha dhorusd dùinte.
Ubh.

13.

Two strings as long as each other.
A river's banks.

Da thaod cho fhada.
Da thaobh na h-abhann.

14.

Rounder than a ball, longer than a ship.
A clew.

'S cruinn' e na ball 's fhaid' e na long.
Ceairsle.

15.

I can hold it myself in my fist,
And twelve men with a rope cannot hold it.
An egg.

Cumaidh mi fein a'm' dhorn e,
'S cha chum da fhear dheug air ròp' e.
Ubh.

16.

A great crooked stick in yonder wood,
And not a thing in it,
But clang bo clang.
A weaving loom.

Maide mor cam 's a' choill ud thall
'S gun aona mhìr ann
Ach gliong bo gliong.
Beairt fhighte.

17.

It travels on the little meads,
It travels on the midden steads,
It travels on the lengthened riggs,
And home it cometh late at night.
The reaping hook.

Siubhlaidh e na leunagan,
Siubhlaidh c na breunagan,
Siubhlaidh e 'n t-imire fada,
'S thig e dhachaidh anmoch.
An corran buana.

18.

Clean sour (salt or of the field) water without brine or salt.
Water in a field.--There is a pun which cannot be rendered.

Uisge glan goirt gun sàile gun salann.
Uisg' ann an claiseachan a' ghoirt.

19.

A rod in the wood of MacAlister,
And neither yew nor ivory,
Nor tree of wood in the universe,
And the deuce take him that it measures not.
A snake.

Slat an coill Mhic Alasdair,
‘S cha ‘n iubhar i ‘s cha n’ eabhar i,
‘S cha chraobh de dh’ fhiodh an domhain i,
‘S an deomhan air an fhear nach tomhais i.
Nathair.

20.

A black cock is in yonder town,
Feather black, feather brown,
Feathers twelve in the point of his wing,
And more than threescore (thirsts) in his back.
A bottle of whisky.--The pun is on “ite,” a feather--or thirst.

Coileach dubh ‘a a’ bhail’ ud thall,
Ite dhubh is ite dhonn
Da ite dheug am bàrr a sgeith
‘S corr is tri fichead ‘na dhriom.
Botall uisge bheatha.

21.

Guess-guess, whelp, son of the son of guessing,
Twelve chains in the very middle,
Four ties, guess-guess.
A team of horses.

Tomh tomh a chuilean ‘ic ’ic Thomh.
Da shlabhraidh dheug ‘san teis meadhoin
Ceìthir cheanghail tomh tomh.
An t-seisreach.

(Seisreach means, literally, a team of six horses; and this . seems to be the sense of the puzzle.)

22.

A little bit cogie in yonder wood,
Its mouth below, and it spills no drop.
A cow’s udder.

Miodaran beag ‘s a choill ud thall,
‘S a bheul foidhe, ‘s cha doirt e deur.
Uth na boine.

23.

A little gold well in the midst of this town,
Three golden ends and a cover of glass.
A watch.

Tobaran òir am meadhon a bhaile so
Trì chinn oir is comhla ghloine ris.
Uaireadair.

24.

Clattering without, clattering within,
A box four-cornered, and brimful of clattering.
A weaver's shuttle.

Gliogaran a muigh, gliogaran a stigh,
Bocsa ceithir chearnach 's e làn ghliogaran.
Spàl figheadair.

25.

No bigger it is than a barleycorn,
And it will cover the board of the king.
The stone (apple) of the eye.

Cha mhoth' e na grainean eorna
'S comhdachaidh e bord an righ.
Clach na suil.

26.

A small wife come to this town,
And well she makes a "drandan;"
A cap of the chochullainn on,
And yellow coat of blanket.
A bee.

Bean bheag a' tigh 'n do 'n bhaile so,
'S gur math a ni i dranndan,
Currachd do 'n cho, chullainn urra,
'S còta buidhe plangaid.
Seillean.

27.

A small wife coming to this town,
And creagada creag an her back,
Feet on her, and she handless,
And loads of chaff in her chest.
A hen.

Bean bheag a' tigh 'n do 'n bhaile so,
'S creagada creag air a muin,
Casan urra 's i gun làmhan
'S ultachan càthadh 'na h-uchd.
Cearc.

28.

A shaving upon the floor,
And well it makes a humming,
A yard of the Saxon yew,

And bow of the yew of France.
The Fiddle.

Sliseag air an urlar,
‘S gur math a ni i dranndan,
Slat ‘n iubhar Shasunnach,
A ‘s bogha, ‘n iubhar Fhrangach.
An fhidheal.

29.

It came out of flesh, and has no flesh within,
It tells a story without ever a tongue.
A pen.

Thainig e a feoil ‘s cha n’ eil feoil ann
Innsidh e naigheachd ‘s gun teanga ‘na cheann,
Peann.

30.

A golden candlestick on a two-leaved board,
Guess it now, come quickly guess it.
Death.

Coinnlear òir air bord da shliseig,
Tomhais a nis e, ‘s tomhais gu clis e.
Am Bàs.

31.

A black horse and a brown horse, sole to sole,
Swifter is the black horse than the brown.
Water and the mill wheel.

Each dubh is each donn bonn ri bonn,
‘S luaithe ‘n t-each dubh na ‘n t-each donn.
An t-uisge ‘s roth a’ mhuilinn.

32.

Twelve brethren in one bed,
And no one of them at the front or the wall.
Spokes of the spinning-wheel.

Da bhrathair dheug ‘san aon leaba,
‘S gun h-aon din aig a’ bheingidh na aig a bhalla.
Roth na cuibhealach.

33.

Three whales so black, so black, three whales coloured, coloured,
Whale in the east, whale in the west, and punish him that guesses not.
Waves.

Tri mucan dubha, dubha, tri mucan datha, datha;
Muc an ear, ‘s muc an iar, ‘s pian air an fhear nach tomhais e.
Na tonnan.

34.

A small house out in the West,
And five hundred doors in it.
A sieve.

Tigh beag ‘san aird an iar
‘S coig ciad dorus air.
Ruideal.

35.

It is higher than the king’s house,
It is finer than silk.
Smoke.

‘S aird e na tigh an righ,
‘S min’ e na’n sioda.
An toit.

36.

The son on the house top,
And the father unborn,
Smoke before flame.

Am mac air muin an tighe
‘San t-athair gun bhreith.
An toit ma’n gabh an gealbhan.

37.

A man went eyeless to a tree where there were apples,
He didn’t leave apples on it, and he didn’t take apples off.
There were two, and he took one.

Chaidh fear gun suilean ‘ionnsuidh craobh air an robh ubhlan
Cha d’ fhag e ubhlan urra ‘s cha d’ thug e ubhlan dith.
’Se da ubhal a bh’ air a’ chraoibh ‘s thug e h-aon leis.

38.

Totaman, totaman, little black man,
Three feet under, and bonnet of wood,
(A potato) pot with the lid in.

Totaman, totaman, duine beag dugh,
Tri chasan foidhe, agus boinneid air de dh’ fhiodh.
Poit agus brod iunte.

39.

I went to the wood and I sought it not,
I sat on a hill and I found it not,
And because I found it not, I took it home with me.
A thorn in the foot.

Chaidh mi ‘n choille ‘s cha d’ iarr mi e,
Shuidh mi air cnoc ‘s cha d’ fhuair mi e,
‘S o’n nach d’ fhuair mi e thug mi leam dachaidh e.
Bior ann an cois.

40.

A waveless well, it holds its fill of flesh and blood.
A tailor's thimble.

Tobar gun tonn, cumaidh e 'làn de dh' fhuil 'a de dh' fheoil.
Meuran tailleir.

41.

Blacky, blacky, out at the door and a human bone in her mouth.
A shoe on a foot.

Dubhag, dubhag mach an dorusd 's cnaimh duine 'na beul.
Bròg air cois.

42.

Red below, black in the middle, and white above.
Fire, griddle, and oatcake.

Dearg foidhe, dugh 'na mheadhon, 's geal as a chionn.
An gealbhan, a' ghreideal, 'a an t-aran.

43.

I can go over on a bridge of glass,
And I can come over on a bridge of glass,
And if the glass bridge break,
There's none in Islay, nor in Eirinn,
Who can mend the bridge of glass.
Ice.

Theid mi nunn air drochaid ghloine,
'S thig mi nall air drochaid ghloine
'S ma bhrisdeas an drochaid ghloine
Cha 'n 'eil an Ile na 'n Eirinn
Na chàras an drochaid ghloine.
Eitheandach.

44.

A brown stag in the hill, and his car on fire.
The gun.

Damh donn 's a' bheinn 's a chluas ra theinidh.
An gunna.

45.

I will go out between two woods,
And I will come in between two lochs.
A pair of pails.

Theid mi mach eadar dha fhiodh,
'S thig mi stigh eadar dha loch.
Na cuinneagan.

46.

A green gentlewoman behind the door.
A broom, usually made of a bunch of some plant.

Bean nasal uaine cùl an doruisd.
An gais sguabaidh.

47.

Wiggle waggle about the river,
Iron its head, horse its neck,
Man its tail.
A fishing-rod.

Driobhal drabhal feadh na h-abhann, iarunn a cheann
each a mhuineal duin' a thòn.
Slat iasgaich.

48.

A sharp sharp sheep, and her entrails trailing.
A big needle.

Caora bhiorach bhiorach, 's a mionach slaodadh rithe.
Suathad mhor.

49.

A red red sheep, red mad.
The tongue.

Caora dhearg dhearg, air an dearg choitheach.
An teanga.

50.

I have a puzzle for thee:
It isn't thy hair, and it isn't thy locks,
It isn't a bit of the bits of thy trunk,
It is upon thee, and thou art no heavier.
The man's name.--The Gaelic expression being, 'What name is upon thee?"

Tha toimhseagan agam ort,
Cha n' c t-fhionna 's cha 'n e t-fhalt,
Cha n' e ball de bhallaibh do chuirp,
'S tha e ort 's cha truimid thu e.
Ainm duine.

Got these puzzles, riddles, or toimseagain, from Flora MacIntyre, and a little girl, Catherine MacArthur, at Ballygrant, twelve years of age.

GLOSSARY.

AIR AN T-SLIAIBH IS FHAIDE MUIGH, the farthest off hill or mountain.

BEUM, a piece or bit.

BLAIGH LIN, linen cloth.

BREUNAGAN; this word may mean every filthy piece of ground over which the sickle passes.

CATHADH, gen. of càith, corn seeds.

CIR, the fore-part of the jams.

COITILEAN, a garment somewhat of one piece, serving as the whole clothes; or perhaps a little boat or skiff, which suggests the form of the rainbow.

CAS, fast.

CUIRNEANACH, curled in ringlets.

FHILE or Ile, or perhaps eibheal or eibhle, an ember.

IONACHAG may be aonachag, from aon, a solitary little thing.

LOMACHAG, a bareness, from lom.

LOS, power of destruction.

It will be observed that these riddles are all of a peculiar kind, such as the well known--

Polly with a white pettiecoat and a red nose,
The longer she stands, the shorter she grows."

J. F. C.

LXIV. The Fair Gruagach, Son Of The King Of Eirinn

From Alexander MacNeill, fisherman, Ten Tangval, Barra.

THE Fair Chief, son of the King of Eirinn, went away with his great company to hold court, and keep company with him. A woman met him, whom they called the Dame of the Fine Green Kirtle; she asked him to sit a while to play at the cards; and they sat to play the cards, and the Fair Chief drove the game against the Dame of the Fine Green Kirtle.

“Ask the fruit of the game,” said the Wife of the Fine Green Kirtle.

“I think that thou hast not got a fruit; I know not of it,” said the Fair Chief, son of the King of Eirinn.

“On the morrow be thou here, and I will meet thee,” said the Dame of the Fine green Kirtle.

“I will be (here),” said the Fair Chief.

On the morrow he met her, and they began at the cards, and she won the game.

Ask the fruit of the game,” said the Fair Chief.

“I,” said the Dame of the Fine Green Kirtle, “am laying thee under spells, and under crosses, under holy herdsmen of quiet travelling, wandering women, the little calf, most feeble and powerless, to take thy head and thine ear and thy wearing of life from off thee, if thou takest rest by night or day; where thou takest thy breakfast that thou take not thy dinner, and where thou takest thy dinner that thou take not thy supper, in whatsoever place thou be, until thou findest out in what place I may be under the four brown quarters of the world.”[83]

She took a napkin from her pocket, and she shook it, and there was no knowing what side she had taken, or whence she came.

He went home heavily-minded, black sorrowfully; he put his elbow on the board, and his hand under his cheek, and he let out a sigh.

“What is it that ails thee, son said the king of Eirinn; “Is it under spells that thou art?--but notice them not; I will raise thy spells off thee. I have a smithy on shore, and ships on sea; so long as gold or silver lasts me, stock or dwelling, I will set it to thy losing till I raise these spells off thee.”

“Thou shalt not set them,” said he; “and, father, thou art high-minded. Thou wouldst set that away from thyself, and thou wilt lose all that might be there. Thou wilt not raise the spells; thy kingdom will go to want and to poverty, and that will not raise the spells; and thou wilt lose thy lot of men; but keep thou thy lot of Men by thyself, and if I go I shall but lose myself.”

So it was in the morning of the morrow’s day he went away without dog, without man, without calf, without child.

He was going, and going, and journeying; there was blackening on his soles, and holes in his shoes; the black clouds of night coming, and the bright, quiet clouds of the day going away, and without his finding a place of staying, or rest for him. He spent a week from end to end

[83] This sort of incantation is common, and I am not certain that it is quite correctly rendered.

without seeing house or castle, or any one thing. He was grown sick; sleepless, restless, meatless, drinkless, walking all the week. He gave a glance from him, and what should he see but a castle. He took towards it, and round about it, and there was not so much as an auger hole in the house. His “DUDAM” and his “DADAM” fell with trouble and wandering, and he turned back, heavily-minded, black sorrowfully. He was taking up before him, and what should he hear behind him but a shout.

“Fair Chief, son of the king of Eirinn, return: there is the feast of a day and year awaiting thee; the meat thou thinkest not (of), and the drink thou thinkest not of; the meat thou thinkest on, and the drink thou thinkest on,” and he returned.

There was a door for every day in the year in the house; and there was a window for every day in the year in it. It was a great marvel for him, the house that he himself had gone round about, and without so much as an auger hole in it, that door and window should be in it for every day in the year when he came back.

He took in to it. Meat was set in its place for using, drink in its place of drinking, music in its place for hearing, and they were plying the feast and the company with solace and pleasure of mind, himself and the fine damsel that cried after him in the palace.

A bed was made for him in the castle, with pillows, with a hollow in the middle; warm water was put on his feet, and he went to lie down. When he rose up in the morning, the board was set over with each meat that was best; and he was thus for a time without his feeling the time pass by.

She stood in the door. “Fair Chief, son of the king of Eirinn, in what state dost thou find thyself, or how art thou?” said the damsel of the castle.

“I am well,” said he.

“Dost thou know at what time thou camest here?” said she.

“I think I shall complete a week, if I be here this day,” said he.

“A quarter is just out to-day,” said she. “Thy meat, thy drink, or thy bed will not grow a bit the worse than they are till it pleases thyself to return home.”

There he was by himself till he was thinking that he had a month out. At this time she stood in the door.

“Yes! Fair Chief, how dost thou find thyself this day?” said she.

“Right well,” said he.

“In what mind dost thou find thyself?” said she.

“I will tell thee that,” said he; “if my two hands could reach yonder peaked hill, that I would set it on yon other bluff hill.”

“Dost thou know at what time thou camest hither?” said she.

“I am thinking that I have completed a month here,” said he.

“The end of the two years is out just this day,” said she.

“I will not believe that the man ever came on the surface of the world that would gain victory of myself in strength or lightness,” said he.

“Thou art silly,” said she; “there is a little band here which they call An Fhinn, the Een, and they will get victory of thee. The man never came of whom they would not get victory.”

“Morsel I will not eat, draught I will not drink, sleep there will not come on my eye, till I reach where they are, and I know who they are,” said he.

“Fair Chief be not so silly, and let that lightness pass from thy head; stay as thou art, for I know thou wilt return,” said she.

“I will not make stay by night or day, until I reach them,” said he.

“The day is soft and misty,” said she, “and thou art setting it before thee that thou wilt go. The Feen are in such a place, and they have a net fishing trout. Thou shalt go over where they are. Thou wilt see the Feen on one side, and Fionn alone on the other side. Thou shalt go where he is, and thou shalt bless him. Fionn will bless thee in the same way; thou shalt ask service from him; he will say that he has no service for thee, now that the Feen are strong enough, and he will not put a man out. He will say, ‘What name is upon thee?’ Thou shalt answer, the name thou didst never hide, An Gruagach ban Mae Righ Eireann. Fionn will say then, ‘Though I should not want of a man, why should I not give service to the son of thy father.’ Be not high minded amongst the Feeantan. Come now, and thou shalt have a napkin that is here, and thou shalt say to Fionn, whether thou be alive or dead to put thee in it when comes its need.”

He went away, and he reached the (place) where the Feen were; he saw them there fishing trout, the rest on the one side, and Fionn on the other side alone. He went where Fionn was, and he blessed him. Fionn blessed him in words that were no worse.

“I heard that there were such men, and I came to you to seek hire from you,” said the Fair Chief.

“Well, then, I have no need of a man at the time,” said Fionn. “What name is upon thee?”

“My name I never hid. The Gruagach Ban, son of the king of Eireann,” said he.

“Bad! bad! for all the ill luck that befel me! where I got my nourishment young, and my dwelling for my old age; who should get service unless thy father’s son should get it; but be not high minded amongst the Feentan,” said Fionn. “Come hither and catch the end of the net, and drag it along with me.”

He began dragging the net with the Feen. He cast an eye above him, and what should he see but a deer.

“Were it not better for the like of you, such swift, strong, light, young men to be hunting yonder deer, than to be fishing any one pert trout that is here, and that a morsel of fish or a mouthful of juice will not satisfy you rather than yonder creature up above you a morsel of whose flesh, and a mouthful of whose broth will suffice you,” said the Fair Chief, son of the king of Eirinn.

“If yonder beast is good, we are seven times tired of him,” said Fionn, “and we know him well enough.”

Well, I heard myself that there was one man of you called LUATHAS (Swiftness) that could catch the swift March wind, and the swift March wind could not catch,” said the Fair Chief.

“Since it is thy first request, we will send to seek him,” said Fionn.

He was sent for, and CAOILTE came. The Fair Chief shouted to him.

“There is the matter I have for thee,” said the Gruagach, “to run the deer that I saw yonder above.”

“The Fair Chief came amongst our company this day, and his advice may be taken the first day. He gave a glance from him, and he saw a deer standing above us; he said it was better for our like of swift, strong, light men to be hunting the deer, than to be fishing any one pert trout that is here; and thou Caoilte go and chase the deer.”

“Well, then, many is the day that I have given to chasing him, and it is little I have for it but my grief that I never got a hold of him,” said Caoilte.

Caoilte went away, and he took to speed.

“How will Caoilte be when he is at his full speed?” said the Fair Chief.

“There will be three heads on Caoilte when he is at his full speed,” said Fionn.

“And how many heads will there be on the deer?” said the Chief.

“There will be seven heads on him when he is at full swiftness,” said Fionn.[84]

“What distance has he before he reaches the end of his journey?” said the Chief.

“It is seven glens and seven hills, and seven summer seats,” said Fionn; “he has that to make before he reaches a place of rest.”

“Let us take a hand at dragging the net,” said the Chief.

The Fair Chief gave a glance from him, and he said to Fionn, “Een, son of Cumhail, put thy finger under thy knowledge tooth, to see what distance Caoilte is from the deer.”

Fionn put his finger under his knowledge tooth. “There are two heads on Caoilte, and on the deer there are but two heads yet,” said Fionn.

“How much distance have they put past?” said the Fair Chief.

“Two glens and two hills; they have five unpassed still,” said Fionn.

“Let us take a hand at fishing the trout,” said the Fair Chief.

When they had been working a while, the Fair Chief gave a glance from him. “Fionn, son of Cumal,” said he, “put thy finger under thy knowledge tooth to see what distance Caoilte is from the deer.”

“There are three heads on Caoilte, and four heads on the deer, and Caoilte is at full speed,” said Fionn.

“How many glens and hills and summer seats are before them,” said the Chief.

“There are four behind them, and three before them,” said Fionn.

“Let us take a hand at fishing the trout,” said the Fair Chief.

They took a while at fishing the trout.

“Fionn, son of Cumal,” said the Chief, “what distance is still before the deer before he reaches the end of his journey?”

“One glen and one hill, and one summer seat,” said Fionn.

He threw the net from him, and he took to speed. He would catch the swift March wind, and the swift March wind could not catch him, till he caught Caoilte; he took past him, and he left his blessing with him. Going over by the ford of Sruth Ruadh, the deer gave a spring--the Fair

[84] What this means I do not know. Perhaps a head may be the height of a man, a fathom-three and seven fathoms at a stride.

Chief gave the next spring, and he caught the deer by the hinder shank, and the deer gave a roar, and the Carlin cried--

“Who seized the beast of my love?”

“It is I,” said the Fair Chief, “the son of the king of Eirinn.”

“Oh, Gruagach ban, son of the king of Eirinn, let him go,” said the Carlin.

“I will not let (him go); he is my own beast now,” said the Gruagach.

“Give me the full of my fist of his bristles, or a handful of his food, or a mouthful of his broth, or a morsel of his flesh,” said the Carlin.

“Any one share thou gettest not,” said he.

“The Feen are coming,” said she, “and Fionn at their head, and there shall not be one of them that I do not bind back to back.”

“Do that,” said he, “but I am going away.”

He went away, and he took the deer with him, and he was taking on before him till the Een met him.

“Een, son of Cumal, keep that,” said he, as he left the deer with Fionn.

Fionn, son of Cumal, sat at the deer, and the Fair Chief went away. He reached the smithy of the seven and twenty smiths. He took out three iron hoops out of it for every man that was in the Een (Fhinn); he took with him a hand hammer, and he put three hoops about the head of every man that was in the Een, and he tightened them with the hammer.

The Carlin came out, and let out a great screech.

“Een, son of Cumal, let hither to me the creature of my love.”

The highest hoop that was on the Feeantan burst with the screech. She came out the second time, and she let out the next yell, and the second hoop burst. (Was not the Carlin terrible!) She went home, and she was not long within when she came the third time, and she let out the third yell, and the third hoop burst. She went and she betook herself to a wood; she twisted a withy from the wood; she took it with her; she went over, and she bound every man of the Feeantaichean back to back, but Fionn.

The Fair Chief laid his hand on the deer, and he flayed it. He took out the GAORR, and every bit of the inside; he cut a turf, and he buried them under the earth. He set a caldron in order, and be put the deer in the caldron, and fire at it to cook it.

“Een, son of Cumal, “ said the fair Chief, “whether wouldst thou rather go to fight the Carlin, or stay to boil the caldron?”

“Well, then,” said Fionn, “the caldron is hard enough to boil. If there be a morsel of the flesh uncooked, the deer will get up as he was before; and if a drop of the broth goes into the fire, be will arise as he was before. I would rather stay and boil the caldron.”

The Carlin came. “Een, son of Cumal,” said she give me my fist full of bristles, or a squeeze of my fist of GAORR, or else a morsel of his flesh, or else a gulp of the broth.”

“I myself did not do a thing about it, and with that I have no order to give it away,” said Fionn.

Here then the Fair Chief and the Carlin began at each other; they would make a bog on the rock and a rock on the bog. In the place where the least they would sink, they would sink to the knees; in the place where the most they would sink, they would sink to the eyes.

“Art thou satisfied with the sport, Een, son of Cumal?” said the Fair Chief.

“It is long since I was satiated with that,” said Fionn.

“There will be a chance to return it now,” said the Chief.

He seized the Carlin, and he struck her a blow of his foot in the crook of the hough, and he felled her.

“Een, son of Cumal, shall I take her head off?” said the Chief.

“I don’t know,” said Fionn.

“Een, son of Cumal,” said she, “I am laying thee under crosses, and under spells, and under holy herdsman of quiet travelling, wandering woman, the little calf, most powerless, most uncouth, to take thy head and thine ear, and thy life’s wearing off, unless thou be as a husband, three hours before the day comes, with the wife of the Tree Lion.”[85]

“I,” said the Fair Chief, “am laying thee under crosses and under spells, under holy herdsman of quiet travelling, wandering woman, the little calf most powerless and most uncouth, to take thy head and thine ear, and thy life’s wearing off, unless thou be with a foot on either side of the ford of Struth Ruadh, and every drop of the water flowing through thee.”

He arose, and he let her stand up.

“Raise thy spells from off me, and I will raise them from off him,” said the Carlin. “Neither will I lift nor lay down, but so; howsoever we may be, thou comest not.”

The fair Chief went and he took off the caldron; he seized a fork and a knife, and he put the fork into the deer; he seized the knife and he cut a morsel out of it, and he ate it. He caught a turf, and cut it, and he laid that on the mouth of the caldron.

“Een, son of Cumal, it is time for us to be going,” said he; “art thou good at horsemanship?”

“I could hit upon it,” said Fionn.

He caught hold of a rod, and he gave it to Fionn. “Strike that on me,” said he.

Fionn struck the rod on him and made him a brown ambler.

“Now, get on top of me,” said the Chief. Fionn got on him.

“Be pretty watchful; I am at thee.”

He gave that spring and he went past nine ridges, and Fionn stood (fast) on him. “She” gave the next spring and “she” went past nine other ridges and Fionn stood fast on “her.” He took to speed. He would catch the swift March wind, and the swift March wind could not catch him.

“There is a little town down here,” said the ambler, “and go down and take with thee three stoups of wine and three wheaten loaves, and thou shalt give me a stoup of wine and a wheaten loaf, and thou shalt comb me against the hair, and with the hair.”

Fionn got that and they reached the wall of the Tree Lion.

[85] Leòmhan chraobh. This, I presume, is a griffin; I have often heard the name though it is not in dictionaries. The word griffin is also omitted from some.

“Come on the ground, Een, son of Cumal, and give me a stoup of wine and a wheaten loaf.”

Fionn came down and he gave him a stoup of wine and a wheaten loaf.

“Comb me now against the hair, and comb me with the hair.”

He did that.

“Take care of thyself,” said the ambler.

Then “she” leaped, and she put a third of the wall below her, and there were two-thirds above, and she returned.

“Give me another stoup of wine and another wheaten loaf, and comb me against the hair, and comb me with the hair.”

He did that.

“Take care of thyself, for I am for thee now,” said the ambler.

She took the second spring, and she put two-thirds of the wall below her, and there was a third over her head, and she returned.

“Give me another stoup of wine and a wheaten loaf, and comb me against the hair, and with the hair.”

He did that.

“Take care of thyself, for I am for thee now,” said she.

She took a spring, and she was on the top of the wall.

“The matter is well before thee, Een,” said the ambler, “the Tree Lion is from home.”

He went home. My Chief, and all hail! were before him: meat and drink were set before him; he rested that night, and he was with the wife of the Tree Lion three hours before the day.

So early as his eye saw the day, earlier than that he arose, and he reached the ambler, the Gruagach Ban, and they went away.

Said the Fair Chief, “The Tree Lion is from home; anything that passed she will not hide; he is coming after us, and he will not remember his book of witchcraft; and since he does not remember the book of witchcraft, it will go with me against him; but if he should remember the book, the people of the world could not withstand him. He has every DRAOCHD magic, and he will spring as a bull when be comes, and I will spring as a bull before him, and the first blow I give him, I will lay his head on his side, and I will make him roar. Then he will spring as an AISEAL, (ass), and I will spring as an ass before him, and the first thrust I give him I will take a mouthful out of him, between flesh and hide as it may be. Then he will spring as a hawk in the heavens; I will spring as a hawk in the wood, and the first stroke I give him, I will take his heart and his liver out. I will come down afterwards, and thou shalt seize that napkin yonder, and thou shalt put me in the napkin, and thou shalt cut a turf, and thou shalt put the napkin under the earth, and thou shalt stand upon it. Then the wife of the Tree Lion will come, and thou standing on the top of the turf, and I under thy feet; and she with the book of witchcraft on her back in a hay band, and she will say--Een, son of Cumal, man that never told a lie, tell me who of the people of the world killed my comrade, and thou shalt say I know not above the earth who killed thy comrade. She will go away and take to speed with her weeping cry.”

When they were on forward a short distance, whom saw they coming but the Tree Lion.

He became a bull; the Fair chief became a bull before him, and the first blow he struck him he laid his head on his side, and the Tree Lion gave out a roar. Then he sprung as an ass, the Fair Chief sprung as an ass before him, and at the first rush he gave towards him he took a mouthful between flesh and skin. The Tree Lion then sprang as a hawk in the heavens, the Fair Chief sprang as a hawk in the wood, and he took the heart and liver out of him. The Fair Chief fell down afterwards, Fionn seized him and he put him into the napkin, and he cut a turf, and he put the napkin under the earth, and the turf upon it, and he stood on the turf. The wife of the Tree Lion came, and the book of witchcraft was on her back in a hay band.

"Een, son of Cumal, man that never told a lie, who killed my comrade?"

"I know not above the earth, who killed thy comrade," said Fionn.

And she went away in her weeping cry, and she betook herself to distance.

He caught hold of the Fair Chief and he lifted him with him, and he reached the castle in which was the dame of the Fine Green Kirtle. He reached her that into her hand. She went down with it, and she was not long down when she came up where he was.

"Een, son of Cumal, the Gruagach Ban, son of the king of Eirinn, is asking for thee."

"That is the news I like best of all I ever heard, that the Fair Chief is asking for me," said Fionn.

She set meat and drink before them, and they would not eat a morsel nor drink a drop till they should eat their share of the deer with the rest at Sruth Ruaidh.

They reached (the place) where the Een were bound, and they loosed every single one of them, and they were hungry enough. The Fair Chief set the deer before them, and they left of the deer thrice as much as they ate.

"I should go to tell my tale," said the Fair Chief. He reached the carlin at the ford of Sruth Ruaidh, and he began to tell the tale how it befel him. Every tale he would tell her she would begin to rise; every time she would begin to rise he would seize her, and he would crush her bones, and he would break them until he told his lot of tales to her.

When he had told them he returned, and he reached the Een back again.

Fionn went with him to the Castle of the Dame of the Fine Green Kirtle.

"Blessing be with thee, Een, son of Cumal," said the Fair Chief, son of the king of Eirinn, "I have found all I sought--a sight of each matter and of each thing, and now I will be returning home to the palace of my own father."

"It is thus thou art about to leave me, after each thing I have done for thee; thou wilt take another one, and I shall be left alone."

"Is that what thou sayest?" said he, "If I thought that might be done, I never saw of married women or maidens that I would take rather than thee, but I will not make wedding or marrying here with thee, but thou shalt do to the palace of my father with me."

They went to the palace of his father, himself and the Dame of the Fine Green Kirtle, and Fionn. A churchman was got, and the Fair Chief and the dame of the Fine Green Kirtle married. A hearty, jolly, joyful wedding was made for them; music was raised and lament laid down; meat was set in the place for using, and drink in the place for drinking, and music in the place for hearing, and they were plying the feast and the company until that wedding was kept up for a day and a year, with solace and pleasure of mind.

(Gaelic omitted)

ALEXANDER MACNEILL, Fisherman.

Ten Tangval, Barra.

This is another specimen of what is called Seanachas--one of those old Highland stories which in their telling resemble no others. Fionn and his comrades are mentioned as England is by Americans. They are the greatest of heroes, but only act as foils to one still greater. "The Britishers wop the world, and we wop the Britishers," says the Americans. And Gruagach Ban, the Irish chief, beats the Fingalians, who beat the world. It seems hopeless to search for the original of this, unless it is to be found in mythology. The history of the Island of Barra, and the name of the place where the story was told, suggest a mixture of Norse and Celtic mythology as the most probable.

Fionn and his comrades are clearly Celtic worthies, and though they are usually brought clown to be "militia" raised in Ireland by a particular Irish king, at a certain date, I strongly suspect them to be divinities in disguise. The leader at one end of the net and all his comrades at the other, has a parallel in the Edda (page 76, Dasent's translation).

"When the net was made ready, then fared the Asa to the river, and cast the net into the force; Thorr held one end and the other held all the Asa, and so they drew the net."

And in other stories Fionn has part of the gear of Thorr in the shape of a hammer, whose stroke was heard over Eirinn and Lochlann, and which surely was a thunderbolt rather than the whistle of a militiaman.

Fionn, too, has the character of the leader in all the old Western romances; and in all mythology of which I know anything, he is the chief, but he is not the strongest; he is the wisest, but there is always some power wiser and stronger than him.

The dame of the Fine Green Kirtle, and the carlin with the wonderful deer, were both able to perform feats which the Feen could not equal, and they with their magic arts overcame the heroes, as the Fates ruled Jupiter and the Nornir ruled men, though there were Greek and Norse gods and goddesses in plenty. So King Arthur was chief but not the most valiant, the wisest but not the best of his time. And so in the Niebelungen Lied there was always a hero greater than the great man. And here seems to be something of the same kind in this Gaelic story.

The wife of the Tree Lion in her magic castle, and the leaping man in disguise, who carries the wooer, are characters which may be traced in the old German romance, and the incidents have a parallel in the Volsung tale, as its outline is given in the Norse Tales. There, too, is a lady to be won, and an obstacle to be surmounted, and a steed which springs over it, and a disguised worthy, more valiant than the chief.

The transformation into many shapes is a very common incident in Gaelic tales. It is common to Norse, to Mr. Peter Buchan's Scotch MS. Collection; and is somewhat like a story in the Arabian Nights where a princess fights a genius.

The dame of the Fine Green Kirtle is a common character in Gaelic tales. In Sutherland she was mentioned as seen about hills. She is always possessed of magic powers; and I know nothing like her in other collections. The carlin with the deer is to be traced in the Irish tales published by Mr. Simpson, and in Breton tales and poems, and in Welsh stories; and she is at least as old as Diana and the Sacred Hind with golden horns and brazen feet, which Hercules caught after a year's chase, which Diana snatched from him, reprimanding him severely for molesting an animal sacred to her.

LXV. The Knight Of The Red Shield

From John MacGilvray, Colonsay.

THERE was before now a king of Eirinn, and he went himself, and his people, and his warriors, and his nobles, and his great gentles, to the hill of hunting and game. They sat on a hillock coloured green colour, where the sun would rise early, and where she would set late. Said the one of swifter mouth than the rest.

"Who now in the four brown[86] quarters of the universe would have the heart to put an affront and disgrace on the King of Eirinn, and he in the midst of the people, and the warriors, great gentles, and nobles of his own realm."

"Are ye not silly," said the king; "he might come, one who should put an affront and disgrace on me, and that ye could not pluck the worst hair in his beard out of it."

It was thus it was. They saw the shadow of a shower coming from the western airt,[87] and going to the eastern airt and a rider of a black filly coming cheerily after it.

As it were a warrior on the mountain shore,
As a star over sparklings,[88]
As a great sea over little pools,
As a smith's smithy coal
Being quenched at the river side ;
So would seem the men and women of the world beside him,
In figure, in shape, in form, and in visage.

Then he spoke to them in the understanding, quieting, truly wise words of real knowledge; and before there was any more talk between them, he put over the fist and he struck the king between the mouth and the nose, and he drove out three of his teeth, and he caught them in his fist, and he put them in his pouch, and he went away.

"Did not I say to you," said the king, "that one might come who should put an affront and disgrace on me, and that you could not pluck the worst hair in his beard out of it!"

Then his big son, the Knight of the Cairn, swore that he wouldn't eat meat, and that he wouldn't drink draught, and that he would not hearken to music, until he should take off the warrior that struck the fist on the king, the head that designed to do it.

"Well," said the Knight of the Sword, the very same for me, until I take the hand that struck the fist on the king from off the shoulder.

There was one man with them there in the company, whose name was Mac an Earraich uaine ri Gaisge, The Son of the Green Spring by Valour. "The very same for me," said he, "until I take out of the warrior who struck the fist on the king, the heart that thought on doing it."

"Thou nasty creature!" said the Knight of the Cairn, "what should bring thee with us? When we should go to valour, thou wouldst turn to weakness; thou wouldst find death in boggy moss, or in rifts of rock, or in a land of holes, or in the shadow of a wall, or in some place."

[86] Probably a corruption, ruadh for roth, the four quarters of the wheel or circle of the universe.
[87] That is against the sun, which is unlucky according to all popular mythology.
[88] Roineagan, small stars, minute points of light.

“Be that as it will, but I will go,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour.

The king’s two sons went away. Glance that the Knight of the Cairn gave behind him, he sees the Son of the Green Spring by Valour following them.

“What,” said the Knight of the Cairn to the Knight of the Sword, “shall we do to him?”

“Do,” said the Knight of the Sword, “sweep his head off.”

“Well,” said the Knight of the Cairn, “we will not do that; but there is a great crag of stone up here, and we will bind him to it.”

“I am willing to do that same,” said the other.

They bound him to the crag of stone to leave him till he should die, and they went away. Glance that the Knight of the Cairn gave behind him again, he sees him coming and the crag upon him.

“Dost thou not see that one coming again, and the crag upon him!” said the Knight of the Cairn to the Knight of the Sword; “what shall we do to him?”

“It is to sweep the head off him, and not let him (come) further,” said the Knight of the Sword.

“We will not do that,” said the Knight of the Cairn; but we will turn back and loose the crag off him. It is but a sorry matter for two full heroes like us; though he should be with us, he will make a man to polish a shield, or blow a fire heap or something.”

They loosed him, and they let him come with them. Then they went down to the shore; then they got the ship, which was called AN IUBHRACH BRALLACH, The speckled barge.[89]

They put her out, and they gave her prow to sea, and her stern to shore.
They hoisted the speckled, flapping, bare-topped sails
Up against the tall, tough, splintery masts.
They had a pleasant little breeze as they might choose themselves,
Would bring heather from the hill, leaf from grove, willow from its roots,
Would put thatch of the houses in furrows of the ridges.
The day that neither the son nor the father could do it,
That same was neither little nor much for them,
But using it and taking it as it might come,
The sea plunging and surging,
The red sea the blue sea lashing
And striking hither and thither about her planks.
The whorled dun whelk that was down on the ground of the ocean,
Would give a SNAG on her gunwale and crack on her floor,
She would cut a slender oaten straw with the excellence of her going.

They gave three days driving her thus. “I myself am growing tired of this,” said the Knight of the Cairn to the Knight of the Sword, “It seems to me time to get news from the mast.”

“Thou thyself are the most greatly beloved here, oh Knight of the Cairn, and shew that thou wilt have honour going up; and if thou goest not up, we will have the more sport with thee,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour.

[89] These words would bear many translations according to dictionaries, such as the spotted stately woman, the variegated abounding in bows. The meaning seems to be a gaily painted boat.

Up went the Knight of the Cairn with a rush, and he fell down clatter in a faint on the deck of the ship.

“It is ill thou hast done,” said the Knight of the Sword.

“Let us see if thyself be better and if thou be better, it will be shewn that thou wilt have more will to go on; or else we will have the more sport with thee,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour.

Up went the Knight of the Sword, and before he had reached but half the mast, he began squealing and squealing, and he could neither go up nor come down.

“Thou hast done as thou wert asked; and thou hast shewed that thou hadst the more respect for going up; and now thou canst not go up, neither canst thou come down! No warrior was I nor half a warrior, and the esteem of a warrior was not mine at the time of leaving; I was to find death in boggy moss, or in rifts of rock, or in the shade of a wall, or in some place; and it were no effort for me to bring news from the mast.”

“Thou great hero!” said the Knight of the Cairn, “try it.”

“A great hero am I this day, but not when leaving the town,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour.

He measured a spring from the ends of his spear to the points of his toes, and he was up in the cross-trees in a twinkling.

“What art thou seeing?” said the Knight of the Cairn.

“It is too big for a crow, and it is too little for land,” said he.

“Stay, as thou hast to try if thou canst know what it is,” said they to him; and he stayed so for a while.[90]

“What art thou seeing now? “ said they to him.

“It is an island and a hoop of fire about it, flaming at either end; and I think that there is not one warrior in the great world that will go over the fire,” said he.

“Unless two heroes such as we go over it,” said they.

“I think that it was easier for you to bring news from the mast than to go in there,” said he.

“It is no reproach!” said the Knight of the Cairn.

“It is not; it is truth,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour.

They reached the windward side of the fire, and they went on shore; and they drew the speckled barge up her own seven lengths on grey grass, with her mouth under her, where the scholars of a bio, town could neither make ridicule, scoffing, or mockery of her. They blew up a fire heap, and they gave three days and three nights resting their weariness.

At the end of the three days they began at sharpening their arms.

“I,” said the Knight of the Cairn, “am getting tired of this; it seems to me time to get news from the isle.”

“Thou art thyself the most greatly beloved here,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour, and go the first and try what is the best news that thou canst bring to us.”

[90] The whole of this is drawn from the life of boatmen. The feat of climbing the mast of an open boat under sail is far from easy, and I have seen it done as a feat of strength and skill.

The Knight of the Cairn went and he reached the fire; and he tried to leap over it, and down he went into it to his knees, and he turned back, and there was not a slender hair or skin between his knees and his ankles, that was not in a crumpled fold about the mouth of the shoes.

“He’s bad, he’s bad,” said the Knight of the Sword.

“Let us see if thou art better thyself,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour. “Shew that thou wilt have the greater honour going on, or else we will have the more sport with thee.”

The Knight of the Sword went, and he reached the fire; and he tried to leap over it, and down he went into it to the thick end of the thigh; and he turned back, and there was no slender hair or skin between the thick end of the thigh and the ankle that was not in a crumpled fold about the mouth of the shoes.

“Well,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour, “no warrior was I leaving the town, in your esteem; and if I had my choice of arms and armour of all that there are in the great world, it were no effort for me to bring news from the isle.”

“If we had that thou shouldst have it,” said the Knight of the Cairn.

“Knight of the Cairn, thine own arms and armour are the second that I would rather be mine (of all) in the great world, although thou thyself art not the second best warrior in it,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour.

“It is my own arms and array that are easiest to get,” said the Knight of the Cairn, “and thou shalt have them; but I should like that thou wouldst be so good as to tell me what other arms or array are better than mine.”

“There are the arms and array of the Great Son of the sons of the universe,[91] who struck the fist on thy father,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour.

The Knight of the Cairn put off his arms and array; and the Son of the Green Spring by Valour went into his arms and his array.

He went into his harness of battle and hard combat,
As was a shirt of smooth yellow silk and gauze stretched on his breast;
His coat, his kindly coat, above the kindly covering;
His boss covered; hindering sharp-pointed shield on his left hand,
His head-dress a helm of hard combat,
To cover his crown and his head top,
To go in the front of the fray and the fray long lasting
His heroes hard slasher in his right hand,
A sharp surety knife against his waist.

He raised himself up to the top of the shore; and there was no turf he would cast behind his heels, that was not as deep as a turf that the bread covering tree[92] would cast when deepest it would be ploughing. He reached the circle of fire; he leaped from the points of his spear to the points of his toes over the fire.

Then there was the very finest isle that ever was seen from the beginning of the universe to the end of eternity; he went up about the island, and he saw a yellow bare hill in the midst. He raised himself up against the hill; there was a treasure of a woman sitting on the hill, and a great youth with his head on her knee, and asleep. He spoke to her in instructed, eloquent,

[91] MHACAIBH MHOIR MHACHAIBH AN DOMHAIN; who this personage may he I cannot even guess.
[92] DALLA CHRANN ARAIN, a plough.

true, wise, soft maiden words of true knowledge. She answered in like words; and if they were no better, they were not a whit worse, for the time.

“A man of thy seeming is a treasure for me; and if I had a right to thee, thou shouldst not leave the island,” said the little treasure.

“If a man of my seeming were a treasure for thee, thou wouldst tell me what were waking for that youth,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour.

“It is to take off the point of his little finger,” said she.

He laid a hand on the sharp surety knife that was against his waist, and he took the little finger off him from the root. That made the youth neither shrink nor stir.

“Tell me what is waking for the youth, or else there are two oft whom I will take the heads, thyself and the youth,” said the Son of the Green Spring by Valour.

“Waking for him,” said she, “is a thing that thou canst not do, nor any one warrior in the great world, but the warrior of the red shield, of whom it was in the prophecies that he should come to this island, and strike yonder crag of stone on this man in the rock of his chest; and he is unbaptized till he does that.”

He heard this that such was in the prophecy for him, and he unnamed. A fist upon manhood, a fist upon strengthening, and a fist upon power went into him. He raised the crag in his two hands, and he struck it on the youth in the rock of his chest. The one who was asleep gave a slow stare of his two eyes and he looked at him.

“Aha!” said the one who was asleep, “hast thou come, warrior of the Red Shield. It is this day that thou has the name; thou wilt not stand long to me.”

“Two thirds of thy fear be on thyself, and one on me,” said the Warrior of the Red Shield;, thou wilt not stand long to me.”

In each other’s grips they went, and they were hard belabouring each other till the mouth of dusk and lateness was. The Warrior of the Red Shield thought that he was far from his friends and near his foe; he gave him that little light lift, and he struck him against the earth; the thumb of his foot gave a warning to the root of his ear, and he swept the head off him.

“Though it be I who have done this, it was not I who promised it,” said he.

He took the hand off him from the shoulder, and he took the heart from his chest, and he took the head off the neck; he put his hand in the dead warrior’s pouch, and he found three teeth of an old horse in it, and with the hurry took them for the king’s teeth, and he took them with him; and he went to a tuft of wood, and he gathered a withy, and he tied on it the hand and the heart and the head.

“Whether wouldst thou rather stay here on this island by thyself, or go with me?” said he to the little treasure.

“I would rather go with thee thyself, than with all the men of earth’s mould together,” said the little treasure.

He raised her with him on the shower top of his shoulders, and on the burden (bearing) part of his back, and he went to the fire. He sprang over with the little treasure upon him. He sees the Knight of the Cairn and the Knight of the Sword coming to meet him rage and fury in their eyes.

“What great warrior,” said they, “was that after thee there, and returned when he saw two heroes like us?”

“Here’s for you,” said he “this little treasure of a woman, and the three teeth of your father; and the head, and hand, and heart of the one who struck the fist on him. Make a little stay and I will return, and I will not leave a shred of a tale in the island.”

He went away back; and at the end of a while he cast an eye behind him, and he sees them and the speckled barge playing him ocean hiding.

“Death wrappings upon yourselves!” said he, “a tempest of blood about your eyes, the ghost of your hanging be upon you! to leave me in an island by myself, without the seed of Adam in it, and that I should not know this night what I shall do.”

He went forward about the island, and was seeing neither house nor tower in any place, low or high. At last he saw an old castle in the lower ground of the island, and he took (his way) towards it. He saw three youths coming heavily, wearily, tired to the castle. He spoke to them in instructed, eloquent, true, wise words of true wisdom. They spoke in return in like words.

They came in words of the olden time on each other; and who were here but his three true foster brothers. They went in right good pleasure of mind to the big town.

They raised up music and laid down woe;
There were soft drunken draughts
And harsh, stammering drinks,
Tranquil, easy toasts
Between himself and his foster brethren,
Music between fiddles, with which would sleep
Wounded men and travailing women
Withering away for ever; with the sound of that music
Which was ever continuing sweetly that night.

They went to lie down. In the morning of the morrow he arose right well pleased, and he took his meat. What should he hear but the GLIOGARSAICH, clashing of arms and men going into their array. Who were these but his foster brethren.

“Where are you going?” said he to them.

“We are from the end of a day and a year in this island,” said they, “holding battle against MacDorcha MacDoilleir, the Son of Darkness Son of Dimness, and a hundred of his people: and every one we kill to-day they will be alive to-morrow. Spells are on us that we may not leave this for ever until we kill them.”

“I will go with you this day; you will be the better for me,” said he.

“Spells are on us,” said they, “that no man may go with us unless he goes there alone.”

“Stay you within this day, and I will go there by myself,” said he.

He went away, and he hit upon the people of the Son of Darkness Son of Dimness, and he did not leave a head on a trunk of theirs.

He hit upon MacDorcha MacDoilleir himself, and MacDorcha MacDoilleir said to him,

Art thou here, Warrior of the Red Shield?”

“I am,” said the Warrior of the Red Shield.

“Well then,” said MacDorcha MacDoilleir, “thou wilt not stand long for me.”

In each other’s grips they went, and were hard belabouring each other till the mouth of dusk and lateness was. At last the Knight of the Red Shield gave that cheery little light lift to the Son of Darkness Son of Dimness, and he put him under, and he cast the head off him.

Now there was MacDorcha MacDoilleir dead, and his thirteen sons; and the battle of a hundred on the hand of each one of them.

Then he was spoilt and torn so much that he could not leave the battle-field; and he did but let himself down, laid amongst the dead the length of the day. There was a great strand under him down below; and what should he hear but the sea coming as a blazing brand of fire, as a destroying serpent, as a bellowing bull; he looked from him, and what saw he coming on shore on the midst of the strand, but a great toothy carlin, whose like was never seen. There was the tooth that was longer than a staff in her fist, and the one that was shorter than a stocking wire in her lap. She came up to the battle-field, and there were two between her and him. She put her finger in their mouths, and she brought them alive; and they rose up whole as best they ever were. She reached him and she put her finger in his mouth, and he snapped it off her from the joint. She struck him a blow of the point of her foot, and she cast him over seven ridges.

"Thou pert little wretch," said she, "thou art the last I will next-live[93] in the battle field."

The carlin went over another, and he was above her; he did not know how he should put an end to the carlin; he thought of throwing the short spear that her son had at her, and if the head should fall off her that was well. He threw the spear, and he drove the head off the carlin. Then he was stretched on the battlefield, blood and sinews and flesh in pain, but that be had whole bones. What should he see but a musical harper about the field.

"What art thou seeking?" said he to the harper.

"I am sure thou art wearied," said the harper; "come up and set thy head on this little hillock and sleep."

He went up and he laid down; he drew a snore, pretending that he was asleep, and on his soles he was brisk, swift, and active.

"Thou art dreaming," said the harper.

"I am," said he.

"What sawest thou?" said the harper.

"A musical harper," he said, "drawing a rusty old sword to take off my head."

Then he seized the harper, and he drove the brain in fiery shivers through the back of his head.

Then he was under spells that he should not kill a musical harper for ever, but with his own harp.

Then he heard weeping about the field. "Who is that?" said he.

"Here are thy three true foster brothers, seeking thee from place to place to-day," said they.

"I am stretched here," said he, "blood and sinews, and bones in torture."

"If we had the little vessel of balsam that the great carlin has, the mother of MacDorcha MacDoilleir, we would not be long in healing thee," said they.

"She is dead herself up there," said he, and she has nothing that ye may not get."

"We are out of her spells forever," said they.

[93] ATH BHEOTHAICHEAS; there is no such verb in English, but to next-live expresses the meaning.

They brought down the little vessel of balsam, and they washed and bathed him with the thing that was in the vessel; then he arose up as whole and healthy as he ever was. He went home with them, and they passed the night in great pleasure.

They went out the next day in great pleasure to play at shinty. He went against the three, and he would drive a half hail down, and a half hail up, in against them.

They perceived the Great Son of the Sons of the World coming to the town; that was their true foster brother[94] also. They went out where he was, and they said to him--

"Man of my love, avoid us and the town this day."

"What is the cause?" said he.

"The Knight of the Red Shield is within, and it is thou he is seeking," said they.

"Go you home, and say to him to go away and to flee, or else that I will take the head off him," said the Great Son of the Sons of the Universe.

Though this was in secret the Knight of the Red Shield perceived it; and he went out on the other side of the house, and he struck a shield blow, and a fight kindling.

The great warrior went out after him, and they began at each other.

There was no trick that is done by shield man or skiff man,
Or with cheater's dice box,
Or with organ of the monks,
That the heroes could not do
As was the trick of CLEITEAM, trick of OIGEAM,[95]
The apple of the juggler throwing it and catching it
Into each other's laps
Frightfully, furiously,
Bloodily, groaning, hurtfully.
Mind's desire! umpire's choice!
They would drive three red sparks of fire from their armour,
Driving from the shield wall, and flesh
Of their breasts and tender bodies,
As they hardly belaboured each other.

"Art thou not silly, Warrior of the Red Shield, when thou art holding wrestling and had battle against me?" said Macabh Mhacaibh an Domhain.

"How is this?" said the hero of the Red Shield.

"It is, that there is no warrior in the great world that will kill me till I am struck above the covering of the trews," said Macabh Mor.[96]

"The victory blessing of that be thine, telling it to me! If thou hadst told me that a long time ago, it is long since I had swept the head off thee," said the Warrior of the Red Shield.

"There is in that more than thou canst do; the king's three teeth are in my pouch, and try if it be that thou will take them out," said Macabh Mor.

When the Warrior of the Red Shield heard where the death of Macabh Mor was, he had two blows given for the blow, two thrusts for the thrust, two stabs for the stab; and the third was

[94] DEARBH CROMHALTA; this must mean something besides true foster brother.
[95] These may mean the pen trick-the trick of writing; but I am not certain.
[96] From which it appears that he was too tall to be reached by the other.

into the earth, till he had dug a hole; then he sprung backwards. The great warrior sprung towards him, and he did not notice the hole, and he went down into it to the covering of the trews. Then he reached him, and he cast off his head. He put his hand in his pouch, and he found the king's three teeth in it, and he took them with him and he reached the castle.

"Make a way for me for leaving this island," said he to his foster brethren, "as soon as you can."

"We have no way," said they, "by which thou canst leave it; but stay with us forever, and thou shalt not want for meat or drink."

"The matter shall not be so; but unless you make a way for letting me go, I will take the heads and necks out of you," said he.

"A coracle that thy foster mother and thy foster father had, is here; and we will send it with thee till thou goest on shore in Eirinn. The side that thou settest her prow she will go with thee, and she will return back again by herself; here are three pigeons for thee, and they will keep company with thee on the way," said his foster brothers to him.

He set the coracle out, and he sat in her, and he made no stop, no stay, till he went on shore in Eirinn. He turned her prow outwards; and if she was swift coming, she was swifter returning. He let away the three pigeons, as he left the strange country; and he was sorry that he had led them away, so beautiful was the music that they had.[97]

There was a great river between him and the king's house. When he reached the river, he saw a hoary man coming with all his might, and shouting, "Oh, gentleman, stay yonder until I take you over on my back, in case you should wet yourself."

"Poor man, it seems as if thou wert a porter on the river," said he.

"It is (so)," said the hoary old man.

"And what set thee there?" said he.

"I will tell you that," said the hoary old man; "a big warrior struck a fist on the King of Eirinn, and he drove out three of his teeth, and his two sons went to take out vengeance; there went with them a foolish little young boy that was son to me; and when they went to manhood, he went to faintness. It was but sorry vengeance for them to set me as porter on the river for it."

"Poor man," said he, "that is no reproach; before I leave the town thou wilt be well."

He seized him, and he lifted him with him: and he set him sitting in the chair against the king's shoulder.

"Thou art but a saucy man that came to the town; thou hast set that old carl sitting at my father's shoulder; and thou shalt not get it with thee," said the Knight of the Cairn, as he rose and seized him.

"By my hand, and by my two hands' redemption, it were as well for thee to seize Cnoc Leothaid as to seize me," said the Warrior of the Red Shield to him, as he threw him down against the earth.

He laid on him the binding of the three smalls, straitly and painfully. He struck him a blow of the point of his foot, and he cast him over the seven highest spars that were in the court,

[97] In another version pigeons were his foster brothers transformed.

under the drippings of the lamps, and under the feet of the big dogs; and he did the very same to the Knight of the Sword; and the little treasure gave a laugh.

“Death wrappings be upon thyself said the king to her. “Thou art from a year’s end meat companion, and drink companion for me, and I never saw smile or laugh being made by thee, until my two sons are being disgraced.”

“Oh, king,” said she, “I have knowledge of my own reason.”

“What, oh king, is the screeching and screaming that I am hearing since I came to the town? I never got time to ask till now,” said the hero of the Red Shield.

“My sons have three horses’ teeth, driving them into my head, since the beginning of a year, with a hammer, until my head has gone through other with heartbreak and torment, and pain,” said the king.

“What wouldst thou give to a man that would put thy own teeth into thy head, without hurt, without pain,” said he.

“Half my state so long as I may be alive, and my state altogether when I may go,” said the king.

He asked for a can of water, and he put the teeth into the water.

“Drink a draught,” said he to the king.

The king drank a draught, and his own teeth went into his head, firmly and strongly, quite as well as they ever were, and every one in her own place.

“Aha!” said the king, “I am at rest. It is thou that didst the valiant deeds; and it was not my set of sons!”

“It is he,” said the little treasure to the king, “that could do the valiant deeds; and it was not thy set of shambling sons, that would be stretched as seaweed seekers when he was gone to heroism.”

“I will not eat meat, and I will not drink draught,” said the king, “until I see my two sons being burnt tomorrow. I will send some to seek faggots of grey oak for burning them.”

On the morning of the morrow, who was earliest on his knee at the king’s bed, but the Warrior of the Red Shield.

“Rise from that, warrior; what single thing mightest thou be asking that thou shouldst not get,” said the king.

“The thing I am asking is, that thy two sons should be let go; I cannot be in anyone place where I may see them spoiled,” said he. “It were better to do bird and fool clipping to them, and to let them go.”

The king was pleased to do that. Bird and fool clipping was done to them. They were put out of their place, and dogs and big town vagabonds after them.

The little treasure and the Warrior of the Red Shield married, and agreed. A great wedding was made, that lasted a day and a year; and the last day of it was as good as the first day.

(Gaelic omitted)

From John M’Gilvray, labourer, Baile Raomainn, Colonsay, aged seventy-two years. Says he learnt it from his father, Farquhar M’Gilvray, and that he heard him tell it since he remembers anything.

Farquhar M'Gilvray, his father, was a native of Mull, and there learnt this tale in his boyhood. He served nine years in the army, in North America, and subsequently settled in Colonsay. He died near about forty years ago, about seventy-five years of age.

Ballygrant, Islay, July 7, 1860.

I was uncertain how to class this story--whether to consider it as a mock heroic or a romance--and if the latter, to what period it belongs.

The island with fire about it might be a tradition of Iceland. There is something of the same kind in the Volsung tale, as given in the introduction to Norse Tales; but that also might be founded on the wonders of Iceland when they were first discovered.

The language of the story is a good example of the way in which these tales are repeated in the Highlands. Words all but synonymous, and beginning with the same letter, or one like it, are strung together; there are strange names for the heroes, roundabout phrases to express simple ideas, and words used which are seldom heard in conversation, and which are hard to translate.

The story is a good illustration of the manner in which such popular tales are preserved by tradition--how they change and decay. Its history may throw some light on the subject; so I give it.

The first incident was first sent to me by my kind friend Mrs. MacTavish from Port Ellen, in Islay, and may be taken to represent that portion of a popular tale which fixes itself in the minds of the well educated, and which would be transferred from one language to another. It is the beginning of Ursgeul Righ Eilean a Bhacruidh, and is thus told:--

"This king was out hunting with a number of attendants, when his son said, 'Where is there the man in Ireland, Scotland, or the four quarters of the *globe* that would dare strike my father with his fist in the midst of the company who now surround him;" or in Gaelic, 'Caite am bheil am fear an Erin no an Albuin no an *ceitheir ranna ruadh an domhain*,' etc., etc. (the words translated *four quarters of the globe* literally mean the four reddish brown divisions of the universe. This phrase, therefore, in translation fits itself to the knowledge of the person who uses it, and loses its originality in the new language).

"He had scarcely uttered these words when a dark cloud appeared in the north, and a rider on a black horse, who struck the king with his fist, and knocked out one of his front teeth, and took the tooth away with him. The king was downcast at the loss of his tooth, when his son said, '*Let it cost me what it will, but I will not rest* till I recover your lost tooth;' or, as it is expressed in Gaelic, 'Cha d' theid ruith as mo chois, na lodan, as mo bhroig, gas am faigh me t' fhiacil' (literally, running shall not go out of my foot, nor puddle out of my shoe, till I get thy tooth). Having said this he went off and travelled a great way.

So here again the original is better than the translation.

The incidents which follow are not the same as in the Knight of the Red Shield, but they end in the recovery of the lost tooth. The king's son goes to three houses, where he finds three sisters, each of whom gives him a pair of magic shoes, which return home when they have carried him seven years' journey in one day. The last sister is young and lovely; she lowers him over a rock in a basket to light her brother, who is a giant with three heads. He cuts off a head each day; fires *a pistol shot* at the foot of the rock as a signal to be hauled up each evening, for this giant never fought after sunset; he is cured with magic balsam by the lady each night, and goes out fresh each morning. The giant's third head leaps on as often as it is cut off, but an eagle comes over the prince, and tells him to hold the sword on the neck till the marrow freezes, which he does, and the giant is killed. He takes his spoil from a castle, finds

the tooth in a drawer, returns home with the beautiful lady, and marries her. “And the festivities on the occasion continued for a year and three days, and they lived long and happily together.”

Two of the teeth and two of the adventurers have dropped out of sight, the island with fire about it is exchanged for a high rock, and the magic shoes, which are so common in all popular tales, take the place of the magic boat.

The story then in this form is wholly different from the Knight of the Red Shield, and yet its groundwork is manifestly the same. Incidents remain, and style and accessories change.

The incident of the king on the hill and the rider in the shower has come to me from a great many sources, and is followed by adventures which very with every narrator, but which have a general resemblance.

John MacDonald, travelling tinker, gives the incident as the beginning of a story called Loircean na luaith--Little Shanks in the Ashes, which was written down by Hector Urquhart. It is very like the Colousay version; but instead of the rider on the black horse--

“One looked hither and one thither, and they saw a head coming in a flame of fire, and another head coming singing the song of songs (or? St. Oran). A fist was struck on the door of the mouth of the king, and a tooth was knocked out of him, and there was no button of gold or silver on the coat of the king but showered off him with the shame. The head did this three years after each other, and then it went home.”

This then is the view of the incident taken by a wild harum-scarum strolling character, without any education at all, but with a great deal of natural wit; and his father, aged about eighty, told me a story with the incident of three old men who lived on separate islands, and sent a wandering hero on his way, with what I then took to be CURRACHD, a cap, but which I now believe to be CURRACH a corracle, which did the same as the magic shoes. Here again are the incidents, but told in a different manner.

The remainder of the story of Loircean is nearly the same as the Knight of the Red Shield, but with great variations. The king’s son, who is a knight, RIDERE; COCAIRE CLAON RUADH, a red skulled cook; and SHANKS IN THE ASHES go off together, and play the part of the king’s two sons and the son of the Green Spring.

They climb the mast. The despised one succeeds. The voyage is there, but only two or three lines of the descriptive passage, the first and the last. “They set her prow to sea and her stern to shore; and she would split a grain of hard corn with the excellence of the steering.” But while much is left out, much is preserved which is lost elsewhere.

“When Loircean leaped on board the barge, and shook the ashes off him, he all but blinded the five fifths of Eirinn, and there fell seven bolls of ashes on the floor of the barge.”

“They sailed further than I can tell you or you can tell me.”

“‘Oh, lads,’ said Loircean (from the top of the mast), ‘there is an island here before, and it is in a red blaze of fire. It is not in our power to go nearer it than seven miles, for the barge will go on fire if we do; and it is in this island that my father’s teeth are, and you must leap on shore.’”

When he leaps on shore. “‘Now, lads,’ said Loircean, ‘if you see the fire growing Smaller at the end of nine days and nine nights, you may come on shore; but if you do not see it’--

And saying this he gave a dark spring (DUILEUM) on shore, and every handful he drove out was scorching those who were in the ship.”

And then follow a wholly different set of adventures which are very curious, and give glimpses of forgotten manners with the same characters appearing. The fearful old woman, with the marvellous teeth; the gigantic warriors, of whom there are three with many heads; and three lovely ladies, who are found under ground, and carried off by the cowards. The story ends with the replacement of the king's lost teeth, and the punishment of the knight and the cook; and Loircean married the three ladies at once.

Again the very same incident is the beginning of Iullar og Armailteach Mac Righ na Greige, Young Heavenly Eagle, Son of the King of Greece, which was sent by John Dewar, and which he got, in Glendaruail, from J. Leitch, shoemaker, in 1860, and in 1817 from "one Duncan Campbell on Lochlong side, who is now working there as a roadman."

The three adventurers who go after the king's two teeth and *a bit of his jaw* are UBHAR, ATHAIRT, and IULLAR, and they go through a vast number of adventures with giants, monsters, and magical people of various sorts, which are also very curious. But still they set off in a boat, and for the same reason. The descriptive passage of the voyage is there in nearly the same words, but with variations; two are cowards; the one whom they despise is the true hero, and poetical justice is done at the end. The king's teeth are restored and his jaw mended; the brave lad marries a beautiful Greek lady whom he has rescued, and he turns out to be the king's only legitimate son, and he gets the kingdom, while the others are degraded--one to be a swineherd and the other a groom.

It is clearly the same story, but a different part of it; except the sailing passage, which is almost identical, it is told in different words. The names are all different, the scene is different, the adventures are different, but yet it is a remnant of the same story without doubt.

John Mackenzie, Fisherman, near Inverary, repeated another story to Hector Urquhart, in which the plot is much the same, in which a bit of the sailing passage occurs, in which the three adventurers are IULLIN, IUAR, and ARST, sons of the king of Greece, and their object the possession of the daughter of the king under the waves. The adventures which follow are again different, but like the rest, and they link the story to another set of adventures, which generally belong to the story of "Nighean Righ Fuidh Thuinn,"--adventures and exploits some of which are attributed to Fionn and Ossian and Conan in Mr. Simpson's book of Irish stories.

Many other versions of the story have been sent, or told, or mentioned to me. A gentleman in South Uist repeated some of the descriptive passages with variations, and said he remembered a man who came to his native island, Tyree, and who used to repeat the story to admiring audiences, about thirty years ago. Old Donald MacPhie, at the Sound of Benbecula, repeated part of the descriptive passages, and gave me the outline of a very similar story. On repeating the boat passage to a native of Cantyre whom I found as assistant light-keeper at the point of Ayre, in the Isle of Man, he first stared in dumb astonishment at the unexpected sound of his own language; and then exclaimed--"Well, I have heard those very words said by my father when I was a child!" In short, the incidents and the measured prose passages with which they are garnished are scattered in fragments over the whole West Highlands of Scotland, and the less instructed the narrator the more quaint and complete his version is.

The conclusion seems unavoidable that these are the fragments of some old romance traditionally preserved, and rapidly fading away before the light of modern times.

If further evidence were required, it is not wanting. The very words of the boat passage, and a great deal that is not in any version of it which I have got, is in the "Fragment of a Tale, page 17th," lent me by my friend Mr. Bain, and referred to in the Introduction. It proves that the

passage was in existence about the beginning of this century at all events, and that it was then thought worthy of preservation.

There are many other similar passages in the manuscript tale of which I have found no trace hitherto amongst the people, and which have probably died out with the old race, or emigrated with them to America.

I have been permitted to have access to other manuscripts belonging to the Highland Society. They are nearly all poetry. One is marked MS. poems collected in the Western Highlands and Islands by Dr. John Smith; and from it I copy this

"ADVERTISEMENT.

"The following poems being compiled from various editions will often appear inelegant and abrupt, it being sometimes necessary to take half a stanza or perhaps half a line from one to join to as much of another edition.

"In order to complete the sense, and to supply many defects in the versification, recourse has frequently been had to the tales or *ursgeuls* which generally accompany the poems. As these tales, although they have the appearance of prose, were composed in a particular kind of measure, they are set down in the form of verse, but without any alteration in the arrangement of the words. This, it was thought, would give the work a more uniform appearance than if it had been a mixture of prose and verse, as one is apt to suppose it on hearing some parts of it repeated.

"As these pieces were, for the most part, taken down from oral recitation, frequent mistakes may have been made in the proper division of the lines, and in the assigning of its due quantity to each. A matter to which the poets themselves do not always seem to have been very attentive, their measure often varying as their subject changes.

"As those who recited ancient poems took frequently the liberty of substituting such words as they were best acquainted with, in room of such as were foreign or obsolete, a few words that may perhaps be considered as modern or provincial may occur in the course of these compositions. To expunge these words, when none of the editions in the editor's hands supplied him with better, was a task which he did not consider as any part of his province. He hopes that, with all their imperfections, the poems have still so much merit as to give the reader some idea of what they had once been. We have only the fragments of the ruin, but they may serve to give an idea of the grandeur of the edifice."

This then is the statement of the collector's plan of action.

The following note shews the spirit in which the best of them worked in these days. I think it was a mistaken spirit that caused the Ossianic controversy, and threw discredit on Highland literature. Still, as it is openly and fairly stated, it is fair to believe what is asserted by a gentleman and a clergyman, and for my part I implicitly believe that Dr. Smith of Campbeltown really did what he tells us, and that these poems are what they purport to be,--patched versions of oral recitations, with portions left out.

"DIARMAID.--This poem is generally interlarded with so much of the ursgeuls or later tales as to render the most common editions of it absurd and extravagant. But the fabulous dross of the fifteenth century is easily separated from the wore precious ore of the ancient bards."

Of part of this same story of Diarmaid, Mrs. MacTavish writes in 1859:--

"A dan or song which I heard an old ploughman of my father's sing very near sixty years since. He had a great collection of tales and songs, and often have I stood or sat by him in winter when kiln-drying corn, or in summer when building a peat stack, listening to what was

to me so fascinating in those days. And then follows the story of how Diarmaid was killed by pacing bare-footed against the bristles of a boar which he had killed, and the lament of Diarmaid's love, and the music to which it used to be sung; and this same story of Diarmaid and the boar was sung to me by Alexander MacDonald in Barra, in September 1860, together with other long Gaelic poems. And whatever may be said or thought of MacPherson's collection, this at least is genuine old poetry, and still known to many in the Highlands.

The story, then, of the Knight of the Red Shield, or whatever its real name may be, seems to be one of the tales which were despised by the collectors of former days, and which have survived many of the poems which were fading away about eighty years ago, and which are now very nearly but not quite extinct.

Hector MacLean sent me first a version which he got from an Islay man, Alexander Campbell, farmer at Mulreas. He named his authority, "an old man still living in Colonsay, who frequently comes to Islay, and is welcome for the tales he recites."

The old man did come, and his version of the story being more complete, is given, though Campbell's version was the same shortened. It is said that it was written down by desire of the late Captain Stewart of Colonsay, and that it was noticed amongst his papers after his death.

I might have tried to reconstruct this tale from the materials which I have, but I have given without alteration the best version which came to me. I may some day try to fuse what I have into a whole; at all events, here is the clew for any other who may be disposed to work out the subject, and the best account I can give of the story.

"BEARRADH EOIN AGUS AMADAIN." This phrase is explained to mean clipping the hair and beard off one side of the head. The idea is taken from clipping one wing of a bird, and the punishment was probably inflicted at some period, for the phase occurs several times in Gaelic tales.

Another phrase, which occurs in this and other stories, probably gives a true picture of the hall of a chief in former days. A man is said to be bound with the binding of the three smalls (wrists, ancles, and small of the back), and cast under the board, under the dripping of torches, and the feet of big dogs, and there was not one in the company but cast a bone at him as he lay, and the wicked knight is kicked over the rafters. The hall meant, then, would seem to have been a large room without a ceiling, full of men and big dogs, and lighted with dripping torches; the scene of feasts, which consisted of flesh rather than. potatoes; while the prisoners, bound hand and foot, lay on the floor.

In this, as in the great majority of Gaelic stories, the scene is laid in Ireland, but it seems probable that the customs of the Western Isles of Scotland and of Ireland were once nearly identical.

A version of this story, under the name of "The Son of the Green Spring by Valour," was repeated to me by an old man, Alexander MacNeill, in Barra, on the 10th of September, 1860.

The story contained less of the measured prose, and more incident than the Colonsay version. The hero is represented as sitting with his feet in the ashes, like "Boots" of the Norse Tales. He is the son of the Red Ridere, and goes off in the boat with the king's two sons to recover the king's teeth. When the feat of climbing the mast occurs, he runs up "faster than a mad woman's tongue." He has CLACH BHUAIDH, a stone of victory, with which he slays his foes. There is the magic island with fire about it, the lady and the sleeping warrior; he is left by the king's sons, goes to a small house where he finds no man, but food for three--wine and

wheaten loaves. He takes a little from each portion, like the hero of many popular tales in many languages, and gets into one of three beds. Three sorely wounded men come in, and cure themselves with magic balsam, and discover him, and on the morrow he goes to fight for them. These warriors are enchanted princes, the rightful heirs of this fiery island, compelled for twenty years to contend daily with armies, and giants, and monsters. They have lost their mother, and some one has stolen their sister, who turns out to be the lady whom the hero had already rescued. They tell him what he will have to encounter, but he goes on and overcomes everything, and his coming had been foretold. Armies of enchanted warriors fall, six hundred fall heroes; three giants with several heads; "tri cruitairean na cruite bige;" the three harpers of the little harps, who could set the whole world asleep; the son of darkness, son of dimness; and a terrible old carlin, who as usual was the worst of all.

He takes a warrior by the legs and kills the others with his head; he drives his victory stone through the heads of the giants, and of MacDorcha Mac Doilleir. When the harpers come, he gnaws his fingers till his mouth is full of blood, to keep himself awake, and at last he kills the magic harpers with their own harps. When the old carlin arrives she comes over the sea with a magic cup to revive her dead warriors and her sons; she puts her finger into his mouth and he bites it off. She has a tooth for a staff, and a tooth as, brod griosach, a poker, one eye in the midst of her face, one leg; and her heart, her liver, and her lungs could be seen through her mouth when it was opened. She is, in short, the same mythical carlin who so often appears, on whom the tellers of stories expend their powers in describing all that is hideous and monstrous. The hero cuts her head off, it leaps on again, he cuts it off again, and it flies up into the skies; he holds the sword on the neck, and looks up, and sees the head coming down and aiming at him; he leaps to one side, and the head goes four feet into the earth, and the victory is gained. The three warriors carry him home and bathe him in balsam, and he recovers. He raises their father and mother from the dead, and they promise him their daughter and realm. He gets a brown mare, recovers the king's teeth, returns to Ireland with a magic shoe, rides into the hall, presents the magic cup with the teeth in it to the king, saying, "I have travelled Christendom with my brown mare, and I have found out the king's teeth." He looses his father, the Red Knight, in whose stead he had set off, ties the knights to his shoe-ties and marries the fair lady, who is the daughter of the king of the town under the waves.

In short, it is manifest that this Gaelic story, now told by the poorest of the inhabitants of the western coasts and isles of Scotland, and very widely spread, is the ruin of some old romance, similar to those of the middle ages.

It is surely worth attention, though it is not strictly "true."

Certain persons, in a place which I abstain from naming, so zealous in the cause of "truth," that they assured a simple old man, who had repeated a number of stories to one of my collectors, that he would have to substantiate every word he had uttered, or suffer punishment for telling falsehoods. I found him in great perturbation, evidently expecting that I had arrived for the purpose of calling him to account, and I had some trouble in setting his mind at rest. He repeatedly assured me that he only told what others had told him. In this instance, as it seems to me, "truth" might well say, "keep me from my friends."

LXVI. The Tail

Told about thirty years ago by John Campbell, piper to his pupil, J. F. Campbell.

THERE was a shepherd once who went out to the hill to look after his sheep. It was misty and cold, and he had much trouble to find them. At last he had them all but one; and after much searching he found that one too in a peat hag half drowned; so he took off his plaid, and bent down and took hold of the sheep's tail, and he pulled! The sheep was heavy with water, and he could not lift her, so he took off his coat and he *pulled*!! but it was too much for him, so he spit on his hands, and took a good hold of the tail and he PULLED!! and the tail broke! and if it had not been for that this tale would have been a great deal longer.

This may be compared with Grimm's Golden Key. I have not given it in Gaelic, because, so far as I remember, the story was never told twice in the same words; and it can be told quite as well in any language. It is very well known in many districts in various shapes. I have a second version, which is called--

2. Ursgeal a' Ghamhna dhuinn, an aill leibh as a thoiseach e, The tale of the Brown Stirk. Do you wish from the beginning? It has nothing but a beginning; for the stirk fell over a rock and left his tail in the herdsman's hands; and the story comes to an untimely end with the Gaelic proverbial phrase--had the tail been tougher the story had been longer. NA 'M BIODH AN T-URBALL NA BU RUIGHNE BHIODH AN T-URSGEUL NA B' FHAIDE.

3. According to a Skye version, a man put the stirk on a house top to eat a tuft of grass; the beast fell down the chimney, and the rupture of the tail was

END OF VOLUME 2

LXVII. The Rider Of Grianaig, And Iain The Soldier's Son

Maclean writes as follows:--

Got this tale from Donald M'Niven, Bowmore, who learnt it from an old man of the name of Neil MacArthur, who died some twenty years ago or more.

Donald MacNiven is over forty years of age, is a cripple, but is sometimes in the habit of acting as a carrier, and driving a cart from Bowmore to Port Ellon and Port Askaig. He is of a fair complexion, a demure expression, and evidently loves the wonderful. I do not think he can either read or write. I was informed that he could recite a considerable number of tales, but he tells me he has quite forgot them, from having given up reciting them.

RIDIRE GHRIANAIG. The word Ridire, as explained elsewhere, now means a knight, but it probably meant a minor king in the olden time.

GHRIANAIG is the genitive of Grianag, which has been corrupted into Greenock.

The town is called by its Gaelic name throughout the Highlands. It is derived from Grian the sun, pronounced GreeAn, which is probably the root of many names which are now sounded "green," such as Grisnez in France, Crinan in Argyllshire, and other places which are green and sunny in other countries. I might translate the words freely, the knight of Greenock, the knight of the sun, or the Ritter of Sunnynook, but acting on the principle with which I set out, I give the knight his Gaelic name, and so avoid drawing doubtful conclusions.--J. F. C.

From Donald MacNiven, a lame carrier. Bowmore, Islay, 5th July, 1859. Written down by Hector MacLean.

THE knight of Grianaig had three daughters, such that their like were not to be found or to be seen in any place. There came a beast from the ocean and she took them with her, and there was no knowledge what way they had taken, nor where they might be sought.

There was a soldier in the town, and he had three sons, and at the time of Christmas[98] they were playing at shinny, and the youngest said that they should go and that they should drive a hale on the lawn of the knight of Grianaig. The rest said that they should not go; that the knight would not be pleased; that that would be bringing the loss of his children to his mind, and laying sorrow upon him. "Let that be as it pleases," said Iain, the youngest son, "but we

[98] NOLLAIG is Christmas, and is also used for New Year's day. The derivation is probably NODH, new; LA, day; French, *noël*; Welsh, *nadolig*; Irish, *nodhlag*; Manks, *nollick*; Breton, *nadolig*. The Highland customs which prevail at this season smack rather of pagan times. Processions of boys go about on New Year's eve shouting curious rhymes, some of which are full of the names which pervade the Ossianic poems; curious ceremonies are performed, and the singers are rewarded with food. I hope some day to be in a position to say more about these old Christmas customs; they are mentioned in Chambers's nursery rhymes.
The game of shinny is usually played at this season, and the great game used to come off on the day of the great "Nollaig," New Year's day, old style. The game is played in all parts of the United Kingdom as "hocky," "hurling," etc., and something like it is still played in the far east on horseback. To drive the ball from one goal to the other is called LETH BHAIR, a "half hale;" to drive it back again is BAIR, a "hale;" and to win a goal at the man's game is nearly as great a feat as to gain a battle. In some parts of the Highlands hundreds used to be engaged, all excited to a degree that those who have been at a public school, or who have read Tom Brown's account of football, may perhaps understand.

will go there and we will drive a hale; I am careless of the knight of Grianaig, let him be well pleased or angry."

They went to play shinny, and Iain won three hales from his brethren. The knight put his head out of a window, and he saw them playing at shinny, and he took great wrath that any one had the heart to play shinny on his lawn--a thing that was bringing the loss of his children to his mind, and putting contempt upon him. Said he to his wife, "Who is so impudent as to be playing shinny on my ground, and bringing the loss of my children to my mind? Let them be brought here in an instant that punishment may be done upon them." The three lads were brought to the presence of the knight, and they were fine lads.

"What made you," said the knight, "go and play shinny upon my ground and bring the loss of my children to my mind? you must suffer pain for it."

"It is not thus it shall be," said Iain; "but since it befell us to come wrong upon thee, thou hadst best make us a dwelling of a ship, and we will go to seek thy daughters, and if they are under the leeward, or the windward, or under the four brown boundaries of the deep,[99] we will find them out before there comes the end of a day and year, and we will bring them back to Grianaig."

"Though thou be the youngest, it is in thy head that the best counsel is, let that be made for you."

Wrights were got and a ship was made in seven days. They put in meat and drink as they might need for the journey. They gave her front to sea and her stern to land, and they went away, and in seven days they reached a white sandy strand, and when they went on shore there were six men and ten at work in the face of a rock blasting, with a foreman over them.

"What place is here?" said the skipper.

"Here is the place where are the children of the knight of Grianaig; they are to be married to three giants."

"What means are there to get where they are?"

"There are no means but to go up in this creel against the face of the rock."

The eldest son went into the creel, and when he was up at the half of the rock, there came a stumpy black raven, and he began upon him with his claws, and his wings till he almost left him blind and deaf.[100] He had but to turn back.

The second one went into the creel, and when he was up half the way, there came the stumpy black raven, and he began upon him, and he had for it but to return back as did the other one.

[99] FHIORRACHD, FHUARRACHD, etc. This phrase is (according to Maclean) frequently used, though few know what the words literally mean. The common meaning attached to them is, "Not to be found anywhere." May they not be corrupt forms of IOCHDRACHD and UACHDRACHD, it is not in the higher or lower regions. I have given a different rendering; I have heard very similar words used by boatmen for beating to windward and running to leeward, and *veering* is an English sailor's word still.
RANNAN is used for *rain*nean, *divisions*, in this tale. This form of the word in this sense is obsolete in Islay, and I suspect elsewhere. It now signifies *verse*, which is no doubt so called from being *divided* into lines and stanzas. We still use it in the genitive, thus, An Rainn, the Rhynns; Ceann shios na Ranna, the farthest down part of the Rhynns; An rugha Rannach.--H M'L.

[100] The raven attacking the man in the basket might be a picture drawn from nature. Boys are often lowered over rocks in the Western Highlands to take birds' nests, and the old birds occasionally resent the injury. I have myself seen sparrow-hawks, terns, and other birds stooping viciously at men who had gone near their nests. I have heard of a man having his head laid open by enraged sea-swallows; and there are all manner of stories current of adventures with birds in rock climbing.--J. F. C.

At last Iain went into the creel. When he was up half the way there came the stumpy black raven, and he began upon him, and he belaboured him about the face.

“Up with me quickly!” said he, “before I be blinded here.”

He was set up to the top of the rock. When he was up the raven came where he was, and he said to him.

“Wilt thou give me a quid of tobacco?”[101]

“Thou high-priced rogue! little claim hast thou on me for giving, that to thee.”

“Never thou mind that, I will be a good friend to thee. Now thou shalt go to the house of the big giant, and thou wilt see the knight’s daughter sewing, and her thimble wet with tears.”

He went on before him till he reached the house of the giant. He went in. The knight’s daughter was sewing.

“What brought thee here?” said she.

“What brought thyself into it that I might not come into it.”

“I was brought here in spite of me.”

“I know that. Where is the giant?”

“He is in the hunting hill.”

“What means to get him home?”

“To shake yonder battle-chain without, and there is no one in the leeward, or in the windward, or in the four brown boundaries of the deep, who will hold battle against him, but young Iain the soldier’s son, from Albainn, and he is but sixteen years of age, and he is too young to go to battle against the giant.”

“There is many a one in Albainn as strong as Iain the soldier’s son, though the soldier were with him.”

Out he went. He gave a haul at the chain, and he did not take a turn out of it, and he went on his knee. He rose up, be gave the next shake at the chain, and he broke a link in it. The giant heard it in the hunting hill.

“Aha!” said he, “who could move my battle-chain but young Iain the soldier’s son from Albainn, and he is but sixteen years of age; he is too young yet?”

The giant put the game on a withy, and home he came.

“Art though young Iain the soldier’s son, from Albainn?”

“Not I.”

Who art thou in the leeward, or in the windward, or in the four brown boundaries of the deep, that could move my battle-chain, but young Iain the soldier’s son, from Albainn?”

“There is many a one in Albainn as strong as young Iain the soldier’s son, though the soldier should be with him.”

[101] The quid of baccy needs no explanation, when it is remembered that the common fee for the story-teller is a quid. An old man long ago was teaching a boy to play the fiddle, and the following dialogue is recorded:-- ”Which finger shall I raise?” “Hast thou tobacco?” “No; which finger shall I lift?” “Hast thou got tobacco?” “No.” “Then lift and lay them down as it may please thyself.” There is a hungering after tobacco amongst those who are given to it, and cannot get it, which must be felt to be understood.

“I have got that in the prophesyings.”

“Never thou mind what thou hast got in the prophesyings.”

“In what way wouldst thou rather try thyself?”

“When I and my mother used to be falling out with each other, and I might wish to get my own will, it was in tight wrestling ties we used to try; and one time she used to get the better, and two times she used not.”

They seized each other, and they had hard hugs, and the giant put Iain on his knee.

“I see,” said Iain, “that thou art the stronger.” “It is known that I am,” said the giant.

They went before each other again. They were twisting and hauling each other. Iain struck a foot on the giant in the ankle, and he put him on the thews of his back under him on the ground. He wished that the raven were at him.

The stumpy black raven came, and he fell upon the giant about the face and about the ears with his claws and with his wings until he blinded him, and he deafened him.

“Hast thou got a nail of arms that will take the head off the monster?”

“I have not.”

“Put thy hand under my right wing, and thou wilt find a small sharp knife which I have for gathering briar-buds, and take the head off him.”

He put his hand under the raven’s right wing and he found the knife, and he took the head off the giant.

“Now Iain thou shalt go in where is the big daughter of the knight of Grianaig, and she will be asking thee

to return and not to go farther; but do not thou give heed, but go on, and thou wilt reach the middle daughter; and thou shalt give me a quid of tobacco.”

“I will give that to thee indeed; well hast thou earned it. Thou shalt have half of all I have.”

“I will not. There’s many a long day to Bealtain.”

“The fortune will not let me be here till Bealtain.”

“Thou hast knowledge of what has passed, but thou hast no knowledge of what is before thee; get warm water, clean thyself in it; thou wilt find a vessel of balsam above the door, rub it in thy skin, and go to bed by thyself and thou wilt be whole and wholesome to-morrow, and to-morrow thou shalt go on to the house of the next one.”

He went in and he did as the raven asked him. He went to bed that night, and he was whole and wholesome in the morning when he arose.

“It is better for thee,” said the knight’s big daughter, “not to go further, and not to put thyself in more danger; there is plenty of gold and silver here, and we will take it with us and we will return.”

“I will not do that,” said he; “I will take (the road) on my front.”

He went forwards till he came to the house where was the middle daughter of the knight of Grianaig. He went in and she was seated sewing, and she (was) weeping, and her thimble wet with her tears.

“What brought thee here?”

“What brought thyself into it that I might not come into it?”

“I was brought in spite of me.”

“I have knowledge of that. What set thee weeping?”

“I have but one night till I must be married to the giant.”

“Where is the giant ?”

“He is in the hunting hill.”

“What means to get him home?”

“To shake that battle chain without at the side of the house, and he is not in the leeward nor in the windward, nor in the four brown boundaries of the deep, who is as much as can shake it, but young Iain the soldier’s son, from Albainn, and he is too young yet, he is but sixteen years of age.”

“There are men in Albainn as strong as young Iain the soldier’s son, though the soldier should be with him.”

He went out, and he gave a haul at the chain, and he came upon his two knees. He rose up and gave the next haul at it, and he broke three links in it.

The giant heard that in the hunting hill.

“Aha!” said he, and he put the game on a withy on his shoulder, and home he came.

“Who could move my battle chain but young Iain the soldier’s son from Albainn, and he is too young yet; he is but sixteen years of age?”

“There are men in Albainn as strong as young Iain the soldier’s son, though the soldier should be with him.”

“We have got that in the prophesyings.”

“I care not what is in your prophesyings.”

“In what way wouldst thou rather try thyself?”

“In hard hugs of wrestling.”

They seized each other and the giant put him on his two knees.

“Thine is my life,” said Iain, “thou art stronger than I. Let’s try another turn.”

The tried each other again, and Iain struck his heel on the giant in the ankle, and he set him on the thews of his back on the ground.

“Raven!” said he, “a flapping of thine were good now.”

The raven came, and he blinded and deafened the giant, giving it to him with his beak, and with his claws, and with his wings.

“Hast thou a nail of a weapon?”

“I have not.”

“Put thy hand under my right wing, and thou wilt find there a small sharp knife that I have for gathering briar-buds, and take the head off him.”

He put his hand under the root of the raven’s right wing, and he found the knife, and he took the head off the giant.

“Now thou shalt go in and clean thyself with warm water, thou wilt find the vessel of balsam, thou shalt rub it upon thyself, thou shalt go to bed, and thou wilt be whole and wholesome to-morrow. This one will be certainly more cunning and more mouthing than was the one before, asking thee to return and not to go further; but give thou no heed to her. And thou shalt give me a quid of tobacco.”

“I will give it indeed; thou art worthy of it.”

He went in and he did as the raven asked him. When he got up on the morrow’s morning he was whole and wholesome.

“Thou hadst better,” said the knight’s middle daughter, “return, and not put thyself in more danger; there is plenty of gold and of silver here.”

“I will not do that; I will go forward.”

He went forward till he came to the house in which was the little daughter of the knight; he went in and he saw her sewing, and her thimble wet with tears.

“What brought thee here?”

“What brought thyself into it that I might not come into it?”

“I was brought into it in spite of me.”

“I know that.”

“Art thou young Iain the soldier’s son, from Albainn?”

“I am; what is the reason that thou art weeping?”

“I have but this night of delay without marrying the giant.”

“Where is he?”

“He is in the hunting hill.”

“What means to bring him home?”

“To shake that battle chain without.”

He went out, and he gave a shake at the chain and down he came on his hurdies.

He rose again, and he gave it the next shake, and he broke four links in it, and he made a great rattling noise. The giant heard that in the hunting hill; he put the withy of game on his shoulder.

“Who in the leeward, or in the windward, or in the four brown boundaries of the deep, could shake my battle chain but young Iain the soldier’s son, from Albainn; and if it be he, my two brothers are dead before this?”

He came home in his might, making the earth tremble before him and behind him.

“Art thou young Iain the soldier’s son?”

“Not I.”

“Who art thou in the leeward, or in the windward, or in the four brown boundaries of the deep, that could shake my battle chain but young Iain the soldier’s son, from Albainn? and he is too young yet, he is but sixteen years of age.”

“Is there not many a one in Albainn as strong as young Iain the soldier’s son, though the soldier were with him?”

“It is not in our prophesyings.”

“I care not what is in your prophesyings.”

“In what way wouldst thou like thy trial?”

“Tight wrestling ties.”

They seized each other and the giant set him on his haunches.

“Let me go; thine is my life.”

They caught each other again; he struck his heel on the giant in the ankle, and he laid him on the shower top of his shoulder, and on the thews of his back on the ground.

“Stumpy black raven, if thou wert here now!”

No sooner said he the word than the raven came. He belaboured the giant about the face, and the eyes, and the ears, with his beak, and with his claws and with his wings.[102]

“Hast thou a nail of a weapon?

“I have not.”

“Put thy hand under the root of my right wing and thou wilt find a small sharp knife that I have for gathering whortle berries, and take his head off.”

He did that.

“Now,” said the raven, “take rest as thou didst last night, and when thou returnest with the three daughters of the knight, to the cut (edge) of the rock, thou shalt go down first thyself, and they shall go down after thee; and thou shalt give me a quid of tobacco.”

“I will give it; thou hast well deserved it; here it is for thee altogether.”

“I will but take a quid; there is many a long day to Bealtain.”

“The fortune will not let me be here till Bealtain.”

Thou hast knowledge of what is behind thee, but thou hast no knowledge what is before thee.”

On the morrow they set in order asses, and on their backs they put the gold and the silver that the giants had, and he himself and the three daughters of the knight reached the edge of the rock: when they reached the edge of the rock, for fear giddiness should come over any of the girls, he sent them down one after one in the creel. There were three caps of gold on them, made up finely with “daoimean” (diamond); caps that were made in the Roimh (Rome), and such that their like were not to be found in the universe. He kept up the cap that was on the youngest. He was waiting and waiting, and though he should be waiting still the creel would not come up to fetch him. The rest went on board, and away they went till they reached Grianaig.

[102] GODARLEUM (page 18).--This is a new word to me. The reciter could give no explanation of it farther than that it was darting off very abruptly, which the context leads a person to think. Godadh is a quick, somewhat violent shake of the head. I find the reciters at Bowmore speak a more corrupt dialect than others whom I have met. They use English words very frequently for Gaelic words still in common use. This gives an idea of the manner in which English words and forms of speech may have gradually replaced Gaelic ones in these tales, MacNiven alternately used FORESMAN and UACHDARAN in speaking of the overseer of the sixteen men that wrought at the rock.--H. M’L.
The flapping stone door occurs in a book called the “Romance of History,” and I think the magic cave was placed somewhere in Spain. I have an impression that I have heard of it elsewhere.--J. F. C.

He, was left there, and without a way in his power to get out of the place. The raven came where he was.

“Thou didst not take my counsel?”

“I did not take it; if I had taken it I should not be as I am.”

“There is no help for it, Iain. The one that will not take counsel will take combat. Thou shalt give me a quid of tobacco.”

“I will give it.”

“Thou shalt reach the giant’s house, and thou shalt stay there this night.”

“Wilt thou not stay with me thyself to keep off my dullness?”

“I will not stay: it is not suitable for me.”

On the morrow came the raven where he was.

“Thou shalt now go to the giant’s stable, and if thou art quick and active, there is a steed there, and sea or shore is all one to her, and that may take thee out of these straits.”

They went together and they came to the stable, a stable of stone, dug in into a rock, and a door of stone to it. The door was slamming without ceasing, backwards and forwards, from early day to night, and from night to day.

“Thou must now watch,” said the raven, “and take a chance, and try if thou canst make out to go in when it is open, without its getting a hold of thee.”

“Thou hadst best try first, since thou art best acquainted.”

“It will be as well.”

The raven gave a bob and a hop and in he went, but the door took a feather out of the root of his wing, and he screeched.

“Poor Iain, if thou couldst get in with as little pain as I, I would not complain.”

Iain took a run back and a run forward, he took a spring to go in, the door caught him, and it took half his hurdies off. Iain cried out, and he fell cold dead on the floor of the stable. The raven lifted him, and he carried him on the points of his wings, out of the stable to the giant’s house. He laid him on a board on his mouth and nose, he went out and he gathered plants, and he made ointments that he set upon him, and in ten days he was as well as ever he was.

He went out to take a walk and the raven went with him.

“Now, Iain, thou shalt take my counsel. Thou shalt not take wonder of any one thing that thou mayest see about the island, and thou shalt give me a quid of tobacco.”

He was walking about the island, and going through a glen; be saw three full heroes stretched on their backs, a spear upon the breast of every man of them, and he in lasting sound sleep, and a bath of sweat.

“It seems to me that this is pitiable. What harm to lift the spears from off them?”

He went and he loosed the spears from off them. The heroes awoke, and they rose up.

“Witness fortune and men, that thou art young Iain the soldier’s son, from Albainn, and it is as spells upon thee to go with us through the southern end of this island past the cave of the black fisherman.”

He went away himself and the three full heroes. They saw a slender smoke (coming) out of a cave. They went to the cave. One of the heroes went in and when he went in there was a hag there seated, and the tooth that was the least in her mouth would make a knitting pin in her lap, a staff in her hand, and a stirring stick for the embers. There was a turn of her nails about her elbows, and a twist of her hoary hair about her toes, and she was not joyous to look upon.

She seized upon a magic club, she struck him, and she made him a bare crag of stone. The others that were without were wondering why he was not returning.

“Go in,” said Iain to another one, “and look what is keeping thy comrade.”

He went in, and the carlin did to him as she did to the other. The third went in, and she did to him as she did to the rest. Iain went in last. There was a great red-skulled cat there, and she put a barrow full of red ashes about her fur so as to blind and deafen him. He struck the point of his foot on her and drove the brain out of her. He turned to the carlin.

“Don’t, Iain! these men are under spells, and in order to put the spells off them thou must go to the island of big women and take a bottle of the living water out of it, and when thou rubbest it upon them the spells will go and they will come alive.”

Iain turned back under black melancholy.

“Thou did’st not take my counsel,” said the raven, “and thou hast brought more trouble upon thyself. Thou shalt go to lie down this night, and when thou risest to-morrow thou shalt take with thee the steed, and shalt give her meat and drink. Sea or land is all one to her, and when thou reachest the island of big women sixteen stable lads will meet thee, and they will all be for giving food to the steed, and for putting her in for thee, but do not thou let them. Say that thou wilt thyself give her meat and drink. When thou leavest her in the stable, every one of the sixteen will put a turn in the key, but thou shalt put a turn against every turn that they put in it. Thou shalt give me a quid of tobacco.”

“I will indeed.”

He went to rest that night, and in the morning he set the steed in order, and he went away. He gave her front to sea and her back to shore, and she went in her might till they reached the island of big women. When he went on shore sixteen stable lads met him and every one of them asking to set her in and feed her.

“I myself will put her in, and I will take care of her; I will not give her to any one.”

He put her in, and when he came out every man put a turn in the key, and he put a turn against every turn that they put into it. The steed said to him that they would be offering him every sort of drink, but that he should not take any drink from them but whey and water. He went in and every sort of drink was being put round about there, and they were offering each kind to him, but he would not take a drop of any drink but whey and water. The were drinking, and drinking till they fell stretched about the board.

The steed asked him before she parted from him that he should take care and not sleep, and to take his chance for coming away. When they slept he came out from the chamber; and he heard the very sweetest music that ever was heard. He went on, and he heard in another place music much sweeter. He came to the side of a stair and he heard music sweeter and sweeter, and he fell asleep.

The steed broke out of the stable, and she came where he was, and she struck him a kick, and she awoke him.

“Thou didst not take my counsel,” said she, “and there is no knowing now if thou canst get thy matter with thee, or if thou canst not get it.”

He arose with sorrow; he seized upon a sword of light that was in a corner of the chamber, and be took out the sixteen beads. He reached the well, he filled a bottle and he returned. The steed met him, and be set her front to sea and her back to shore, and he returned to the other island. The raven met him.

“Thou shalt go and stable the steed, and thou shalt go to lie down this night; and to-morrow thou shalt go and bring the heroes alive, and thou shalt slay the carlin, and be not so foolish to-morrow as thou wert before now.”

“Wilt thou not come with me to-night to drive off my dullness from me?”

“I will not come; it will not answer for me.”

On the morning he reached the cave, “FAILTE DHUIT, all hail to thee, Iain,” said the carlin; “FAILTE DHUIT’S, all hail to thee, but CHA SHLAINTE DHUIT not health to thee.”

He shook the water on the men and they rose up alive, and he struck his palm on the carlin and scattered the brains out of her. They betook themselves out, and they went to the southern end of the island. They saw the black fisherman there working at his tricks.[103] He drew his palm, and he struck him, and he scattered the brains out of him, and he took the heroes home to the southern end of the island. The raven came where he was.

“Now thou shalt go home, and thou shalt take with thee the steed to which sea and shore are alike. The three daughters of the knight are to have a wedding, two to be married to thy two brothers, and the other to the chief that was over the men at the rock. Thou shalt leave the cap with me, and thou wilt have but to think of me when thou hast need of it, and I will be at thee.”

“If any one asks thee from whence thou camest, say that thou camest out from behind thee; and if he say to thee, where art thou going? say that thou art going before thee.”

He mounted upon the steed, and be gave her front to sea, and her back to shore, and away be was, and no stop nor stay was made with him till he reached the old church in Grianaig, and there there was a grass meadow, and a well of water, and a bush of rushes,[104] and he got off the steed.

“Now,” said the steed, “thou shalt take a sword and thou shalt take the head off me.”

“I will not take it indeed; it would be sad for me to do it, and it would not be my thanks.”

“Thou must do it. In me there is a young girl under spells, and the spells will not be off me till the head is taken off me. I myself and the raven were courting; he in his young lad, and I in my young girl, and the giants laid DRAOIDHEACHD magic upon us, and they made a raven of him and a steed of me.”[105]

[103] Here the narrator has evidently forgotten some of the adventures. A similar character to the black fisherman appears in other tales, and his adventures should be added here, if the story were mended.
[104] TOM LUACHARACH, a bush of rushes, perhaps a rushy knoll.
[105] FO GHEASAN. Irish writers who take the historical view of these traditions, translate geasa by vow or promise. This seems to fix the meaning at MAGIC.
I have translated this passage as literally as my knowledge of the two languages enables me to do it, because the language, which is simply every day Gaelic, seems, when considered with its meaning in this passage, to throw a light on past beliefs. The enchanted steed, and men at the present day when they speak Gaelic, talk of themselves as if they were something different from their bodies. In English it is said, “I *am* an old man;” in Gaelic, “I am *in my* old man.”

He drew his sword, he turned his back, and he took the head off her with a scutching blow, and he left the head and the carcass there. He went on forwards and a carlin met him.

“From whence didst thou come?” said she.

“I am from behind me.”

“Whither art thou going?

“I am going before me.”

“That is the answer of a castle man.”

“An answer that is pretty answerable for an impudent carlin such as thou art.”

He went in with her and he asked a drink, and he got that.

“Where is thy man?”

“He is at the house of the knight seeking gold and silver that will make a cap[106] for the knight’s young daughter, such as her sisters have; and the like of the caps are not to be found in Albainn.”

The smith came home.

“What’s trade to thee, lad?”

“I am a smith.”

“That is good, and that thou shouldst help me to make a cap for the knight’s young daughter, and she going to marry.”

“Dost thou not know that thou canst not make that.”

“It must be tried; unless I make it I shall be hanged to-morrow; here thou hadst best make it.”

“Lock me into the smithy, keep the gold and silver, and I will have the cap for thee in the morning.”

The form of words is the same when the speaker says “I am in my old clothes,” and this form of speech is here used together with DRAOIDH-eachd (?), *druid*-ism, magic, and a *transformation* is effected by *steel* at a *well*, in a *grass meadow*, near a *rushy knoll*, beside *an old church* at *Grian*aig.
Something to do with GRIAN the sun, is mixed up with magic and worship, at an old church, and with druidism, and wells, and magic metal, and green meadows and rushes, things which usually have to do with magic, and with metempsychosis, which is supposed to have been a druidical doctrine; and all comes direct from a man who cannot possibly know anything about such things except as traditions, which are supported by similar traditions found elsewhere. I believe this tale to be founded on Celtic mythology.--J. F. C.
The following Gaelic words used in this tale are very near to the English, LENA, lawn; GRUND, ground; SGIOBAIR, skipper; PEANAS, penalty; BLASTADH, corruption for blasting; SAIL, heel. SIPAISDEAIR-ACHD is not in English, but it has relations in Italian, andar *a spasso*, and in Norse and German, spazieren. The incidents may be compared with those in the Big Bird Dan, Norse Tales, page 442; the King of Lochlin’s Three Daughters, vol. i., page 236; but though these have much in common, I know nothing quite like this story anywhere. To me it suggests a succession of vivid pictures, perhaps because I understand the intention of the narrator from my knowledge of the landscapes which he clearly had before his mind.]

[106] CEAP may have been substituted for CURRACHD, a cap, which was the old Gaelic name for all head-dresses, male or female.--H. M’L. I have no doubt that the man who told the story meant a cap, and I have so translated the word, but the Gaelic word means a trap or gin, and many things besides. An old man who told me a story exceedingly like “the Fisherman” in the Arabian Nights, introduced the character who resembled the young king of the Black Isles, not as a man half marble, but as a man with his head in a *ceap*, and on being interrogated, explained that this was a kind of head-dress used for punishment or torture, in which the head of the victim was fastened. Such head-dresses, made of rusty iron, may be seen in museums, and ceap may have meant something like a helmet, whose machinery bears some resemblance to a rat-trap.

The smith locked him in. He wished the raven to be with him. The raven came, he broke in through the window, and the cap was with him.

“Thou shalt take the head off me now.”

“It were sorrow for me to do that, and it would not be my thanks.”

“Thou must do it. A young lad under spells am I, and they will not be off me till the head comes off me.”

He drew his sword, and he scutched his head off, and that was not hard to do. In the morning the smith came in, and he gave him the cap, and he fell asleep. There came in a noble-looking youth, with brown hair, and he awoke him.

“I,” said he, “am the raven, and the spells are off me now.”

He walked down with him where he had left the dead steed, and a young woman met them there as, lovely as eye ever saw.

“I,” said she, “am the steed, and the spells are off me now.”

The smith went with the cap to the house of the knight. The servant maid betook herself to the knight’s young daughter, and she said that there was the cap which the smith had made. She looked at the cap.

“He never made that cap. Say to the lying rogue to bring hither the man that made him the cap, or else that he shall be hanged without delay.”

The smith went and he got the man that gave him the cap, and when she saw him she took great joy.

The matter was cleared up. Iain and the knight’s young daughter married, and backs were turned on the rest, and they could not get the other sisters. They were driven away through the town with stick swords and straw shoulder-belts.

LXVIII. Fionn’s Questions

From Donald MacPhie (smith), Breubhaig, Barra, 1860.

Fionn would not marry any lady but one who could answer all his questions, and it appears that this was rather difficult to find. Graidhne, daughter of the King of the fifth of Ullin, answered them all, and proved herself the wisest as well as the handsomest of women. Fionn married Graidhne because she answered the questions. The reciter told me that there were a great many more, but that these were all that he could remember at the time.”

H. MACLEAN, October 20, 1860.

CEISDEAN MINN.

[Seo na ceisdean.
Fionn. Dé ‘s lionaire na’m feur?
Graidhne. Tha ‘n druichd; bidh moran bhoineachan deth air aon ghas feoir.]

Fionn. What is more plenteous than the grass?
Graidhne. The dew; there will be many drops of it on one grass blade.

[Dé ‘s teotha na’n teine?
Ciall mnatha eadar da fhear.]

What is hotter than the fire?
A woman’s reasoning betwixt two men.

[Dé ‘s luaithe na ghaoth?
Aigne mnatha eadar da fhear.]

What is swifter than the wind?
A woman’s thought betwixt two men.

[Dé ‘s duibhe na ‘m fitheach?
Tha ‘m bàs.]

What is blacker than the raven?
There is death.

[Dé ‘s gile na ‘n sneachd?
Tha ‘n fhirinn.]

What is whiter than the snow?
There is the truth.

[Dé ‘s long ri gach luchd?
Teanchair gobha; cumaidh i teith a’s fuar.]

What is a ship for every cargo?
A smith’s tongs; it will hold hot and cold.

[Dé air nach gabh glas na slabhraidh cur?
Rasg duine ma charaid; cha ghabh e dunadh na cumail ach ag amhare air.]

What is it will not bide lock or chain?
The eye of a man about his friend; it will not brook shutting or holding, but looking on him.

[Dé ‘s deirge na fuil?
Gnuis duine choir nuair thigeadh coigrich an rathad ‘s gun bhiadh aige ‘bheireadh e dhaibh.]

What is redder than blood?
The face of a worthy man when strangers might come the way, and no meat by him to give to them.

[Dé ‘s géire na claidheamh?
Athais namhaid.]

What is sharper than a sword?
The reproach of a foe.

[Dé ‘s fearr do bhiadh?
Bleachd; thig iomadh atharrachadh as, niotar im a’s càise dheth, ‘s beathachaidh e leanabh beag a’s seanduine.]

What is the best of food?
Milk; many a change comes out of it; butter and cheese are made of it, and it will feed a little child and an old man.

[Dé ‘s measa do bhiadh?
Blianach.]

What is the worst of meat?
Lean flesh.

[De ‘n seud a’s fhearr?
Sgian.]

What is the best jewel?
A knife.

[Dé ‘s brisge na cluaran?
Briathran torc muice.]

What is more brittle than the sow thistle?
The words of a boar pig.

Dé ‘s maoithe na cloimhteach?
Dearn air an leaca.]

What is softer than down?
The palm on the cheek.

[Dé ‘n gniomh a’s fhearr do ghniomhabh?
Gniomh ard a’s uaill iseal.]

What deed is the best of deeds?
A high deed and low conceit.

From this then it appears that Graidhne represents, quick wit and beauty, and her name seems to mean Gràdh--love.

Fionn always represents wisdom. Mature wisdom marries young love, and in the stories which follow, love runs away with young valour.

They followed the track which had been assigned to the Celtic race. They are married in Eirinn, and in the next story, the course of their wanderings is pointed out.

LXIX. Diarmaid And Grainne

From Hector MacLean, July 6th, 1859. Told by an old man in Bowmore, Islay, Alexander Macalister.

FIONN was going to marry Grainne, the daughter of the king of Carmag in Eirinn. The nobles and great gentles of the Feinne were gathered to the wedding. A great feast was made, and the feast lasted seven days and seven nights; and when the feast was past, their own feast was made for the hounds. Diarmaid was a truly fine man, and there was, BALL SEIRC, a love spot, on his face, and he used to keep his cap always down on the beauty spot; for any woman that might chance to see the ball seirce, she would be in love with him. The dogs fell out roughly, and the heroes of the Feinn went to drive them from each other, and when Diarmaid was driving the dogs apart, he gave a lift to the cap, and Grainne saw the ball seirc and she was in heavy love for Diarmaid.

She told it to Diarmaid, and she said to him, “Thou shalt run away with me.”

“I will not do that,” said Diarmaid.

“I am leaving it on thee as a wish; and as spells that thou go with me.”

“I will not go with thee; I will not take thee in softness, and I will not take thee in hardness I will not take thee without, and I will not take thee within; I will not take thee on horseback, and I will not take thee on foot,” said he; and he went away in displeasure, and he went to a place apart, and he put up a house there, and he took his dwelling in it.

On a morning that there was, who cried out in the door but Grainne, “Art thou within, Diarmaid?”

“I am.”

“Come out and go with me now.”

“Did I not say to thee already that I would not take thee on thy feet, and that I would not take thee on a horse, that I would not take thee without, and that I would not take thee within, and that I would not have anything to do with thee.”

She was between the two sides of the door, on a buck goat. “I am not without, I am not within, I am not on foot, and I am not on a horse; and thou must go with me,” said she.[107]

“There is no place to which we may go that Fionn will not find us out when he puts his hand under his tooth of knowledge, and he will kill me for going with thee!”

“We will go to Carraig (a crag, Carrick?) and there are so many Carraigs that he will not know in which we may be.”

They went to Carraig an Daimh (the stag’s crag).

Fionn took great wrath when he perceived that his wife had gone away, and he went to search for her. They went over to Ceantire, and no stop went on their foot, nor stay on their step, till they reached Carraig an Daimh in Ceantire, near to Cille Charmaig, Diarmaid was a good

[107] This incident may be compared with a German story Die-kluge Baueren-tochter. Grimm, No. 94. See vol. iii., p. 170, for numerous references to versions of the story in a great many languages. I have had two versions of the story in Gaelic--one from Mr. MacLauchlan, the other from an old man in Barra.

carpenter, and he used to be at making dishes, and at fishing, and Grainne used to be going about selling the dishes, and they had beds apart.

On a day that there was there came a great sprawling old man the way, who was called Ciofach Mae a Ghoill,[108] and he sat, and he was playing at DINNSIREAN (wedges.[109]) Grainne took a liking for the old earl, and they laid a scheme together that they would kill Diarmaid. Diarmaid was working at dishes. The old man laid hands on him, and he turned against the old man, and they went into each other's grips. The old man was pretty strong, but at last Diarmaid put him under. She caught hold of the, GEARRASGIAN, knife, and she put it into the thigh of Diarmaid. Diarmaid left them, and he was going from hole to hole, and he was but just alive, and he was gone under hair and under beard. He came the way of the Carraig and a fish with him, and he asked leave to roast it. He got a cogie of water in which he might dip his fingers, while he was roasting it. Now there would be the taste of honey or anything which Diarmaid might touch with his finger, and he was dipping his fingers into the cogie. Grainne took a morsel out of the fish[110] and she perceived the taste of honey upon it. To attack Diarmaid went Ciofach, and they were in each other's grips for a turn of a while, but at last Diarmaid killed Ciofach, and away he went, and he fled, and he went over Loch a Chaisteil.

When Grainne saw that Ciofach was dead she followed Diarmaid, and about the break of day, she came to the strand, and there was a heron screaming. Diarmaid was up in the face of the mountain, and said Grainne--

"It is early the heron cries,
On the heap above Sliabh gaoil,
Oh Diarmaid O Duibhne to whom love I gave,
What is the cause of the heron's cry?

"Oh Ghrainne, daughter of Carmaig of Steeds,
That never took a step aright,
It seems that before she gave the cry.
Her foot had stuck to a frozen slab.[111]

"Wouldst thou eat bread and flesh, Diarmaid

"Needful were I of it if I had it."

"Here I will give it to thee; where is a knife will cut it?"

"Search the sheath in which thou didst put it last," said Diarmaid.

The knife was in Diarmaid ever since she had put it into him, and he would not take it out. Grainne drew out the knife, and that was the greatest shame that she ever took, drawing the knife out of Diarmaid.

Fear was on Diarmaid that the Fheinn would find them out, and they went on forwards to Gleann Eilg.

[108] Ciofach, the son of the stranger. This personage, who plays this part in another version, is called "Cuitheach."
[109] Or DISNEAN, dice?
[110] There seems to be something mythical about this fish, for he appears in various shapes in the legend.
[111] There seems to be a hidden meaning in the reply.

They went up the side of a burn that was there, and took their dwelling there, and they had beds apart.[112]

Diarmaid was making dishes, and the shavings which he was making were going down with the burn to the strand.

The Fiantan were hunting along the foot of the strand, and they were on the track of a venomous boar that was discomfiting them. Fionn took notice of the shavings at the foot of the burn.

"These," said he, "are the shaving of Diarmaid."

"They are not; he is not alive," said they.

"Indeed," said Fionn, "they are. We will shout Foghaid? a hunting cry, and in any one place in which he may be, he is sworn to it that he must answer."

Diarmaid heard the Foghaid.

"That is the Foghaid of the Fiantan; I must answer."

"Answer not the cry, oh Diarmaid,
It is but a lying cry."[113]

Diarmaid answered the shout, and he went down to the strand. It was set before Diarmaid to hunt the boar. Diarmaid roused the boar from Bein Eidin to Bein Tuirc.[114]

While drawing down the long mountain,
The brute was bringing Diarmaid to straits.
His tempered blades were twisted
Like withered rushy plaits.

Diarmaid gave a draw at the slasher that Lon Mac Liobhain[115] made, and he put it in under the armpit and he killed the boar.

This was no revenge for Fionn yet over Diarmaid. There was a mole on the sole of the foot of Diarmaid, and if one of the bristles should go into it, it would bring his death.

Said Fionn--

"Oh Diarmaid, measure the boar,
How many feet from his snout to his heel?

Diarmaid measured the boar.

"Sixteen feet of measure true."

Measure the boar against the hair."

He measured the boar against the hair, one of the bristles went into the mole and he fell.

Fionn took sorrow for him when he fell. "What would make thee better, Diarmaid

"If I could get a draught of water from the palms of Fionn I would be better."

[112] Glen Elg, opposite the narrows between Skye and the mainland. There are two "Pictish towers" in a glen which would answer to the description, and there are many legends of the Feinn localised about that spot.
[113] This is a line of the poem which follows, given as a sentence in a prose tale; and other lines occur which I have written as poetry when I thought I could recogmise them.
[114] Two well known Scotch mountains.
[115] This sword maker is known by this name in the Isle of Man, and is there called the dark smith of Drontheim.

Fionn went for the water, and when he thought on Grainne he would spill the water, and when he would think of Diarmid, he would take sorrow, and he would take it with him; but Diarmaid was dead before Fionn returned.[116]

They walked up the side of the burn till they came to where Grainne was; they went in; they saw two beds, and they understood that Diarmaid was guiltless. The Fein were exceedingly sorrowful about what had befallen. They burned

Grainne, daughter of Carmaig of steeds
That never took a step aright,
In a faggot of grey oak.

This story then, under a very rough exterior, embodies the main incidents and some lines of the poem which follows.

The last story, No. LIX., got in Barra, started the heroine in Ireland. This, got in Islay, starts her in Ireland and brings her through Ceantire into Lorn and to Glen Elg, opposite to Skye.

The next, the Lay of Diarmaid, got from several people in Uist and Barra, seems to leave the place of the catastrophe uncertain, but Bein-Gulban is the haunt of the heroes, and Irish writers say that Bein-Gulban is Bein-Boolban in Sligo.

In the manuscript histories of the Argyll family, Diarmaid's sons are made to possess Carrick.

Gaelic omitted

The only points in which the tale and poem published by Dr. Smith agree are those of the death of Diarmaid. It is so long since I read Dr. Smith's Sean Dana that I have but a faint recollection of the poem. The tale would seem to me to be partly a parody on the poem. These old people are sometimes confused in reciting these tales, probably much is lost, and from confusion of memory some may be altered. At times they cannot recite at all. Shaw, from whom I got Murchadh Mac Brian, died a few days ago, and, so far as I can ascertain, there is none in Islay, Jura, or Colonsay, that can recite the same tale now.

H. MACLEAN.

Ballygrant, July 6th, 1859.

[116] In Dr. Smith's Sean Dana, page 3 (1787), is this note on the Poem of Diarmaid. "A long dialogue concerning Cuach Fhinn, or the medicinal cup of Fingal, often repeated here, is rejected as the spurious interpolation of some later bard." The scene is often laid on the ridge between Oban and Loch Awe, and I well remember to have heard how Fionn held his palms to Diarmaid filled with water from a spring which is still shewn, and how a draught from the hollow palms would have healed the dying warrior; but Fionn thought on Graidhne and opened his hands and let the water drain away, as he held his hands to Diarmaid's mouth, and Diarmaid died. J. F. C.

LXX. The Lay Of Diarmaid

I HAVE already referred to a note by Mrs. MacTavish on this subject, vol. ii. 489. She tells how she learned Dan an Dearg (the Song of the Red) more than sixty years ago, from a ploughman who used to chant it at his work; and she adds--

“The subject of the song is Diarmaid O Duine, or Dearg as he was sometimes called. Diarmid was, as I daresay you know, the progenitor of the clan Campbell, who are called at times Siol Diarmid, at other times Clann Duine. I never heard who his wife was, but she was esteemed a virtuous and worthy person; yet she had enemies, who wished to persuade her husband that she did not love him, and who concerted a plot to prove her fidelity. Diarmid was a great sportsman, as all Fingalians were, and hunted wild boars, which, it would appear, were numerous in the Scottish forests at that period. The sport at times proved fatal to those engaged in it. Pretended friends persuaded Diarmid to pretend that he was killed by one of those animals. They put him on a bier, and carried him home to his wife, all bloody, as if he had really suffered as they said. She conducted herself with becoming fortitude and composure, ordered refreshments for those assembled to watch the remains of their chief, sat down along with them, and commenced singing the song which follows. It is very touching in the original. Never having been favoured by the muses, I cannot do it the justice which it deserves, or that I could wish. The translation is as literal as I can make it.”[117]

1

Derg, son of Derg, I am thy wife,
The husband whom I would not hurt,
The husband whom 1 would not hurt,
There never was a worthy who was not tried;
Wretched am I after thee this night.

2

Derg, son of Olla of the enlightened mind,
By whom so softly the harp was played,
By whom so softly the harp was played,
Beloved was the hero who kept no wrath,
Though Derg was laid low by a hog.

3

I see the hawk, I see the hound,
With which my loved one used to hunt,
With which my loved one used to hunt,
And she that loved the three
Let her be laid in the grave with Derg.

4

Then let us rejoice this night,
As we sit around the corpse of a king,
As we sit around the corpse of a king

[117] The Gaelic and music were subsequently got from the same lady.

Let us be hospitable and liberal,
Thanks be to God for every thing.

1

Derg mac Derg gur i mi do bhean;
Air an fhear cha deanain lochd.
Cha n' eil saoi nach d' fhuair a dheuchain
S' truagh tha mise ad dheigh an nochd.

2

Derg mac Olla chridhe 'n iuil,
Leis an seinte gu ciuin cruit;
B 'ionmhuin an Laoch air nach do luidhe fearg;
Ged do thorchradh Derg le muic.

3

Chi mi n' t seabhag a's an cu
Leis an deanamh mo run sealg;
S' an neach leis ail ionmhuin an triuir
Cuirer i 's an uir le Derg.

4

Bi mid gu subhach an nochd
Sin nar suidhe mu chorp Righ
Bi mid gu furanach fialaidh;
Buidheachas do Dhia gach ni.

Diarmaid, who was never conquered in battle, was destroyed by stratagem. Some one of his enemies took a bet with him that he could not measure the length of a boar that he had killed by pacing its back against the bristles with his bare soles, which gave rise to the saying--

Tomhas n' tuirc n' aghaidh n' fhrioghain,
Measuring the boar against the bristles,

when any unlikely thing is proposed. He gained his bet, but it cost him his life; the boar's bristles being so strong that he bled to death. This legend is said to be the origin of the boar's head being the crest of the principal families of the Campbells.

MARY. MACTAVISH, November 1859.

The clan MacTavish are a branch of the Campbells, and this lady, in relating a legend of her own family, tells it as I have heard it repeatedly told, with variations, by peasants and fishermen, who firmly believed in their own descent from Diarmaid O'Duibhn, and in the truth of this legend.

The LAY OF DIARMAID is quoted p. 117, and mentioned in several places in the Report of the Highland Society on the poems of Ossian, 1805. The version given below, though it resembles those which I have seen in books in some respects, differ from them all so as to make it evident that it is taken from none. I have no doubt that it is purely traditional.

I am inclined to believe that there was a real Diarmaid, in whose honour poems have been composed by many bards, and sung by generations of Scotch Highlanders, and that to him the adventures of some mythical Celtic Diarmaid have been attributed, in the same way that the mythical story of the apple has been ascribed to William Tell.

Be that as it may, the Lay of Diarmaid can be traced for a period of 300 years, and its story is known amongst the whole Celtic population from the south of Ireland to the north of Scotland.

LXXI. The Story Of The Lay Of Diarmaid, No.1

FIONN never was a king; it was Breean, his father's brother, who was king over the fifth which the Een had of Eirinn, and Fionn he was Fla, the chief of the Feene, and it was Osgar who was chief of the men.

It is Djeearmaid who was the man of the best head that was in the Een altogether, and no arm at all could make an impression upon him. There was BALL DORAIN (a mole, an otter-mark) in his right heel; and he could not be killed unless a spike should go into his heel in the mole.

Graine, the wife of Een, saw the BALL SEIRC (beauty spot) that was on Djeearmaid, and she took love for him, and he fled before her, but she followed him; and they were dwelling in a cave. Djeearmaid would not approach her, and he used to put a symbol before the door, a quarter of a slaughtered animal on a stake; and Fionn, when he saw the sign was satisfied; but on a day the sign was changed. A ciuthach[118] came into the cave, and Djeearmaid killed him with a spear, for Graine was unfaithful even to her lover.

There was an old woman there whom they used to call Mala Llee (gray eyebrow), and she had a herd of swine, and she had a venomous boar for guarding the pigs. There was no being that went to hunt this boar that came back alive. So it was that Fionn thought to send Djeearmaid to hunt him, to put an end to him.

When Djeearmaid gave out the shout of death, said Fionn to Grainne-

"Is that the hardest shriek to thy mind that thou hast ever heard?"

"It is not," said she, "but the shriek of the ciuthach, when Djeermaid killed him."

"Ye Gods! that Djeermaid were alive," said Fionn.

From Janet Currie, Stonybridge, September 14, 1860.---H. MACL.--Part is altered and omitted in the translation, and the Gaelic is not given, because there is nothing peculiar in the language. The legend is remarkable as containing incidents common to the story published by the Ossianic Society of Dublin in 1855.--J.F.C.

[118] Pr. *kewach*, described in the Long Island as naked wild men living in caves, supposed to be derived from "CIUTH, long hair behind," which word is applied in Islay to a pigtail. French, *quene*.

LXXII. The Lay Of Diarmaid, No.2

WHEN the Fhinn used to go to hunt, one of them used always to stay at home to watch the women. It fell upon Diarmaid on that day that it was he who should stay. There was a thing which they used to call SUGH SEIRC (love juice), a kind of mark in the face of the--man, and there was a helmet upon him that must not be raised, for there was no woman who might see the *sugh seirc* that would not fall in love with him, and Diarmaid knew that these gifts were in himself. On the day that he stayed at home he thought that no being was seeing him, and he gave a lift to the helmet; and Graidhne, the daughter of the King of Coig Ullainn, sees the face of Diarmaid. The warm soul would not be in her unless she should go with Diarmaid.

Said Diarmaid, “That will not answer for me to go with thee.”

“O! we will go, or else I will tear my clothes, and I will give thee up to Fionn.”

“I have no doubt of thee but that he will believe thee, because thou art his own beloved wife indeed.”

They went away, and they travelled together three days and three nights. They were crossing a river, and a little trout rose and struck her, and she said--

“Thou art bolder than Diarmaid. If thou couldst go on shore!”

“Now,” said he “Fionn has come home, and they will not find us within, then they will come on our tracks, and they will get us.”

“They will not get us,” said she. “Whether they get us, or get us not, we will try to hide ourselves. The thing that we will do is this, we will go up to this wood up here, and the branches and leaves of the trees will hide us.”

They rose up into the tree, and they went into the heart of the tree, and they drew the branches and leaves of the tree about them.

The Fhinn came to their house, and they did not find Diarmaid or Graidhne at the house.

“Here, here! lads,” said Fionn, “I am without a wife, and the Fhinn without Diarmaid. We ought to go till we find them.”

They went on their search, and they went over the same river. When they went over, said Fionn--

“We have now been a while walking, and since we have we will breathe a little at the root of this tree up here.”

They took the advice of Fionn, and they sat at the foot of the tree.

Said Fionn--”We should turn to playing, lads.”

“We are willing,” said they.

Fionn and Osgar used to be the two leaders of the game. It was Diarmaid who used always to be along with Fionn. Fionn knew that Diarmaid had magic gifts at games. Now there was Osgar, and he needed a man to be with him, and it was his own father who used to be with him. They began at the games. Every game that was going, it was against Fionn that it went, and Osgar was winning. They drove three games.

Said Fionn--"I am missing Djeermaid heavily; for it was seldom that a game went against me when Diarmaid was with me. but they are now going against me since he parted from me; but I will go against thee another time."

Diarmaid was listening. He went and he put his hand against his right side,--thus;--and he caught hold of one of the red rowan berries that were on the tree, and he let it fall down beside the tree, and the back of Fionn was against the tree. He noticed something striking him on the back, and put his hand behind him, and he caught the rowan berry, and he put it into his pouch. They began at the game, and this game went with Fionn.

"One is with me," said Fionn.

"It is," said Osgar; "but two are wanting."

"Wilt thou go into it any more?" said Osgar.

"I will go, I will go," said Fionn; "try it again."

Diarmaid let down the next rowan berry, and Fionn won this one.

"Wilt thou go into any more?" said he.

"I will go," said Osgar. "If thou hast two, there is one wanting."

Diarmaid let down the third one, and Fionn won the third one.

"We are now," said Oscar, "even and even; all I won thou thyself hast taken it back again."

"Wilt thou go into it any more?" said Fionn.

"I will go," said Osgar; "we shall have knowledge of its good or evil at this time."

They went at it, and Diarmaid let down the fourth one, and Fionn won.

"Howsoever, it was whilst thou wert without Diarmaid on thy side I was winning. Howsoever the matter may be, there were matters that belong to Diarmaid about thee this day before thou hast won the fourth time."

Said Oisean--"My father did not drive (the game) against us with right, my son, at all."

"I did drive it," said Fionn.

"Thou did'st not," said Oisean.

"I did; as a proof that I did there are four rowan berries in my pouch opposite to (for) every game that I won."

He took out the four rowan berries, and when be took them out he said-

"Come down from that, Diarmaid, thyself and Graidhne, daughter of the King of Coig-Ullainn, for ye are there together."

Diarmaid and Graidhne came down; the party was made anew, and Fionn and Osgar fell out. The arms began, and the skaith began, and they were doing much harm to each other. The other part of the Fhinn were seeing that Osgar was like to win against the side of his grandfather.

Said Goll Mac Morna--"Though we had no part in the discord we should make a redding, and an umpire's parting, between the children of Treun Mhor."

Said Conan--"Let the Clann Baoisge back each other's bodies."

Then Fionn said to Osgar to stay the arms, in case the Clanna Morna should still be after them in Alba.

Fionn took notice of Diarmaid, and he said--

My frame, and my band, and mine eye,
Are longing to do honour to thee,
Oh! Dhiarmaid O Duibhne, brave man,
Going with my consort in secret?

There was a woman who was called Mala Lith, and she had a herd of swine, and there was a venomous boar at their head, and many a good lad went to hunt him that never came whole from the boar.

Said Fionn to Diarmaid--"Go to hunt the boar of Mala Lith on her herd of swine. Many a one went there that did not come out of the burn besides a trout." Diarmaid went to hunt the boar.

H. MACLEAN.

The Gaelic follows at page 78.

These two stories and the following poem give the relationships of the chiefs of that band of warriors whose exploits form the subject of all that class of old Celtic poetry which is attributed to Oisean, Osin or Ossian, and is called Fingalian in English, and Fenian in Ireland. This is the family tree as here set forth:--

TREUNMHOR (great, mighty), who gives his name to the tribe, the children of Treunmhor, or the clan of the BAOISGE (flashes of light, coruscations, gleams).

CUMHAL (spelt Cooal in Manx), only mentioned as the father of Fionn. He is sometimes called MacDhughil (Macdugald), or the son of black and white *Brian* the king, brother of Fionn's father, who seldom does anything.

FIONN MACCHUMAIL (fair), flath na Finne (chief of the Finne), married to GRAIDHNE, daughter of the king of the fifth of Ullan.

OISEAN, the last of the Finne, son of Fionn, who afterwards sings the departed glories of his race as a blind old man in poverty and wretchedness.

OSGAR, his son, Flath nam Fear, chief of men.

DONN, brown, who gives his name to a tribe, clan O Duibhne.

A SISTER of Fionn, wife of King O Dhuine, mother of DIARMAID O DHUBHINE, the Expert Shield, the best head in the Finne, whom all family histories and oral traditions call the ancestor of the Campbells, but whom I strongly suspect to be a Celtic divinity, whose attributes have been ascribed to their ancestor by a Celtic tribe.

GOLL MAC MORNA, who is only mentioned here as an umpire in the strife, but who is a very well known character in other poems, and is said to have been a god in Ireland.

CONAN, who only appears to utter a bitter taunt and thereby supports the character always assigned to him. MAOL, the blunt, cropped, or bald.

The FINNE, who are not here named in detail, but are always introduced into every poem or story in which the rest of these characters are named. Besides these, there are--

MALA LITH, an old woman, who has a magical white boar with a spike of venom in his back, invulnerable to all arms but the arms of Diarmaid.

There is a trout which Graidhne wishes to come on shore.

A savage who comes to the cave where Graidhne is, and who is killed by Diarmaid, to whom the faithless Graidhne is unfaithful.

There is the rowan tree, which is magical, and whose berries are amulets to this day; and nearly all this is common to Irish stories, as published in 1855.

The scene is vague, and might be anywhere in Alba. It is commonly laid near Oban, in Lorne, but Bein Gulbein is the favourite haunt of these warriors, and it is generally placed in Ireland, and is said to be in Sligo, and Diarmaid turns his dying face towards Bein Gulban, wherever it may be.

This subject is referred to elsewhere; but let me here point out that the "Feene" are the children of beams of light, "Baoisge;" of Great Mighty, their great ancestor, and their chief is Fair, the son of Cooal, or it may be of black and white, light and darkness. That Djeearmaid might be translated "the armed god," who had yellow hair. That their standard was called the sunbeam, and that in the following short poem we have similar incidents to the loves of Venus and Adonis, the death of Achilles, etc., and that all this points rather to mythology than to a single historical incident connected with the disbanding of an Irish militia.

It is worth remark that the poem alludes to several well known adventures which are now told as stories, which may have been poems or distorted facts.

The rowan tree dwelling, verse 21, is No. xxix. in vol. ii., or No. xxxvi. I forget which story goes by the name. Who White Tooth may be I do not know, but Diarmid had a son so called.

As to the date of the poem and its origin. There seems every reason to believe that it is old, and that it has been orally transmitted for centuries from generation to generation, in the islands of Scotland, wherever it was composed.

A version of it, got in Kintyre or on Lochawe-side, was printed by John Smith. D.D., minister of the gospel at Campbeltown, 1787, p. 99. That version is avowedly pruned and polished.

It is printed without division into stanzas, but the rhythm here and there appears to indicate that such was the original form of the poem.

That which is now printed is so divided by me, because the rhythm generally accords, and the "assonance" and sense all point to separate verses, each complete in itself, and fit for singing to music, as these old songs are in fact sung at this day. Similar Irish poems are so divided.

Several of the lines are nearly the same in Dr. Smith's version and in this which is collected from the people eighty-four years later.

The story in the "Sean Dana" is clearly the same, though--the magic is avowedly weeded from the original, and Graidhne is the faithful wife of Diarmaid, not the faithless wife of his uncle Fionn.

There is another version much older, in a MS. now in course of publication, which dates from 1539.

One specimen page has been shewn to me, and it contains one stanza and several lines almost the same as part of this "Lady of Diarmaid." It is quite certain, then, that this old song has been preserved more or less perfectly by oral tradition in Scotland amongst people who can neither read nor write, for at least 330 years, and it gives a standard by which to form an opinion of popular tradition as an aid to written history.

"The pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne" fills the greater part of vol. iii. of the Transactions of the Dublin Ossianic Society, 170 pages; and a glance at the story as there told will shew that it is founded on the same widely spread tradition, which, as I imagine, is not a tradition of any one real event which happened at any given time anywhere; but a chapter in the mythology of the Pagan world, which may be traced far and wide in various forms.

Of the following poem, founded on this legend, the collector MacLean says:

“This Laoidh Dhiarmaid is one of the most popular of the Ossianic pieces recited in the Long Island, and is known to more individuals than any other. In South Uist I heard it recited by Angus M’Donald, Janet Currie, Allan M’Phie, and some others; in Barra by Alexander M’Donald, and Donald M’Phie (smith), Breubhaig; also by a man in Minglay. The best reciter of this and other Ossianic pieces, that I have met with, is Donald M’Phie. This M’Phie says he learnt the poem from Neill M’Innes, Cill Bharraidh, who died about twenty years ago, about sixty years of age. M’Innes could neither read nor write. M’Donald says he learnt it from his mother, Marion Galbraith; and traces it up for six generations to a maternal ancestor of his, who came from Kintyre. Janet Currie traces it to Neill Currie, her ancestor, who was Clanronald’s poet.

HECTOR MACLEAN.”

For valid reasons, I have not given the Gaelic of all the prose stories, or the whole of them, or the whole of those of which I translate a part.

J. F. C.

LXXIII. The Lay Of Yeearmaid, No.3

I have tried to spell the names so as to convey some idea of the sound of the Gaelic words to English minds.--J. F. C.

1.

HEARKEN a space if you wish a lay
Of the tribe that from us are gone,
Of MacCooal and of the Feen,
And of the prince there's a woeful song.

2.

Going to Vein Goolban to hunt
The boar that the weak arms cannot wound,
That venomous boar, and he so fierce
That Gray eyebrows had with her herd of swine.

3.

GRAINE.

Oh Yeearmaid slip not the hounds,
And trust not but this is a party of guile,
For it is hard to withstand MacCooal,
And he is in sorrow deprived of a wife."

LAOIDH DHIARMAID.

The MS. came to me without division into verses, I have so divided it, being nearly certain that I am right. The people talk of "ceathrannan," quatrains, and the metre is clear, and fits the music.--J. F. C.

1

Eisdibh beag ma[119] 's aill leibh laoidh,
Air a' mhuinntir a dh' fhalbh uainn;
Air MacChumhail, 's air an Fhinn,
'S air mac an righ, gu 'm bheil sgial truagh.

2

Dol a Bheinn Ghulbann a shealg,
An tuirc nach dearg na h-airm chli;[120]
'S e 'n torc nimhe, 's e ro gharg,[121]
Bh' aig Mala liath[122] aig sealbh mhuc.

[119] Laoidh, lay, ode, lyric; it differs from dan a poem, in being more melodious, and capable of being sung. It narrates rapidly a few events ending tragically, almost invariably the death of a hero.
[120] Cli, weak, powerless. Duine gun chli, a man without strength. Airm chli, feeble weapons.
[121] Garg, fierce.
[122] Mala liath. The reciters pronounce this name Mala lìth, but the Irish pronounce ia, ee, so that the name means gray eyebrow, the old woman who owned the venomous boar and the swine, "aig sealbh mhuc," guarding her swine (herd of swine).

3

GRAIDHNE.

“A Dhiarmaid na leig na gadhair
‘S na creid nach i ‘n fhaghaid bhreige;[123]
‘S gur deacair cur ri Mac Chumhail
A ‘s cumha leis ‘bhith gun chéile.”

4.

DJEEARMAID.

“O Graine wilt thou not keep still,
And for thy first love earn not shame,
I would not let slip my share of the hunt,
For all the wrath of the men of the Feene.”

5.

GRAINE.

“Son of O Duine, valiant chief,
Since exploits were done through thee,
Be thou mindful of thy hand,
Here is the death to be shunned by thee.”

6.

The monster awakened out of the sleep,
She went round about the glen,
And when she heard the din of the Feean,
East and west she turned her head.

7.

The well Skilled Shield withstood her then,
And the spear went into the belly of the boar,
It broke in the midst of the shaft again,
And the toughest head was upon the hog.

8.

The ancient blade was drawn from sheath,
With which each battlefield was won,
The son of king Guyne slew the beast,
And he withdrew himself whole again.

4

DIARMAID.

“A Ghraidhne nach fuirich thu samhach
‘S na coisinn naire dho d’ cheud-ghaol;
Cha leiginn-sa mo chuid de ‘n t-seilg
Air son feirge fir na Finne.”

5

[123] Faghaid bhreige, a lying hunting party, that is got up to deceive and destroy him.

GRAIDHNE.

A mhic O Duibhne, a fhlaith threin,[124]
Nis o rinneadh euchdan[125] leat
Bi-sa cuimhneach air do laimh;
Seo an t-eug o ‘n tearnar leat.”[126]

6

Dhuisg an ulla-bheist[127] as an t-suain
Chaidh i mu chuairt air a’ ghleann,
‘L nuair chual i farum nam Fiann
Thug i ‘n ear ‘s an iar a ceann.

7

Chaidh an sgiath urla[128] ’na dāil
‘S Chaidh an t-sleagh an tar[129] an tuirc;
Bhrisd i eadar[130] an crann a rìs
‘S bha’n ceann bu righn’ air a’ mhuic.

8

Thairneadh an t-seann lann a truaill
Leis am buinichte buaidh gach blair;
Mharbh mac righ Dhuibhn’ a’ bhéist;
Thiarainn[131] e fhin ‘na déigh slan.

9.

We sent the white hog to Leodrum,
And wishful we were to go to spoil. ([132])
. . . . .
. . . . .

10

The fairy glen and the glen by its side,
Where used to be voice of hero and bird,
Where was the hoarse sound of the Feean
Upon the mountain after their hounds.

11.

But anger settled on Fiun of the Feean,
And he sat moodily on the mound,

[124] Brave hero. Here the vocative is elegantly used.
[125] Euchdan, exploits.
[126] This is the death which you require to avoid.
[127] A monster (feminine in Gaelic).
[128] Sgiath urla or urlaimh. Expert shield, a name for Diarmid, from his adroitness in the use of the shield.
[129] Tar, the belly.
[130] Eadar an crann. Here eadar is used in a sense not common now; between the shaft, that is in the shaft, not between the shaft and the head.
[131] Tèarainn, to come off without hurt.
[132] The metre seems to require two lines here. I have not attempted to fill up the space, but I adhere to the division into verses of four lines, which the rhythm seems to indicate.

About Mac O Duine of the mighty arms,
It was torture that he came whole from the boar.

12.

After he had been silent a while
He spoke, and it was ill to say,
“Oh Yeearmaid, measure the boar,
How many feet from his snout to his tail?”

13.

DJEEARMAID.

“Let us take thy counsel, Een,
Since it was grievous coming from home;”
He measured the boar on his back,
King Guyne’s son of the rounded foot.

14.

“Fifteen feet of the measure good
Are in the back of the wild swine;” ([133])

. . . . .
. . . . .

9

[134] Chuir sinn a’ mhuc bhàn do Leodrum
‘S bu deoSach sinn a dhol a ‘reubadh;

. . . . .
. . . . .

10

An gleann sith, ‘san gleann ri ‘thaobh,
Far am biodh guth laoich a’s loin;
Far am biodh torman nam Fiann
Air an t-sliabh an deigh nan con.

11

Gu ‘n d’ luidh sprochd air Fionn nam Fiann,
‘S shuidh e gu cian air a’ chnoc,[135]

[133] Here there seems to be a break in the metre.
[134] This stanza is not known to all the reciters, given by Donald M’Phie, Breubhaig, Barra.
Gleann mo chridhe an gleann seo ri m’ thaobh,
Far am binn guth laoigh a’s loin;
Far am bi farum Dam Fiann,
Air an t-sliabh an deigh nan con.
My heart’s glen, this glen by my side,
Where sweet is the voice of calf and bird;
Where is the murmur of the Fean,
On the mountain side after their hounds.
(This is almost the same as a verse of an old manuscript poem, now in course of publication by Messrs. Edmonston and Douglas, 1861.--J. F. C.)
[135] These are the lines according to Allan M’Phie, and Janet Currie, South Uist.
“Gu ‘n d’ shuidh e siar air a’ chnoc,” according to some; That he sat west on the knoll.

Mu mhac O Duibhne nan arm aidh
Bu chràiteach leis tighinn slan o ‘n torc.

12

A chionn e bhith treis ‘na thosd[136]
Labhair e, ‘s gu’m b’ ole ri ‘radh,
“A Dhiarmaid tomhais an torc
Co mhiad troidh o ‘shoc g’a earr.”

13

DIARMAID.

“Gabham-sa do chomhairl’ Fhinn
O b’ aithreach leinn tigh’n on taigh.”
Thomhais e’n torc air a dhriom;
Mac righ Dhuibhn’ a bu chruinn troidh.[137]

14

“Coig troidhe deug de’n deagh thomhas
Ann an driom na muice fiadhain.”[138]

. . . . .
. . . . .

15.

FIUN.

“That is not his measure at all,
Measure him again, Oh Yeearmaid.
Against his bristles measure him,
And thou get’st each jewel ([139]) of a warrior proud”--

16.

“Oh, Yeearmaid, measure again,
Softly against (the hair) the boar,
And thou shalt get thy prayer from the king,
Thy choice of the tough keen spears.”

17.

He rose, and that was no journey of joy,
And, as he measured the boar for them,
The venomous spike of agony pierced
The heel of the hero not mild in strife.

18.

[136] A chionn e bhith treis na thosd. After, or at the end of his being a while silent.
[137] Bu trom troidh, of heavy tread. This is the version used by most of them, and they explain it as referring to the warrior’s strong firm step, and the largeness and strength of the leg; however, I have inserted bu chruinn troidh, which implies a well formed or fine foot, which is Boyd’s version.
[138] Fiadhain, more poetic than fiadhaich.
[139] Scud a jewel, an instrument. I understand it here to mean a warrior’s jewels, his weapons, but it might mean some decoration. See Graidhne’s answer. “A knife is the best jewel.”

DJEEARMAID.

“Give a draught from thy palms, Oh Een,
Son of my king for my succour,
For my life and my dwelling.”

FIUN.

“Ochon! Oh king it is I that will not.”

19.

“I will not give to thee a draught,
And neither shall it quench thy thirst,
And never hast thou done me good,
That thou hast not helped my ruin.”

15

FIONN.

“Cha’n e sin idir a thomhas,
Tomhais e rithis a Dhiarmaid.
Tomhais e ‘n aghaidh a’ chuilg,
‘S gheibh thu ‘laoich bhuirb gach seud.”

16

“A Dhiarmaid tomhais a ris,
‘Na aghaidh, gu min, an torc,
‘S gheibh thu t’ achanaich o’n righ,--
Rogha nan sleagh ruighinn goirt.[140]

17

Dh’ eirich, ‘s cha b’e ‘n turas aidh,
‘S gu ‘n do thomhais e dhaidh an torc;
Chaidh am bior nimh ‘bu mhor cradh,
An sàil an laoich nach tlath ‘san trod.[141]

18

DIARMAID.

“Thoir deoch bhar do bhasan, Fhinn,
[142]A mhic mo righ, gus mo chobhair,
[143]Air son mo bhidh agus m’ aodaich.”

FIONN.

“Ochon, a righ, ‘s mi nach d’ thobhair.”

[140] This is Janet Currie’s version of the line, which I think is best. Allan M ‘Phie gives,
“Urram nan slighne ghear goirt;” a pretty line also, “The honour of the sharp keen spear.”
A great many give “Taghadh nan sleagh ruighinn, geur, goirt,” Choice of the keen, tough, sharp spears, which I think is inferior in poetic merit to the other two.
[141] Nach tlath ‘san trod. That is, “not soft in fight.” Here the poet very beautifully, in an abrupt manner, turns off to the present tense, so as to produce a vivid impression of the hero’s great bravery on the mind of the hearer.
[142] “A dhealbhaich mo righ,” Boyd.
[143] “Air soil mo bheath’ agus m’ fhardoich,” Boyd.

19

“Cha d’ thoir mise dhuitse deoch,
‘S cha mhò a chaisgeas dhe t’ iota;
‘S cha d’ rinn thu riamh dho m’ leas
Nach do leasaich thu dho m’ aimhleas.”

20.

DJEEARMAID.

“I have never done ill to thee,
Hither nor thither, nor east nor west
But travelling with Graine in a yoke,
While she planned to bring me under spells.

21.

“In the rowan tree dwelling, and thou in straits,
Bold was I for thy succour;
At the time when death was upon thee,
It was I that went joyously to thee.

22.

“Een, ‘tis to thee that my succour was good;
Hast mind of the day of the combat of Conal?
The Cairbre and his tribe was before thee,
And I was behind thee to help thee.”

23.

“How wretched my face towards Bein Goolban!
On another day was I good for thee;
When the white tooth was hitting thee,
I turned upon her from behind thee.

24.

“And I succoured thee in that time!
If the women of the Feene should hear
That I was wounded on this ridge,
Dejected would be their faces.

25.

How wretched my face towards Bein Goolban! ([144])

. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .

20

DIARMAID.[145]

[144] Here three lines seem wanting to make up a stanza.
[145] This beautiful dying speech of Diarmid is not known so full as this to any of the reciters, except to Donald M’Phie, Breubhaig.

“Cha do rinn mis’ ortsa cron
Thall, na bhos, an ear, na ‘n iar;
Ach imeachd le Graidhn’ ann am braid;
‘S i tur gam thobhairt fo gheasaibh.

21

“‘S a’ Bhruighin chaorainn, ‘s tu nad’ chàs,
Bu dana mise gad’ chobhair;
‘S nuair a bha ‘n t-eug air do mhuin
‘S mis’ a chaidh thugad le meodhail.

22

“Fhinn ‘s ann duit bu mhath mo chobhair;
An cuimhneach leat latha cath Chonaill?
Bha ‘n Cairbre romhad ‘s a mhuinntir?
‘S bha mis’ as do dheigh gad’ chobhair!

23

“‘S gur truagh m’ aghaidh ri Beinn Ghulbann!
Lath’ eile bu mhath dhuit mi
Nuair a bha ‘n Deud-gheal gad’ bhualadh;
Thionndaidh mi orr’ as do dheaghainn,

24

“‘S chobhair mi ort anns an uair sin!
Na ‘n cluinneadh mnathan na Finne
Mis’ a bhith leont’ air an driom seo,
Bu tursach a bhiodh an adhart!

25

“‘S gur truagh m’ aghaidh ri Beinn Ghulbann!
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .

26.

“How wretched my face towards Bein Goolban!
As I pour in a flood forth my vigour:
And though I be the son of O Duine,
Farewell be to courting for ever.”

27.

There was Djeearmaid on the hillock,
Heavy the hair was and fine,

Cobhair is repeated here often, from the exasperated feeling at the ingratitude of the uncle. Such repetition is always the language of deep passion, as for instance in the case of Coriolanus in his reply, when called “thou boy of tears.”
The repetition of this line, and the abruptness with which he turns off from other subjects, is very pathetic. Whoever has been in the company of the dying can feel the truth of this line, how they refer constantly to some of their favourite haunts. The ruling passion, the last, a favourite theme with modern philosophers and novelists, is here finely illustrated.

And he ever losing the (life) blood
From the wound of the spike in his sole.

28.

FIUN.

“Poor is the counsel that grew with me
To slay the son of my sister;
For Graine that ill of a woman
That never again will make my joy.

29.

That is great the loss on the hillock,
For the price of the wild swine,
Graine king’s daughter of Coig Ullain,
Djeearmaid and the two hare hounds.

30.

“Djeearmaid, deceiver of women,
Son of king Guyne of the brilliant hue,
No maiden will raise her eye
Since the mould has gone over thy visage fair.”

31.

Yellow without white in thy hair!
Long thy cheek! thine eyelash slow!
Blue without rashness in thine eye!
Passion ([146]) and beauty behind thy curls!

26

“Gur truagh m’ aghaidh ri Beinn Ghulbann
‘S mi ar tuil-bhruchdadh mo nearta!
‘S gad a’s mise mac O Duibhne.
Soraidh leis an t-suiridh am feasda!”

27

Gu robh Diarmaid, air an tulaich,
Bu ghrinn am falt a’s bu trom;
‘S e ri sior chall na fala,
Le lot a bhior, air a bhonn.

[146] CAISE, passion (Armstrong).

32

“‘S ann an raoir bu ghorm an tulach;
‘S dearg an diugh e le fuil Dhiarmaid!
‘S gur h-ann leis an Fhinn bu duilich,
Mar a bhithe Fionn ‘ga iarraidh!”

33

OISEAN.

“Air an oidhche nochd gad tha mi truagh,
Bha mi uair nach robh mi faoin;
Gun easbhuidh dhaoin’ arm na fleadh;
Faic gach ni mu seach ‘san t-saogh’l!”

28

FIONN.

“‘S bochd a’ chomhairl’ a chinn agam,
Mac mo pheathar a mharbhadh
Airson Ghraidhn’, an t-olcas mnatha,
‘S nach dean i rithis mo leanmhuinn.

29

“‘S mor sin a tha dh’ easbhuidh na tulaich!
Air tàillibh na muice fladhain,
Graidhne, nighean righ Choig’ Ullainn,
An da ghearr chuilean, agus Diarmaid.[147]

30

“Diarmaid, fear mhealladh nam ban,--
Mac righ Dhuibhn’ a bu ghlan snuadh!
Suireadh cha tog a suil[148]
O chaidh uir air do ghnuis ghlain.”

31

“Buidhe gun ghil’ an n a’d’ fhalt!
Fada do leac! mall do rasg!
Guirme gun bhrais’ ann a’d’ shuil!
Caise ‘s maise ‘n cul nan cleachd!

32.

“Oh yesternight it was green the hillock,
Red is it this day with Yeearmaid’s blood;
And with the Een it had been wretched
Unless it had been ordered by Fiun.”

33.

OISEAN.

[147] “A dealbh-chuilean.” This is the expression given by Janet Currie, who says it refers to the unborn child; Graidhne, according to her being with child to the Ciuthach. Boyd has da dhearbh chuilean. Macdonald gives the words inserted, who says they refer to the two best dogs of the Feen, after Bran, which were killed by the boar.

[148] Suireadh, a maid. “Suireadh cha tog a suil,” no maid will raise her eye; that is with grief. The line is repeated no doubt in a corrupt manner, thus--
“Suireach cha tog a shuil” no lover will raise his eye, which would make no sense.
Leac, cheek. Rasg, eyelash, also the eye itself.
“Guirme gun ghlaise,” and “guirme le ghlaise.” Janet Currie gives the line inserted, which is prettier, and at the same time a contrast to the piercing blue eye ascribed by Tacitus to the ancient Germans. Bulwer, in one of his novels, describes the French dark eye as milder and softer than the Italian.
Cleachd, a ringlet.
Cùis a’s mais’ air chul nan gleachd. Boyd.
The poem is not the complete version of one reciter, but is built up and selected from several long versions, written from the dictation of the people named. If the evil spirit of the Ossianic controversy still cumbers the earth, the papers can be produced, and the authorities are alive. I will answer for the honest intention of the collector and the translator, and I can do no more.

“On this night’s night though I be wretched,
There was once a time that I was not weak;
Not lacking men, nor arms, nor feasting,
See each thing changes in the world!”

LXXIV. The Lay Of Diarmaid, No.4

One more version carries the legend to the extreme northern and eastern Gaelic frontier. It varies somewhat from the others, but the main incidents are the same. The story is called THE BOAR OF BEN LAIGHAL, and is thus told:--

There lived once upon a: time a king in Sutherland, whose land was ravaged by a boar of great size and ferocity. This boar had a den or cave in Ben Laighal (Pr Loyal), full of the bones of men and cattle.

It came to pass that the king swore a great oath, saying he would give his only daughter to the man who should rid the country of this monster. Then came Fingal, Ossian, Oscar, and I know not who besides, and tried in vain to kill the boar, whose bristles were a foot long, his tusks great and white, and whose eyes glowed like beltain fires. But when Diarmid saw the king's daughter, whose robes were white, and beheld her blue eyes, and her long yellow hair, as she stood in the gateway, he said to himself, "that come what would he would win her." So he went out ere it was yet dawn, and when be came to the boar's lair he saw the monster lying, as large and black as a boat when its keel is turned up on the shore; drawing a shot from his bow he killed it on the spot. All the king's men turned out and pulled the carcase home with shouts to the palace; and the king's daughter stood in the gate, beautiful as the May morn. But the king's heart was evil when he saw that the boar was dead. He went back from his word secretly, saying to Diarmid that he should not have his daughter till he had measured (by paces) the body of his fallen foe, once from the head to the tail, and once again backward from the tail to the snout. That would Diarmaid gladly do, and the wedding should be the morrow's morning. He paced the beast from tip to tail without harm or hindrance, but on measuring it backwards the long poisonous bristles pierced his foot, and in the night Diarmid sickened and died. His grave and the den of the boar may be seen in Ben "Loyal" to this day.

This seems a different and a sadder legend than the one which gives the Campbells their boar's head crest; nearly as tragical as the fate of Adonis; but it is common in the west of this county to call the Campbells MacDiarmid.--C. D., Sutherland.

It may be interesting to shew this legend of "Diarmaid," as the word is spelt now-a-days, in another shape.

The following is taken from a MS. which came from Cawdor Castle, and is now in my possession; it is called,

GENEALOGY ABRIDGEMENT OF THE VERY ANTIENT AND NOBLE FAMILY OF ARGYLL, 1779."

The writer explains that--

In the following account we have had regard to the genealogical tree done by Niel MacEwen, as be received the same from Eachern MacEwen, his ffather, as he had the same from Art^{r}. MacEwen, his grandfather, and their ancestors and predecessors, senachies and pensioners to great ffamilys, who, for many ages were employed to make up and keep such Records in their accustomed way of Irish Rhymes; and the account left by Mr. Alex^{r}. Colvin, who had access to the papers of the ffamily, and Pedro Mexva, a Spaniard, who wrote the origin of diverse and sundry nations, in his book entitled the Treasury of Antiquities."

The first statement is as follows:--

"The Campbells were of old, in the Irish language, called Clan Odinbbn or Oduimhn (bh and mh being pronounced as the Roman v), *id est*, the sons, children, or posteritye of Duimhn, knights of the MacDuimhns; particularly from Diarmid MacDuimhn, who makes such a figure in the Irish history, that from him they are sometimes called Siol Dirmed, *i.e.*, Diarmid's seed, or Sliochd Diarmid, *i.e.*, Diarmod's offspring."

In the next paragraph it is said--

"Yet to this day (1779), in the Irish language or Gaelic, they (the Campbells) are called both by the name of Campbell and O'Duimhn."

I may add that at this day, 1861, the name of Campbell is very rarely used in speaking Gaelic. A man is called *Kaim-bel-ach*, a Campbelite, or the Campbelltonian, but individually, he is Iain Ruagh, Russet John; if he has the common burnt Sienna beard, Iain fada; long John, if he be tall; Iain na Airde bige, John of the little hill, if his farm be so called; or John MacAllister, if his father's name be Alexander. In short, surnames are not yet in full use within the Highland bounds.

In the next paragraph the rhymes of the "Senachies" of the Argyll family are again called "Irish," and thus it appears that in the mind of this writer Irish and Gaelic meant one and the same language in 1779, as I hold that they are in fact now. The story goes on thus:--

"Although the common and ordinary method of reckoning the genealogy of the sirname of Campbell or Clan O'Duimhn is to begin at Arthur of the round table, king of the Britons, as a person very great and famous in history, yet we shall begin it some ages before him, by shewing the occasion of his accession to the crown of the Britons, as Boethius and Buchanan have it in their History of Scotland."

And accordingly the writer begins with Constantine, grandfather to King Arthur.

The half mythical heroes of Welsh and Breton tales, and of mediæval romances; and personages who still figure in Irish and Scotch Gaelic popular tales, as something more than mere mortals:--Arthur and Diarmaid, primeval Celtic worthies, whose very existence the historian ignores, are thus brought together by a family genealogist, and most of these west-country genealogies agree with him in claiming a descent from King Arthur for "Mac Callen Mor."

The fact proves nothing, and is of little interest in itself, but when brought to bear upon Celtic mythology it acquires an interest, for it shews that peasants' stories are sufficiently old to have found their way into family history in Scotland, as well as into what is called the Fenian literature of Ireland. The Irish theory crowds whole centuries of adventure into the lifetime of a single generation of one family, of which Fionn was the head, and which was exterminated, as it is said, about A.D. 277 or 294, at the battle of Gabhra in Ireland. The Scotch genealogist boldly asserts that

"It is plain that the family can trace their predecessors from father to son for upwards of 1360 years."

and produces Diarmaid as one of a Scotch family all alive in 913. He goes on to shew how King Arthur brought Ireland under tribute, and received it at Cathair Ler-eon, now West Chester.

The next worthy is

"Smoroie Mor, or as others have it, Sir Moroie Mor, 'a son of King Arthur,' of whom great and strange things are told in the Irish traditions. He was born at Dumbarton Castle, on the south side of the fort, in the place called the Red Hall, or in Irish, Tour na-hella dheirg, *i.e.*,

the Tour of the Red Hall. He was called to his by-name, The fool of the Forest; he was a wild and undaunted person, and married a sister of King Andar's, the forty-ninth king of the Scots, and was contemporary with Columbus pius; called in the Gaelic Colmkill, or Calum na-kill, because, when he retired from company they were always sure to find him in his cell at prayer."

Now there are a great many poems and stories still extant in Gaelic, some printed, others still as traditions, in which a "great fool" plays the chief part. I would refer to No. xxxv., vol. ii., and to the "Lay of the Great Fool" in this volume. A long version of the last has been printed already.

There is besides an Arthurian tradition in England of a buried army and a sleeping king, and a wizard who appears occasionally about Alderley edge, not far from Chester, and this has a counterpart in a story got from Islay, which localizes the very same legend in another shape at Dumbarton; and that tradition of warriors sleeping a magic sleep in a cave is known in Barra and in the Isle of Man, in Spain, and over nearly the whole of Europe; and here again tradition and genealogy point to a common origin for Celtic tribes, and to a north-western route, and to a common mythology; for to the best of my knowledge this legend is unknown beyond the Celts in the north. Having brought King Arthur to Dumbarton, the genealogist takes to dates (which I give as I found them), and goes on with a list of worthies, most of whom are unknown to fame.

"VI. Ferither-our, *i.e.*, Dun Ferither, A.D. 620.

"VII. Duimhn-Mor, who married a daughter of Duke Murdoch of Moravize, or Murray, or Elgin."

and gave a name to the family, which has been variously explained.

"Odinbhin" and Mac-Oduimhn might suggest a Scandinavian descent, and some old sea-rover for an ancestor, who called himself a son of Odin. It has been suggested that the warriors of Fionn were fair Norsemen. Some Campbells are proud of the "ginger-hackle" which commonly adorns their chins, and claim to be Northmen; but if the name be Gaelic, as I believe it to be, I am compelled to translate Diumhn-Mor, as the Great Brown. The Browns are a numerous and respectable clan, and there is no cause to be ashamed of the connection; for Brown is synonymous with Don, and there are Browns and Dons of high degree.

"VIII. Arthur Oig MacDuimhn, *i.e.*, Young Arthur, son of Brown, 684.

"IX. Ferither eile MacDuimhn. The other Ferither, son of Brown, 730.

"X. Duimhn falt derig MacDuimhn. Brown of the red hair son of Brown, 786, who married the grand-daughter of Connal Gulban, one of the sons of Neal na Nidgheallach, king of Ireland, who was so called because he had nine chains, fetters, or prisons, for confining captives taken in the wars. This Neal was father to Longirius, who reigned when St. Patrick came to Ireland."

So here comes in another hero of Gaelic romance, Connal Gulban, of whom there are more stories told in Gaelic at the present day than of any other individual, Fionn always excepted. As St. Patrick here makes his appearance on the stage with Diarmaid and Connal Gulban, and as he brought Christianity, and mayhap civilization to Ireland, it seems reasonable to suppose that such an event would stimulate the bards; and that about the name of St. Patrick all the floating legends of the old Pagan history and mythology would group themselves, as they are in fact found to do, in the Irish dialogues between St. Patrick and Ossian. In these, the old blind poet tells the glories of his departed race, and argues with the saint in a very discontented and rebellious spirit, to say the least of it. Osin, whose tribe was exterminated

about 277, converses with St. Patrick, who was born about 372, flourished in 430, and, according to this genealogy, was contemporary with Longirius and Connal Gulban.

XI. Ferither finruo, *i.e.*, reddish white MacDuimhn, son of Brown.

"XII. Duimhn dherig, i.e., Brown the red, 860.

"XIII. Duimhn donn, i.e., Brown Brown, 904, was contemporary with Constantine, seventy-fifth king of the Scots."

"XIV. Diarmaid Mac Duimhn, 943."

And having arrived at this Dirmaid, to whom all popular traditions trace the Campbell clan, the writer breaks off into a digression on the origin of surnames. Of Dirmaid he says:--

"This Dirmaid MacDuimhn, from whom the Campbells were called Siol Diarmaid, *i.e.*, Diarmaid's seed, gained great reputation in Ireland, and in all their traditions there is honourable mention made of him for his conduct, valour, and loyalty. He was contemporary with Malcolm the first, seventy-sixth king of the Scots. He had to wife, Graine, niece to Cormac Vic Art Vic Chuin Cheud Chathach, and thus his son was great-grandchild to that famous Irish monarch, Conn Cheud Chathach, so called because he fought one hundred battles."

Diarmaid, say the Irish writers, was one of the Fenians, and they were exterminated A.D. 277; that is, 666 years before the date of the Dirmaid and Graine of the genealogy.

And then we are told how Dirmaid and Graine had two sons--

"Arthur Armderig, 977 (red arms), and Duimhn Dedgheal, Brown white tooth, who had to his son Gilcolm or Malcolm MacDuimhn, who, after he had married a daughter of the lords of Carrick, by whom he had three sons, of whom afterwards, and after her death, in the reign of Kenneth the Third, the eightieth king of the Scots, the said Malcolm MacDuimhn went to Normandy in France and married the heretrix of Beauchamp, *i.e.*, campus bellus, or pleasant field, sister's daughter to William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, afterwards King of England, of which lady he had three sons, who were called Campbells after the name of their lauds in Normandy."

Further on we are told how the representative of the French branch came over and married the heiress of a knight of Lochawe, Evah, and how the clan took the name of Campus bellus; and how, centuries later, French worthies were entertained at Inverary, and acknowledged themselves to be of the same race and descent as their entertainer. And other genealogical incidents are related in the same quaint style down to the writer's time, and to John Duke of Argyll.

"44. John Campbell, XXVIII. Campbell, XX. MacCallen Mor, V. Duke, 1768; who (amongst other deeds) caused remove the old burgh of Inverary, but has reared up a much prettyer and more fashionable burgh royal, about a furlong south of the palace, upon the Gallow failean point."

So here are Diarmaid and Graidhne, the hero and heroine of so many Gaelic myths, stories, poems, and proverbs, the Venus and Adonis of Gaelic mythology, brought into juxtaposition with King Arthur and his knights, honestly married and planted in Scotland, A.D. 943, as Mr. and Mrs. Brown; a family tree grafted on their stock, and the growth of the tree itself all set forth as true family history in 1789.

There probably were people who bore these names. There are hundreds of Dermotts, and Dermids, and Donns, and Dons, and Guns, Mae-Dermotts and MacDiarmaids, still to be

found in Ireland and in Scotland. There are Gwynnes in Wales, and there are many similar family names in France which have been booked into the family tree, which springs from Oduimhn; but it is surely time to give up the attempt to convert Celtic mythology into comparatively modern history, and to fix a time and place for the slaying of Diarmaid by the venomous boar of Beingulban.

In a learned note in the Transactions of the Ossianic Society (vol. v., p. 62, 1860), I find that the Celtic legends about magic boars which pervade Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, have already attracted the notice of Irish scholars, and that they are taking a wide view of their popular lore. The sacred swine of the ancient Celts are supposed to have given rise to this tradition. It is suggested that there was a "Porcine worship which was analogous to, if not identical with, the existing worship of the Hindoo deity Vishnoo, in his avatar as a boar." And that Diarmaid was a reformer who tried to abolish the worship of pigs, and died in the attempt.

To me it seems perfectly hopeless to attempt to explain a legend which is at least as old as the loves of Venus and Adonis, by referring it to any one time or place.

It is like making Hercules a doctor or a drainer, and the Hydra sulphuretted hydrogen embodied in an epidemic, and cured with steel.

Let this tale of Diarmaid rather be taken as one phase of a myth which pervades half the world, and which is still extant in the Highlands of Scotland, and in Ireland, amongst all classes of the Gaelic population. Let all that can be got concerning it be gathered from the most unsuspecting and the most unlearned witnesses; and when the traditions are compared with what is known to the learned, there is some chance of digging knowledge out of these old mines of fable. At all events, I have now shewn the same legend in a poem, a popular tale, a proverb, a family tradition, and a family history; I have shewn it in Ireland, Cantyre, Islay, Lorn, Skye, the Long Island, and Sutherland; and I believe it to be an ancient pagan myth, which belonged especially to a tribe of Celts who took possession of Argyll, and which has been transferred to the family of the chief of the most numerous clan, and perhaps to the real leader of the tribe, together with every thing else which a race of family historians thought likely to adorn their favourite topic.

There would seem to be two distinct forms of the myth; one the wildest and best known to the people, the other more rational and best known to the educated, classes.[149]

[149] Since this was written I have seen two versions of the Lay of Diarmaid, one of 1786, the other written about 1530. I refer to them elsewhere.

LXXV. Fables

I am told on good authority, that stories in which beasts play a chief part are perhaps the most interesting of all in a scientific point of view. I accordingly give a few here, which should belong to No. XVII. in Vol. I. They will serve as a contrast to the heroic traditions with which I had intended to fill this third volume. Their value consists in their close resemblance to well-known stories, found elsewhere amongst peasants, and published in modern times, and in their possessing traits of their own, which seem to indicate that they are parallel traditions derived from a common source; not stories derived from others, and following in their wake.

For example, the whole of the incidents in the story of the Fox and the Wolf are to be found in Grimm; but they are separated. Some of the incidents are also in the Norse tales; but the Gaelic tale fits Highland ways of life exactly, and the story is so widely spread in the Highlands, and can be traced so far back, that it seems almost impossible that the unlettered men who tell it to their children should have got it from modern books which they could neither read nor understand.

LXXVI. How The Fox Took A Turn Out Of The Goat

From Hector Boyd, Barra.

THERE was a gray goat and she had kids, and if she had, the fox went on a day around them, and he caught them, and he killed them, and he ate them. Then the goat came home, and she was black melancholy and miserable when she came and was without them before her. She took on her way and she reached the house of the russet dog, and she went up on the top of the house, and the fox cried out--

“Who is that on top of my bothy, maiden my deary,
That will not leave my caldrons to boil,
That will not leave my bonnachs to bake,
And that will not let my little one go to the well?”

GOAT.

“There is me gray goat, harried out,
Seeking the three kindly kidlings,
And the gray-bellied buck,
And the buck lad.”

FOX.

“Well then; by the earth that is beneath,
By the aether over head,
By the sun that is gone down,
That I have never seen thy set of kids.”

There was no bird in the flock that she did not go to and she returned home and she did not get them.

This story is known to that section of the poorer Gaelic population, which is, and which has been young; but though everybody knows it, nobody will tell it. I persuaded an old woman on the banks of Loch Hourn, to tell it to me in part, and so far as it went her version was better.

Chaidh a gbobhar ghlas don traigh
Agus, bhrisd strabh a cas.

The gray goat went to the strand, and a straw broke her leg, and when she came home there were

Na tri minneana mine-glas
Taraigna taraghlas
Driomana driomaghlas
Agus am boc ceannaglas.

The three kindly kidlings-gray,
With bellies gray bellied,
And with backs gray back-ed,
And the buck gray-head.

And the ram (something, which I forget); and a whole party besides, whom my informant would not name; all gone away. And she went to the fox, and his clearing oath was:--

Air an draigheann air an dreas
Air an talamh fo mo chois
Air a ghrian seachad siar
Cha ‘n fhaca, mise riamh
Do chuid meann.

By the blackthorn and the briar,
By the earth beneath my foot,
By the sun that has gone West,
I have never never seen
  Thy set of kids.

It is manifest that there is a great deal more of this, but I have not got it.[150]

[150] May 1861.--I have received a much better version from Mr. Alexander Carmichael, from Carbost in Skye. The fox, disguised as the goat, after several trials gets in, and eats the kids. The goat goes to the houses of the gull, hoodie, and sheep, and at last to the fox. He lets her in, eats up a caldron of food, gives her none, and makes her scratch his paunch. The goat rips him up, out come the kids, and they go home. The rhymes are curious and whole very original.

LXXVII. How The Cock Took A Turn Out Of The Fox, And No Creature Ever Took A Turn Out Of Him But That Cock

From Hector Boyd, Barra, Sept. 20, 1860.

THE russet dog came to a house, and he caught hold of a cock. He went away with the cock, and the people of the town-land went away after him.

“Are they not silly!” quoth the cock, “going after thee, and that they cannot catch thee at any rate.”

The cock was for that he should open his mouth that he might spring out.

When he saw that the cock was so willing to go along with himself, he was so pleased.

“Oh! musician, wilt thou not say--It is my own cock that is here, and they will turn back,” said the cock.

The fox said, “Shê-mo-haolach-hay-n-a-han;” and when the fox opened his mouth the cock sprung away.

I have already given a version of this in Vol. II.; the main difference is, that the cock here calls the fox a musician, as the fox in the old story called the crow, when he did him out of a cheese by the same stratagem. Ceolaire is used to express a silly fellow.

LXXVIII. The Hen

From Hector Boyd. Learnt this story from Donald M'Kinnon, Laidhinnis, Barra, who died twelve years ago at the age of sixty--Castle Bay, October 4, 1860.

THERE was a woman before now, and she bore a hen in rock by the shore, after she had been driven into banishment in some way or other.

The hen grew big, and she used to be going to the king's house every day to try if she could get something that she might give to her mother. The king came out on a day of these days, and he said to her,

"What, thou nasty little creature, art thou doing standing there upon my door?"

"Well, then, though I be little, and even nasty, I can do a thing that the fine big queen thou hast cannot do," said she.

"What canst thou do?" quoth the king.

"I can spring from spar to spar, with the tongs and the hook for hanging the pot trailing after me."

He went in and he told that to the queen. The hen was tried, and she did it; they tied the pot-hook and the tongs to her, and she sprang over three spars (rafters), and she came down on the ground.

Then they tied the pot-hook and the tongs to the queen, and she went and she took a spring out of herself, and she cut the edge of her two shanks, and she fell, and the brain went out of her.

He had four queens, and the hen put them all out with this work.

"It would be better for you to marry my mother," quoth the hen; "she is a very fine woman."

"Avoid me," said the king; "thou hast caused me loss enough already, thou nasty creature."

"Well, then, that is not what is best for thee, but to marry her," said the hen.

"Send down thy mother so that we may see her," said the king.

She went where her mother was, and she said to her, "The king is seeking you, mother; I was asking him to marry you."

She went up, and she herself and the king married.

Then there was a Sunday, and they were going to sermon, the king and the queen; and they left within but the hen and the son of the first wife. The hen went when they went away, and she went to a chamber, and she cast off her the husk that was upon her, and the lad went into the room, and he saw the husk that was upon her. He caught hold of it, and he put it into the hot middle of the fire. She came down and she had no tale of the "cochall."

She came where the lad was, and she had a naked sword, and she said to him,

"Get for me my husk, or else I will take the head off thee, against the throat."

The lad took much fear, and he could not say a word to her.

“Thou nasty creature,” said she, “it is much for me that thy death should be on my hands; I don’t know what I shall do now; if I get another cochall they will think that I am a witch, and I had better stay as I am.”

When the king came home he saw that fine woman within, going about the house, and he had no knowledge what had put her there, and the king must know what sort of a woman she was. She told every whit. She herself and the king’s son married, and a great wedding was made for them.

I suspect this is a fragment of some much longer tale. I know nothing like it in any other language.

LXXIX. The Keg Of Butter

From Hector Boyd, Barra, who learnt it from Neil M'Neill, Watersay; and from many other old men. Neil M'Neill died ten years ago, past eighty years of age.--Castle Bay, Sept. 20, 1860.

THE russet dog and the wild dog, the fox and the wolf, were going together; and they went round about the sea shore, and they found a keg of butter, and they buried it.

On the morrow the fox went out, and when he returned in he said that a man had come to ask him to a baptism. The fox went and he arrayed himself in excellent attire, and he went away, and where should he go but to the butter keg; and when he came home the wolf asked him what name was on the child; and he said that there was FOVEEAL (*under its mouth*).

On the morrow he said that a man had sent to ask him to a baptism, and he reached the keg and he took out about half. The wolf asked when he came home what name was on the child.

"Well," said he, "there is a queer name that I myself would not give to my man child, if I had him., there is MOOLAY MOOLAY (*about half and half*).

On the morrow he said that there was a man there came to ask him to a baptism again; and he went and he reached the keg, and he ate it all up. When he came home the wolf asked him what name was on the child, and he said that there was BOOILL EEMLICH (*tack-ling, licking, or licking all up*).

On the morrow he went and he said to the wolf that they ought to bring the keg home. They went, and, when they reached the keg--there was not a shadow of the butter in it.

"Well! thou wert not without coming to watch this, though I was without coming here," quoth the fox.

The other one swore that he had not come near it.

"Thou needst not be blessing that thou didst not come here--I know that thou didst come, and that it was thou that took it out; but I will know it from thee when thou goest home, if it was thou that ate the butter," said the fox.

He went, and when he went home he hung the wolf by his hind legs, with his head dangling below him, and he had a dab of the butter and he put it under his mouth, and if it was true, it was out of the wolf's belly that it came.

"Thou red thief!" said he, "I said before that it was thou ate the butter."

They slept that night as they were, and on the morrow when they rose the fox said,

"Well, then, it is silly for ourselves to be going to death in this way with great excess of sloth; we will reach such and such a town-land, and we will take a piece of land in it."

They reached the town-land, and the man to whom it belonged gave them a piece of land the worth of seven Saxon pounds.

It was oats that they set that year, and they reaped it, and they began to divide it.

"Well, then," said the fox, "whether wouldst thou rather have the root or the tip? thou shalt have thy two choices."

"I'd rather the root," said the wolf.

Then the fox had fine oaten bread all the year, and the other one bad fodder.

On the next year they set a crop; and it was tata root (potatoes) that they set, and the potatoes grew well.

“Which wouldst thou like best, the root or the crop this year?” said the fox.

“Indeed, thou shalt not take the twist out of me any more; I will have the crop (top) this year,” quoth the wolf.

“Good enough, my hero,” said the fox.

Then the wolf had the potato tops again, and the fox the potatoes. Then the wolf used to keep stealing the potatoes from the fox.

“Thou hadst best go yonder, and read that name that I have in the hoofs of the gray mare,” quoth the fox.

Away went the wolf, and he began to read the name; and on a time of these times the white mare drew her leg, and she cast the head off the wolf.

“Oh!” said the fox, “it is long since I heard it. I would rather be a clerk than be reading a book.”

He went home, and the wolf was not putting trouble upon him any more.

I heard this story often myself in boyhood. There is some portion of dialogue that I remember, not in this version. When the fox speaks to the wolf about the christening, the conversation goes on in this manner

Madadh Ruadh. Och! heun! thall.

Madadh Alluidh. Dé tha thu ‘faicinn ann.

Madadh Ruadh. Tha iad gam iarraidh gu goisdeachd.

Madadh Alluidh. Och, och, ann d’ theid thu ann.

Madadh Ruadh. Och, och, theid.

Fox. Och! hein! yonder.

Wolf. What seest thou there?

Fox. They are asking me to sponsorship.

Wolf. Och! och! wilt thou go there?

Fox. Och! Och! I will.

H. MACLEAN.

See Norse Tales, p. 472, where the creatures are fox and bear.

The Boor and the Fiend, Grimm, No. 189. The notes in vol. iii., Grimm, shew that this is widely spread. See also No. 2, Grimm, vol. iii., where the creatures in company, in various versions, are cat and mouse, cock and hen, cock and fox.

See also stories on Proverbs, 1854, London.

“Send not the cat for lard.” The actors are a kitten and a rat; the scene, a belfry and a garret.

LXXX. The Fox And The Little Bonnach

From Hector Boyd, who learnt it from one John Campbell, who died three years ago, at the age of thirty-Sept. 20, 1860.

THE fox was once going over a loch, and there met him a little bonnach, and the fox asked him where he was going. The little bonnach told him he was going to such a place.

“And whence camest thou?” said the fox.

“I came from GEEOGAN, and I came from COOAIGEAN, and I came from the slab of the bonnach stone, and I came from the eye of the quern, and I will come from thee if I may,” quoth the little bonnach.

“Well, I myself will take thee over on my back,” said the fox.

“Thou’lt eat me, thou’lt eat me,” quoth the little bonnach.

“Come then on the tip of my tail,” said the fox.

“Oh! I will not; thou wilt eat me,” said the little bonnach.

“Come into my ear,” said the fox.

“I will not go; thou wilt eat me,” said the little bonnach.

“Come into my mouth,” said the fox.

“Thou wilt eat me that time at all events,” said the little bonnach.

“Oh, I will not eat thee,” said the fox. “At the time when I am swimming I cannot eat anything at all.”

He went into his mouth.

“Oh! ho!” said the fox, “I may do my own pleasure to thee now. It is long since it was heard that a hard morsel is good in the mouth of the stomach.”

The fox ate the little bonnach. Then he went to the house of a gentleman, and he went to a loch, and he caught hold of a duck that was in it, and he ate that.

He went up to a hill side, and he began to stroke his sides on the hill.

“Oh king! how finely the bullet would spank upon my belly just now.”

Who was listening but a hunter.

“It will be tried upon thee directly,” said the hunter.

“Bad luck to the place that is here,” quoth the fox, “in which a creature dares not say a word in fun that is not taken in earnest.”

The hunter put a bullet in his gun, and he fired at him and killed him.

See Chambers’ Popular Rhymes of Scotland, 1858, 231.

See also Wolf’s stories, where a wolf prays to Odin that an axe may fall on his head, and a man throws one.

Gaelic omitted

The following two stories, LXVII. and LXVIII., were got in Islay from an old man, whose name has not been sent to me. They were written by Mr. Carmichael, an enthusiastic Highlander, and a good Gaelic scholar, who was stationed in Islay in July 1860, and is now, 1861, at Carbost in Skye.

The main incidents of these stories are quoted in the introduction, as known in the Isle of Man.

The Feinn (Fane) are here found in the spot where the Lay of Diarmaid left them, stationed near the old “Pictish towers,” opposite to the Isle of Skye, and they next appear in Islay, where the forging of Fionn’s sword, “the Son of Luinne,” is a well-known legend. The incidents are told in the Isle of Man of a baron, and the scene is partly Drontheim. Fionn’s patronymic, by a change from the common spelling which hardly changes the sound, here becomes MacDugald, or the son of Black and White; another slight change would make it MacDonald. And thus the most numerous clans of the West Highlands, the MacDonalds, MacDugalds, and Campbells, seem all to have something to do with MacCumhal and his men, who may have been Irish warriors, or Celtic gods, nevertheless; for nearly all these West country traditions point back to Eirinn; and the deeds of the Feinn are not always those of mortal men.

There is a curious poem of twenty-six verses about the smithy “Ceardach MhicLuin,” in Gillie’s Collection, 1787, p. 233. Several of the phrases in the story are in the poem, and the incidents are much the same. I have often heard that a number of poems were collected in Islay by a minister, and published, and verses about the forging of Fionn’s sword are still repeated there. Probably the poem is the one of which I have heard.

LXXXI. Caol Reidhinn. Why The Name Was Given To It

From Mr. Alex. Carmichael, (excise officer), Islay.

ON a certain time, when the Feinn had come home from the chase to the house of Farabhuil, at the foot of Farabhein in Ardnamurchan, they were much astonished to find their wives so lusty, fair, and comely; for the chase was very scarce at the time with the Feinn.

The Feinn determined that they would know what their wives were getting to make them thus; and when they went away again to the chase, they left Conan, one of themselves, at the house, so that he might find this out.

Conan kept a watch, and the meat that they had was the hazel top boiled, and they were drinking the bree. It is said besides that they used to wash themselves with this.

The women understood that it was to watch them that Conan had been left at the house, and they were in a great fury.

In the night when Conan laid down to sleep, they tied his hair to two stakes which they drove into the earth on either side of his head. Then the women went out to the front of the house, and they struck their palms with a great lament, till they awoke Conan.

Conan sprang on foot with great haste, but he left part of his hair and of the hide of his head fast to the stakes.

When Conan got the women within, he set fire to heather and faggots in front of the house, so that he might kill the women with the smoke.

The Feinn were at this time opposite to the house of Farabheil on the other side of Caol Readhin (Kyle Ray), and when they saw the fire and the smoke rising up, they cried out loudly, striking their left hands on the front of their faces, with their eyes on the sky.

Then they ran to succour their set of wives, but the strait was between them; but with their blades they leaped the strait, (all) but one Mac an Reaidhinn (Ramsay). Mac an Reaidhinn fell in the strait and he was drowned; and since then to this day's day, (the name of) Reaidhinn's Strait has stuck to the narrows.

Valour so swiftly for wives of the Feinn,
And each one sprang on the point of his spear;
And they left Mac an Reaidhinn in the strait.

By good fortune the women all came through it but one or two of them, for the Feinn made mighty running to succour them. The Feinn were in great fury against Conan for what be had done, and they seized him to put him to death. Conan asked as a favour that the head should be taken off him with MAC AN LUINNE that would not leave a shred behind, the sword of Fionn MacDhuil (MacDuguld), and that his own son Garbh should smite him on the thigh of Fionn.

With earnest entreaty I would; ask it
And my soul's privation to seek it;
The son of Luinne to reap my soul
Upon the thigh of the sense of the Feinn.

This was allowed him, but first seven gray hides and seven faggots of firewood, and seven "*tiruin*" of gray bark were laid about the thigh of Fionn.

Then the head of Conan was laid on that, and GARBH, his son, struck the head off him with MAC AN LUINNE--

And folds in the palm were not more plenteous
Than severed thews in the thigh of Fionn.

Then GARBH asked them where were the Feinn, for he had gone mad; and they said to him that they were below beneath him. Then he went down till he reached the sea, and he slashed at it till he drowned himself.

LXXXII

ON a day when Fionn and his set of men were out hunting in Haslainn, in Gortean Taoit in Ile, they saw coming to meet them an unhandsome man, with a shaggy eye in the front of his face.[151] He was running with might, and making right for Fionn MacDhuil. When he met them he asked them to follow him to the door of the smithy. Said Fionn, “Where, stripling, is thy smithy? or shall we be the better for seeing it?”

“My smithy,” said the Fairy Smith, “is not to be found; and if it may, ye shall not see it.”

The Fairy Smith and Daor Ghlas stretched out against the mountain breast; and they would but give the one step over each cold desert glen; there could but scarce be seen a glimpse of their clothes on their hips.

On nearing the door of the smithy the heroes neared each other.

“A little opening,” said the Fairy Smith.

“Tear it before thee,” said Daor Ghlas.

Then turned round the Fairy Smith and he said,

“Oh king! that thou hast earned the name oh Caoilte (slenderness), Daorghlas shall not be thy name from this time.”

It was then that they began at MAC AN LUINNE, and when they were at it the daughter of the Fairy Smith came in to the smithy, and she asked,

“Who is the slender grey fearless man?”

“A shineadh a’ pinah cruach?”

The maiden fell into weighty questions with Daor Ghlas, and she gave him notice that her father would say to him when the sword was ready, “What did it want new?” and that he should say, “It wants one little thing yet;” then that he should seize the sword and thrust it through her father’s body to temper it.

Gaelic omitted

[151] He is one-legged in the poem, and his name Lun MacLiobhain, and he has seven hands.

LXXXIII. Thomas Of The Thumb

From Catherine Macfarlane in 1809. John Dewar.

THERE was one before now whose name was Tómas na h òrdaig, and he was no bigger than the thumb of a stalwart man. Tómas went once to take a walk, and there came a coarse shower of hailstones, and Tómas went in under a dock leaf; and there came a great drove of cattle past, and there was a great brindled bull amongst them, and he was eating about the docken, and he ate Tómas of the Thumb. His mother and his father missed him, and they went to seek him. They were going past the brindled bull, and quoth Tómas na h òrdaig,

“Ye are there a seeking me,
Through smooth places, and moss places;
And here am I a lonely one,
Within the brindled bull.”

Then they killed the brindled bull, and they sought Tómas na h òrdaig amongst the paunches and entrails of the bull, but they threw away the great gut in which he was.

There came a carlin the way, and she took the great gut, and as she was going along she went over a bog.

Tómas said something to her, and the old wife threw away the great gut from her in a fright.

There came a fox the way, and he took with him the gut, and Tómas shouted

“Bies taileù! the fox. Bis taileù! the fox.”

Then the dogs ran after the fox, and they caught him, and they ate him and though they ate the gut they did not touch Tómas na h òrdaig.

Tómas went home, where his mother and his father were, and he it was indeed that had the queer story for them.

This varies from the book adventures of our old friend Tom Thumb, who is now supposed to have been the dwarf of King Arthur. The story comes from Glenfalloch, which is not far from Dumbarton, which was, according to family tradition, the birth-place of King Arthur’s son. It was told to Dewar by a girl who took charge of him when a child, and it is known to one other man whom I know. I used to hear the adventures of “Comhaoise Ordaig” (Thumb’s co-temporary), from my piper nurse myself, but I was so young at the time that I have forgotten all but the name.

The cry of “bis taileu” may still be heard in the mouths of herd laddies addressing their collies, and it maybe the same as “tally-ho!” for which a French derivation has been sought and found--”tallis hors.” I would rather imagine King Arthur, and his knights, and his dwarf, shouting an old Celtic hunting cry, and red-coated sportsmen keeping it up till now, than trace it to Norman-French; but in any case, here is something like tally-ho in the mouth of Tom Thumb, and in a glen where tally-ho has never been heard.

Gaelic omitted

LXXXIV. The Bulls

The following is a very good gloss upon the language of bulls. The imitation can be made very close by any one who will repeat the Gaelic conversation of the champions, with the intention of imitating the sound of their angry bellowings. These go by the name of "Boor-eech" in Gaelic, and oo, ee, and r, express the prevailing sounds. I have tried to spell these sounds, but I have small hopes of conveying an idea of them by letters.

Whether this is a story founded on some old battle between tribes, which fought near the "Stone of the Bulls," or if so, who these may have been, I will not attempt to guess.

There are bulls and bulls' heads in the armorial bearings of several of the Highland clans; and the nickname of "John Bull" must have had some origin. There is a bull sculptured on an old stone near Inverness, which is figured in "The Sculptured Stones of Scotland," from which work the drawing above is copied. The story is certainly the invention of some one familiar with bulls, whatever it means.

From John Dewar, November 17, 1860.

THERE came before now a red bull from Sasunn (England), to put Albainn to shame. He stood on the shoulder of Bein Voorluig, and he bellowed,

"StrooAh n dooaich! StrooAh n dooaich! The country is pitiable!"

There was a black Gaelic bull on the other side of Loch Loimein (Loch Lomond), opposite the top of Dun Polachròdh (Castlepool Castle), and he bellowed,

"KeeA AS A HA oo? KeeA AS A HA oo? Whence, art thou?"

Quoth the red bull, "A tjeer do nAvaid. A tjeer do nAvaid. From thy foe's land."

Said the black bull, "Cud ê hêchd an tjeer? Cud ê hêchd an tjeer? What is thy land's produce?"

"KruinAchd s Feen. KruinAchd s Feen. Wheat and wine," said the red bull.

"Hoorin oo n coir do hooil. Hoorin oo n coir do hooil. I'd drive thee backwards," said the black bull.

"KAtche n do roogatoo? KAtche n do roogatoo? Where wert thou born?" said the red bull.

"An craw an dooin. An craw an dooin. In the castle fold," said the black bull.

"Cud boo veeA gooit on VA oo d laogh? Cud boo veeA gooit on VA oo d laogh? What was thy food since thou wert a calf!" said the red bull.

"BAine s bAr fraoich. BAine s bAr fraoich. Milk and heather tops," said the black bull.

"An aorAchd chrom shaw am bêl do chlêv. An aorAchd chrom shaw am bêl do chlêv. This crooked horn in the front of thy chest," said the red bull.

"Hoogad mee! hAn êgal do. Hoogad mee! hAn êgal do. Shun me! no fear of me," said the black bull.

And the black bull went round about the upper end of Loch Lomond, and the two bulls met each other on the upper shoulder of beinn Voorluig, and they set heads to each other, and they struggled.

The black bull drove the red bull backwards as far as a great stone that was there, and they rolled the stone over, and the stone rolled down to a level place that is at the side of the road, about five miles on the upper side of the Lomond Tarbet, and three miles on the lower side of the upper end of the Loch of Lomond.

The black bull put his crooked born into the front of the chest of the red bull, and he killed him; and “clach nan tarv,” the stone of the bulls, is the name that is on that stone till this day’s day, and that is the greatest stone that is in the three realms.

Gaelic omitted

LXXXV. The Hoodie Catechising The Young One

THE hoodie fell to at catechising the gorrachan, and she said to him,--

“If thou seest one coming, and a slender stick in his oxter, and a broad end to it, flee--that will be a gun; he will be going to kill thee. If thou seest one coming, and lifting a pebble, it is lifting it to kill thee that he will be--flee. If thou seest one coming fair straight forward, and without anything in his oxter, and with out stooping, thou needst not stir, that one will not touch thee.”

“What,” said the croaker, “if the stone be in his pouch?”

“Oh!” said the Hoodie, “I need not be instructing thee any longer.”

Gaelic omitted

LXXXVI. The Hoodie And The Fox

THE hoodie and the fox were good at early rising, and they laid a wager with each other, for which should soonest get up in the morning. The hoodie went into a tree top, and she slept; and the fox staid at the foot of the tree, looking aloft (to see) when the day would come. As soon as he perceived the day he cried,

“Sê-n-lAbAn-ê.” It is bright day.

The hoodie had never stirred all the night, and then she awoke with the cry, and she answered, “SAd-o-bê-ê, SAd-o-bê-ê.” It’s long since it was. Then the fox lost the wager and the hoodie won.

Gaelic omitted

LXXXVII. The Yellow Muilearteach

1--BARD.

On a day when the Fhinn were on Oirill's mound,
A watching the Eireann all around,
There was seen coming on the tops of the wave,
The crooked, clamouring, shivering brave.

2

The name of that undaunted wraith
Was the bald russet-yellow Muilearteach
From Lochlann's bounds, coming on brine,
All in a day to cover Eirinn.

A MHUILEARTACH BHUIDHE.[152]

1

Latha dh' an Fhinn, air Tulach Oirill, [1]
A' coimhead na h-Eireann mu timchill
Chunnacas a' tighinn, air barraibh thonn,
An eàrra, ghàireach, chraobhaidh, chrom. [2]

2

'Se b' ainm dh' an fuath nach bu thim
A' Mhuileartach mhaol, ruadh-bhuidhe,
O chriochan Lochlann 'tighinn air sàil
Gu h-Eirinn a chomhdach a dh' aon là.

3

A rusted glaive was upon her belt,
Will give them a grim darkling pelt;
When the time of the fury of battle shall come.
. . . . . .

4

There were two slender spears of battle,
Upon the other side of the carlin;
Her face was blue-black of the lustre of coal,
And her bone tufted tooth was like rusted bone.

5

In her head was one deep pool-like eye,
Swifter than a star in a winter sky;
Upon her head gnarled brushwood,
Like the clawed old wood of the aspen root.

6

[152] In Gillies, this character is a man, and called "A Mhuireart-each"; perhaps muir iarteach,--sea western.

Her heart was merry for joy,
As she saw in the south the Fiantaidh
“Will ye not teach the wretch to her ruin,
Let not her’s be a good gift without return.”

7

And a hundred warriors she sportively slew,
And there was a grim on her rugged maw;
A warrior exalted each warrior of these,
And that were raised up on slender trees.

8

A pouring of their blood amongst the hounds,
And the juice of the fruit of Oireal was threatened;
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

3

Bha claidheamh meirgeach air a crios
Bheir dhaibh caisgeadh dùige, doite [3]
An am an d’ thigeadh gairbhe catha,

4

Bha da shleagha chaola chatha
Air an taobh eile dh’ an chaillich.
Bha ‘h-aodann dubh-ghorm air dreach a’ ghuail,
‘S a deud cnábadach, cnàmh-ruadh. [4]

5

Bha aon suil ghlumach [5] ’na ceann
Bu luaithe na rionnag gheamhraidh
[6] Craobh mhìneach chas air a ceann
Mar [7] choill ìnich de ‘n t-seana chrithinn.

6

Bha ‘cridhe ‘mire ri h-àdh,
‘Si ‘g amhare nam Fianntaidh fo dheas,
“Nach deachd [8] sibh a’ bheist thun a h-aimhleis.
‘S gu ‘n tharladh leatha gean gun chomain;”

7

‘S gu ‘n mharbh i le ‘h-abhachd ceud laoch;
‘S gu ‘n robh càir [9] air a garbh chraos.
Laoch inbheach gach laoch a bh’ ann,
‘S a thogadh air chaola chrann.

8

Air sgath fala, ‘measg nan con,
‘S bha brigh mhios Oirill ‘ga maoidheadh.
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

9--WITCH.

Who are the warriors better than they?
Out spoke the yellow Muilearteach;
“Terror or fear there is not upon me,
Before the king since I happened upon ye.”

10--BARD.

To Fionn Prince of the Finne there came,
The ill-favoured goblin right valiant;
By her there were slaughtered nine in the plain,
As she sought for detestable combat.

11--WITCH.

Now since I have come over the brine,
For the taking of all Eirinn
Let yielding be given me without pain,
Or else a whole battle of hardy men.”

12--BARD AND FIONN.

Mac Chumhail would give that without displeasure,
Ten hundred hounds, upon leashes of leather;
“Take the bribe, and besides (behold),
Ten hundred ruddy apples of gold.”

13--WITCH.

Although I should get all the value of Eirinn,
With her gold and her silver and her precious things;
I would rather have on board of my vessel,
The heads of Osgar, and Raonaidh, and Coiril.”

14-BARD AND CONAN.

Spoke a hero that brooked no slur,
Son of great Morna, by name Conan;
“Thou shalt loose the bush of thy round head,
Because thou hast asked for the son of Oisein.”

9

“Cia iad na laoich a ‘s fhearr na sin?”
Labhair a’ Mhuileartach bhuidhe.
“Fiamh na eagal cha ‘n ‘eil orm
Roimh ‘n righ, o’n tharladh mi thugaibh.”[153]

10

Gu Fionn, flath na Finne, thainig
Am fuath dìth-mhaiseach, [10] deagh-dhana.
Mharbhadh leatha naonar ‘s a’ mbagh,
‘S i ‘g iarraidh fuath’chadh na comhraig.

[153] Another version is,--O’n ti a tharladh mi thugaibh.

11

“Nis o’n thainig mi air sàil
Gu h-Eirinn uile do ghabhail,
Thugta geill gun doruinn domh,
Airneo comhrag cròdha churaidhean.”

12

Bheireadh MacChumhail siud di gun diombadh,
Deich ceud cu air choimh lion éille,
“Gabh an cumha, is e ‘choir,”
“Deich ceud ubhlan dearg oir.”

13

“Buaidh na h-Eirionn gad gheibhinn uile,
Le ‘h-or, ‘s le ‘h-airgiod, ‘s le ‘h-ionmhas,
B’ fhearr leam, air bord air mo luing,
Ceann Osgair, a’s Raonaidh, a’s Choiril.”

14

Labhair laoch nach d’ fhulaing tair,
Mac mor Morna d’ am b’ ainm Conan,
“Caillidh tu dos do chinn chruinn
Ann an dàil Mhic Oisein iarraidh.”

15--BARD.

When they saw the wrath of the monster,
Up rose Fionn the Prince of the Finne;
Up rose Oisean, Prince of the men,
Up rose Osgar, and Iollainn.

16

Up rose Diarmaid o’ Duibhne;
Up rose they, and Iall o’ Buidhne;
Three sons of the dusky black king Dhuinne;
Up rose they, and Cearbhal.

17

Up rose Glaisean o’ Damhach
Up rose they, and Ard Ambarc
Up rose Ciar Dhubh, Prince of Lomhann,
The doughtiest four that were in the Fhinn.

18

Went to do battle with the beast.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

19

She was serving them out in turn,
As a blade might run through flame;

Until there met MacChumail the grand,
And the Muilearteach hand to hand.

20

Their equal was never yet seen,
Since the smithy of Lonn MacLiobhainn;[154]
There was dew on the point of the spears,
Of MacChumhail of the sides so fair.

15

Nuair chunnaic iad colg na beiste;
Gu ‘n d’ eirich Fionn, flath na Finne;
Dh’ eirich Oisean, flath nam fear;
Gu ‘n d’ eirich Osgar a’s Iollainn.

16

Gu ‘n d’ eirich Diarmaid O Duibhne;
Gu ‘n d’ eirich sin a’s Iall O Buidhne;
Triuir mac an righ chiar-dhubh Dhùinne;
Gu ‘n d’ eirich sin agus Cearbhall.

17

Dh’ eirich Glaisean O Damhach;
Dh’ eirich sin agus Ard-amhare;
Dh’ eirich Ciar-dhubh, mac righ Lomhann,
A cheathrar a b’ fhoghaintiche ‘bha ‘san Fhìnn.

18

Chaidh a chomhrhg ris a’ bheist.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

19

Bha i ‘gam frithealadh mu seach
Mar a ruitheadh lann roimh lasair,
Gus an do thachair Mac Chumhail an aidh
‘S a’ Mhuileartach lamh ri lamh.

20

An aicheadh cha ‘n fhacas mar sin
O cheardach Lonn Mhic an Liobhann,
Bha dealt air bharraibh a shleagh
Aig Mac Chumhail an taoibh ghil.

21

Her side was pierced with sharp wound,
There was rain of her blood on the heather

[154] See No. LXVIII.

The Muilearteach was slain by the king,
And if she was slain, it was no smooth slaying.

22--SMITH.

The smith took with him her bree[155]
To Tur Leoin of the high king.
“My sorrow!” said the smith of the axes,
“If bald russet Muilearteach is slain.”

23--KING.

The king said, “the people never stood,
That on the bald russet could bring blood;
Unless in a land of holes fell she,
Or was drowned upon the smooth bare sea.”

24

“There never yet have come of any,
Those who the yellow Muilearteach could slay;
They did not slay her, but the Fhinn,
A band from whom tribute is not won.”

25

“Great is the shame to the blossom of Phail,
To give under to the people of a single isle
To the travelling, and to the west,
Travel we, and travel we in haste.”

26

“That I would give my vow again,
If my mild Muilearteach has been slain;
That I with my people should never return,
Till Eirinn to a heap of ashes should burn.

21

Bha ‘taobh air a tholladh le guin
Bha braon dh’ a fuil air na fraochaibh.
Mharbhadh a’ Mhuileartach leis an righ
Ma mharbhadh cha b’ e ‘m marbhadh min.

22

Thug an gobha leis a’ brigh
Gu tùr Leoin, an t-ard righ.
“Mo bheud,” arsa gobha nan tuadh,
“Ma mharbhadh a’ Mhuileartach mhaol ruadh.”

23

Thuirt an righ, “nach d’ f has a shluagh
Na ‘bheireadh fuil air a’ mhaoil ruaidh.

[155] It seems that she was the wife of a superhuman Celtic sea smith, who goes by the name of Bulcan sometimes.

Mar an deach i ‘n talamh toll,
Na ‘bathadh air muir sleamhuinn, lom.”

24

Cha d’ thainig de dhaoine ‘sam bith
Na ‘mharbhadh a’ Mhuileartach bhuidhe.
Cha do mharbh i ach an Fhinn,
Buidheann bhar nach buinigear cis.”

25

“‘S mor an nair do Bhlaith Phàil
Géill a thoirt do luchd aon eilean.
Air an triallam, ‘s air an iar;
Triallam, agus triallam mor.”

26

“Gu ‘n d’ thugainn-sa mo bhòid a ris,
Ma Mharbhadh mo Mhuileartach mhìn,
A choidhch nach tillinn le m’ shluagh
Gus am biodh Eirinn ‘na torr luatha.

27

“In Eirinn let me not leave a stone,
In burn, or in moor, or in- mountain lone;
Unlifted upon the beaks of my fleet,
Eirinn level of such great weight.”

28

I will bring my plungers upon the brine
To bring out of her sea bent all Eirinn.”

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

29--BARD.

Great is the brag for the white ships
The whole of Eirinn to uplift,
And that there are not white ships in being
That could uplift one fifth of Eirinn.

30--KING.

“Gather to me my worthy race,
King of the Spaniards and his force,
The king of Greece and of Gallia clean,
King of Hispania and of the Inds.”

31--BARD.

Gather of the whole world the clan,
The children of a king and of a single man,
Goblin or champion shall not get clear
From the beautiful Fhinn of the yellow hair.

32

Seven score ships, and one thousand
Gathered the king, what a heavy band
For the taking of all Eirinn,
Could it be brought to Fionn, prince of the Finne.

27

“An Eirinn na fagam clach,
An allt, na ‘m monadh, na ‘m fireach,
Gun thogail air chorraibh mo long;
Eirinn chothromach, cho trom.

28

“Bheiream breabanaich air sàil
Toirt Eirinn uil’ as a tan.”

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

29

‘S mor an spleadh do luingeas bàn
Eirinn uile do thogfail;
‘S gun de luingeas bàn sam bith
Na thogadh, a dh’ Eirinn, coigeamh.

30

RIGH.

“Tionail thugam mo theaghlach còir,
Righ na h-Easpanaidh ‘s a shlogh,
Righ Greige, ‘s righ Gallia glan,
Righ na h-Easpainn a’s na h-Inid.”

31

FILIDH.

Tionail sluagh an t-saoghail uile,
De chlann righ, ‘s de dh’ aon duine;
Fuath na eàrrachd cha d’ thig as
O’n Fhinn aluinn fhalt-bhuidhe.”

32

Seachd fichead a’s mile long
Thionail an righ, ‘s gu ‘m b’ fheachd trom,
Gu gabhail Eirinn air fad
Gu Fionn, flath na Finna na ‘n tárt ‘e.

33

There was not a port nor a half port within
The five-fifths of the Eireann
That of beaked barks was not full,
And of the barges of their lords all.

34

Though it was evil to be waiting for them,
‘Twas no better for them that to us they came.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

35

A messenger came from Blaith Phail,
To find for him the Muilearteach,
Or else the bold youth of all Eirinn,
The children of a single man or of a king.

That MacChumhail would give to the
King of Lochlann, and without a grudge.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

36

Ten hundred helmets and fine mail,
Ten hundred shields and sheathed glaives,
Ten hundred collars of gold upon hounds,
Ten hundred slender stingers of battle.

37

Ten hundred fine coloured flags,
Ten hundred wise warriors whom he might choose
Ten hundred bridles of gold and saddles.

. . . . . .

33

Cha robh port na leith-phort ann,
An coig choigeamh na h-Eireann,
Nach robh lan de bharcaibh bheannach,
Agus bhirlinnibh o thighearnan.

34

Ge b’ ole dhuinn a bhith air an cionn,
Cha ‘n ann daibh-san a b’ fhearr teachd thugainn.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

35

Thainig teachdair o, Bhlaith Phàil
A Mhuileartach fhaotainn da,
Airneo borbraidh Eirinn uile
Eadar clann righ ‘s aon duine.

Bheireadh MacChumhail siud do righ Lochlann
‘S gun diomadh;--

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

36

Deich ceud clogad a’s caol luireach,
Deich ceud sgiath a’s claidheamh comhdaicht,
Deich ceud lomhainn òir air chonaibh,
Deich ceud sallta chaola chatha,

37

Deich ceud bratach mhìne, dhaite,
Deich ceud saoidh, na ‘m b’ aille leis,
Deich ceud strian òir agus diollaid.
. . . . . .

38.

Though he got all that, the king of Lochlann
And the bold youth of the whole of Eirionn,
For ever with his people he would not be still
Till Eirinn should become a ruddy hill.

39--LOCHLANNERS.

Then spoke an answerable true wise bard,
The lad that could answer with a knowing word;
And he spoke timidly and like a sneer
Unto the king that was too early.

40--BARD.

“Though you, like the whole of the Fhinn,
In the front of battle and combat
You must come as lions, weighty and gray,
Or else you will work out your own decay.

41

“It were better to get us on a single place
Than from billow to billow to be on our trace.”
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

42--KING.

“Thy counsel is lying, thou musical bard,”
Out spoke the king, wrathfully, hatingly,
“Because a third part of what is there (seen)
Thou hast never beheld in Eirinn.”

43--FEENE.

[156] Then spoke Garaidh of the glens: ([157])
If you will take my counsel, Fhinn,
Let submission be given on the sea,
That for ever under his sway you may be.”

[156] Here the action changes from one camp to an other.
[157] This warrior is said to have given the name to Glengarry. There are legends about him still current in that neighbourhood.

38

Ged a gheibheadh righ Lochlann siud,
Agus borbraidh na h- Eirionn uile,
Choidhch' cha stadadh e le 'shluagh
Gus am biodh Eirinn 'na torr ruadh.

39

Thuirt filidh fhreagarrach, fior-ghlic,
An gille fhreagradh gu h-eolach--
'S labhair e gu fromhaidh, fàdh,
Ris an righ, gu 'n robh ro thrath.

40--FILIDH.

"Ge math leibhs' an Fhinn uile
An tus cath agus comhraig;
Thig sibh 'n 'ur Leomhana trom, ghlas,
Airneo ni sibh uil' 'ur n-aimhleas.

41

B' fhearr 'ur faighinn air aona bhall,
Na 'bhith 'g ur sireadh o thuinn gu tuinn."

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

42--RIGH.

'S breugach do bheachd fhilidh bhinn,
Thuirt an righ gu fuathach, feargach;
"Agus trian na 'bheil an sin
Nach fhaca tu riamh an Eirinn."

43

An sin labhair Garaidh nan Gleann,
"Ma ghabhas sibh, comhairl, Fhinn,
Rachadh geill a thoirt air sail,
'S gu 'm biodh sibh gu bràth fo iona."

44--BARD.

Up rose Iollain with a hero's tread,
And each one followed him side by side,
To give a leathering to Garaidh from the wild,
Who the service of man could not abide.

45--FIONN.

"Stay thou, Iollain, as thou mayest be,"
Said MacChumhail, the prince so high,
"Though evil the counsel of the man,
Stalwart his hand when the strife began."

46--OSGAR.

Said Osgar, as he felt the pain,
"Whatever ship is of loftiest sail,

Shall swim in blood beneath her keel,
If there be enough within her hull.”

47--BARD.

Then raised they, and they were not scarce,
Their slender pennons on their slender shafts
The standard of MacChumhail of Victories,
“Sun’s brightness,” above the trees.

48.

There were nine chains from it downward fell
Of the yellow gold, of no lustre dull,
A hero at every chain of these,
That was holding them against the stays.

49.

In the camp there was many a thousand of men,
Many a one with blades and spears so keen,
Many a trunkless head was there,
Many a neck there was swept bare.

From the first of the sun till the same evening.

44

Dh’ eirich Iollainn, ‘s bu cheum laoich,
‘S gach ti lean e taobh ri taobh,
Thoirt leadairt air Garaidh o ‘n fhasach,
‘S cha b’ aill leis duine ‘ga fhasdadh.

45--FIONN.

“Stad ort Iollainn mar a ta thu;”
Arsa Mac Chumhail an ard fhlatha,
“Ge b’ olc impidh an fhir,
“Bu teom’ a lamh anns an iorguill.”

46--OSGAR.

Thuirt Osgar, ‘s e ‘gabhail loon,
“Ge b’ e long a ‘s airde seol,
Snamhaidh i ‘m fuil fo’ a driom,
Ma tha na h-urad ‘na colainn.”

47--FILIDH.

Thog iad an siud, ‘s cha bu ghann,
An caol shrolt, air an caol chroinn;--
Bratach Mhic Chumhail an aidh,
Gile-ghreine, as cionn chrannaibh.

48

Bha naoidh slabhraidhean aisde sios
De ‘n òr bhuidhe gun dall-sgiamh;
Laoch air gach slabhraidh dhiu sin
A bha ‘gan cumail ris na slàithean.

49

Bu lionar ‘s a’ chrò mìle fear;
Bu lionar fear gheur lann ‘s sleagh ann;
Bu lionar ceann ann gun chom iona;
Bu lionar muineal ann air maoladh,

O thus greine gu con-fheasgar.

50

Those heroes the greatest of the tribe
That came to us with an army (of pride),
To them the camp was the narrowest
Ere their rough vapouring was dispersed.

51

In the thick of the people Osgar slew
One hundred spearmen for the first time,
Another hundred of the people by three,
Seeking a way to their Ard Righ.

52

Another hundred of the hosts of men
On the further side of the King of Lochlann,
Until he slew, in the thick of the host,
The king for all his great honour’s boast.

53

When they saw that the king had fallen,
Their courage failed them, and in great swiftness,
They went all in ranks to the sea;
And the battle poet was driving them.

54

Amongst the warriors in turn,
It was the Osgar that was urging them.
After he had given the war
Came succour to the hero of bright arms.

55

For through the spear-holes there might go
The sickles ([158]) through the back of Osgar.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

50

‘An laoch sin bu mhò dhe ‘n t-sliochd
A thainig thugainn le ‘mhor fheachd

[158] Herons is the more evident meaning, but corr means any crooked instrument. The line occurs elsewhere.

‘Sann daibhsan bu chuing’ an crò
Ma’n do sgaoileadh an garth sgleo.

51

Mharbh Osgar, an tiugh an t-sluaigh,
Ceud fear sleagha mar cheud uair,
Ceud eil’ as a’ phobull a tri,
Ag iarraidh thun an ard righ.

52

Ceud eile de shluagh nam fear
An taobh thall de righ Lochlann,
Gus an do mharbh e, ‘n tiugh an t-sluaigh,
An righ air mheud onarach.

53

Nuair chunnaic iad gun d’ thuit an righ
Threig am meanmna iad ‘s am mor luathas:
Chaidh iad ‘nan sreathan gu sàil,
‘S a’ chliar chatha ‘gan iomain.

54

Eadar na saoidhean mu seach
‘S e’n t-Osgar a bha ‘gan iomain;
An deis a bhith tabhairt a’ bhlair,
‘S ann thainig cobhair gu laoch arm-ghil.

55

Oir rachadh, roimh thollaibh nan sleagh,
Na corran roimh dhriom Osgair.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

56

Whatever that day might hap to be
On the battle steep side of Beinn-Eudainn,
Such like great peril was not there found
From the first of the Finne till one day

On the day when the Fhinn were on Oirill’s Mound.

Wrote down this poem from the recitation of Angus MacDonald, Staoine-breac, South Uist, September 1860, and again from that of Allan MacPhie, tailor. MacDonald gives the same authority for it as for the “Great Fool,” and MacPhie says he learnt it from one Donald MacIntyre, who has gone to America, and if living is now about 80 years of age. In Barra, I heard it from Alexander MacDonald, Burgh; and from Donald MacPhie, smith, Brubhaig, who learnt it from an uncle of his, Hector MacLaine, also a smith. Some versions have lines which are wanting in others, and in some lines there are a few slight variations. I have inserted those lines and words which I thought best when differences occurred.

H. M’L.

56

Ge b’ e bhitheadh an latha sin
Air taobh uchd-catha Bheinn Eudainn;
A leithid de bhaoghal cha d’ fhuaras ann,
O thùs na Finne gus an aon latha,

‘S latha dha ‘n Fhinn air tulach Oirill.

point to a division into quatrains. I am indebted to ‘the collector for a literal translation, which has been of the greatest assistance; but I have here and there followed Armstrong’s Dictionary, which contains many rare words, avowedly taken from the Ossianic poems. If there be errors in the translation, I hope they may be overlooked.

MacDonald, who sang this and two other poems to me in Barra, September 10, 1860, did it with only one mistake. He forgot something near the beginning, and stopped short, and uttering several expressions of strong disgust at his own forgetfulness, he turned back to the first line and began again, and got over the difficulty with a rush that reminded me of a man taking a running leap over a stiff hedge. With that one mistake he recited a whole poem; and so far as I can judge, from hearing such crabbed Gaelic once, it was the same poem which is here given, but we made out that there were fourscore verses in it, whereas there are but fifty-five incomplete in MacLean’s manuscript.

I observed that, two or three times, in reciting this and other poems, MacDonald repeated a couple of lines to fill up the time and complete a quatrain.

The poem was attributed to Oisean, and whoever composed it, clearly did so in the character of that old half mythical bard, for he speaks like an eye-witness, and dwells on the prowess of *his* son Osgar. I am not sufficiently acquainted with early Norwegian and Irish history, to be able to guess at the event which is celebrated, or at a date, but I suspect the poem was composed in remembrance of some real invasion of Ireland by the sea rovers of Lochlann, in which they got the worst of the fight, and that it has been preserved traditionally in the Hebrides ever since. Could it be Brian’s famous battle, A.D. 1014. MacLean has named his authorities; one of them, MacDonald, is referred to above. He is a workman who cannot read, and who speaks no language but Gaelic. He is a fine intelligent man, with a clear gray eye and smooth dark hair, very fond of the old poetry of his native country, and charmed to recite it to an audience able to take an interest in it. The audience was a numerous one on the 10th of September, and we were highly attentive. One woman was industriously weaving in a corner, another was carding wool, and a girl was spinning dexterously with a distaff made of a rough forked birch-branch, and a spindle which was little better than a splinter of fir. In the warm nook behind the fire sat a girl with one of those strange foreign faces which are occasionally to be seen in the Western Isles, and which are often supposed by their neighbours to mark the descendants of the Spanish crews of the wrecked armada--a face which, at the time, reminded me of the Nineveh sculptures, and of faces seen in St. Sebastian. Her hair was as black as night, and her clear dark eyes glittered through the peat smoke. Her complexion was dark, and her features so unlike those who sat about her, that I asked if she were a native of the island, and learned that she was a Highland girl. Old men and young lads, newly returned from the eastern fishing, sat about on benches fixed to the wall, and smoked and listened; and MacDonald sat on a low stool in the midst, and chanted forth his lays amidst suitable remarks and ejaculations of praise and sympathy. One of the poems was the Lay of Diarmaid, much the same as it appears here; as I had got it from MacLean, who had written it from the dictation of another man elsewhere. “Och! och!--aw! is not that sad?” said the women when Diarmaid was expiring, One of the audience was a stranger from the south, a Campbell, who had come to Barra from some other place, and who, as usual, hailed me as a kinsman, claimed Diarmaid as our common ancestor, and MacCalain Mor as the head

of his family. His hair was yellow, though tinged with white; and amongst the short, dark natives of Barra, be looked large, and gaunt, and bony. He gave me his prose version of the escape and pursuit of Diarmaid and Graidhne, and brought the fugitives from Ireland to the Isle of Skye. The main incidents were similar to those already given, but in detail they differed entirely, as all versions which I have, do from each other. The house where our meeting was held was one of those which are only to be found in the far west, and this may serve to give a notion of the people, who still preserve and delight in this old Gaelic poetic lore.

May 11, 1861.--Since this was printed, I have found a version of “Duan a Mhuirearteach” in a collection of Gaelic poetry, made by Hugh Gillies, and printed in 1786 at Perth. I am indebted to the Rev. Mr. MacLauchlan for a loan of the book, which is rare, and which I had sought in vain at the British Museum and elsewhere. There are 112 lines arranged in stanzas in the published version; 213 in the traditional version here given.

The story, and some lines of the poetry, also appear in the proceedings of the antiquaries of Scotland (vol. iii., part ii. 1861), these are taken from a MS. collection made in Lewis. It appears that the heroine was wife of a superhuman Celtic sea smith, who is a kind of Neptune, and who had been maltreated by the Feen.

Another version of the poem was written from the dictation of a man at Gairloch ten years ago; and another has lately been written by Mr. Torrie in Benbecula, from the recitation of an old beggar wife.

LXXXVIII. The Story Of The Lay Of The Great Fool

Written by Rector MacLean, September 13, 1860. Recited by Angus MacDonald, (constable) at Stoney Bridge, South Uist, who styles himself Aonghas, Mac Iain, Mhic Aonghais, Mhic Dhomhnuill, Mhic Thormaid, Mhic Iain, Mhic Neill, Mhic Chalain, Mhic Eoghain, Mhic Aonghais oig, Mhic Aonghais Mhoir, Mhic Sheann Aonghais, a Ile ‘s tha iad ag radh nach robh e cli. That is to say, Angus, the son of John, and up to the thirteenth ancestor, “Old Angus from Islay; and they say he was not weak.” MacDonald says he learnt this poem fifty-eight years ago from Aonghas, Raothaill bhàin, Mhic Iain, Mhic Dhomhnuill, Domhnullaich, Mhic Ghilleaspaig, Mhic Iain, Mhic Uisdean, Mhic Aonghais, Mhic Raothaill, H. Earaich (that is to say, Angus of white Ronald, the son of John, and up to the tenth ancestor), who lived in North Uist, at Baile Ràthaill, and who died more than fifty years ago, about seventy years of age.

He could neither read nor write, and he learnt this and other stories from his mother, who died about seventy years ago, at the age of one hundred years.

He (MacDonald) says that the song--

A Nighean bluidh bhàin nam falbhadh tu leom,
Gun ceannachain gunn de ‘n t-sioda dhuit.

Thou fair yellow girl, if thou’dst go with me,
That I’d buy a gown of the silk for thee.

was composed by her.

The poem is, as usual, preceded by a short prose story, which is as follows:--

THERE were two brothers once in Eirinn, and one of them was a king and the other a “ridire.” They were both married. On the knight there was a track (that is, the knight had children), and there were no children at all to the king. It was a source of insult to the knight and his lot of sons, that the king should have the realm at all. The thing that happened was, that they gathered armies, both of them, on each side. On the day of the battle that they gave, the knight and his three sons were slain.

The wife of the knight was heavy, and the king sent word that if she were to have a babe son to slay him, but that if it were a baby daughter to keep her alive, and keep her. It was a lad that she had, and there was a kitchen wench within who had a love son. Braomall was her name, and Domhnull was the name of her son.

When the son of the knight was born, this one fled with the two, the knight’s son and her own son. They were being fed at the cost of the knight’s wife. She was there on a day, and for fear they should be hungry, she went to a town land to seek food for them. They were hungry, and she was not coming, and they saw three deer coming towards the bothy. The knight’s son was where the other was, and he asked what creatures were there. He told him there were creatures on which there was meat and clothing.

“If we were the better for it I would catch them,” said be.

He ran and he caught the three deer, and they were before his “muime” when she came. She flayed them, and they ate, and she made a dress for him of the deer’s hides.[159] Thus they were in a good way till the deer failed, and hunger came upon them again, and she went again to the town land. There came a great horse that belonged to the king--a wild horse--to the place where they were. He asked of Donald what beast was that.

“That is a beast on which sport is done, one is upon him riding him.”

“If we were the better for him I would catch him,” said he.

“Thou ill-conditioned tatterdemalion! to catch that beast! It would discomfit any man in the realm to catch him.” He did not bear any more chatter, but he came round about, and he struck his fist on Donald, and he drove his brains out. He put an oaken skewer through his ear, and he hung him up against the door of the bothy. “Be there thou fifty beyond the worst,” said he.

Then he stretched out after the horse, and the hides were trailing behind him. He caught the horse, and he mounted him; and the horse that had never borne to see a man, he betook himself to the stable for fear. His father’s brother had got a son by another wife. When he saw the palace he went up with wonder to look at the palace of his father’s brother.

His muime never had called him anything but “the great fool” and “Creud orm.” When he perceived the son of his father’s brother playing shinty, he went where he was, and, “Creud orm,” said he.

“Who art thou,” said the king’s son--”of the gentles or ungentles of the realm, that has the like of that speech?”

“I am the great fool, the son of the knight’s wife, the nursling of the nurse, and the foster-brother of Donald the nurse’s son, going to do folly for myself, and if need were, it is I that could make a fool of thee also.”

“Thou ill-conditioned tatterdemalion! make a fool of me?” said the king’s son.

He put over the fist and he drove the brain out of him. “Be there, then, thou fifty over worse, as is Donald the nurse’s son, with an oaken skewer through his ear.”

He went in where the king was. “Creud orm,” said he.

“Who art thou,” said the king--”of the gentles or ungentles of the realm, that hast such a speech?”

“I am the great fool, the son of the knight’s wife, the nursling of the nurse, and the foster-brother of the nurse’s son, going to make folly for myself, and if need were, it is I that could make a fool of thee also.”

“Well, then, it is not thou that made me that, but my counsellor, on the day that I slew thy father, and did not slay thy mother.”

Then the king went with him. Every one, then, that he fell in with in the town, they were going with him, and that was their blessing, “Creud orm.”

There was a splendid woman in the realm, and there was a great “Fachnach,” that had taken her away. The people thought, if they could bring him to the presence of this woman, that be would set his head upon her, and that he would let the people away; that it was likely they

[159] I have several versions of a long very wild story called the Lad of the Skinny husks.”

would come between himself and the Fachach, and that the Fachach would kill him. That time he was an utter fool.

[Of the poem, MacLean remarks:--"Some of the phraseology and pronunciation is such as is considered Irish; for example, the particle ni for cha, dho for dhà, cos for cas; but these forms of expression were common in the Highlands; add to which, a cultivated dialect was probably common to both countries. The versification is exceedingly harmonious and varied. In some lines the number of syllables is shorter, to give room for the emphasis and slow utterances required by the sense. In reciting the poem, the pronunciation of the reciter was peculiar, and differed widely from that of his conversational dialect.

"It appears that this Lyric was considered by the Gael their best, for it is said, 'Gach dàn gu dàn an Deirg;' 'Gach laoidh gu laoidh an amadain mhoir;' 'Gach eachdraidh gu eachdraidh Chonnail.' *Each poem to the poem of the Red; each lay to the lay of the great fool; each history to the history of Connal* (*is to be referred as a standard*). In Dr. Smith's 'Sean Dàna,' there is a "Laoidh an amadaiu mhoir" quoted, entirely different from this one."--H. MacL.

The lay is in "Sean Dàna" as part of Cath Mhanuis. Another long poem was published under the name of "Laoidh an Amadain Mhoir," which I have failed to get at the British Museum. The language of the version here given is difficult, and it differs in construction and in sound from the spoken modern Gaelic of the district. There seems every reason to consider it as a fragment. It seems to describe a single adventure only, and there must have been a prelude and a sequel to it.

Perhaps Gillmhin (Fairfine) was the lady whom the Fachach had taken away, and who made an entire fool of the mighty simpleton.

There is something allegorical in the adventure. There is a mystic valley in which the hero is tempted, and yields to a cup of pleasure, but when he perseveres, his punishment is lightened, and he gets to the golden city. There he yields to sloth, but when he holds to his promise, and resists temptation, and fights manfully, he is delivered from all his woes. If this view be correct, this may be part of the same tradition which is interwoven with the romances of Arthur and his knights, which were certainly founded on Celtic traditions, and which pervade all Europe.

The story of Peronnik L'Idiot, in the "Foyer Breton," is of the same class. The hero is an orphan, and a simpleton, and proves himself a hero with sharp wits. He takes service as a herd at a farm, and there sees knights going to Kerglas to seek the golden basin, and the diamond lance. The one is filled with any food which the owner desires, cures diseases, and raises the dead; the other crushes all that it touches, and shines like a flame; both belong to a giant magician who lives at Kerglas. Now Kerglas might be Cathair Glas, the gray or mystic city. The golden basin, though it has more virtues, has the same properties as the Gaelic "Ballan iochshlaint" (vessel of balsam), and the shining lance is own brother to "Claidheamh geal Soluis," the white glaive of light.

Kerglas was surrounded by an enchanted forest, in which rivulets seemed to be torrents, and shadowy rocks and vain shows terrified the wanderer. Beyond that, a dwarf korrigan guarded an apple tree, which was the same which grew in Eden; further on, a lion with vipers for a mane, guarded a magic flower, which dissolved enchantments--still further, a shoal of dragons watched the lake in which they swam; and lastly, a terrible black man, with many eyes, guarded a fearful valley. He was chained to a rock, and armed with a iron bullet, which returned to him when he had thrown it, and he at least is a common character in Gaelic tales (see page 15). When all these dangers were passed, temptation assailed the adventurer in the shape of delicious food, pleasant drinks, and fair women, and if he yielded he fell.

All these dangers Peronnik the Breton idiot overcomes by wily stratagems. The Gaelic Amadan Mor overcomes temptations also, but he conquers by valour and dogged perseverance, rather than by wiles.

Peronnik, the half-starved idiot, catches a colt of thirteen months, rides through the wood, and at last, by the help of a yellow lady, who turns out to be the plague, kills the magician, and acquires the magic basin and lance. He appears on the side of the Bretons in a war with the French at Nantes, kills his foes with the lance, brings his friends to life when killed, and feeds them when alive with the magic basin; and finally, he goes to Palestine, where he destroys armies, forces the Emperor of the Saracens to be baptized, and marries his daughter, "by whom he had one hundred children."

By some accounts he still lives with all his family. The great fool does not go to Palestine, but Connal Guilbeinach does, and he there acquires a magic shining sword, and a talisman, which brings the dead to life. I am inclined to rank "the Great fool" with "Peronnik the idiot," to place the golden city on the same magic hill of the imagination as Kerglas, and to consider the "lay" as one episode in the adventures of a Celtic hero, who in the twelfth century became Perceval le chercheur du basin. He, too, was poor, and the son of a widow, and half-starved, and kept in ignorance by his mother, but nevertheless he got a horse and venison, and acquired knowledge from King Arthur's knights, and joined them; and in the end he became possessed of that sacred basin le Saint Graal, and the holy lance, which, though Christian in the story, are manifestly the same as the Gaelic talismans which appear so often in Gaelic tales, and which have relations in all popular lore,--the glittering weapon which destroys, and the sacred medicinal cup which cures.

May 18, 1861.--The fourteen verses numbered with an (*) are inserted from a version written down for Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, in 1850, at Gairloch, chiefly from the recitation of John MacPherson, then eighty-eight years old, and thus headed" How the might (neart) of the Great Fool got the victory over the Glamour (druigheachd) of Mananan (mhananaid), and how he took his legs back again from him by his might." I am indebted to Mr. Nicholson of Edinburgh, who had the MSS.

The twelve verses numbered with (†) are not in the Gairloch version. The remaining thirty-seven verses are common to both. No two verses, hardly two lines are identical; but the variations are slight, and the phonetic value of the words is preserved in almost every instance. This seems a strong argument for the traditional preservation of these poems.

2 and 3, which are not in my version, and 4, which is not in the other, together lead me to suspect either that this was composed to imitate an older poem, and to teach a moral lesson; or that some one has tried to give an old poem a moral turn. The language of 2 and 3 is Biblical; 4 is magical, and so is the bulk of the poem; and the rhythm of 3 and 4 is different from the rest. The bearing of this on Welsh tradition is referred to elsewhere.

LXXXIX. The Lay Of The Great Fool

1--BARD.

TALE of wonder that was heard without lie,
Of the idiot to whom hosts yield,
A haughty son who yields not to arms,
Whose name was the mighty fool.

2*

The might of the world he had seized
In his hands, and it was no rude deed.
It was not the strength of his blade or his shield,
But that the mightiest was in his grasp.

On his falling on a hidden glen,
Wherein he never before had staid,
Of loveliest strath and grass and plain
And sound of the waves ‘gainst each bright stone. (See 5.)

ELK.--From a stone in the churchyard of Meigle.--*Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, Pl. lxxii. *See note* (2).

Air tachairt a’n gleann diomhair dhò
Anns nach robh e fos roimh riamh,
A b’ ailte srath a’s fear a’s fonn,
Fuain nan tonn ri slios gach leug. (Gairloch 4.)

3*

Lasting long ere we had come,
Many a chief is beneath his sway;
Another little tale I’d tell,
But it there discerned, and it is strange.

4†

A day when the mighty fool
Was in Lochlan’s bounds in a magic cloud,
Himself and one beauteous dame,
As a woman he beauty sufficed.

5

Meeting in a vast shore-glen,
As a rose ever growing through it,
Floods, and strife, and grass, and sound,
Roar of waves on shore of sea.

6--GILVEEN.

“There was seen,” said Gilveen young,
“A gruagach of the yellowest cloak in the way,

A new coloured vessel in his grasp,[160]
Like to a cup in which was drink."

7†--FOOL.

It was then that the great hero spoke,
"Is it an empty flower I see?
It is, when greatest is my thirst,
That it's coming were best for health."

8--GILVEEN.

"An earnest entreaty I make to thee,
Drink not his draught, take not his food,
Till thou knowest what is the glen
Wherein thou wert, never before."

3*

A leantuin fad air dhuine teachd
'S iomadh ceud a tha fu 'smachd;
Sgeul beag eile dh' innsean ann
Tuigear thall 's gu bheil e ait.

4†

Latha do'n Amadan mhor,
An criochan Lochlann fo cheo draodh,--
E fhein agus aona mhaca mna;
Bu leoir a h-ailleachd mar mhnai.

5

Tachairt an gleann diomhair, ròdh,
Mar ròs fas roimhe riamh,
Sionan, streubh, a's feur, a's fonn,
Stoirm nan tonn ri stios na léi.

6

"Chunnacas," arsa Gilmhin og,
"Gruagach 'san ròd a's buidh brot,
Soitheach ur, daite 'na dorn[161]
Coltach ri corn am biodh deoch.

7†

Sin 'n uair labhair Macabh mor,
"An e ròs fòs ([162]) tha mi a reir?
'San uair a's motha mo thart,
'S gu'm b' fhearr a theachd gu beatha."

8

[160] Of flaming gold.
[161] A dh'or laiste.
[162] Fàs, empty. Ròs, a flower--probably the cap is called a flower.

“Achanaich a dh’ iarram’s art,
Na ol a dheoch ‘s na gabh a bhiadh,
Gu fiosraich gu dé ‘n gleann
Nach robh thu ann roimhe riamh.”

9†--GRUAGACH.

After that had been spoken to him,
Out spoke the Gruagach of the Cup,
“Be not downcast stalwart youth,
Be merry and quaff thy draught.”

10--BARD.

In the like commune with him
Out spoke he, and it was no wise speech.
He gave a haughty clashing dart,
And there was no drop in the cup but he drank.

11

Away went the Gruagach of the Cup
Unlucky was the cup to drink,
The two legs down from the knee
Were wanting to the mighty fool.

12--GILVEEN.

Then it was young Gilveen spoke,
“Great is this woe has befallen thee,
Scarce are thy friends in the great world
Unliked by them is thy want of feet.[163]

13--FOOL.

“Hist! now thou Gilveen young,
Cease thy woe and be thou still,
No leg shall be under one in the land,
Or I myself will get my two feet.”

14†--BARD.

There they wended the pair,
The woman and the hero of heaviest tread,
Swifter was he on his two knees
Than six at their swiftness of foot.

9†

An deigh sin fhoclachadh dhò
Gu ‘n do bheannaich gruagach a’ chuirn,
“Na bi dubhach oglaich mhoir
Bi subhuch a’s ol do dheoch.”

10

[163] They’ll not weep thy want of feet.

Air a' chomain chiadhna dhó,
Labhair esan 's cha b' e 'ghloir ghlic;
Thug e sitheadh bruaisgneach borb,
'S cha robh braon 's a' chorn nach d' ibh.

11

Gu. 'n d' imich gruagach a' chuirn,
Neo-bhuadhach a' chuirn ri ol;
An da chois, fo'n ghluin-shios,
Bha 'dhith an Amadain mhoir.

12

'Sin 'n uair labhair Gilmhin og,
"'S mor am bron seo thainig ort,
'S tearc do charaid 'san domhan mhor,
'S ni neo-oil leo thu 'bhith gun chois."[164]

13

"Uist a nis a Ghilmhin og,
Sguir ad' bhron, a's bi nad' thosd;
Cha bhi cas fo fhear as tir
Neo gheibh mi fhin mo dha chois."

14†

Dh' imich iad an siud 'nan dis,
A bhean 'san laoch bu truime trosd;
Bu luaithe esan air a dha ghluin
Na seisear air luathas an cos.

15

They heard the hunt in the glen,
The voice of the hound and music sweet,
Rapidly chasing the elk ([165])
On the moorland that suited best.

16

On the moorland that suited best
Was seen the deer from the mountains wild,
The red cared and very white hound
Keenly baying upon his track.

17

Swiftly he gave a dart,
That sudden cast with his keen blade,
There was driven by force of the hero's hand
The spear through the deer's two sides.

18--FOOL.

[164] S cha bhron leo thu bhi gun chos.
[165] The word is translated hind, roe, etc. It is the same word as elk, but it means a stag here.

They caught hold of the white stag-hound,
And out of hand put him on leash.
“Be there making music by me,
Till one come after thee from the chase.”

19--BARD.

There was seen descending a glen
A Gruagach in full splendour of gold,
Hand on blade on his left side,
And his two spears and his shield in his grasp.

20

Certes they asked a tale from him,
Or what road the stranger used.
* They took an alternate tale about
* What was the land where they used to be.

15

Chual iad an fhaghaid ‘s a’ ghleann
Guth gadhair ann a ‘s binn ceol
A’ ruith na h-eilid gu than
Air an fhireach a b’ fhearr doigh.

16

Air an fhireach a b’ fhearr doigh,
Chunnacas fiadh o bheannaibh borb,
‘S gadhar cluas-dearg gle gheal
A’ tabhann gu geur ‘na lorg.

17

Thug esan sitheadh gu grad;
An urchair chlis ud le lann geur;
Thártadh, le neart lamh an laoich,
An t-sleagh roimh dha thaobh an Fheidh.

18

Bheir iad air a’ ghadhar bhán,
‘S air a laimh gu ‘n chuir air eill.
“Bi tu agam deanadh ciuil
Gu ‘n d’ thig fear o ‘n iuil a’ d’ deigh.”

19

Chunnacas a’ tearnadh le gleann
Gruagach ann lan dearsadh òir
Lamh air lann air a thaobh cli,
‘S a dha shleagh ‘s a sgiath ‘na dhorn.

20

Dh’ fhoighneachd iad sgeul deth gu beachd,
Na co ‘n ròd a chleachd an aoidh?

* Gabh iad sgeula dheth mu seach,
* Ciod i n’ tir a’n do chleachd a bhi.

21--GRUAGACH.

“Ridire Corcair is my name,
And on each spot I have victory won.
I am the Gruagach of the white stag-hound
That has fallen into thine hand.”

22--FOOL.

“Thou Gruagach of the handsomest mien,
I will give thee assurance of this
That Gruagach of the white stag-hound
Shall not henceforth be said to thee.

23.

“Will’t not suffice thee, mighty son,
A make-weight or two to be in the scale?
As the whole of the hunt is beneath thy power
To leave the white stag-hound with me.

24--GRUAGACH.

“It is I, indeed, who made the hunt,
As the idiot is wrathful and fierce,
Whichever one is of strongest hand,
His be the white stag-hound and the deer.”

25[166]

“Since my stag-hound has fallen to thee,
And thy feet are awanting,
Food and clothing take thy desire
I would give that to thee and thy wife.

26--GILVEEN.

“Accept that, said Gilveen young,
And give the white stag-hound to him,”
“I’ll give him, and a speckled hound,
And if it pleased thee, a greater thing.”

21

“Ridire Corcair b’e m’ ainm,
‘S air gach ball gu ‘n d’ thug mi buaidh.
‘S mise gruagach a’ ghadhair bhàn
A tharladh ann an laimh thu;”

22

[166] There seems to be some description of a fight wanting here, unless the Gairloch version is right.
“It is I myself who made the hunt,”
So said the fool fiercely.

“A Ghruagach ud a ‘s ailne dealbh
Bheir mise ‘dhearbhadh sin duit,
Nach bi gruagach gadhair bain
As an seo ri ràdh riut.”

23

“Nach fhoghainn leatsa ‘Mhice mhoir
Leatrom no dha ‘bhith ‘san roinn,
‘S an t-seilg uile ‘bhith fo d’ bhinn,
‘S an gadhar bàn a leiginn leam.”

24

“‘S mise sin a rinn an t-seilg;
Mar tha’n t-Amadan garg, dian;
‘S ge b’ e neach a’s treise lamh
‘S leis an gadhar bàn ‘s am fiadh.”

25

“‘S o tharlladh mo ghadhar ort,
Agus do chosan gu d’ dhìth,
Biadh a’s aodach, gabh d’a reir,
Bheirinn dhuit fhein ‘s do d’ mhnaoi.

26

“Gabh siud,” arsa Gilmhin og,
‘S an gadhar bán a thoirt dhó.”
“Bheiream agus gadhar breac,
‘S na’ b’ aill leat na bu mhó.”

27--BAIRD.

Then wended they on the three,
Under the guidance of the man.
He raised in the hollows of his shield
The sling-shaft ([167]), and the woman, and the deer.

28

Then was seen, appearing aside,
A still city filled with the glitter of gold,
And there was no hue that eye hath seen
That was not in plenty the court within.

29--FOOL.

Then asked the mighty fool,
“What was the city of gold by the way,
Of noblest form and most beauteous mien.
Shall I find out from whence it came?”

[167] Crann tabhail is translated “sling” in Armstrong; but tabhail, according to the same authority, is “catapult;” “Crann” is a tree. It seems, then, that the word means some instrument made partly of wood, and used in the chase; and I suspect it means cross-bow. Men are represented on the sculptured stones of Scotland shooting with cross-bows.

30--GRUAGACH.

"Gold Yellow City is its name,
From Mount Modest and glens of gloom,"[168]
And there are in it of guileful men,
But I only and my single dame.

31†

"Yonder glen that thou camest through,
Full of glamour it is always,
But little it has taught to me
But to behold the worth of my dame.

32†

"A young wife that I found in the tower,
The sight of an eye no better was,
Whiter than very snow is her form,
Gentle her eye and her teeth like a flower."

27

Dh' imich iad, an sin 'nan triuir,
Anns an iuil a rin am fear;
Thog e 'n crannagaibh a sgiath
An crann-tabhuill, 's am fiadh, 's a' bhean.

28

Chunnacas a' tighinn ri taobh
Cathair chaomh 's lan dearsadh oir
'S cha robh dath a chunnaic suil
Nach robh anns a' chuirt na 's leoir.

29

Dh' fhoighneachd an t-Amadan mor,
"Co i 'chathair oir, ri 'h-iuil,
A's breagh cruth 's is ailne dreach?
'S am faigh mi mach co dheth a tùs?"

30

"'Chathair orbhuidh gu 'm b' e 'h-ainm
O Dhun Tuirbh 's o ghleannta Smol,
'S cha 'n 'eil innt' a dh'fhearaibh fòil
Ach mise fòs a's m' aona bhean.[169]

31

"An gleann sin roimh d' thainig thu trid
Lan de dhraodhachd tha e 'ghnath;
'S beag a dh' fhaoghluim e dhomh fhein
Ach 'bhith 'g amharc beus mo mhná.

[168] Perhaps "Glannasmoil," in the county of Dublin, where Fenian legends are localized.
[169] A chathair orruidh, and Dungarbh (Gairloch version), comain chrois; a name incomprehensible.

32†

“Bean og a fhuair mi ‘san tur
Nach robh amhare sùl na b’ fhearr;
‘S gile na gach sneachd a corp,
‘S mall a rosg, ‘s a deud mar bhlath.”

33 *--LADY.

The dame of exceeding beauty blessed
The Gruagach so lovely and brown.
“Who is the lady stately and young,
Or the big man thou hast yielded to?”

34 *--GRUAGACH.

“The mighty Fool is his name,
And his wife is the young Fairfine;
The men of the world are at his beck,
And the yielding to him was mine.”

35 *--LADY.

“I think marvellous what thou say’st,”
So said the young Fairfine;
“If the men of the world are at his beck,
That he’d let his legs go with them.”

36 *--GRUAGACH.

“I’ll give thee my word, oh dame,
That the men of the world are at his beck
And were it not glamour of Comain cross,
He’d not let his legs go with them.”

37

“And now that I may go to the chase,
To the ruddy mountains and glens of gloom,
Do thou watch, my brother of love,
My house, my wife, and my store of gold!

38

“So long as I am without,
Do thou nor slumber or droop thy head.
Let never a man within
Or a man out, if one come in.”

33*

Bheannaich a bhean a b’ fhearr snuagh
Do na Gruagach aluinn donn.
“Co macan steud gheal og
No ‘m fear mor d’an d’ thug thu geill?”

34*

“An t-amadan mor gur e ainm.
‘S a Gheilbhinn og gur i ‘bhean

Fir an domhain tha gu ‘mhein
‘S mise fein gu’n gheill da.”

35*

“‘S ioghnadh leam na tha thu ag radh,”
‘Se labhair a Gheilbhinn og;
“Fir an domhain gu bheil gu’ mhein
‘S gu leigeadh e a chasan leo.”

36*

“Bheir mise mo bhriathra’ bhean
Fir an domhain gu bheil gu mhein;
‘S mar b’ e druidheachd Chomain chrois
Cha leigeadh e a chasan leò.”

37

Gu’n d’ theid mise ‘nis a shealg
A bheanntai dearg ‘s a ghleanntai smol;
Mathaich thusa, ‘bhrathair ghraidh,
Mo theach, ‘s mo mhnai, ‘s mo chuid oir.

38

Cho fad ‘s gu’m bi mise muigh
Na deansa lochd ‘s na crom do cheann
Na leig duin’ idir a steach;
Na duine ‘mach ma thig ann.’

39--BARD.

They went to the chase the three,
The dog, and the Gruagach, and the white stag-hound.
The two fair ones and the great son
Stayed waiting within the city of gold.

40--FOOL.

Then outspoke the hero large,
“Gilveen young, here at my head,
A heavy sleep is enticing me.
We did not yield up in the glen.”

41 *--BARD.

He was not long in his sleep
A Gruagach came in from the way,
And gave a kiss to the Gruagach’s dame,
And the lady was not ill pleased that he came.

42†--BARD AND GILVEEN.

The young wife sat beneath his head;
In her mien she pictured a sun,
And said she to the stalwart youth,
“Thou hast slumbered, but not for thy good.

43

“Thou hast slumbered, but not for thy good.
There came a mighty warrior in
And gave a kiss to the Gruagach dame;
Unlucky it is that the stranger came.”

44--BARD.

Up rose the mighty fool,
To the doorway went he,
Never struck blacksmith, tinker, or wright
A door more strongly than the angry wight.

39

Dh’ imich iad a shealg ‘nan triuir
An cu, ‘s an gruagach, ‘s an gadhar bán;
An dithis ban ‘s am macabh mor
Dh’ fhan ‘s a’ chathair oir ri h-iuil.

40

Sin do labhair Macabh mor,
“Ghilmhin og seo aig mo cheann
Tha ‘n cadal trom ‘gam bhuaireadh;
Ni ‘n òbamaid suas ‘s a’ ghleann.”

41*

Cha b’ fhada bha e na shuain
Thainig Gruagach a’ ròd a steach
‘S do bhean a Ghruagaich thug e pog
‘S cha b’ fhuathach leis an oigh a theachd.

42†

Gu’n shuidh an og-bhean fo ‘cheann
Mac samhlaih dealbha i ri grein;
‘S thuirt i ris an oglach mhor,
“Rinn thu suaimhneas, ‘s cha b’ e t’ fheum.

43

“Rinn thu suaimhneas, ‘s cha b’ e t’ fheum,
Thainig gaisgeach treun a steach,
‘S do ‘n mhnaoi Ghruagaich thug e pog;
‘S neo-bhuadhach an aoidh a theachd.”

44

Dh’ eiricn an t-Amadan mor;
Thun an doruis a ghabh e.
Cha d’ bhuail gobha, ceard, na saor,
Comhla, ‘s treise na ‘n laoch borb.

45 *--FOOL.

“Unless I were sound enough
He had not come in from the road,

Till comes the Gruagach of the golden doon,
With my will he goes not out.”

46--GRUAGACH.

Up rose the warrior straight and brown,
And the arms were seized by grasp.
“Leave the doorway, stalwart youth,
Thou art there instead of right.”

47†--FOOL.

Thus answered the warrior great
To the hero of the firm speech,
“Till he comes, the Gruagach who is out,
Thou shalt he in or thy head.”

48*

“Still will I give my vows,
Though thou thinkest much of thy speech
When comes the Gruagach of the golden doon
He will repay thee for his wife’s kiss.”

49 *--GRUAGACH.

“Wilt not suffice thee, thou mighty man,
Seven vats full of glittering gold,
Cattle and horses, and untaxed land,
Plain of the plains and the woman’s doon?”

50*

“Thou mayest get that, and to boot,
My tissue vesture and horse,
Who’s as ready on sea as on land,
If thou wilt but let me go out.”

45*

“Mur bhithinn a’ m’ shuain gu leor
Cha tigeadh e a’ rod a steach,
‘S gus an tig Gruagach dun an oir
Le mo dheoin cha teid e mach.”

46

Dh’ eirich an gaisgeach deas, donn,
‘S ghlacadh leis na h-airm ‘na dhorn,
“Fag an dorus oglaich mhoir;
An aite coir a bhiodh tu ann.”

47†

Air freagairt do Mhacabh mor,
Air a’ ghaisgeach na gloir theann,
“Gu ‘n d’ thig an gruagach tha muigh
Bidh tusa steach no do cheann.”

48*

“Bheir mise mo bhriathra fos
Ge mor leat na bheil thu ag radh;
Nuair thig Gruagach dun an oir
Gu’n diol e ort pog a mhna.”

49*

“Nach foghnadh leatsa mhic a mhoir
Seachd lan dabhaich ‘a dh’or glan
Crodh a’s eich fearann saor
Raon nan raon a’s dun nam ban.”

50*

“Gheibheadh tu sin a’s ni ‘s mó
Mo chulaidh shroil agus m’ each
‘S co deas leis muir agus tìr
A chionn mo ligeadh a mach.”

51 *--FOOL.

“Still will I give my vows,
Though thou thinkest much of thy speech
When comes the Gruagach of the tissue cloak,
He will repay thee for his wife’s kiss.”

52--GRUAGACH.

“From the Gruagach of the Cup I got
Thy one foot to let me in;
I’ll blow it beneath thee with joy
If thou leave the way to go out.”

53--BARD.

With his own magic he blew
His one foot beneath him as ever it was,
And said the Gruagach, who was wise,
“It is time for me now to depart.”

54--FOOL.

Thus answered the warrior great,
“A little stay yet for a slow space,
The other foot for a sturdy step,
I’ll take from thee or thy head.”

55--GRUAGACH.

When the hero was in hard straits,
He suddenly sprang to the breast of his dame;
“My comeliness I throw upon thee,
Guard me my feet and my hand.”

56 †--FOOL.

“If death be a terror to thee,
For the poor wife of most beauteous mien,

The other foot thou wouldst give away
A refuge in that hour for thy head.”

51 *

“Bheir mise mo bhriathra fos
Ge mor leat na bheil thu ag radh
Gu’n tig Gruagach a bhrait shroil
‘S gu’n diol c ort pog a mhna.”

52

“Fhuair mi o ghruagach a’ chuirn
Do leith chos a m’ leig a steach;
Seideam fodhad i gu m’ dheoin,
‘S ma leigeas an ròd a mach.”

53

Shéid esan le dhraodhachd fhein
A leith-chos foidh mar bha i riamh
‘S thuirt an gruagach a bha glic,
“Gur tim dhomh bhith nis a triall.”

54

Air freagairt do Mhacabh mor,
“Stad beag fathasd gu fòil mall;
A chas eile gu ceum cruaidh
Bheir mise uait no do cheann.”

55†

‘Nuair a bha ‘n gaisgeach an càs cruaidh,
Duibh leum gu, luath ri uchd na mnai,
“Tilgidh mi mo chuimrin ([170]) ort;
Dion domh mo chosan ‘s mo lamh.”

56†

“Ma ‘s h-eagal leat am bàs,
Do ‘n ghraidh-bhean a’s ailne dealbh
A’ chas eile bheireadh tu uait;--
Didean, air an uair, dho d’ cheann.”

57 †--BARD.

He was not allowed to come to words,
When the great one was upon him,
And unless t’ other foot was given him
Slice in two! ere he could cry for Fionn.

50 *--GRUAGACH.

Then with his own glamour he put
His two legs under him as they were,

[170] *Cuimeir*, neat, trim, well-formed, elegance; *cuimrin*, my elegance, my elegant self.

And said the Gruagach, who was wise,
“It is time for me now to begone.”

59--FOOL.

“These feet I have now got below
I yield not to thee nor to them,
The day will not come that thou goest out,
Till comes the Gruagach of the golden doon.”

60--GRUAGACH.

“I am the Gruagach of the golden doon,
And great is my boast of thy good will,
And (I am) the Gruagach of the white stag hound
That fell into thy hand,

61 †

“And that took these feet off thee
To try thy courage and thy force;
I blow them beneath thee again,
Right as straight as thou wert.”

62 *

“Youth of most beauteous mein,
I esteem thee great in each thing;
It was I took thy leg off thee
To try thy valour and mind.”

57t

Cha d’ leigeadh gu focail dhò
Nuair bha ‘m fear mor as a chionn;
‘S gun a chos eile thoir dhò,
Sgiol na dhò ma ‘n goirear Fionn.

58*

Chuir e’n sin lè dhruideachd fein
A dha chos fodha mar bha, iad riamh
S thu’irt an Gruagach a bha glic
“‘S mithich a nis a bhi triall.”

59

“Na casan seo fhuair mi fodham
Cha leig mi leat iad na leo.
Cha d’ thig an la a theid thu mach
Gus an d’ thig gruagach Dhun an oir.”

60

“‘S mise gruagach Dhun an oir,
‘S bu mhor mo bhosd as do ruin,
Agus gruagach gadhair bhàin
A tharladh ann an lamh thu.

61 t

“‘S a thug na cosan ud diot
A dhearbadh do ghniomh a’s do lugh;
Seideam fodhad iad a rìs
Cheart cho direach ‘s a bha thu.”

62 *

“Oganaich is ailte dreach
Gur mor mo bheach ort ‘s gach cuis;
‘S gur mi bhun do chasan d’ iot
A dhearbhadh do ghniomh ‘s do thurn.”

63--BARD.

Then they laid hold hand on hand,
Love on love, and good will on good will,
One little tale on the dames,[171]
A wondrous tale heard without a lie.

63

Rug iad an sin lamh air lamh;
Gaol air ghaol a’s mìnn air mhìnn;
Aona sgeul beag air na mnai,[172]
Sgeul uamharr’ a chualas gun bhreig.

CAOGAD, fifty. IBH, to drink.

SIONAN, I do not know this word, unless it is a corruption of sithean, a knoll. STREUBH, I do not know unless it is a strath. The line might be read this way--

Sithean, srath, a’s fear a’s fonn.
Knoll, strath, grass, and land.

STIOS na lei, I think is slios na lei. LIA, an old name for a stream; on the side of the stream. RÒDH, I suspect, is “very extensive.” MACA MNA, is, I think, a superior women.

SÒITHEACH UR DAITE na dorn, should be, I think, ‘na dhorn.

H. M’L.

On the authority of Armstrong, and taking similar words, I have put a meaning on the doubtful line, but I am not sure that it is correct. See various readings, footnote.

J. F. C.

Gaelic omitted

[171] Together, like the fellowship of the Fane.
And so the tale passed away.--(Gairloch.)
[172] Araon mar chomunn na Feinne
‘S dh’imich an sgeul mar sin.

XC. Guaigean Ladhrach ‘S Loirean Spagach

From Kate MacFarlane, as early as 1810, John Dewar, October, 1860.

THERE was at some time a king in Albainn whose name was Cumhal, and he had a great dog that used to watch the herds. When the cattle were sent out, the dog would lead them to a place where there might be good grass; and the dog would herd them there for the day, and in the evening he would bring them home.

There were certain people dwelling near to the king’s house, and they had one son, and they used to send the son on matters to the king’s house every evening. There was one beautiful sunny evening, and the boy was going to the king’s house on a matter, and he had a ball and a shinny, and he was playing shinny forwards on the way to the king’s house.[173] A dog met him, and the dog began to play with the ball; he would lift it in his mouth and run with it. At last the boy struck a blow on the ball while it was in the dog’s mouth, and he drove the ball down the dog’s throat; he stuffed it down with the shank of the shinny, and he choked the dog; and since he had choked the dog, he himself had to go and keep the king’s cattle instead of the dog. He had to drive out the cattle in the morning, to drive them to good grass, and to stay and to herd them all day, for fear they should be stolen, and to bring them home in the evening, as the dog used to do. So since he killed the dog, and since it was in the place of the king’s dog that he was, it was “Cu Chumhail” (Cual’s dog) that they used to say to him; and afterwards they altered the name to “Cuthullain.”[174]

On a day of the days, Cuchullin put out the cattle, and be drove them to a plain that was there, and he was herding them; and he saw a giant who was so big that he thought he could see the lift between his legs, coming to the side where he was, and driving a great ox before him; and there were two great horns on the ox, and their points were backwards instead of being forwards. The giant came forward with the ox where Cuchullin was, and he said,

“I am going to take a while of sleep here, and if thou seest any other man of the giants coming after me, awaken me. It may be that I will not easily be wakened, but waken thou me if thou canst.”

“What is waking to thee?” said Cuchullin.

“It is,” said the giant, “to take the biggest stone thou canst find and strike me on the chest with it, and that will wake me.”

The giant lay and slept, and his snoring was as loud as thunder. But sleep was not long for him, till Cuchullin saw another giant coming, who was so big that he thought he could see the lift between his legs.

Cuchullin ran and he began to awaken the first giant that came, but waken he would not. Cuchullin was shoving him, but his wakening could not be done; but at last he lifted a great stone, and he struck the giant in the chest with it. The giant awoke, and he rose up sitting, and he said, “Is there another giant coming?”

“There is; yonder he is,” said Cuchullin, as he held his forefinger towards him.

[173] This is a common practice among Highland laddies now.
[174] The writer means the Ossianic hero, commonly called Cuchullin; so I have followed the usual spelling rather than Dewar’s, which is bat another way of expressing the same sound.

The giant struck his two palms on each other, and he said “Ach, he is!” and he sprang on his feet.

The other giant came forwards, and he said, “Yes Ghuaigean làdhraich,[175] thou hast stolen my ox.”

“I did not steal it, Loirean Spàgaich,”[176] said he, “I took it with me in the sight of every man as my own.”

Shamble Shanks seized one horn of the ox to take it with him, and Crumple Toes seized the other. Shamble Shanks gave a swift jerk at the horn which he had in his hand, and he took it off the bone; he threw it from him with all his strength, and he drove it into the earth, point foremost, and it went down into the earth to the root. Then he seized the bone, and the two hauled at the ox to drag it from each other.

At last the head of the ox split, and the ox tore asunder down through his very middle to the root of the tail. Then they threw the ox from them, and they began at wrestling; and that was the wrestling! there was no knowing which of them was the stronger.

Cuchullin came to bring aid to Crumple Toes; he could not reach up aloft to give a blow to Shamble Shanks with a sword which he had, but he began to cut at the back of his legs to try to make a stair up the back of the giant’s legs, up which he might climb to give him a blow of his sword.

Shamble Shanks felt something picking the back of his legs, and he put down his hand and he threw Cuchullin away; and where should Cuchullin go but foot foremost into the horn of the ox, and oat of the horn he could not come. But at that time that Shamble Shanks was throwing Cuchullin away, Crumple Toes got a chance at him, and Shamble Shanks was levelled, and Crumple Toes got him killed.

When that was done he looked about for Cuchullin, but he could not see him; and he shouted, “Where art thou now, thou little hero that wert helping me?”

Quoth Cuchullin, “I am here in the horn of the ox.”

The giant went to try to take him out, but he could not put his hand far enough down into the horn; but at last he straddled his legs, and he drove his hand down into the horn, and he got hold. of Cuchullin between his two fingers, and he brought him up. Cuchullin went home with the cattle at the going down of the sun, and I heard no more of the tale.

JOHN DEWAR.

I have not given the Gaelic of this, because there is nothing peculiar in the language. It is curious as having a general resemblance to the adventures of Jack the Giant Killer and Tom Thumb, Thor, and other such worthies; and as showing two well-known Ossianic heroes in a nursery tale, as “early as 1810.” Cumhal the father of Fionn, and Cuchullin.

I have another version of these incidents in a story dictated by Neil Macalister, Port Charlotte, Islay, and written by Mr. Carmichael at the request of my old friend, John MacLean, of Coulabus.

The Feinn were all in Islay to drive away the Lochlanners, and when they had succeeded, Cuchullin fell in with a fairy sweetheart, who had flocks and herds, and he staid, while the

[175] Crump-footed, toe-ish.
[176] Straddling tracker, or shambling shanks. A bandy-legged man is spágach.

rest went north to fight the Lochlanners in Skye. The fairy sweetheart bore a son, and by desire of his father, called him Conlaoch. There was a neighbour called Garbh Mac Stairn, who was far stronger than Cuchullin, and one day he went to take his fine light-coloured bull. Cuchullin disguised himself as a herd, met the giant, told him his mistress was ill in bed, and then ran round, and got into the bed behind her. The wife said she had got a baby, and the giant poked his finger into his mouth, to see if he would make "fisean Cuin," a whelp of Conn, and the hero bit him to the bone. The wife complained of the draught from the door, lamenting her husband's absence, for he would turn the house away from the wind. The big man tried, but could not, so he made off to the cattle. The seeming herd got there before him, and they seized the bull by the horns, and tore him in two. Then they try the feats which Cuchullin could do. The giant carries a millstone which the herd cannot lift, to a hill top, and the herd rides it to the bottom. The giant tries, and gets many a hard fall. They go to a rock more than a hundred fathoms high, and perform a feat which used to be attributed to Islay boys; they "measure two feet and two fists" over the edge. The giant puts one heel on the edge, the other against his toe, stoops, and places his clenched hands on each other, on the other toe; and tumbles headlong into the "fierce black green sea."

Cuchullin gives a feast, and then goes to Skye to help Fionn, leaving a ring for his son. He grows up and follows, and his mother swears him never to tell his name till forced. Conlaoch finds the Feinn fighting at "Taigh Mheile ann an Dura." Fionn sends to find out his name. Conan goes; they fight, and Conan is beat. Cuchullin goes, and the son keeps him off with his sword. They go out into the sea, to the bands of their kilts, to try "cath builg," and they cast their spears at each other, but the son casts shaft foremost. At last he is pierced by his father, and discovers himself; and they curse the fairy mother. The last few lines are fragments of a poem, and make six verses. "The death of Conlaoch" is told in an undated quarto MSS. in the Advocates' Library; the action is partly in Scythia, and there is much more incident. The poem of "Carthon," is founded on the incidents, but the names are different. This then is old, Ossianic, mythological, and Celtic; it is common to Scotland and Ireland; to MSS., print, and tradition.

See Carleton Irish stories, Dublin, 1846, p. 107, etc.

XCI. Conall Gulban; Or Guilbeinach, Or Gulbairneach

IN translating this I have departed from my first plan, which was to give in all cases exactly what I got from one man, and abstracts of other versions. In this case the longest version was translated; and to its passages and notes were added from three other written versions: and from two of which I took notes myself. Where the same incidents are given by two men in different words, the passage which seemed best has been selected. Where one version has an additional incident which the rest have not, it is inserted in its order. Where versions vary, the variation is given in a note. Thus many passages are substituted and inserted, but I have carefully avoided adding anything of my own invention.

At the earnest request of the publishers, the Gaelic of this long story is omitted, to make room for other matter; but the manuscript is preserved, and some few curious passages are given in foot notes.

The chief "author," as the scribe calls him, is John MacNair, who lives at Clachaig, near the powder mills at Dunoon. The scribe is John Dewar, a labourer now working in the woods at Roseneath, and their version fills sixty foolscap pages. I find that there is a tendency to change dialogue into narrative in writing a story, as is the case here; but when these men *tell* stories, dialogue predominates.

MacNair, who is a shoemaker, got the story about thirty-five years ago from an old man named Duncan Livingston, who lived in Glendaruel, and was then about sixty-five. Dewar says that he was a shoemaker, and grandfather to another old shoemaker, James Leitch, who lives at Eas-clacbain in Glendaruel, and from whose dictation Dewar has taken down several long and curious stories which I have. Leitch says that his grandfather "had Ossian's Poems by heart," and many tales "sgeulachd;" and a list of those who still know the latter is given.

Of Livingston, MacNair says--

"I have an interesting story about that old man. In the time of the American war, the laird was pressing the tenants to go, and this old man seemed not willing; so they pursued him through a deep river, or burn, as we call it; and when he saw he could not escape, he placed his leg between two stones and snapped it in two, so they had to carry him home.

The second version was written by Hector MacLean, and fills twenty-five pages. The reciter was Alexander MacNeill, who lives in Barra, and who names as his authorities several old men. He also recited No. XXXVI.

The third was also written by MacLean, from the telling of John MacGilvray, labourer, Colonsay, in July 1860. It fills fourteen pages, and has this tradition attached to it,--"Two ministers, long ago, desirous of trying the powers of the Gaelic language, composed this story and the Knight of the Red Shield (No. LII.). MacLean suggests two Monks of Iona.

The fourth was written by Mr. Fraser of Mauld, near Beauly, Inverness-shire, and fills six pages. It was told by Dugald Martin in Crochal.

I have heard the story told by various reciters, particularly by Donald MacPhie in South Uist, and Charles MacIntyre in Benbecula. The latter spoke for an hour. I did not time the former, but be spoke for a long time, and I though his version the most consistent and the most complete story which I had then heard.

The story then is very widely spread in Scotland--from Beauly on the east, to Barra on the west, and Dunoon and Paisley in the South. No two give it in the same words, or give exactly the same incidents; but MacNair's version written in Dunoon, and MacNeill's in Barra, written independently by different scribes, so far as they go together, closely resemble each other.

Dewar who is a very intelligent man, suggests that the story is "purely Irish," and that "it was composed about the time of the crusade, as it tells about the Turks invading the king of Iubhar's country." He thinks the Green Isle is one of the Orkneys.

"Innse torrain, the isles of Noise. Ossian's poem on Cathul," so called because covered with fir trees and with large rocks facing the sea, against which the waves make a great noise." (There are no trees in Orkney.) Dewar does not think this tale so old as many of the others which he has written for me.

My own opinion is that the story is mixed with the adventures of the Norse sea rovers who frequented the Western Isles; and that it is impossible to say whether it was composed in Ireland or in Scotland; but it is clear that it was composed a long time ago, and by some one able to imagine and carry out an elaborate plot. There are many old men in Scotland, widely separated, and who cannot read, who know the story and can remember the plot, in whole or in part; so it must be old. It is also known in Ireland. I have traced the incidents amongst Irish labourers in London. One man, a bricklayer, had "seen Conall Gulban in an Irish manuscript;" and a story so called is mentioned in the transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin.

THE STORY OF CONALL GULBAN.

THERE was at some time a young king in Eirinn, and when he came to man's estate the high counsellors of the realm were counselling him to marry; but he himself was inclined to go to foreign countries first, so that he might get more knowledge, and that he might be more instructed how the realm should be regulated; and he put each thing in order for matters to be arranged till he should come back. He staid there a while till he had got every learning that he thought he could get in that realm. Then he left Greece and he went "do'n Fheadailte," to the Italy to get more learning. When he was in that country he made acquaintance with the young king of "an Iubhair," and they were good comrades together; and when they had got every learning that they had to get in Italy, they thought of going home.

The young king of the Iubhar gave an invitation to the young king of Eirinn that be should go to the realm of the Iubhar, and that he should stay a while there with him. The young king of Eirinn went with him, and they were together in the fortress of Iubhar for a while, at sports and hunting

The king of Iubhar had a sister who was exceedingly handsome; she was "stuama beusach," modest and gentle in her ways, and she was right (well) instructed. The young king of Eirinn fell in love with her, and she fell in love with the young king of Eirinn, and he was willing to marry her, and she was willing so marry him, and the king of Iubhar was willing that the wedding should go on; but the young king of Eirinn went home first, and he gathered together the high counsellors of the realm, and he told them what he desired to do; and the high counsellors of the realm of Eirinn counselled their king to marry the sister of the kin, of Iubhar.[177]

[177] This seems to shew that Celtic kings did not act without the consent of their chiefs; and this appears in other places, in this, and in many other stories. Iubhar is a name for Newry, but the story is not consistent with the supposition that Newry is meant. I suspect Jewry is the word, and that the Holy Land is meant.

The king; of Eirinn went back and he married the king's sister; and the king of the Iubhar and the king of Eirinn made "co-cheanghal" a league together. If straits, or hardships, or extremity, or anything counter should come upon either, the other was to go to his aid.

When they had settled each thing as it should be, the two kings gave each other a blessing and the king of Eirinn and his queen went home to Eirinn.

At the end of a little more than a year[178] after that they had a young son, and they gave him Eobhan as a name. Good care was taken of him, as should be of a king's son. At the end of a little more than a year after that they had another son, and they gave him Claidhean as a name. Care was taken of this one as had been taken of his brother; and at more than a year after that they had another son, and they gave him Conall as a name, and care was taken of him as had been taken of the two others.[179]

They were coming on well, and at the fitting time a teacher was got for them. When they had got about as much learning as the teacher could give them, they were one day out at play, and the king and the queen were going past them, and they were looking at their children (clann).

Said the queen, "This is well, and well enough, but more than this must be done for the children yet. I think that we ought to send them to Gruagach Bhein Eidinn to learn feats and

[178] The island reciter always say, "at the end of three quarters," etc.

[179] The parentage and education of Conall are differently given in a very good, though short version, written by Mr. Fraser of Mauld. It is called the tale of Conall Guilbeanach, son of the King of Eirinn, and Gealmhaiseach mhin (fair, beauteous, smooth) daughter of the King of Lochlann.
A king of Eirinn was fond of the chase, and on a fine spring day he chased the deer till he lost his dogs and his people. In the gray of the evening he sat on the side of a green knoll, behind the wind and before the sun, and he heard a voice beside him say, "Hail to thee, King of Eirinn." "Hail to thyself, thou old gray man," said the king. The old man took him into the mountain, and there he saw what he had never seen before: such food and drink, meat and music and dancing; and the old man had a beautiful daughter. He slept that night, and when he arose in the morning he heard the cry of a child; and he had to stay for the christening of his son, and he was named Conal Guilbeanach.
The king sent him venison from time to time, and be grew up to be a stalwart youth, swift and strong.
Then war sprung up between the King of Eirinn and the King of Lochlann; and the king sent Caoilte (one of the Feine), the swiftest man in the realm, for Conall, and he could not keep up with Conall on the way home.
The old gray man gave him a sword, and he said "Here is for thee, Conall, 'a Gheur Ghlas' (the keen gray), that I got myself from Oisean MacOscar na Feinne," etc.
An old man in Benbecula, Donald MacIntyre, told me this story in 1859. It lasted about an hour, and I did not take notes, but his version was the same as Mr. Fraser's, so far. A king of Eirinn gets lost in a magic mist, is entertained by a gray old p. 205 man, stays in his house for a night, sees the man's daughter, "and wheresoever the girl slept, it was there the king rose in the morning." He had been there a year and a day. Conall was born, and when the king went home he said nothing about his adventures.
The man who was sent for Conall, when war broke out with the Turks, and the king's two sons refused to stay, was so swift that he could cover seven ridges at a stride; but Conall beat him at all feats of agility, and when he came home with him he was seven ridges before him; and as he went he kept a golden apple playing aloft with the points of his two spears, etc.
Old Donald MacPhie, in South Uist, also told me the story. Like all versions which I have heard, it was full of metrical prose passages, "runs," as they are called. His version agreed with MacIntyre's as to the parentage of Conall.
The correct reading then seems to be, that Conall's two brothers were the sons of the queen, but that the hero was the son of the daughter of the Gruagach (? the Druid) of Beinn Eudain, an old gray man, who lived in the mountain, and who had been a comrade of Oisean and the Feine.
Conall had the blood of the ancient heroes in his veins, and they helped their descendant.

heroes' activity (luth ghaisge), and that there is not in the sixteen realms another that is as good as the Gruagach of Beinn Eidinn.[180]

The king agreed with her, and word was sent for the Gruagach. He came, and Eobhan and Claidhean were sent with him to Bein Eidinn to learn feats and activity, and what thing so ever besides the Gruagach could teach them.

They thought that Conall was too young to send him there at that time. When Eobhan and Claidhean were about a year by the Gruagach, he came with them to their father's house; they were sent back again, and the Gruagach was giving every learning to the king's children. He took them with him one day aloft up Beinn Eidinn, and when they were on high about half the mountain, the king's children saw a round brown stone, and as if it were set aside from other stones. They asked what was the reason of that stone being set aside so, rather than all the other stones on the mountain. The Gruagach said to them that the name of that stone was "Clach nan gaisgeach," the stone of the heroes. Any one that could lift that stone till he could place the wind between it and earth, that he was a hero.

Eobhan went to try to lift the stone; he put his arms about it, and he lifted it up to his knees; Claidhean seized the stone, and he put the wind between it and earth.

Said the Gruagach to them, "Ye are but young and tender yet, be not spoiling yourselves with things that are too weighty for you. Stop till the end of a year after this and you will be stronger for it than you are now."

The Gruagach took them home and taught them feats and activity, and at the end of a year he took them again up the mountain. Eobhan and Claidhean went to the stone; Eobhan lifted it to his shoulder top, and set it down; Claidhean lifted the stone up to his lap, and the Gruagach said to them, "There is neither want of strength or learning with you; I will give you over to your father."

At the end of a few days after that, the Gruagach went home to the king's house, and he gave them to their father; and he said that the king's sons were the strongest and the best taught that there were in the sixteen realms. The king gave thanks and reward to the Gruagach, and he sent Conall with him.

The Gruagach began to teach Conall to do tricks and feats, and Conall pleased him well; and on a day he took Conall with him up the face of Beinn Eidinn, and they reached the place where the round brown stone was. Conall noticed it, and he asked as his brothers had done; and the Gruagach said as he said before. Conall put his hands about the stone, and he put the wind between it and earth; and they went home, and he was with the Gruagach getting more knowledge.

The next year after that they went up Beinn Eidinn where the round brown stone was. Conall thought that he would try if he was (na bu mhurraiche) stronger to lift the heroes' stone. He caught the stone, and he raised it on the top of the shoulder, and on the faggot gathering place of his back, and he carried it aloft to the top of Beinn Eidinn, and down to the bottom of Beinn Eidinn, and back again; and he left it where he found it.

And the Gruagach said to him, "Ach! thou hast enough of strength, if thou hast enough of swiftness."

[180] Dewar says, "a master of arts and sciences, a title, old Gaelic;" but he says so only on the authority of his stories. I suspect the word to be the same as Druidhach, a Druid or magician; p. 206 and that this relates to some real school of arms and warlike exercises. What the sixteen realms may mean I don't know.

The Gruagach shewed Conall. a black thorn bush that was a short way from them, and he said, “If thou canst give me a blow with that black thorn bush yonder, before I reach the top of the mountain, I may cease giving thee instructions,” and the Gruagach ran up the hill.

Conall sprang to the bush; he thought it would take too much time to cut it with his sword, and he pulled it out of the root, and he ran after the Gruagach with it and before he was but a short way up the mountain, Conall was at his back striking him about the backs of his knees with the black thorn bush.

The Gruagach said, “I will stop giving thee instructions, and I will go home and I will give thee up to thy father.”

The Gruagach wished to go home with Conall, but Conall was not willing till he should get every knowledge that the Gruagach could give him; and he was with him after that more than a year, and after that they went home.

The king asked the Gruagach how Conall had taken up his learning. “It is so,” said the Gruagach, “that Conall is the man that is the strongest and best taught in the sixteen realms, and if he gets days, he will increase that heroism yet.”

The king gave full reward and thanks to the Gruagach for the care he had taken of his son. The Gruagach gave thanks to the king for the reward he had given him. They gave each other a blessing, and the Gruagach and the king’s sons gave each other a blessing, and the Gruagach went home, and he was fully pleased.[181]]

Mac-Nair

The young King of Eirinn and the king of Laidheann were comrades, and fond of each other; and they used to go to the green mound to the side of Beinn Euadain to seek pastime and pleasure of mind.

The King of Eirinn had three sons, and the King of Laidheann one daughter; and the youngest son that the King of Eirinn had was Conall. On a day, as they were on the green mound at the side of Beinn Eudain, they saw the seeming of a shower gathering in the heart of the north-western airt, and a rider of a black filly coming from about the shower; and he took (his way) to the green mound where were the King of Eirinn and the King of Laidheann, and he blessed the men, and he inquired of them. The King of Eirinn asked what he came about; and he said that he was going to make a request to the King of Eirinn, if it were so that he might get it. The King of Eirinn said that he should get it if it should be in his power to give it to him.

“Give me a loan of a day and a year of Conall thy son.”

“I myself promised that to thee,” said the King of Eirinn; “and unless I had promised thou shouldst not got him.”

He took Conall with him. Now the King of Eirinn went home; he laid down music, and raised up woe, lamenting his son; he laid vows on himself that he would not stand on the green mound till a day and a year should run out. There then he was at home, heavy and sad, till a day and a year had run.

[181] So far I have followed MacNair’s version, which is the only one with this part. I have shortened it by striking out repetitions; but I have followed Dewar’s spelling of’ the names. Thep. 209 next bit may be but another version of the education of the warrior, but it seems as if something were wanted to complete it. It is the beginning of the story as told in Barra, and I give it as part of the same thing. It agrees with the mysterious origin of Conall.

At the end of a day and year he went to the green mound at the side of Beinn Eudain. There he was a while at the green mound, and he was not seeing a man coming, and he was not seeing a horseman coming, and he was under sorrow and under grief. In the same airt of the heaven, in the mouth of the evening he saw the same shower coming, and a man upon a black filly in it, and a man behind him. He went to the green mound where the man was coming, and he saw the King of Laidheann.

"How dost thou find thyself, King of Eirinn?"

"I myself am but middling."

"What is it that lays trouble on thee, King of Eirinn?"

"There is enough that puts trouble upon me. There came a man a year from yesterday that took from me my son; he promised to be with me this day, and I cannot see his likeness coming, himself or my son."

"Wouldst thou know thy son if thou shouldst see him?"

"I think I should know him for all the time he has been away."

"There is thy son for thee then," said the lad who came.

"Oh, it is not; he is unlike my son; so great a change as might come over my son, such a change as that could not come over him since he went away."

"He is all thou hast for thy son."

"Oh, you are my father, surely," said Conall.

"Thanks be to thee, king of the chiefs and the mighty! that Conall has come," said the King of Eirinn; "I am pleased that my son has come. Any one thing that thou settest before me for bringing my son home, thou shalt get it, and my blessing."

"I will not take anything but thy blessing; and if I got thy blessing I am paid enough."

He got the blessing of the King of Eirinn, and they parted; and the King of Eirinn and his children went home.]

MacNeill.

After the sons of the King of Eirinn had gotten their learning, they themselves, and the king and the queen, were in the fortress; and they were full of rejoicing with music and joy, when there came a messenger to them from the King of Iubhar, telling that the Turcaich were at war with him to take the land from him; and that the realm of Iubhar was sore beset by the Turks; that they were (LIONAR NEARTHMHOR 'S BORB) numerous, powerful, and proud (RA GHARG), right fierce, merciless without kindliness, and that there were things incomprehensible about them; though they were slain to-day they would be alive to-morrow, and they would come forward to hold battle on the next day, as fierce and furious as they ever were; and the messenger was entreating the King of Eirinn to go to help the King of Iubhar, according to his words and his covenants.[182] The King of Eirinn must go to help the King of the Iubhar, because of the heavy vows: if strife, danger, straits, or any hardship should come against the one king, that the other king was to go to help him. [183]]

[182] All versions agree that there was war between Eirinn and the Turks.
[183] This is the fullest version. MacNeill gives the same incidents in a very few words. The Colonsay man, MacGilvray, begins here. "The King of Eirinn thought that he would go to put the Turks out of the realm of the Emperor--Impire." Another version also says that the king had gone to put the Turks out of the realm of the Emperor.

MacNair.

They put on them forgoing; and when they had put on them for going away, they sent away a ship with provisions[184] and with arms. There went away right good ships loaded with each thing they might require; noble ships indeed. The King of Eirinn and the King of Laidheann gave out an order that every man in the kingdom should gather to go.

The King of Eirinn asked, "Is there any man about to stay to keep the wives and sons of Eirinn, till the King of Eirinn come back? Oh, thou, my eldest son, stay thou to keep the kingdom of Eirinn for thy father, and thine is the third part of it for his life, and at his death."

"Thou seemest light minded to me, my father," said the eldest son, "when thou speakest such idle talk; I would rather hold one day of battle and combat against the great Turk, than that I should have the kingdom of Eirinn altogether."

"There is no help for it," said the king. "But thou, middlemost son, stay thou to keep the kingdom of Eirinn for thy father, and thine is the half for his life, and at his death."

"Do not speak, my father, of such a silly thing! What strong love should you have yourself for going, that I might not have?"

"There is no help for it," said the King of Eirinn.

"Oh, Conall," said the king, "thou that hast ever earned my blessing, and that never deserved my curse, stay thou to keep the wives and sons of Eirinn for thy father until he himself returns home again, and thou shalt have the realm of Eirinn altogether for thyself, for my life, and at my death."

"Well then, father, I will stay for thy blessing, and not for the realm of Eirinn, though the like of that might be."[185]]

MacNeill

The king thought that Conall was too young for the realm to be trusted to him; he gathered his high counsellors and he took their counsel about it. The counsellors said that Conall was surely too young, but that was (FAILLINN A BHA DAONAN A DOL AM FEOBHAS) a failing that was always bettering; though he was young, that he would always be growing older; and that as Eobhan and Claidhean would not stay, that it was best to trust the realm to Conall].

MacNair.

Then here went the great nobles of Eirinn, and they put on them for going to sail to the realm of the Tuirc, themselves and the company of the King of Laidhean altogether.[186]]

MacNeill.

They went away, and Conall went along with them to the shore; he and his father and his brothers gave a blessing to each other; and the King of Eirinn and his two sons, Eobhan and Claidhean, went on board of a ship, and they hoisted the speckled flapping sails up against the tall tough masts; and they sailed the ship fiulpande[187] fiullande.[188] Sailing about the sandy

[184] The word provēēshon has been adopted by reciters.
[185] The Colonsay version and MacNair's give the same incidents; and Conall says that if the others get as much as Eirinn, they will be well off. "Thou art wise, Conall," said the king; and Conall was crowned King of Eirinn before the started.
[186] The other versions do not say that the company of the King of Laidhean went, but it is implied.
[187] Bounding
[188] Seaworthy.

ocean, where the biggest beast eats the beast that is least, and the beast that is least is fleeing and hiding as best he may; and the ship would split a hard oat seed in the midst of the sea, so well would she steer; and so she was as long as she was in the sight of Conall.

And Conall was heavy and dull when his father and brothers left him, and he sat down on the shore and he slept; and the wakening he got was the one wave sweeping him out, and the other wave washing him in against the shore.

Conall got up swiftly, and he said to himself, "Is this the first exploit I have done! It is no wonder my father should say I was too young to take care of the realm, since I cannot take care of myself."

He went home and he took better care of himself after that].

MacNair

There was not a man left in the realm of Eirinn but Conall; and there was not left a man[189] in the realm of Laidheann, but the daughter of the King of Laidheann, and five hundred soldiers to *guard*[190] her.

Anna Diucalas, daughter of the King of Laidheann, was the name of that woman, the very drop of woman's blood that was the most beautiful of all that ever stood on leather of cow or horse. Her father left her in his castle, with five hundred soldiers to keep her; and she had no man with her in Laidheann but the soldiers, and Conall was by himself in the realm of Eirinn.

Then sorrow struck Conall, and melancholy that he should stay in the realm of Eirinn by himself; that he himself was better than the people altogether, though they had gone away. He thought that there was nothing that would take his care and his sorrow from off him better, than to go to the side of Beinn Eudainn to the green mound. He went, and he reached the green mound; be laid his face downwards on the hillock, and he thought that there was no one thing that would suit himself better, than that be should find his match of a woman. Then he gave a glance from him, and what should he see but a raven sitting on a heap of snow;[191] and he set it before him that he would not take a wife forever, but one whose head should be as black as the raven, and her face as fair as the snow, and her cheeks as red as blood. Such a woman was not to be found, but the one that the King of Laidheann left within in his castle, and it would not be easy to get to her, for all the soldiers that her father left to keep her; but be thought that he could reach her.

[189] A man, DUINE, means a human being.
[190] GUARD, this is an English word which has crept into Gaelic stories, saighdair probably meant archer; it means soldier.
[191] This incident, with variations, is common. It is clear that the raven ought to have been eating something to suggest the blood; and so it is elsewhere.
Mr. Fraser of Mauld, Inverness, East Coast.
He had gone to see his grandfather, the mysterious old gray man.
"When he got up in the morning there was a young snow, and the raven was upon a spray near him, and a bit of flesh in his beak. The piece of flesh fell, and Conall went to lift it; and the raven said to him, that Fair Beauteous Smooth was as white as the snow upon the spray, her cheek as red as the flesh that was in his hand, and her hair as black as the feather that was in his wing."
MacPhie, Uist.
On a snowy day Conall. saw a goat slaughtered, and a black raven came to drink the blood. "Oh," says he, "that I could marry the girl whose breast is as white as the snow, whose cheeks are red as the blood, and whose hair is as black as the raven; and Conall fell sick for love.
(Benbecula) Macintyre gave the same incident.
The Colonsay version introduces an old nurse instead.
MacNair simply says that Conall heard of the lady.

He went away, and there went no stop on his foot nor rest on his head, till he reached the castle in which was the daughter of the King of Laidheann.]

MacNeil.

He took (his burden) upon him, and he went on board of a skiff, and he rowed till he came on shore on the land of the King of Laidheann.[192] He did not know the road, but he took a tale from every traveller and walker that he fell in with, and when he came near to the dun of the king of Laidheann, he came to a small strait. There was a ferry boat on the strait, but the boat was on the further side of the narrows. He stood a little while looking at its breadth; at last he put his palm on the point of the spear, and the shaft in the sea, he gave his rounded spring, and he was over.]

MacNair.

Then here he was on a great top that was there, and he was looking below beneath him, and he saw the very finest castle (luchairt) that ever was seen from the beginning of the universe to the end of eternity, and a great wall at the back of the fortress, and iron spikes within a foot of each other, about and around it; and a man's head upon every spike but the one spike. Fear struck him, and he fell a shaking. He thought that it was his own head that would go on the headless spike.]

MacGilvray, Colonsay.

The dun was guarded by nine ranks of soldiers. There were nine warriors (CURAIDHNEAN) at the back of the soldiers that were as mighty as the nine ranks of soldiers. There were behind the warriors six heroes (GASGAICH) that were as mighty as the nine warriors and the nine ranks of soldiers. There were behind these six heroes three full heroes (LAN GASGAICH) that were as mighty as all that were outside of them; and there was one great man behind these three, that was as mighty as the whole of the people that there were altogether, and many a man tried to take out Ann Iuchdaris,[193] but no man of them went away alive.

He came to near about the soldiers, and he asked leave to go in, and that he would leave the woman as she was before.

"I perceive," said one of them, "that thou art a beggar that was in the land of Eirinn; what worth would the king of Laidheann have if he should come and find his daughter shamed by any one coward of Eirinn."

"I will not be long asking a way from you," said Conall.]

MacNeil

Conall looked at the men who were guarding the dun; he went a sweep round about with ears that were sharp to hear, and eyes rolling to see. A glance that he gave aloft to the dun he saw an open window, and Breast of Light on the inner side of the window combing her hair.

[192] It seems hopeless to try to explain this topography. Laidheann should be Leinster, and Iubhar might be Newry, and Beinn Eudainn or Eideinn is like the Gaelic for Edinburgh, though the stories place the hill in Ireland; and here are the king of Eirinn and his son rowing and sailing about from realm to realm in Ireland, and the Turks at Newry a foreign land. If Iubhar mean Jewry, and this is a romance of the crusades, it is more reasonable.

[193] This name is variously spelt:--1, as above; 2, Anna Diucalas; and 3, An Uchd Solais. The first is like a common French name, Eucharis, the second Maclean thinks has something to do with the raven black hair. The third was used by the Colonsay man and means bosom of light. All three have a similar sound, and I take Breast of Light as the most poetical.]

Conall stood a little while gazing at her, but at last he put his palm on the point of hip, spear, he gave his rounded spring, and he was in at the window beside Breast of Light.

“Who is he this youth that sprang so roundly in at the window to see me?” said she.

“There is one that has come to take thee away,” said Conall.

Breast of Light gave a laugh, and she said--”Sawest thou the soldiers that were guarding the dun?”

“I saw them,” said he; “they let me in, and they will let me out.”

She gave another laugh, and she said--”Many a one has tried to take me out from this, but none has done it yet, and they lost their luck at the end; my counsel to thee is that thou try it not.”

Conall put his hand about her very waist; he raised her in his oxter; he took her out to the rank of soldiers; he put his palm on the point of his spear, and he leaped over their heads; he ran so swiftly that they could not see that it was Breast of Light that he had, and when he was out of sight of the dun he set her on the, ground.]

MacNair.

(*Was not that the hero and the worthy wooer that his like is not to be found to day*!)]

MacNeill, Barra.

Breast of Light heaved a heavy sigh from her breast. “What is the meaning of thy sigh?” said Conall.

“It is,” said she, “that there came many a one to seek me, and that suffered death for my sake, and that it is (gealtair) the coward of the great world that took me away.”

“I little thought that the very coward of Eirinn that should take me out, who staid at home from cowardice in the realm of Eirinn, and that my own father should leave five hundred warriors to watch me, without one drop of blood taken from one of them.”]

MacNeill.

“How dost thou make that out?” said Conall.

“It is,” said she, “that though there were many men about the dun, fear would not let thee tell the sorriest of them who took away Breast of Light, nor to what side she was taken.”[194]

(*That’s it--the women ever had a torturing tongue, teanga ghointe*.)]

MacNeill

Said Conall--”Give me thy three royal words, and thy three baptismal vows, that thou wilt not move from that, and I will still go and tell it to them.”

“I will do that,” said she.]

MacNair.

Conall turned back to the dun, and nothing in the world, in the way of arms, did he fall in with but one horse’s jaw which he found in the road;]

MacNeill

[194] Macgilvray also gives this incident, but omits the next. She kilted her gown and followed him.

and when he arrived he asked them what they would do to a man that should take away Breast of Light.

“It is this,” said they, “to drive off his head and set it on a spike.”

Conall looked under them, over them, through, and before them, for the one of the biggest knob and slenderest shanks, and he caught hold of the slenderest shanked and biggest knobbed man, and with the head of that one he drove the brains out of the rest, and the brains of that one with the other’s heads. Then he drew his sword, and he began on the nine warriors, and he slew them, and he killed the six heroes that were at their back, and the three full heroes that were behind these, and then he had but the big man. Conall struck him a slap, and drove his eye out on his cheek, he levelled him and stripped his clothes off,]

MacNair.

and he left no one to tell a tale or wear out bad news, but the one to whom he played the clipping of a bird and a fool, and though there should be ten tongues of a true wise bard in that man’s head, it is telling his own exploits, and those of his men that he would be; the plight that the youth who had come to the town had made of them.[195]]

MacNeill.

He asked him where was the king of Laidheann, and the big man said that he was in the hunting hill with his court and his following (dheadhachail) of men and beasts.

Said Conall to him--”I lay it on thee as disgrace and contempt (tair agus tailceas) that thou must go stripped as thou art to tell to the king of Laidheann that Conall Guilbeanach came, the son of the king of Eirinn, and that he has taken away his daughter Breast of Light.[196]

When the big man understood that he was to have his life along with him, he ran in great leaps, and in a rough trot, like a venomous snake, or a deadly dragon;[197] he would catch the swift March wind that was before him, but the swift March wind that was after him could not catch him. The King of Laidheann saw him coming, and he said, “What evil has befallen the dun this day, when the big man is coming thus stark naked to us?” They sat down, and he came.

Said the king, “Tell us thy tale, big man?”

“That which I have is the tale of hate, that there came Conall Guilbeanach, son of the King of Eirinn, and slew all that there were of men to guard the dun, and it was not my own might or my own valour that rescued me rather than the sorriest that was there, but that he laid it on me as disgrace and reproach that I should go thus naked to tell it to my king, to tell him that there came Conall Guilbeanach, son of the King of Eirinn, and he has taken away Breast of Light, thy daughter.”

“Much good may it do him then,” said the King of Laidheann. “If it is a hero like that who has taken her away be will keep her better than I could keep her, and my anger will not go after her.”[198]]

[195] This is common to many stories. Beaarradh eòin us amadain, means shaving and clipping and stripping one side of a man, like a bird with one wing pinioned.
[196] The spirit of this is like the Icelandic code of honour described in the Njal Saga. It was all fair to kill a man if it was done openly, or even unawares if the deed were not hidden, and here the lady was offended because the swain had not declared his name, and quite satisfied when he did.
[197] Na leumanan garbh ‘s na, gharbh threte mar nathair nimh na mar bheithir bhéumanach.
[198] The king’s company had started for the wars; it is to be assumed the king followed.

MacNair.

Conall returned, and he reached the woman after he had finished the hosts.

"Come now," said he to Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidheann, "and walk with me; and unless thou hadst given me the spiteful talk that thou gavest, the company would be alive before thy father, and since thou gavest it thou shalt walk thyself. Let thy foot be even with mine."

(*My fine fellow Conall, that's the way with her*.)]

MacNeill.

She rose well-pleased, and she went away with him; they reached the narrows, they put out the ferry boat, and they crossed the strait. Conall had neither steed, horse, nor harness to take Breast of Light on, and she had to take to her feet.

When they reached where Conall had left the currach they put the boat on the brine, and they rowed over the ocean. They came to land at the lower side of Bein Eidin, in Eirinn. They came out of the boat, and they went on forward.]

MacNair.

They reached the green mound at the foot of Bein Eidin.]

MacNeill.

Conall told Breast of Light that he had a failing, every time that he did any deed of valour he must sleep before he could do brave deeds again.[199]]

MacNair.

"There now, I will lay my head in thy lap."

"Thou shalt not, for fear thou should'st fall asleep."

"And if I do, wilt thou not waken me?"

"What manner of waking is thine?"

"Thou shalt cast me greatly hither and thither, and if that will not rouse me, thou shalt take the breadth of a penny piece of flesh and hide from the top of my head. If that will not wake me, thou shalt seize on yonder great slab of a stone, and thou shalt strike me between the mouth and nose, and if that will not rouse me thou mayest let me be."

He laid his head in her lap,[200] and in a little instant be fell asleep.

[199] MacNair also gives the next passage in different words, and with the variation that the joint of his little finger was to be cut off.
Macgilvray, the same in different words. According to the introduction to Njal Saga, there were in Iceland long ago gifted men of prodigious strength, who, after performing feats of superhuman, force, were weak and powerless for a time. While engaged in London about this story, an Irish bricklayer came to mend a fire-place, and I asked him if he had ever heard of Conall Gulban, "Yes sure," said the man with a grin, "he was one of the Finevanians, and when he slept they had to cut bits off him, before he could be wakened. They were cutting his fingers off." And then he went away with his hod.
The incident is common in Gaelic stories, and Conall is mentioned in a list of Irish stories in the transactions of the Ossianic society.

[200] And he laid his head in her lap, and she--dressed--his hair. (MacPhie, Uist.) This is always the case in popular tales of all countries, and the practice is common from Naples to Lapland. I have seen it often. The top of his little linger was to be cut off to rouse him, and if that failed, a bit from his crown, and he was to be knocked about the ribs, and a stone placed on his chest.

He was not long asleep when she saw a great vessel sailing in the ocean. Each path was crooked, and each road was level for her, till she came to the green mound at the side of Bein Eidin.

There was in the ship but one great man, and he would make rudder in her stern, cable in her prow, tackle in her middle, each rope that was loose he would tie, and each rope that was fast he would loose],

MacNeill.

and the front of each rope that was on board was towards him,][201]

MacNair.

till he came on shore at the shoulder of Bein and Mae--Eidin.]

MacNair and MacNeill.

He came in with the ship at the foot of Bein Nair. Eidin, and the big man leapt on shore; he caught hold of the prow of the ship,[202] and he hauled her her own nine lengths and nine breadths up upon green grass, where the force of foes could not move her out without feet following behind them.

He came where Breast of Light was, and Conall asleep, with his head on her knee. He gazed at Breast of Light, and she said,--]

MacNair.

"What side is before thee for choice? Or where art thou going?

"Well, they were telling me that Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidheann, was the finest woman in the world, and I was going to seek her for myself."

"That is hard enough to get," said she. "She is in yonder castle, with five hundred soldiers for her guard, that her father left there."

"Well," said he, "though she were brighter than the sun, and more lovely than the moon, past thee I will not go."

"Well, thou seemest silly to me to think of taking me with thee instead of that woman, and that I am not worthy to go and untie her shoe."

"Be that as it will, thou shalt go with me.]

MacNeill.

I know that it is thou by thy beauty, Breast of Light, daughter of the king of Laidheann."

"Thou hast the wishing knowledge of me," said she;

"I am not she, but a farmer's daughter, and this is my brother; he lost the flock this day, and he was running after them backwards and forwards throughout Bein Eudain, and now he is tired and taking a while of sleep."]

MacNair.

[201] MacGilvray gives the incident in different words.
[202] Long means a large ship.

"Be that as it will," said he, "there is a mirror in my ship, and the mirror will not rise up for any woman in the world, but for "Uchd Soluisd," daughter of the King of Laidheann. If the mirror rises for thee, I will take thee with me, and if it does not I will leave thee there."

He went to the mirror, and fear would not let her cut off the little finger, and she could not awaken Conall. The man looked in the mirror, and the mirror rose up for her, and he went back where she was.]

Macgilvray.

Said the big one, "I will be surer than that of my matter before I go further." He plucked the blade of Conall. from the sheath, and it was full of blood. "Ha!" said he, "I am right enough in my guess. Waken thy champion, and we will try with swift wrestling, might of hands, and hardness of blades, which of us has best right to have thee."[203]

"Who art thou?" said Breast of Light.

"I," said the big man, "am Mac-a-Moir MacRigh Sorcha (son of the mighty, son of the King of Light). MacNair. It is in pursuit of thee I came."[204]]

MacNair

"Wilt thou not waken my companion," said she.

He went, and he felt him from the points of the thumbs of his feet till he went out at the top of his head. "I cannot rouse the man myself; I like him as well asleep as awake."]

MacNeill.

Breast of Light got up, and she began to rock (a chriothnachadh) Conall hither and thither, but he would not take waking.

Said Mac-a-Moir--"Unless thou wakest him thou must go with me and leave him in his sleep."

Said she--"Give thou to me before I go with thee thy three royal words and thy three baptismal vows that thou wilt not seek me as wife or as sweetheart till the end of a day and a year after this, to give Conall time to come in my pursuit."

Mac-a-Moir gave his three royal words and his three baptismal vows to Breast of Light, that she should be a maiden till the end of a day and a year, to give time to Conall to come in pursuit of her, if he had so much courage. Breast of Light took the sword of Conall from the sheath, and she wrote on the sword how it had fallen out. She took the ring from off the finger of Conall, and she put her own ring on his finger in its stead, and put Conall's ring on her own finger, and she went away with Mac-a Moir, and they left Conall in his sleep.]

MacNair.

He took the woman with him on his shoulder and he went to the ship. He shoved out the ship and he gave her prow to sea, and her stern to shore; he hoisted the flapping white sails against the mast, tall and enduring, that would not leave yard unbent, sail untorn, running the seas,

[203] A good illustration of the law of the strongest, which seems to have been the law of the Court of Appeal in old times in Iceland, and probably in Ireland and Scotland also.

[204] Here, as it seems to me, the mythological character of the legend appears. Sorcha is *light*, in opposition to Dorch, *dark*; and further on a lady is found to match the king of Sorcha, who is in a lofty turret which no man could scale, but which the great warrior pulled down. So far as I know there is no place which now goes by the name of Sorcha, unless it be the island of Sark. According to Donald MacPhie (Uist), this was Righ-an-Domhain, the King of the Universe, which again indicates mythology.

ploochkanaiche plachkanaiche, blue clouds of Lochlanach, the little buckie that was seven years on the sea, clattering on her floor with the excellence of the lad's steering.

When Conall awoke on the green mound he had but himself, a shorn one and bare alone. Glance that he gave from him, what should he see but herds that the king of Eirinn and Laidheann had left, dancing for joy on the point of their spears. He thought that they were mocking him for what had befallen him. He went to kill the one with the other's head,]

MacNeill.

and there was such a (sgrann) grim look upon him that the little herds were fleeing out of his way.

He said to one of them--"What fleeing is on the little herds of Bein Eidin before me this day, as if they were mad--are ye mocking me for what has befallen me?"[205]]

MacNair.

"We are not," said they; "it was grievous to us (to see) how it befell thee."

"What, my fine fellow, did you see happening to me?"]

MacNeill.

Said the little herd--"Thou art more like one who is mad than any one of us. If thou hadst seen the rinsing, and the sifting, and the riddling (an luasgadh, an cathadh, 'as an creanacadh) that they had at thee down at the foot of the hill, thou wouldst not have much esteem for thyself. I saw," said the little herd, "the one who was with thee putting a ring on thy finger."

Conall looked, and it was the ring of Breast of Light that was on his finger.

Said the little herd--"I saw her writing something on thy sword, and putting it into the sheath."

Conall drew his sword, and he read--"There came Mac-a-Moir, the king of Sorcha, and took me away, Breast of Light; I am to be free for a year and a day in his house waiting for thee, if thou hast so much courage as to come in pursuit of me."

Conall put his sword into its sheath, and he gave three royal words.[206]]

MacNair.

"I lay it on myself as spells and as crosses, that stopping by night, and staying by day, is not for me, till I find the woman. Where I take my supper, that I will not take my dinner, and that there is no place into which I go that I will not leave the fruit of my hand there to boot, and the son that is unborn he shall hear of it, and the son that is unbegotten he shall hear tell of it."[207]]

MacNeil.

[205] Macgilvray awakens him by a troop of school-boys who were playing tricks to him.
[206] He also gives the following passage, but less fully.
[207] It was a common practice, according to the Njal Saga, for the old Icelands to bind themselves by vows to perform certain p. 229 deeds, and, according to Irish writers, a like practice prevailed in Ireland. it seems that the custom is remembered and preserved in these stories. The fruit, TORADH, rather means a harvest; he will leave a harvest of dead reaped by his hand.

Said the little herd to him--"There came a ship to shore at the port down there. The shipmen (sgiobe) went to the hostelry, and if thou be able enough thou mayest be away with the ship before they come back."[208]

Conall went away, and he went on board of the ship, and he was out of sight with her before the mariners missed him.]

MacNair.

He gave her prow to sea, and her stern to shore, helm in her stern, rope in her prow, that each road was smooth, and crooked each path, till he went into the realm of Lochlann[209]]

MacNeil.

at a place which was called Cath nam peileirn (Battle of bullets), but he did not know himself where he was.

He leaped on shore, and he seized the prow of the ship, and he pulled her up on dry land, her own nine lengths and nine breadths, where the foeman's might could not take her out without feet following behind.

The lads of the realm of Lochlann, were playing shinny on a plain, and Gealbhan Greadhna, the son of the King of Lochlann, working amongst them.[210]]

MacNeil.

He did not know who they were, but he went to where they were, and it was the Prince of Lochlann and his two scholars, and ten over a score; and the Prince of Lochlann was alone, driving the goals against the whole of the two-and-thirty scholars.

Conall stood singing "iolla" to them, and the ball came to the side where he was; Conall struck a kick on the ball, and he drove it out on the goal boundary against the Prince of Lochlann. The Prince came where he was, and he said, "Thou, man, that came upon us from off the ocean, it were little enough that would make me take the head off thee, that we might have it as a ball to kick about the field, since thou wert so impudent as to kick the ball. Thou must bold a goal of shinny against me and against the two-and thirty scholars. If thou get the victory thou shalt be free; if we conquer thee, every one of us will hit thee a blow on the head with his shinny."[211]]

MacNair.

"Well," said Conall, "I don't know who thou art, great man, but it seems to me that thy judgment is evil. If every one of you were to give me a knock on the head, you would leave my head a soft mass. I have no shinny that I can play with."

"Thou shalt have a shinny," said Gealbhan Greadhna.

[208] Mr. Fraser, Invernesshire. "His grandfather took him to the side of the sea, and he struck a rod that was in his band on a rock, and there rose up a long ship under sail. The old man put "a gheur ghlas," the keen gray (sword) on board, and at parting he said, in every strait in which thou art for ever remember me."--MacPhie. He wished for his grandfather, who came and said, "Bad! bad! thou hast wished too soon," and raised a ship with his magic rod.

[209] The only variation here is the words.

[210] I have never seen the game of shinny played in Norway, but there is mention of a game at "ball" in Icelandic sagas.

[211] Iomhair Oaidh MacRigh na Hiribhi, Iver, son of the King of Bergen, is the person who plays this part in the Inverness-shire version. He was a suitor, and he was thrashed, but he afterwards plays the part of the King of Sorcha, and is killed. MacPhie makes him a young man, and a suitor for the Princess of Norway.

Conall gave a look round about, and he saw a crooked stick of elder growing in the face of a bank. He gave a leap thither and plucked it out by the root, and he sliced it with his sword and made a shinny of it.[212]]

MacNair.

Then Conall had got a shinny, and he himself and Gealbhan Greadhna (cheery fire) went to play.

Two halves were made of the company, and the ball was let out in the midst. On a time of the times Conall got a chance at the ball; he struck it a stroke of his foot, and a blow of his palm and a blow of his shinny, and he drove it home.

"Thou wert impudent," said Gealbhan Greadhna, "to drive the game against me or against my share of the people."

"That is well said by thee, good lad! Thou shalt get two shares (earrann) of the band with thee, and I will take one share."

"And what wilt thou say if it goes against thee?"

"If it goes against me with fair play there is no help for it, but if it goes against me otherwise I may say what I choose,"

Then divisions were made of the company, and Gealbhan Greadhna had two divisions and Conall one. The ball was let out in the midst, and if it was let out Conall got a chance at it, and he struck it a stroke of his foot, and a blow of his palm, and a blow of his shinny, and he drove it in.

"Thou wert impudent," said Gealbhan Greadhna a second time, "to go to drive the game against me."

"Good lad, that is well from thee! but thou shalt get the whole company the third time, and what wilt thou say if it goes against thee."

"If it goes by fair play I cannot say a jot; if not, I may say my pleasure."

The ball was let go, and if so, Conall got a chance at it, and be all alone; and he struck it a stroke of his foot, and a blow of his palm, and a blow of his shinny, and he drove it in.

"Thou wert impudent," said Gealbhan Greadhna, "to go and drive it against me the third time."

"That is well from thee, good lad, but thou shalt not say that to me, nor to another man after me," and he struck him a blow of his shinny and knocked his brains out.[213]]

MacNeill.

He looked (taireal) contemptuously at them; he threw his shinny from him, and he went from them.

He was going on, and he saw a little man coming laughing towards him.

[212] According to MacPhie (Uist), he wished for his grandfather, who appeared with an iron shinny, and said, "Bad, bad, thou hast wished too soon."

[213] This description of a game of shinny is characteristic, and the petulance of Prince Cheery Fire, with his two-and-thirty toadies, and the independence of the warrior who came over the sea, and who would stand no nonsense, are well described, MacNair's version is not so full, nor is the catastrophe so tragic, but otherwise the incidents are the same.

“What is the meaning of thy laughing at me?” said Conall.

Said the little man, “It is that I am in a cheery mood at seeing a man of my country.”

“Who art thou,” said Conall, “that art a countryman of mine?”

“I,” said the little man, “am Duanach MacDraodh (songster, son of magic), the son of a prophet from Eirinn. “Wilt thou then take me as a servant, lad?”[214]

“I will not take thee,” said Conall. “I have no way (of keeping) myself here without word of a gillie. What realm is this in which I am here?”

“Thou art,” said Duanach, “in the realm of Lochlann.”

Conall went on, and Duanach with him, and he saw a great town before him.

“What town is there, Duanach?” said Conall.

“That,” said Duanach, “is the great town of the realm of Lochlann.”

They went on and they saw a big house on a high place.

“What big house is yonder, Duanach?”

“That,” said Duanach, “is the big house of the King of Lochlann;” and they went on.

They saw another house on a high place.

“What pointed house (biorach with points? pallisades or what) is there, Duanach?” said Conall.

“That is the house of the Tamhasg, the best warriors that are in the realm of Lochlann,” said Duanach.

“I heard my grandfather speaking about the Tamhaisg, but I have never seen them; I will go to see them,” said Conall.

“It were not my counsel to thee,” said Duanach.[215]]

MacNair.

On he went to the palace of the King of Lochlann (bhuail e beum sgeithe) and he clashed his shield, battle or else combat to be sent to him, or else Breast of Light, the daughter of the King of Laidheann.

That was the thing he should get, battle and combat, and not Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidheann, for she was not there to give him; but he should get no fighting at that time of night, but he should get (fardoch) lodging in the house of the amhusg, where there were eighteen hundred amhusg and eighteen score; but he would get battle in the morrow’s morning: when the first of the day should come.

‘Twas no run for the lad, but a spring, and he would take no better than the place he was to get. He went, and he went in, and there was none of the amhuish within that did not grin. When he saw that they had made a grin, he himself made two.]

[214] From the Njal Saga it appears that the Northmen, in their raids, carried off the people of IRELAND, and made slaves of them. Macgilvray called this character Dubhan MacDraoth, blacky, or p. 233 perhaps crook, the son of magic, and he explained, that draoth was one who brought messages from one enemy to another, and whose person was sacred.

[215] Here my two chief authorities vary a little in the order of the incidents. MacNair sends him first to his house, the other takes him there later; they vary but little in the incidents. Macgilvray takes him at once to the palace, where he finds a great chain which he shakes to bring out the foe.

MacNeill.

"What was the meaning of your grinning at us?" said the amhusg.

What was the meaning of your grinning at me?" said Conall.

Said they, "Our grinning at thee meant that thy fresh royal blood will be ours to quench our thirst, and thy fresh royal flesh to polish our teeth."

And said Conall, "The meaning of my grinning is, that I will look out for the one with the biggest knob and slenderest shanks, and knock out the brains of the rest with that one, and his brains with the knobs of the rest.]

MacNair.

Every one of them arose, and he went to the door, and he put a stake of wood against the door. He rose up himself, and he put two against it so tightly that the others fell.

"What reason had he to do that?" said they.

"What reason had you to go and do it?" said he.

It were a sorry matter for me though I should put two there, when you yourselves put one there each, every one that is within. 7)

"Well, we will tell thee," said they, "what reason we had for that: we have never seen coming here (one), a gulp of whose blood, or a morsel of whose flesh could reach us, but thou thyself, except one other man, and he fled from us; and now everyone is doubting the other, in case thou shouldst flee."

"That was the thing that made me do it myself likewise, since I have got yourselves so close as you are." Then he went and he began upon them. "I feared to be chasing you from hole to hole, and from hill to hill, and I did that." Then he gazed at them, from one to two, and he seized on the one of the slenderest shanks and the fattest head; he drove upon the rest, sliochd! slachd! till he had killed every one of them; and he had not a jot of the one with whom he was working at them, but what was in his hands of the shanks.[216]

He killed every man of them, and though he was such a youth as he was, he was exhausted (enough-ified, if I might coin a word.) Then he began redding up the dwelling (reitach na h-araich) that was there, to clean it for himself that night. Then he put them out in a heap altogether, and he let himself (drop) stretched out on one of the beds that was within.[217]

There came a dream (Bruaduil)[218] to him then, and he said to him, "Rise, oh Conall, and the chase about to be upon thee."

He let that pass, and he gave it no heed, for he was exhausted.

[216] AMHAS, a madman, a wild ungovernable man; also, a dull stupid person (Armstrong). AMHASAN, a sentry (ditto); also, a wild beast, according to the Highland Society Dictionary. Perhaps these may have something to do with the Basemarks of the old Norsemen, who were "public pests," great warriors, half crazy, enormously strong, subject to fits of ungovernable fury, occasionally employed by saner men, and put to death when done with. The characters appear in many Highland tales; and an Irish blind fiddler told me a long story in which they figured. I suspect this guardhouse of savage warriors has a foundation in fact. Macgilvray gives the incidents also.

[217] He made himself a bed of rushes at the side of the house.--Macgilvray.

[218] This word, thus written, is in no dictionary that I have, but it is the same as brudair; and, the other version proves that a dream is meant. It is singular to find a dream thus personified in the mouth of a Barra peasant.

He came the second journey, and he said to him, “Conall, wilt thou not arise, and that the chase is about to be upon thee.”

He let that pass, and he gave it no heed; but the third time he came to him, he said, “Conall art thou about to give heed to me at all! and that thy life is about to be awanting to thee.”

He arose and he looked out at the door, and he saw a hundred carts, and a hundred horses, and a hundred carters, coming with food to the amhusg; supposing that they had done for the youth that went amongst them the night before; and a piper playing music behind them, with joy and pleasure of mind.

They were coming past a single bridge, and the bridge was pretty large; and when Conall saw that they were together (cruin round) on the bridge, he reached the bridge, and he put each cart, and each horse, and each carter, over the bridge into the river; and he drowned the men.

There was one little bent crooked man here with them behind the rest.

“My heart is warming to thee with the thought that it is thou, Conall Gulban MacNiall Naonallaich, the name of a hero was on his hand a hundred years ere he was born.”

“Thou hast but what thou hast of knowledge, and the share that thou hast not, thou wilt not have this day,” said Conall Gulban.

He went away, and he reached the palace of the King of Lochlann; and he clashed his shield, battle or else combat to be given to him, or else Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidheann.

That was the thing which he should have, battle and combat; and not Breast of Light, for she was not there to give him.[219]]

MacNeill.

(So he went back and he slept again.)

Word reached the young king of Lochlann, that the big man who came off the ocean had gone to the house of the “Tamhasg;” that they had set a combat, and that the “Tamhasgan” had been slain. The young king of Lochlann ordered four of the best warriors that were in his realm, that they should up to the house of the Tamhasg, and take off the head of the big man that that had come off the ocean, and to bring it up to him before he should sit down to his dinner.

The warriors went, and they found Duanach there, and they railed at him for going with the big man that came out of the outer land,[220] for they did not know who he was.

“And why,” said Duanach, “should I not go with the man of my own country? but it you knew it, I am as tired of him as you are yourselves. He has given me much to do; see you I have just made a heap of corpses, a heap of clothes, and a heap of the arms of the “Tamhaisg;” and you have for it but to lift them along with you.”

“It is not for that we came,” said they, “but to slay him, and to take his head to the young king of Lochlann before he sits to dine. Who is he?” said they.

“He is,” said Duanach, “one of the sons of the king of Eirinn.”

[219] MacNair has not got this adventure of the carts; and MacNeil has not the next adventure, unless it be the same considerably varied. I give both upon chance.

[220] “AN FHOIRS TIR;” this word is now commonly applied to the furthest ground known, such as the outermost reef or even fishing bank; it is also written oirihir, edge-land.

“The young King of Lochlann has sent us to take his head off,” said they.

“If you kill one of the children of the King of Eirinn in his sleep you will regret it enough afterwards,” said Duanach.

“What regret will there be?” said they.

“There is this,” said Duanach. “There will be no son to woman, there will be no calf to cow, no grass nor braird shall grow in the realm of Lochlann, till the end of seven years,[221] if ye kill one of the clan of the King of Eirinn in his sleep, and go and tell that to the young King of Lochlann.”

They went back, and they told what Duanach had said.

The young King of Lochlann said that they should go back, and do as he had bidden them, and that they should not heed the lies of Duanach. The four warriors went again to the house of the Tamhasg,” and they said to Duanach,--

“We have come again to take the head off the son of the King of Eirinn.”

And Duanach said, “He is yonder then, over there, for you, in his sleep; but take good heed to yourselves, unless your swords are sharp enough to take off his head at the first blow, all that is in your bodies is to be pitied after that; he will not leave one of you alive, and he will bring (sgrios) ruin on the realm.”

Each of them stretched his sword to Duanach, and Duanach said that their swords were not sharp enough, that they should go out to the Tamhasg stone to sharpen them. They went out, and they were sharpening their swords on the smooth grinding-stone of the Tamhasg, and Conall began to dream (again).

It seemed to him that he was going on a road that went through the midst of a gloomy wood,[222] and it seemed to him that he saw four lions before him, two, on the upper side of the rood, and two on the lower side, and they were gnashing their teeth, and switching their tails,[223] making ready to spring upon him, and it seemed to him that it was easier for the lions that were on the upper side of the road to leap down, than it was for the lions that were on the lower side to leap up; and it was better for him to slay those that were on the tipper side first, and he gave a cheery spring to be at them; and he sprang aloft through his sleep, and he struck his head against a tie beam (sail shuimear) that was across above him in the house of the “Tamhasgan,” and he drove as much as the breadth of a half-crown piece of the skin off the top of his head, and then he was aroused, and he said to Duanach,--

“I myself was dreaming, Duanach,” and he told him his dream.

And Duanach said, “Thy dream is a dainty to read. Go thou out to the stone of the Tamhasg, and thou wilt see the four best warriors that the King of Lochlann has, two on each side of the stone round about it, sharpening, their swords to take off thy head.”

Conall went out with his blade in his hand, and he took off their heads, and he left two heads on each side of the stone of the Tamhasg and he came in where Duanach was, and he said, I am yet without food since I came to the realm of Lochlann, and I feel in myself that I am growing weak.”

[221] Cha bhith mac aig bean; cha bhith laogh aig mart; ‘s cha chinn fear na fochan, ann an righachd Lochlann, gu ceann seachd bliadhna, etc.
[222] Coille udlaidh, lonely, morose, churlish, gloomy. Pr. ood-lai. Compare outlaw, outlying.
[223] A casadh am fiacall ‘s a sguitse le n’ earball.

And Duanach said, “I wilt get thee food if thou wilt take my counsel, and that is, that thou shouldst go to court the sister of the King of Lochlann, and I myself will go to redd the way for thee.[224]]

MacNair.

There were three great warriors in the king’s palace in search of the daughter of the King, of Lochlann, and they sent word for the one who was the most valiant of them to go to combat the youth that had come to the town. This one came, and the Amhus Ormanach was his name,[225] and he and Conall were to try each other. They went and they began the battle, Conall and the Avas Ormanach. The daughter of the King of Lochlann came to the door, and she shouted for Duanachd Acha Draohd.[226]

“I am here,” said Duanach.

“Well, then, if thou art, it is but little care thou hast for me. Many calving cattle and heifers gave my father to thy father, though thou art not going down, and standing behind the Avas Ormanach, and giving him the urging of a true wise bard[227] to hasten the head of the wretch to me for my dinner, for I have a great thirst for it.”

“Faire! faire! watch, oh queen,” said Duanach; “if thou hadst quicker asked it, thou hadst not got it slower.”

Away went Duanach down, and it was not on the side of the Avas Ormanach he began, but on the side of Conall. “Thou hast not told it to me for certain, yet if it be thou, when thou art not hastening thine hand, and making heavy thy blow! And to let slip that wretch that ought to be in a land of holes, or in crannies of rock, or in otter’s cairns! Though thou shouldst fall here for slowness or slackness, there would neither be wife nor sweetheart crying for thee, and that is not the like of what would befall him.”

Conall thought that it was in good purpose the man was for him, and not in evil purpose;[228] he put his sword under the sword of the Avas Ormanach, and he cast it to the skies, and then he himself gave a spring on his back, and he levelled him on the ground, and then he began to take his head off.

[224] He has not got the next adventure, which I take from MacNeill.

[225] AMHUS, the savage, or wild man, ORMANACH is not so clear; written from ear it might be a word beginning with an aspirated silent letter, such as *th*, which would make the word “noisy,” or it may be some compound of OR gold, such as OR-MHEINNEACH, gold-ore-ish, which would make him the wild man of the gold mines, or armour, or hair, or something else. Macgilvray called him an Amhas Orannoch, the wild man of songs.

[226] Songstership of Magic field, which is MacNeill’s name for the character.

[227] Brosnachadh file fiorghlic. It is said that the bards from the earliest of times sang songs of encouragement to the warriors. The old Icelanders, as it is asserted in their sagas, sung themselves in the heat of the fight, and here is a tradition of something of the kind. In Stewart’s collection, 1804, is the battle song of the Macdonalds for the battle of Harlaw.

[228] Deagh run, droch run. *Rùn* has many meanings--love, etc.; purpose, etc.; a person beloved; a secret, a mystery; and, p. 242 according to Armstrong, it is the origin of “runic.” The man who told this story clearly meant “purpose” by run; but perhaps the original meaning of the passage which comes repeatedly in this story was that Songstership of Magic field sang “good runes for the victory of his countrymen.” It must be remembered that Barra was in the way of Norsemen, and that their ways of life throw light on Gaelic traditions. According to Macgilvray--another islander--Dubhan MacDraoth was the Draoth (? herald) of the king of Eirinn when he went to put the Turk out of the realm of the emperor, and the king of Lochlann brought him home thence, and he was his draoth. As there was a guard of Norsemen in Constantinople this looks like a possible fact.

"Still be thy hand, O Conall," said Duanach Acha Draodh, "make him the binding of the three smalls there, until he gives thee his oaths under the edge of his set of arms, that there is no stroke he will strike for ever against thee."[229]

"I have not got strings enough to bind him," said Conall.

"That is not my case,"[230] said Duanach I have of cords what will bind back to back all that are in the realm of Lochlann altogether."

Duanach gave the cords to Conall, and Conall bound the Avas Ormanach. He gave his oaths to Conall under the edge of his set of arms, that he was a loved comrade to him for ever; and any one stroke he might strike that he would strike it with him, and that he would not strike a stroke for ever against him; and he left his life with the Avus Ormanach.]

MacNair.

"Thou shalt have that woman whom thou art courting and making love to (a suridh 's a scircanachadh), the daughter of the King of Lochlann," said the Amhus Ormanach.

"Thou shalt have that woman for thyself," said Conall; "it is not her that I am courting and making love to."]

MacGilvray.

The daughter of the King of Lochlann was right well pleased that he had left his life with the Avus Ormanach, so that it might be her own but what should she do but send for Conall.[231]

What should the daughter of the King of Lochlann do but send word for Conall to pass the evening together with the Queen and with herself, and if it were his will that she would not give him the trouble of taking a step with his foot, but that she would take him up in a creel to the top of the castle. Conall thought that much reproach should not belong to one that was in the realm of Lochlann, against one that was in the realm of Eirinn, that he should go to do that. He went and he gave a spring from the small of his foot to the point of his palm, and from the point of his palm to the top of the castle, and he reached the woman where she was.[232]

"If thou art now sore or hurt," said the daughter of the King of Lochlann, "there is a vessel of balsam (ballan fiochshlaint), wash thyself in it, and thou wilt be well after it."

He did not know that it was not bad stuff that was in the vessel. He put a little twig into the vessel, so that he might know what thing was in it. The twig came up full of sap (snodhach) as it went down. Then he thought that it was good stuff, and not bad stuff. He went and he washed himself in it, and he was as whole and healthy as he ever was. Then meat and drink went to them, that they might have pleasure of mind while passing the evening, and after that

[229] "The d---l has sworn by the edge of his knife."--*Carle of Kellyburn Braes*, Old Song.
[230] Cha 'n e sin domh 's e.--It is not that to me it is.
[231] MacNair gives the following incidents more in detail, and more as matter of fact. The bard, to get food for the warrior, persuades the lady that he has come to court her, and with her consent, takes him food, and guides him to her chamber. He places a drawn sword between them, and never speaks. The bard sleeps on the stair outside; the king's men seek in vain for Conall; and in the morning the bard explains the mystery of the drawn sword to the lady, who is content. And so it happens thrice, when Conall feels able to fight the lady's brother, and the lady finds that the warrior is faithful to his first love, and the bard a cunning deceiver. This incident is very widely known in popular tales. *See* the "Arabian Nights," Grimm, etc. "Gu de am fath ma 'n do rinn se è mata?" orsa ise. "Tha," orsa Duanach, "tha e a los ma bhitheas leanabh gille eadar sibh gu am bi e na fhear claidheamh cho math ris fein." Thuirt ise, "Ach na an saoillinn sin dheanainn a bheatha ciod air bhith doigh air an tigeadh e."
[232] Thug e leum o chaol a choise go barr a bhoise, 's o barr a bhoise go mullach a chaisteil.

they went to rest; but he drew his cold sword between himself and the woman. He passed the night so, and in the morning he rose and went out of the castle. He clashed his shield without, and he shouted battle or else combat to be sent to him, or else Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidheann. It was battle and combat he should get, and not Breast of Light, for she was not there to give him.

Then the daughter of the King of Lochlann called out. "Art thou there, my brother?"[233]

"I am," said her brother.

"Well," said she, "it is but little count that thou hadst of me. That man who has made me a woman of harrying and hurrying, to whom I fell as a wedded wife last night, not to bring me hither his head to my breakfast, when I am greatly thirsting for it."

"Faire! faire! watch, oh queen," said he, "if thou hadst asked it sooner thou hadst not got it slower. There are none of men, small or great, in Christendom, who will turn back my hand."

He went, and before he reached the door, he set earthquaking seven miles from him. At the first (mothar) growl he gave after he got out of the castle, there was no cow in calf, or mare in foal, or woman with child, but suffered for fear. He began himself and Conall at each other, and if there were not gasgich there at work it was a strange matter.]

MacNeill.

They drew the slender gray swords, and they'd kindle the tightening of grasp, from the rising of sun till the evening, when she would be wending west; and without knowing with which would be loss or winning. Duanach was singing iolladh to them, and when the sun was near about west.[234]

Then the daughter of the King of Lochlann cried out for Duanach acha Draodh that he should go down to give the urging of a truewise bard to her brother, to bring her the head of the wretch to her breakfast, that she was thirsting greatly for it.

BARD.--From a cross near Dupplin.

Duanach went, and if he did, it was not at the back of the King of Lochlann he went, but behind Conall.

"Oh, Conall," said he, "thou hast not told me yet if it be thou. When thou art not hastening thine hand, but making heavy thy blow! and level that wretch that ought to be in a land of holes, or in clefts of rock, or in otters' cairns! Though thou shouldst fall, there would be no wife or sweetheart crying for thee, and not so with him."[235]

Conall thought that it was in good purpose the man was for him, and that it was not in bad purpose. He put his sword under the sword of the King of Lochlann, and he cast it to the skies; and then he gave a spring himself on his back, and he levelled him on the ground, and he began to take off his head.

[233] According to MacNeill it was her father; and as the young king goes away afterwards and is married, I follow MacNair. MacNeill killed a brother at landing. MacNair left him alive to p. 245 be introduced further on, so I have altered one word in MacNeill's account of the fight, and assume that Prince Cheery fire was a younger brother of the young king.

[234] Tharruing iad an claidheamhainn caola glasadh a's dh' fhadadh iad teaneacha dorn, o'n a dh' eireadh a ghrian gus am feasgar tra bhithidh i a dol siar.

[235] As this is a kind of chorus, and probably old, I give the original. Nur nach 'eil thu luaireachadh do laimh, ach a tromachadh do bhuille, agus a bhiast sin a bo choir a bhi 'n talamh toll, na'n sgeilpidh chreag na 'n carn bhiasta dugha leagail! gad a thuiteadh tusa, cha bhiodh bean na leannan a ghlaoidheadh air do shon, cha b' ionann sin a's esan.

"Still thy hand, Conall," said Duanach achaidh Draodh," little is his little shambling head worth to thee.[236]]

MacNeill.

You are long enough at that game, throw away your swords and try another way. They threw away their swords, and they put the soft white fists in each other's breasts; but they were not struggling long till Conall gave the panting of his heart to the young King of Lochlann on the hard stones of the causeway.[237]

Said Conall to Duanach, "Reach hither to me my sword, that I may take off his head."

"Not I, indeed," said Duanach. "It is better for thee to have his head for thyself as it is, than five hundred heads that thou mightest take out with strife. Make him promise that he will be (diles duit) a friend to thee."

Conall made the young King of Lochlann promise with words and heavy vows, that he would be a friend to Conall Guilbeanach, the son of the King of Eirinn, in each strait or extremity that might come upon him, whether the matter should come with right or unright; and that Conall should have the realm of Lochlann under cess.[238]

When the King of Lochlann had given these promises, Conall let him up, and they caught each other by the hand, and they made peace and they ceased.

And the young King of Lochlann gave a bidding to Conall that he should come in with him to his great house, to dine with him; and the young king set a double watch upon each place, so that none should come to disturb himself or the young son of the King of Eirinn, while they were at their feast.]

MacNair.

A churchman was got, and the Amhas Ormanach was married to the daughter of the King of Laidheann.]

MacGilvray.

When each thing was ready the royal ones sat at the great board; they laid down lament, and they raised up music, with rejoicing and great joy]

MacNair.

[236] MacNeill, who goes on to repeat the binding of this warrior in the same words. For variety, I substitute MacNair's description of the same fight, which he, like the other, repeats several times as a kind of chorus.
[237] Chuir iad na duirn bhogadh ghealladh an cneasadh a cheile, ach cha bu fhada a gabh iad do an ghleachd gus an tug Conall cneadhaiseach a chridhe do righ og Lochlann air clachan cruaidh a chausair. As written by Dewar.
[238] Fo chis, tribute or subjection. It seems almost a hopeless task to make romance reasonable, and yet I am convinced that these are semi-historical romances, When it is certain that Norse sea-rovers, were actually settled in the Hebrides, and wandered from America to Constantinople, and levied tribute wherever they could; when it appears from their sagas, which p. 248 are believed to be almost true history, that these raids were often made in single ships, and when simple Icelanders fought with Orkney earls and Norse kings, and Norman adventurers conquered England; it seems possible that one of the body guard from Constantinople might become "Emperor of the world" in the Hebrides, and a voyager from Greenland "king of the green isle that was about the heaps of the deep;" and that such exploits as these men performed might be magnified, and applied to a Celtic warrior by Celtic bards; or that a Celtic warrior may have done as much. It is admitted that Irish priests had found their way to Iceland before the Norsemen went there, and if so, perhaps Irish warriors may have been pirates or varangians, and successful in forays on the Vikings, as Vikings were in Irish forays. We believe the Sagas, so far as they are reasonable; why should not truth be sifted from these romances also.

and they were in great pleasure of mind. Meat was set in the place for eating drink in the drinking place, music in the place for hearing; and they were plying the feast with great sport in the dining-room of the King of Lochlann,]

MacNeill.

and they so liking and loving about each, taking their feast.

The soldiers were without watching, to guard the big house of the king, and they saw a great tasbarltach[239] coming the way; they had such fear before him that they thought they could see the great world between his legs. As he was coming nearer, the watch were fleeing till they reached the great house, and into the passage, and from the passage into the room where were the young King of Lochlann and the Young son of the King of Eirinn, at their feast; and the great raw bones that came began to fetter and bind the men, and to cast them behind him till he had bound every one of them; and till he reached the young King of Lochlann, and he and the big man wrestled with each other.]

MacNair.

He drew his fist and he struck the King of Lochlann between the mouth and nose, and he drove out three front teeth, and he caught them on the back of his fist;[240]]

MacNeill.

but the end for them was, that the young King of Lochlann was bound and laid under fetters, and thrown behind together with the rest;]

MacNair.

and the big man gave a dark leap and he seized the bride, and he took her with him.]

MacGilvray.

Conall gazed on all the company that was within, to try if he could see any man rising to stand by the king. When he saw no living man arising, he arose himself.]

MacNair.

"Let that woman go," said he; "thou hast no business with her." That he would not do.]

MacGilvary.

He gave a spring, he caught the slender black man between the two sides of the door (bhith), and he levelled him; and when he had levelled him, he let the weight of his knee on his chest.

"Has death ever gone so near thee as that?" said Conall.

"It has gone nearer than that," said the slender black man.

He let the weight more on him. "Has he gone as near as that to thee?"

"Oh, he has not gone; let thy knee be lightened, and I will tell thee the time that he went nearest to me."

"I will let thee; stand up so long as thou art telling it," said Conall.[241]]

[239] Large, lean boned, savage and swarthy.--Dewar.
[240] MacNeill, who says he was a slender black man.
[241] MacNair's version is almost the same in different words. This has some resemblance to the story of Conall, Nos. V. VI. VII.; but the adventures of this man are quite different. Macgilvray gives the same story.

Conall loosed the young King of Lochlann and his men from their bonds and from their fetters, and he sat himself and the young King of Lochlann at the board, and they took their feast; and the big man was cast in under the board. Again when they were at supper the king's sister was with them, and every word she said she was trying to make the friendship greater and greater between her brother and Conall. The big man was lying under the board, and Conall said to him, "Thou man that art beneath, wert thou ever before in strait or extremity as great as to be lying under the great board, under the drippings of the waxen torches of the King of Lochlann and mine?"

Said be, "If I were above, a comrade of meat and cup to thee, I would tell thee a tale on that."

At the end of a while after that, when the drink was taking Conall a little, he was willing to hear the tale of the man who was beneath the board, and he said to him, "Thou that art beneath the board, if I had thy name it is that I would call thee; wert thou ever in strait or extremity like that?

And he answered as before.

Said Conall, "If thou wilt promise to be peaceable when thou gettest up, I will let thee come up; and if thou art not peaceable, the two hands that put thee down before, will put thee down again."

Conall loosed the man who was beneath, and he rose up aloft and he sat at the other side of the board, opposite to Conall; and Conall said,

"Aha! thou art on high now, thou man that wert beneath. If I had thy name it is that I would call thee. What strait or extremity wert thou ever in that was harder than to be laid under the board of the young king of Lochlann, and mine?"

STORY OF THE KING OF SPAIN.

Said he--"My name is Garna Sgiathlais Righ na Iospainde (Garna Skeelance, king of Spain.)[242] Let me tell you the hardest strait in which I ever was.]

MacNair.

I was once a warrior, and the deeds of a warrior were on my hand well enough, and I was on my way to the dun of the king of Laidheann to take out Breast of Light with right strong hand; and I saw Mac a-Mor, son of the king of the Sorcha, and the most beauteous drop of blood that I ever saw upon his shoulder. I never saw a woman that I would rather wish to have for myself than that woman. I was working with my own sword at him as high as the band of his kilt. He had but the one duan (song) for me--'Wilt thou not cease, and wilt thou not stop?' but I gave no heed to him.[243]]

MacNeill

He fell upon me, and he bound me, and fettered me, and set me on the horse before him, and he took me to the top of a rock. The rock was high, and he threw me down the rock, and if I had fallen to the bottom I had gone to little morsels, but so it was that I fell into the nest of a dreagan.[244] When I came to myself I looked about me, and I saw three great birds in the nest,

[242] It is not easy to put a meaning on these names; there are two Gaelic words which are like Sgiathlais, and which have appropriate meanings; one means winging about, the other storytelling. MacNeill gives neither name nor country. It might mean "Cut of the tale-telling," because the episode cuts the story in two. Old MacPhie did not give it.

[243] MacNair mounts him on a horse. Macgilvray makes him the king of the universe.

[244] MacNeill says, Cro mhineach, which is a vast bird like an eagle to be found in stories all over the world. Macgilvray says Ghri Mhineach greeveen-each, and I have no doubt the word is the same as Griffin.

and I held my hands and my feet to them, as they were bound, until they loosed them; the monsters! that they might tear me asunder.]

MacGilvray

I saw a cave at the back of the nest, and I dragged myself into the cave, and when the old dreagon would come and leave food for the young ones, I would stay till the old dreagan would go, and then I would come out and I'd take the food from the young dreagans; that was all I had to keep alive upon. But at last the young dreagans found death for want of food. The old dreagan understood that something was eating their food, and she ransacked all about the nest, and she went into the cave.[245]]

MacNair.

She seized me then in her talons; she sailed to the back of the ocean with me; and she sprang to the clouds with me, and I was a while that I did not know which was heaven or earth for me, nor whether she would let me fall in the drowning sea, or on rocks of hardness, or on cairns of stones;]

MacNair.

she was lifting me and letting me down, till she saw that I was soon dead, on the breast of the sea. Though I was not heavy, when I took the brine I was heavy indeed; and when she was lifting me she was spent. She lifted me with her from the surface of the sea as I was dead, and she sailed with me to an island, and the sun was so hot; and she put me myself on the sun side of the island. Sleep came upon herself, and she slept. The sun was enlivening me pretty well though I was dead.]

MacNeill

She had come down at the side of a well, and when she awoke she began at working herself about in the well. I understood that there was iocshlaint, healing in the well, because of how the side of me that was nearest to the well was healing with the splashes of water that the dreagan was putting from her. And I moved the other side of me towards the well, till that side was healed also. Then I felt for my sword; my sword had always stuck by me;[246] and I got it, and I rose up and I crept softly (eallaidh mi) to the back of the dreagan, and with the sword I struck off her head. But it was but simple to strike off her head, by keeping it off. The balsam that was in the well was so strong that though the head should be struck off her, it would spring on again, till at last I got the sword held between the head and neck, till the hag's-marrow froze, and then I got the head and neck driven asunder.]

MacNair.

I did not leave a thong of her uncut, and that is the death that went nearest to me, till the blood dried throughout the island,]

MacNeill.

and when the blood dried I put the dreagan into the well, and I went and I washed myself in it; and so it was that it seemed to myself that I grew stronger and more active than I had ever been before. And the first exploit (gaisge) that I tried to do after that, was to try to contend against the King of Lochlann; and it would have gone with me hadst thou not been here. And my being cast into the nest of the dreagan, and what I bore before I got out, is a harder strait

[245] The other version is the same, less the cave, and there was but one chick.
[246] Claidheamh beag chorr na sgeithe, the little sword of the crook of the shield, according to MacNeill.

and a worse extremity, in my esteem, than to be under the board of the King of Lochlann and thine."

THE STORY OF CONALL GULBAN (PART II)

When Garna Sgiathlais had finished his tale, he said to Conall, "Now, thou man that art yonder, I should like to have thy tale, thy name, thy land, and what is the reason of thy journey to Lochlann." And Conall said--"My name is Conall Guilbeannach, son of the king of Eirinn." And he told his own tale.[247]

The sister of the king of Lochlann was listening; she grew sorrowful, and the drops rained from her eyes when she understood that Conall had another sweetheart. She arose, and she left the room, and she was heavy and sad. Duanach followed her to console her, and put her in order as best he might. She took a ring from her finger, and she sent it to Conall by Duanach.

Conall turned Duanach back with it to herself again. He said that he had a ring from another on his finger already, since he had got no gift (tabhartas) to give it to her, as eiric.[248]

She sent Duanach back again with the ring to Conall, and she asked him to wear it for her. Conall took the ring and put it upon his finger.]

MacNair.

"Thou must go with me," said Conall to Garna Sgiathlais, "in search of that woman Breast of Light."

"It is easier for me to bear death than to go to meet that man any more."

"Thou wilt find death where thou art, then," said Conall.

"It is certain that if I am to suffer death where I am that I will go with thee," said the slender black man.]

MacNeill.

"The young king of Lochlann said that he would go too." Said Conall,

"Who will be a guide to us to take us the shortest way?"

Said Duanach--"I will make a guide for you" (ni mise iull duibh).

Conall and his warriors made ready. The king of Lochlann's sister wished Duanach to stay with her till the rest should come back, but Duanach would not stay.]

MacNair.

Away went Conall, and he rigged a ship, and when the ship was rigged he took with him the slender black man, Duanach acha Draodh, the king of Lochlann, and the Amhus Ormanach; they sailed, and crew enough with them, and they reached the realm of the Sorcha.[249]]

MacNeill.

When they reached, Duanach went into the house of Mac-a-Moir, and he said--"Hospitality from thee, A Mhic-a-Mhoir."

"Thou shalt have that, A Dhraoth aoith."

[247] Here the heads of all that has gone before are given in the original.
[248] This gives eiric the meaning of a forfeit or fine.
[249] According to MacNair there were but two champions on board.

“Champions to fight from thee, great warrior.”

“Thou shalt have that, thou Druid.”

“A sight of Breast of Light,” said Duanach.

“Thou shalt have that, Druid,” said Mac-a-Moir.

Duanach got a sight of Breast of Light, and he told her that Conall had come with his warriors to take her from Mac-a-Moir, and Breast of Light was pleased, for she was tired of being kept there.

Duanach came out, and he told it to Conall, and the next day Conall came to the landmark of Mac-a-Moir. He clashed his shield--”Yielding or battle upon the field.”

“Yielding thou gettest not in this town,” said Mac-a Moir; “though it were but speech it was a mark to Mac-a-Moir to come out to try a combat with Conall.”[250]]

MacNair.

“I should go up to seek the thing I want,” said Conall.

“Well, indeed, thou shalt not. There promised to fall first none but me,” said the slender black man. I will go up before thee, and I will come to thee with word how the place is up before thee.”

The slender black man went up, and he shouted battle or combat, or else Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidhean, to be sent out. That he should have battle and combat, but not Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidhean.[251]

[250] Geill na comhrag air an fhaiche. Geill cha ‘n fhaighe tu anns a bhaile so orsa, Mac-a-Moir, Ga d’ b’ e bu chainnte s’ a bu chomhra do Mhac-a-Moir a tighian a mach dh’ feuchahinn comhrag ri Conall; as written by Dewar.

[251] The Barra version (MacNeill’s) here varies considerably from the Cowall version (MacNair’s). There is more incident in the latter, which I have followed; but the language of the former is more curious. It is wilder altogether, and savours more of an old Bardic composition. It is, in fact, the version of a practised narrator, who cannot read. All the fights, are described by both the men in nearly the same words; but each has a different set p. 257 of phrases, though sometimes they are very like each other. When these are rapidly given, the effect is that of a kind of chant; something which, with music, would almost be a rude chorus; and might be so uttered as to express the battle.

The Barra battles are thus arranged, and they have that kind of symmetry which pervades Gaelic popular tales, as they exist in the islands.

1*st*, The slender, dark man, who, according to MacNair, is the King of Spain, says that he will not let Conall go first on shore, because he has promised to be the first to fall. He lands, and strikes his shield. Five hundred Lughghaisgeach, and as many Treunghasgeach are sent out; he slays them all, and lies down amongst them.

2*d*, Conall, in the ship, says that he has fled, and offers again to go himself; but the Amhas Ormanach has sworn to fall first, and he goes. He finds the dead hosts, and thinks the plague is in the place, and keeps to windward; but his comrade is alive, and tells him that he must do as much as he has done; so he clashes his shield, and there come 500 lughghaisgeach, 500 treunghaisgeach, and 500 langhaisgeach (a larger number, and the last of higher rank, full heroes)--these he slays, and lies down.

3*d*, The scene on board is repeated, and the King of Lochlann goes, and repeats the scene on shore; slays 1500, and lies down. To complete the symmetry, the first should have killed 500; the second, 1000; and the third, 1500.

4*th*, Conall says he was wrong to trust his matter to any other, and goes himself, followed by Duanachd acha Draodh, repeats the scene on shore, and is told by his comrades that the King of Sorcha has none alive now, but his “beag chuideache,” small company, and that he will rather come out than send them. They will not interfere unless Conall flees.

So far, then, the whole goes on increasing to the grand climax--which is the drawing of the great foe, the victory of the hero, the death of the villain, and a happy wedding; and this is no solitary instance of such an artificial arrangement, but is the principle on which a whole class of similar tales are arranged. From this symmetry, and

the rhythmical jingle which pervades the language, I feel convinced that the island versions are the oldest, and that the mainland versions, though better preserved as to incident, have lost somewhat of their original shape. There is as much difference in the stories, as there is in the manners of mainlanders and islanders, and that difference is very much greater than is generally known.

Mae-a-Mor Mae Righ Sorcha comes out to answer Conall "and the step of Conall was back, and not forwards;" but Duanach stands behind, and urges him with the words given above, perhaps. words which have really been spoken by bards in real fights--and Conall casts up the sword of his foe to the skies, "he leaped on his back, and struck off his head." Then the head was aiming straight at the trunk; but Conall, by the advice of Duanach, put the iron on the neck, and the head played "gliong" on the sword, and sprang up again to the skies. Then Duanach shouted, "step on one side; the head is aiming at thee;" and he did so, and the head went seven feet into the earth with the force that it had; and here the narrator remarked, "was not that a head I did not Conall escape well!"

Then Conall took the lady from the Castle, and the narrator exclaimed triumphantly, "Was he the dastard of Eirinn now!" The hero and his three comrades, and the rescued lady get into their ship, and reach an island called Na h-Otolia.

Old MacPhie told this part better than I have ever beard a story told; it was exceedingly symmetrical, full of "ruithean" (runs), and very original.

Conall sails to the realm of the King of the Universe, and strikes his shield blow. Soldiers came out, and he slew them; nobles came out, and he knocked their brains out with one of their number; then came the king's son, and he bound his wrists and ankles to the small of his back. He promised to serve him, and they sailed on to some realm, and challenged. The house of the Tamhasg here came in, and Duanach appeared, but he was the son of the King of Lochlann, wounded, and a prisoner. He cured his wounds with white sugar, and another fight took place, nearly the same as the last. They go on with the new king and the half-starved wight, and sail to Sorcha.

Conall lands as a poor man, and learns that the lady is to be married to the king of Sorcha's son, so on the morrow he challenges. He hears men coming, and he says, "Look out; who comes; is that himself?" There came a company in a particular dress (I think the dresses were red, green, and blue), but I did not note it, and I forget. These, said he, are but the servants; go out and slay them. Then came the first of the nobles in another dress, and the same was repeated; then the last of the nobles in another dress. Then came the son of the King of Light himself, and then a fight indeed. Conall conquers, and is about to sail back to Eirinn, when an old man appears in a boat, and challenges. The warriors go one by one, and are slain, all but Conall; then he thinks for the third time of his grandfather, who appears and says, that old man was with me a student of the black art (then a lot of queer words, which I could not catch, and have never heard since), but he could beat him at one art, so they try, and the grandfather wins. After that Conall goes to Turkey, and rescues the King of Eirinn; and by the help of a magic ring he forces the queen-mother to confess that her two sons are not the king's children, and Conall reigns. It will be seen from these abstracts that the version which I have followed is much more reasonable than the common versions. For example--

The Colonsay version, which varies here from all the rest.

When they set off from Lochlann to take Breast of Light from the King of the universe, Conall remembers that his father told him that he might get aid in extremity from Righ na Iorramhaich (the King of the Boat--songsters?). That personage says, "I have twelve sons, and thou shalt get them. I have thirteen sons, but Cod is just married, and Cod has Counsel himself. Reach Cod."

The Counsellor Son, whose name may be translated "What," agrees to go if he has two-thirds of his counsel, till they come back, and away they go, with a kind of Rhyme-list, which is repeated several times.

Dh' fholbh an seo Conall Gulbairneach
'S an t-Amhas Orannach Mac Righ barragh nan sgiath.
'S am Macabh Mor Mac Righ na Sorcha
'S tri Mic dheug righ na h-Iorramhaich
Cead a's Cod a's Michead.
Dabhan Mac Draodh a's Mac Righ Sigil
A dh'iarraidh Uchd soluisd, nighean Righ Laidhean.

Then went Conall Curlew,
And the Savage of Songs, son of the King of Splitting the Shields;
And the great warrior, son of the King of the Light;
And the thirteen sons of the King of the Boat-songsters;
Leave, and What, and Refusal.
Hook, son of Herald, and the King of Seegeel, (Stripe making siogail means streaked, striped.)
To seek Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Leinster
Going past a castle, there cried out

They stood, Conall, the young King of Lochlann, and Garna Sgiathlais, opposite to the house of Mac-a Moir, and they clashed their shields for battle. Mac-a-Moir sent out the three best warriors that were in his realm to battle with them. They drew their slender gray swords, and they went to meet each other, but the combat did not last long till the three heroes were slain.

On the next day Mac-a-Moir sent the Ridire Leidire, the knight, the mangler, his brother, out to try a combat with any one of Conall's warriors who had the heart to try against him.

"Who will go to battle with this hero of exploits to-day?" said Conall.

"Myself," said Garna Sgiathlais," because of how his brother threw me into the nest of the dreagan."

They went to meet each other; they drew their slender gray swords, and the two battled with each other; but long before the sun went west, the Ridire Leidire was slain.

Garna Sgiathlais took off the head, and he opened the mouth, and he cut the tongue out, and he split the tongue, and he struck it three slaps against himself; and he said to Mac-a-Moir--

The great man whose the castle was,
Co sibh a dh' uaislean nan tri rann?
Na ce ur n-ainmeannan?
Na 'ur n-eachdraidh a niotar?
Who are ye of the gentles of the three divisions? (This would seem to indicate a date earlier that the discovery of the 4th division, America.)
Or what are your names?
Or (who) will your histories make?
Conall Gulbeirneach gum b'e m airims' e
Mac Righ Eirinn bu mhor airm
A cheile comhraig fo leon
A shleaghan cha d' fhuir an t-ath-bheo
Conall Curlew, it is my name,
Son of Eirinn's King of Great Arms;
His battle spouse (adversary), under wounds
Of his spears, never got the next life.
They reached the house of the King of the Universe, and the herald went in, and there he found the most beautiful woman that ever was seen from the beginning of the universe to the end of eternity, with two drops of blood on every eye, weeping for Conall.
The herald repeats the list, and she says, "Every Draoth I ever saw was telling lies; if it were Conall he would come in." Accordingly Conall sprang in, and gave her (na tri poga milisde blasda,) the three sweet tasty kisses, and sprang out again.
The King of the Universe yields the lady without a struggle, comes home from his hunting, and asks them all to a feast, a "minister" was got, and they were married.
In the midst of the festivities, a shout was raised that the King of the Universe had fallen in combat with a monster on the strand. Conall got up to help, but Cod bade him sit still; and the king was seen in his chair. This happened a second time; and the third Cod had no share of the counsel, so Conall took his own, and went out.
He found the monster and the King of the Universe dead, sole to sole; and there came a dove from the east, and she was stooping down to the monster with a *leig* (a pebble possessed of medicinal virtues, a chrystal, a talisman), which she had, and the creature was stirring and opening its eyes. He sprang, and took hold of the leig, and took it from the dove.
"Give me my leig," said the dove, "and I will bring thy father and brothers alive in the Tuirk."
"If thou wilt do but that, I will do it myself," said Conall. He seized the dove, and pulled his head off; and who came to meet him but Cod. Then Conall and Cod and Dubhan and the lady went to Turkey, and found out the graves of the king and the rest, and brought them alive, and took them home; and the descendants of these people are still in Eirinn--
Said John Macgilvray, labourer, Colonsay, July 9, 1860.

“There, that is for thee, for how thou didst cast me into the dreagan’s nest.”

At night Duanach went into the house of Mac-a-Moir, and he said--

“Hospitality from thee, Vic-a-Voir.”

“Thou shalt get that, thou Druid.”

“Warriors to combat Conall to-morrow, Vic-a-Voir.” Thou shalt get that, thou Druid.”

“A sight of Breast of Light,” said Duanach.

“Thou shalt get that, thou Druid,” said Mac-a-Moir.

Duanach got a sight of Breast of Light, and he told her each thing as it was going on outside of the dun, and she was sorrowful that so much blood was being spilt for her; and Duanach came out, and he gave the tale of Breast of Light to Conall.

On the next day Mac-a-Moir himself came out to try a combat with any one who had the heart to go to try him.

“Who will go to battle with the hero of exploits today?” said Conall.

“Myself,” said Garna Sgiathlais, “for the day that he cast me down the rock to the dreagan’s nest.”

They came in front of each other; they drew their slender gray swords, and they kindled a fire of fists with their swords, from the rising of the sun till she was going west; but at last it went with Mac-a-Moir to level Garna Sgiathlais, to bind him and fetter him and he took him with him, and he cast him into a den of lions that he kept for pastime for himself, and--Mac-a-Moir would not come out again till the end of two, days.

When the night came Duanach went into the house of Mac-a-Moir, and he said--

“Hospitality from thee, Vic-a-Voir.”

“Thou shalt get that, thou Druid.”

“A sight of Breast of Light,” said Duanach.

“Thou shalt not get that,” said Mac-a-Moir; and then Breast of Light was put into a dark chamber, where she could not hear voice of friend, and where she could not see light of sun.

When the battle-day of Mac-a-Moir came, he came out, and he clashed his shield.[252]

“Who will go to battle with the hero of exploits today?” said Conall.

“Myself,” said the Young King of Lochlann.[253]

They came in front of each other; they drew their hard thin swords, and they went to battle with each other. But long before the sun went west, the young King of Lochlann was levelled, bound, and fettered, and taken away, and cast into the den of lions, where Garna Sgiathlais was; and Mac-a-Moir would not come out any more to hold battle till the end or five days-Duanach went in every night of these to seek food, and he got it; and on a night of these nights he asked for warriors to hold battle against Conall.

[252] There seems to be a regular system in this series of battles. The victor in the last battle now comes out and gives the challenge.

[253] Here there, is a hole in the story. The King of Lochlann ought clearly to have some quarrel to avenge, but he has none; and the King of Spain had two fights for the same quarrel, which is entirely against regularity and order.

"Thou shalt get that, thou Druid," said Mac-a-Moir. A hundred full heroes were sot in order before the great house on the next day.

It seemed strange to Conall to see the host going into order at the front of the big house; and he asked if there was any knowing what was the meaning of that host going into order, in ranks, at the front of the big house this day.

Said Duanach, "I thought thou wert finding the time long here, not doing anything, and I asked for warriors to combat with thee."

"I have no wish myself to be slaying men without knowing why; and, besides, how should I contend against a hundred full heroes, and I alone?" said Conall.

"So many as thou dost not slay with thy sword I will kill with my tongue," said Duanach.[254]

They went to meet Conall.]

MacNair.

The smooth lad looked from one to two; and where they were thickest, there they were thinnest; and where they were thinnest, there were none at all there.]

MacNeill.

He struck them under, and over, through, and throughout; and those who were thinnest, were most ill scattered; and as many as were dead of them were lying down; and as many as were hurt, they sat; and the rest that were alive of them ran away.[255]

And when the five days of delay that Mac-a-Moir had were gone past, Conall went to the fence of his house.

Mac-a-Moir had a bell on the top of his house, and he was a warrior, any one who could strike a blow on the bell; and when a blow was struck on the bell, unless Mac-a-Moir should come out, then he was a dastard (cladhaire). Then when Mac-a-Moir was eating his breakfast, Conall went up upon the top of the house, and he struck a blow on the bell, and he drove the tongue out of the bell; and the tongue fell down through the house, and down through the board at which Mac-a-Moir was taking his food; and Mac-a-Moir said, "Ha, ha! comrade, it was easier to hold battle against thee on the day of Bein Eidinn than on this day."[256]

[254] This is like a sly allusion to the romantic and untrue side of the tale, and to the poetical license of bards such as Duanach.

[255] Sheall an gille min o h-aon go dha 's far am bo tiughe end 's an a bo tainn' eud 's far am bo tainn' end cha robh gin idir p. 266 ann,]
MacNeill.
Bhuail e iad fodh-pa tharta trid us rompa 's a chuid a bu tainne dhiubh gu am b ia bha a bu mhi-sgaoltiche, 's a mhead a marbh dhiubh bha iad nan luidh 's a mhead 's a bha leointe dhiubh bha iad nan suidh agus an corr a bha beo dhiubh theich.]
MacNeill.
Mr. Fraser, Inverness.--Thoisich è air an arm Lochlannach a sgathadh air an darna ceann gus an deach e mach air a cheann eille. Far am bu tiuch eud, san a bu tainn end, 's far am bu tainn eud san a bu luaidh shiulach eud; far am bo luaidh shiulach eud, san bo luaidh a mharbhadh eud; gus nach d' fhag e ceann air con, ach aon fhear chloain ruaidh.
He began at slicing at one end of the army of Lochlann till he went out at the other end; where they were thickest they were thinnest; where they were thinnest they were swiftest; where they were swiftest they were soonest slain, till he left no head upon hound, but on one gleed old man.

[256] Compare the battle chain of the giants in No. 58, vol. iii. In old romances there is always a horn, or some other instrument. for making a noise, hung up at the door of the castle, for the challenger's special convenience. Compare St. Patrick's bell.

Mac-a-Moir came out to hold battle. Conall clashed his shield, and he said, “Yielding, or battle on the field.”

“Yielding thou gettest not in this town,” said Mac-a-Moir. Though it was but speech, it was a sign for Mac-a-Moir to come out, to try a battle with Conall.

They drew their slender gray swords, and they kindled a fire of fists, from the rising of the sun till the evening, when she would be going west; without knowing with which of them the victory would be.

Duanach was singing “iolla” to them, and he said, “You are long enough at this play; throw from you your swords, and try it another way.” They threw from them their swords, and they put their soft white fists in each other’s breasts, and they wrestled, but they did not take long at the wrestling, till Conall give the panting of his heart to Mac-a-Moir on the hard stones of the causeway. “Stretch hither my sword,” said Conall, “until I reap the head off him.”

“I will not stretch it,” said Duanach. It is better for thee that thou shouldst have his head for thyself as it is, than five hundred heads that thou mightest take out with strife,” said Duanach; “take a pledge of him that be will be faithful to thee.”

Conall made him promise that he would be faithful to Conall Guilbeanach, son of the King of Eirinn, whether the matter should come under right or unright; and that the realm of Scorcha should be under cess to the realm of Eirinn; and Mac-a-Moir gave these pledges to Conall, and he bound himself with words, and with weighty vows. Conall let him aloft; they caught hold of each other’s hands, and they made peace with great friendship, and they were quiet.[257]

Then the first thing that Conall did was to go to the den of lions, to see if his two comrades were alive, and they were; for it is as left with the lions that they will not touch, and that they will not do any hurt to kings, or to the clan of kings.[258]

And Conall took Garna Sgiathlais and the young King of Lochlann out of the lion’s den, and he loosed each bond and fetter that was upon them, and they were free and whole.

The next thing that Conall did was to take Breast of Light out of the dark place in which she was, and she was pleased and joyful coming out.

Mac-a-Moir gave a bidding to Conall, and to Breast of Light, to the King of Iospainde, and the young King of Lochlann, to come into his house to take a feast. They went there. They raised music, and they hid sorrow; word was sent for a priest, and Conall was wedded to Breast of Light, and they made a wedding that lasted for the six days of the week, and the last day was no worse than the first,]

MacNair.

and that was the wedding that was cheery. Meat was set in the place for using, and drink in the drinking place, and music in the place for hearing. They plied the feast and the company with joy, and pleasure, of mind, and long was there mind of the wedding of Conall and Breast of Light.]

[257] According to the Barra version, the Amhas Ormanach here went home to his own country; and as he does not appear again, p. 267 it is to be hoped that he went home to his wife, the Princess of Norway.

[258] Oir tha e mar fhagail aig na leomhainn nach buin iad agus nach dean iad dolaidh air bith air Righrean na air clann Righre. (As written by Dewar.)
Here, according to Macgilvray, Conall acquired a talisman from a mysterious pigeon, and fell in with a monster which slew and was slain by the King of the Universe. (See *ante*).

MacNeill.

But there was much envy (farnaite) with the young King of Lochlann, Garna Sgiathlais, and Mac-a-Moir at Conall, to see him married to one so beautiful, modest, and learned, and that they themselves should be wifeless, and they thought her like was not to be found. Each one of them was as anxious as the rest that her like should be his as a wife, and they left it to Breast of Light to say who was the other one that would come nearest to herself in look, learning, and modesty. She said that there was Aillidh, daughter of the King of Greece, but it was by mighty deeds that she would be got (sar ghaisge).

The three kings made it up that they would go to seek Aillidh, daughter of the King of Greece. Breast of Light was unwilling that Conall should go with the rest, but the rest would not go without him, and when she saw that she consented.

It was left to Conall to say which of them was to get Aillidh, and Conall said, "Since the King of Lochlann was the first king who had come under cess to him, that he was the first for whom he would get a wife." Duanach wished to go with them, but Conall left him to be a king, and to take care of Breast of Light till be should come back.

Away went Conall, young son of the King of Eirinn, Mac-a-Moir, son of the King of Sorcha, and Garna Sgiathlais, King of the Hispainde, to get Aillee (Beauty), daughter of the King of the Grayke (Greece),--for the young King of Lochlann to wife, and they reached Greece.[259]

An old man met them that was their guide. He gave them a tale about the realm of Greece, the desire of the hosts, the battle; the form of the arms, and the customs of the country (miann sloidh, feachd; 's rian nan arm, agus cleachdanan na ducha), and he told them the tale of the King of Greece, and how his daughter was kept in the dun, and that no one at all was to get Beauty, daughter of the King of Greece, to marry, but one who could bring her out by great valour; and the old man told them about the wall that was for a bulwark (daingneach) round about the dun, how many heroes and soldiers there were in the inside of the ramparts; and besides, that there was no way to get Beauty but by strong battle, brave deeds, and ruse (feachd làdir, sàr ghaisge, agus seoltachd). Conall went, and the three other kings, aloft up a mountain that was above the dun of the big town of the kin so that they might see what was going on below beneath them. They lighted upon hunting bothys (bothain sheilg) in the mountain, and they went in into them, and they were there all night, and on the next day they found old clothes in the hunting huts.

Conall put on some of the old clothes which they found, to go in the semblance of a poor lad, to try if he could get to the inside of the gates (cachlaidhean) of the dun of the king's town, and he said to the other kings if they should hear on the third day a hunting cry, or any terror (faoghaid na fuathas), that they should run swiftly to help him. He went, and he reached one of the gates (geata) of the dungeon (daingneach), and he was as a shy boy, ill-looking,

[259] This, at first sight, appears utterly extravagant, if only from the distances, but the story is not more improbable than similar romances in other languages. It is far less improbable in Gaelic than it would be in French or German. A glance at the story of Burnt Njal will she w that in the eleventh century locomotion was p. 270 not the difficulty for the Western Islanders; for example, Audun, an Icelander, before 1066, and within two years, sailed from Iceland to Norway, and thence to Greenland, back to Norway, and thence to Denmark, to give the king a white bear. He made a pilgrimage to Rome, and returned to Denmark and Norway again, and went home to Iceland with a big ship, having conversed on equal terms with the Kings of Denmark and Norway, and this story is believed to be true. The countrymen of Audun fought in Ireland in 1814, and got the worst of it, and one who was at the battle went to Rome, and returned to Iceland. In short, supposing this to be a romance of that period, nothing is more in accordance with probability than that a lot of warriors should set out in search of kingdoms and princesses along the sea-coast of Europe, and that their adventures should be woven in with the romances of the Western Islands of Scotland, which the Norsemen possessed.

without the look of a man, without the port of a lad, or a dress of armour (mar bhallach moitire mi sgiamhach, gun aogosg duine gun dreach gille, na culaidh armachd).

He reached the gate-keeper (fear gleidh a gheata), but that one would not let him in. He asked him what he sought, and Conall said that he had come to see if he could get teaching in feats of arms, nimbleness, and soldier-craft (ionnsach an iomairt arm, luth chleas, ‘s gaisge). The gate-keeper sent word for the ruler of the fort (fear riaghladh an duin), and he came and he asked Conall whence he was. Conall said that he had come from the neighbourhood (iomal) that was farthest off of the realm. The high ruler asked him what customs the people of that place had, and if they tried to do any feats?

Conall said that they used to try casting the stone of force (clach neart), and hurling the hammer.[260]

The high ruler asked Conall to come in, and he Set some to try putting the stone against Conall. Conall could throw the stone further than any of them, and they saw that he had no want of strength if there were enough of courage in him.

A stick sword was given him, and they were teaching him swordsmanship, and Conall was coming on well. But it was little they knew about the teaching that Conall had got from the Gruagach of Beinn Eidinn before then. Conall made himself acquainted with the keeper of the arms, and he was exceedingly anxious to get a sight of their arms-house, but the armourer said that could not be done, for fear of the high ruler of the dun. But on the morning of the third day, when the governor was eating his breakfast, the armourer said to Conall, that if he were able enough now, that he might act a sight of the armoury before the high man who ruled the dun should come out from his morning meal.

Conall went with him swiftly, and the man who was keeping the arms opened the armoury (taisg airm). Conall went in and he looked amongst the arms, and he spied great glaives at the furthest off end of the armoury. He went where they were, and he began to try them, he would raise them in his hand, and brandish them, and some he would shake out of their hilts (ceana bhairt), and others he would break. The man who had the care of the arms began to shout to him that he should come out, but Conall was pretending that he heard him not. Conall would look at the swords, and some were rusted, and some were not. At last he found a sword that pleased him.[261]

He was going the way of the door of the arms-house with it, and the man who had the care of the arms was begging him to put it from him, but Conall gave him no heed, and the man who had charge of the armoury said--

“If the high governor of the dun comes he will take the head off me for letting thee in.”

When Conall was at the door the governor came in, and he desired Conall to put away that sword. If he knew the name of the man who had had that sword that he would not be long

[260] I myself once tried a match with a small Greek shepherd in a sheep-skin capote, in a glen near the top of Mount Parnassus. He had guided me there, and we were waiting in hopes a mist would clear away. To keep ourselves warm we fell to at putting the stone, leaping, and hop-skip-and-jump. Such games prevailed in ancient Greece long ago, as they still do in the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland. The hitch in romances is in the language. Heroes must have been great linguists, but even that hitch is here met, for the old Irish king was educated in Italy and Greece.

[261] This incident is told in Uist of a man whose grave is shewn there still. The “armoury” is a “barrel,” but it is the same incident told as a fact. I believe it to be a bit of popular lore of unknown antiquity, for it is common in stories.

putting it from him that; his name was Mor ghaisge na mor ghleadh. Great valour of the great tricks.

“You may give it that name still,” said Conall.

The high governor said that he would drive the head off the man who had the care of the arms for letting Conall into the armoury, and off Conall for taking the sword out.

“Take thou care that it is not thine own head that will be down first, comrade.”

The high governor called for his men. Conall struck the head off the high Governor, and he gave a hunting whistle (fead fhaoghaid), and the people gathered with their arms about Conall.

He struck them, under them, over them, through and throughout them; where they were thickest there they were thinnest; where they were thinnest they were most scattered.

The king came out, and he said to Conall, “Thou man that came on us a-new; hold on thy hand, and thy blade.[262]

The three other kings came to the gate, but they were not getting in. Conall ran to the gate, and he struck it a kick, and he drove it into splinters. Then came the King of Lochlann, and the King of Light, and the King of the Hispainde, in with their arms. The people of Greece fled back, and the King of Greece said--

“Oubh bhoubh ouv vouv!” “What a wonderful turn has come on the matters! It was in the prophecies that a son of a king of Eirinn would come, and that he would lay the realm of Greece under cess, and instead of that is an awkward fellow of an ill-looking boy, that came and put the realm under cess.”[263]

Said Conall, with a high voice, Thou King of Greece, take not thou each man according to his seeming.[264] I am Conall Guilbeinich, son of the King of Eirinn, but it is not to put the realm of Greece under cess I am come, but to take out Beauty, thy daughter.

Said the King of Greece, “Thou shalt have Beauty, my daughter, and two-thirds of my realm while I myself am alive, and the whole after my death.”

Conall asked that Aillidh should be brought out, and she came, and she was right willing to wed Conall, but Conall told her he was married already to Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidhean; and the King of Greece said--

“If thou hast got Breast of Light, it is no wonder though thou shouldst not take my daughter.”

Conall told Beauty that she had her two choices, to take the King of Lochlann, or be without a husband; and she preferred to marry the young King of Lochlann.

And word was sent for a priest; and Aillidh, daughter of the King of Greece, was wedded to the young King of Lochlann, and they made a wedding that lasted for the six days of the week, and the last day was no worse than the first day.

And when they were at the wedding, they asked Aillidh, the bride of Lochlann’s King, who was the next one that was nearest to her in beauty and comeliness, virtue and learning. And she said that there was Cuimir,[265] daughter of the King of Na Frainge (the Franks, France).

[262] Fhir a thainaig oirnn as ur cum air do laimh ‘us do lann.
[263] This is the idea which, in No. 58, has expanded into another shape. The King of Greece and the first giant were clearly once the same personages.
[264] This is the very foundation of all popular tales; the most despised is the most worthy.
[265] Well formed, neat, trim. Carbad cuimeir Chuchullin.

Conall. asked Garna Sgiathlais if we were willing to take that one as a wife, and he said that he was. Conall asked Aillidh where Cuimir was dwelling, and Beauty told that she was in the great royal house, and that there was a great fortress wall about the great house, and that there was a lion on either side of the gate, that was in through the wall, and that there was the house of the Tamhaisg, the best warriors that the King of France had, a little further on; and the Tamhaisg were proud and merciless to any over whom they might gain victory.[266]

The valiant kings made ready to go to France, but Aillidh was not willing to part with her new married husband, but the other warriors would not part from him; he must needs go with them, till they should put an end to all the valorous deeds they had to do, before they could get wives for Garda Sgiathlais, King of Hispania, and Mac-a-Moir, son of the King of Scorcha.

The four valorous kings put each matter in order in Greece as best they might, and they left Beauty in the care of her father till the King of Lochlann should come back. They went to France and when they reached France they took a tale from each traveller that met them by the way, and so they got guidance to the great royal house, and when they reached the gate, that was without in the fortress wall, there was a great lion at either side of the gate, but that put neither fear nor sorrow upon them,[267] because it is as a charge left with lions that they will not injure kings, or the clan of kings. And Conall went on past the lions, and no one of them stirred his head at him. He reached on forward to where the Tamhasgan were, and they began gnashing their teeth,[268] making ready to spring upon him. He took sure notice of them, for the thick-knobbiest one and the thin-shankiest of them. He compassed them, under them, over them, through and throughout them; and he seized on the two shanks of the thin-shankiest one amongst them, and he was driving out the brains of the rest, with the knob of that one, and the brains of that one with the knobs of the rest, till the part that was thickest of them was thinnest, and the lot that was thinnest they were the most ill scattered.

The King of France came out, and he said to Conall.

“Thou man that hast come on us from a strange land, withhold thy blade and thine hand; slay not my warriors wholly; these are the Tamhaisg, the best warriors I have to guard the great royal house; but they are but as reeds in the front of a meadow before thee. How camest thou past the lions?”

“Thou and thy lions!” said Conall I will go down past thy lions, and I will come up past thy lions, and they will not touch me; and I will bring up three other warriors, that are down here, and the lions will not touch them.”

Garna Sgiathlais Mac-a-Moir and the King of Lochlann came up past the lions, kings were they, and a clan from kings all together, and the lions did not stir their tongues against them.

The King of France asked whence they were, and Conall told that he was Conall Guilbeanach, son of the King of Eirinn, and he shewed the young King of Lochlann, and Mac-a-Moir, son of the King of Sorcha, and Garna Sgiathlais, king of Hispania; and he told him that it was not to disturb France they had come,[269] but to take out Cuimir, daughter of the King of France, to be wife to Garna Sgiathlais King of Hispania.

Said the King of France, “He shall get that.”

[266] “Gu borb aniochdmhor ri feadhainn air bith air am faighe iad buaigh.
[267] Eagal na smuairean.
[268] A casadh am fiacall.
[269] A chungais-each na Frainge.

Cuimir was brought out, and the matter was hidden, and it was Conall she would rather take, for it was he that had done the bravest deeds; but Conall told her that he was wedded already to Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidhean, and that the young King of Lochlann was wedded to Aillidh daughter of the King of Greece, and that it was Garna Sgiathlais, King of Hispania, she was to have. Cuimir was willing to take the King of Hispania, so that she might be a queen in a realm that was near the realm of her father. Word was sent for a priest, and the wedding was done, and they made a wedding that lasted for the six days of the week, and the last day was no worse than the first day.

When they were at the wedding they were talking about who they should get for a wife for Mac-a-Moir; and they left it to be said by Cuimir, the young Queen of Spain. Who was the one that was fittest, in her esteem, to be a wife to Mac-a-Moir. And she said that there was Deo Greine nighean righ an Eilean Uaine.[270] They asked her if that one was to be got. She said that she was not, but by exceeding valour; that there was a fortress wall round about the dun of the king, and that it discomfited the heroes; that Deo Greine would be in a turret that was on the top of the dun, and that none but a valiant warrior could get her; but if Mac-a-Moir should get her, that he had no cause to regret that he was the last of the kings who had got a wife.

Mac-a-Moir was longing to begone in pursuit of Deo Greine, and the rest were as willing and well pleased as himself.[271] When they were at the feast, the King of France was setting a ship in order for them. Cuimir, daughter of the King of France, was not willing to let her new married husband, Garna Sgiathlais, away with the rest, but when the rest saw that, they would not go without him. When Cuimir understood that, she agreed to let him go with them.

The King of France set his slender ship in order for them, with a crew of disciplined, active, strong, hardy men, and the four honourable kings went on board, and the Frenchmen sailed with them to the shore of the Green Island.[272]

They brought the ship to port,[273] and they put Mac-a-Moir and the three gallant kings who were with him on shore, and they themselves sailed back, home to France.

They went on forwards to the dun of the town of the King of the Green Island, taking a tale from each traveller and journeyer that might fall in with them. They got on till they reached the fortress gate of the dun of the king's town. Conall. struck at the gate, and the gate-keeper asked what they sought. Conall answered that they came to seek Sunbeam, daughter of the King of the Green Isle, to be wife to one of them. Word was sent for the high Governor of the dun, and he came, and he asked them who they were, and what they sought. Conall. told him that they were kings, and they had come to seek Sunbeam as a wife to one of them. The high Governor said that they should not get her but by exceeding valour; that they must hold a battle against the warriors of the dun, and gain victory over them.

[270] Sunbeam or breath, daughter of the King of the Green Island. Who this mythical personage may be, I cannot make out. The Green Island occurs continually, and is the land of wonders, beyond the sea. I have surmised that it might mean America. That the Son of Light should marry the daughter of the mythical Green Isle in the west, where the sun sets, seems all right, and the warriors are working westwards. I had imagined that Sorcha might possibly be same as Sarkland of Icelandic Sagas, but that is identified with Africa, Saracen land, and would not fit this story, here, at all events.

[271] Togarach aighearach.

[272] Chuir Righ na Frainge a chaol loingeas air doigh air an son, le sgioba do dhaoine foghluinte, easgaidh, ladir, cruadalach; is chaidh na ceithir righrean uramach air bord.

[273] Calla. Compare Calais.

Conall asked who was the sturdy hero that would go first to battle against the warriors of the dun.

“Myself,” said Mac-a-Moir. “If I am to get the daughter of the King of the Green Island as a wife, I will shew that I am worthy to have her.”

They were asked in, and they went.

Warriors were got to combat Mac-a-Moir, son of the King of Sorcha. They drew their blades, and Conall, and Garna Sgiatlais, and the young King of Lochlann were singing iolla to them. But they had not taken long of the contest, when Mac-a-Moir struck the head off the champion of the Green Isle.

Said Mac-a-Moir to the Governor, “Pick up the champion’s head, and get me another one.”

Another was got; but they had not taken long at the combat when Mac-a-Moir struck the head off that one too. He asked for another, and another was got, but it was not long till the head went off that one in like manner.

The King of the Green Isle was taking sport at them, and he said--

“I see, my hero, that thou wouldst slay my men altogether, one after another, if thou hadst chance of arms. I am not for spilling more blood; I will try it another way.

My daughter is in a turret, that is at the top of the dun, and the man that can take her out shall get two-thirds of my realm while I live, and the whole of my realm when I die; I am but an old man, and it is not likely that I will be long alive now, at all events.[274]

The way was shewn them to the turret, in which was the king’s daughter, at the top of the dun.

“Who is the first man that will try to take the king’s daughter out of the turret?” said Conall.

“Myself,” said Mac-a-Moir.

The turret was aloft, on the top of three carraghan ard, lofty pillars.

Mac-a-Moir went, and he did his very best, but he could not get aloft; he thrust the pillars hither and thither; he tried every way he knew, but it discomfited him.

“Who will try it again?” said Conall.

“Myself,” said the young King of Lochlann. He went, and tried as well as he could, but he could not level one of the posts that was beneath the turret, but it beat him.

Said the King of the Green Isle, “I perceive, my men, that it will not go with you to take my daughter out of the turret. Many a man has striven to take her out, but it went with none of them, and I see that it will not go with you any more; you may be off home.”

“Well, then, if it does not go with us to bring her out, it is a great disgrace to us,” said Conall.

He went and he struck a kick on one of the posts that was keeping the turret aloft, and the post broke, and the turret fell, but Conall caught it between his hands before it reached the ground, A door opened, the Sunbeam came out, the daughter of the King of the Green Isle, and she clasped her two arms about the neck of Conall, and Conall put his two arms about Sunbeam, and he bore her into the great house, and he said to the King of the Green Isle, “Thy daughter is won.”

[274] This is a very common saying amongst old Highlanders, here put into the mouth of the king. Cha Veil annam ach sean duine an nis, ‘s cha’n ‘eil a coltach gu’ m bi mi fada beo a nis co dhiubh.

Sunbeam was very willing to stick to Conall, but Conall told her that he was married already to Breast of Light, daughter of the King of Laidheann, and the King of Lochlann was wedded to Beauty, daughter of the King of Greece, and that Garna Sgiathlais, King of Hispania, was married to Comely, daughter of the King of France, and that Great Hero, son of the King of the Light, was the only one of them that was unmarried.

The King of the Green Isle was pleased when he understood that they were honourable kings altogether, and that his daughter had been taken out with honour; and he said that he would give two-thirds of his realm while he was alive, and the whole after his death, to the one that his daughter should have, and that he was an old man, and that he would not be long alive altogether. Every one of them was married but Mac-a-Moir, and he was the most unblemished amongst them. Though Mac-a-Moir was not so handsome as the rest, he was a stately, comely, personable man; and Sunbeam said that he was the husband she would have, and word was sent for a priest, and Sunbeam, the daughter of the King of the Green Island, was wedded to Mac-a-Moir, son of the King of Light, and they made a wedding that lasted for the six days of the week, and the last day was no worse than the first day, and if there were better there were, and if not let them be.

When the other heroes found that Mac-a-Moir was married, they were in great haste to go home to see their own wives.[275]

The King of the Green Isle set in order a great high masted white-sailed ship. There was a pilot in her prow, and a steersman in the stern, and men managing the rigging-ropes in the middle. Each meat and each drink as seemly for kings was put on board.[276]

When each thing was ready, and each matter arranged as it ought to be, Conall, son of the King of Eirinn, Garna Sgiathlais, King of Hispania, and the King of Lochlann left a blessing with the King of the Green Isle, with Mac-a-Moir, and Deo Greine, and they went on board of the ship. The shipmen sailed with the ship, and they sailed to realm of Sorcha, with Conall, the son of the King of Eirinn.[277] Conall reached the dun of the big town of Sorcha, came to Breast of Light and Duanach, without their having hopes of him, and they rejoiced with great joy to see him. Conall and Breast of Light were a while merry, and joyously, and fondly about each other, and Duanach was blithely and cheerily with them,[278] and when Conall had spent a while cheerily joyously with Breast of Light and Duanach, he began to think it long that he was not hearing from the realm of Iubhar how the fight was coming on between his mother's brother and the Turks,[279] or if his father or brothers were yet alive. He thought that he would go to the realm of the Iubhar to see. He wished to leave Duanach, as he was before, to take care of Breast of Light and the realm, but Duanach would not stay. If Conall would go the realm of Iubhar, Duanach would go with him. Breast of Light wished Conall to go first to Eirinn to see if each thing were right in Eirinn, but his own counsel was best with Conall, and he wished Duanach to stay. But this is what Duanach said, "If thou goest, Conall, to the realm of Iubhar thou wilt fight, and I will be needful enough for thee."

And so it was agreed that Conall should take Duanach as a servant and counsellor.

[275] Here I omit a recapitulation of the wives, and their countries.
[276] Long ard-chranach bhreidgheal air doigh. Bha iull na toiseach, fear-stiurr aig a deireadh, 's fir iomairt na' m ball beart na buillsgain. Chaidh, gach bidh, 's dibh, mur bu clubbraidh do righre a chuir air bord.
[277] MacNair here sends the two kings home, but, according to MacNeill and the rest, Conall and two comrades sailed to the realm of the Turk. So I leave out a paragraph.
[278] Gu aighearach aobhach speiseil ma cheile 's Duanach gu sunndach sodanach comhla riu.
[279] If Iubhar were a corruption for Jewry, then the geography would be right, and this might be a romance found on something to do with wars in the Mediterranean.

Breast of Light, and Conall, and Duanach, went away.[280]]

MacNair.

Then he took with him the woman on board of the ship, and when he and his men were returning he was running out of provisions. There was an island here which they called Eilean na h-Otolia. The man who was over the island was (so) that if he was for giving food it could be got for money, and if he were not he had three big dogs, and he would let them out, and they would kill them all.

Said the slender dark man to Conall, "I would rather myself thou wouldst stay out of it, than go into it."

"I myself would not rather stay than go, I will go and I will get it; but if you see that he is not willing to give it to me, you will leave me the front, and you will stay behind me, if so be that he hounds the dogs at us," said Conall.

He went up to the house, and he asked if he could get food. He said that they should not, that plenty were asking for it who were more likely to get it than he.

He let out the dogs. Every one of the company stood at the back of Conall, and he himself went to the front, he caught a napkin and put it about his fist. Each one as he came, he was seeing his liver down through his mouth, from the rage that he had towards the men. He thrust his hand into the mouths of the dogs, one after another, and he took the heart and the liver out of them, and he killed them.

"Come now and you shall get food," said the man who was over the island.

"Thou mayest give that now, but I will not give thee one 'sgillinn' for it; unless thou thyself hadst been a 'Trusdar,' a stingy filthy wretch, thou hadst got payment; but since thou wert so dirty, thou shalt not get payment, and we shall get meat in spite of thee."

"That is easy enough for you now," said he. "But hast thou heard how it has befallen the King of Eirinn and the King of Laidhean; they were fighting the Turk?"

"Well then I have heard how it has befallen these doubtless; the battle went with the Turk, and all the company that the King of Eirinn, and the King of Laidhean had, have been slain; and the Great Turk has the King of Eirinn, and the King of Laidhean bound back to back, under cats, and dogs, and men's spittle, and with shame and insult on themselves and on their hosts, that came to give battle and could not do it."

"That story is sad for me to hear, but though it is, keep thou this woman for me till I come back from these men."

"Well, then," said he, "I will not keep her, I have no way of keeping her. The thing that I had myself for that, thou thyself hast put me in want of it."

"Unless thou hadst been such a Trusdar of a man as thou wert, I had not put thee in want of it, but thou must keep this woman, or else there will not be much of the world for thee, after letting her go," said Conall.]

MacNeill.

He went and he left the woman, and when they reached the realm of Iubhar the fighting was going on, Conall and Duanach did not go to the house of the king but to a hostelry. They got their supper that night and they went to bed. On the next morning Conall's waking was to

[280] This is shortened.

hear shouts of hosts and clash of armour;[281] heroes starting, commanders arraying soldiers to go to give a day of battle to the Turks. Conall arose and Duanach, they put on them their army and their armour of battle, and they went to the fight on the side of the people of the Iubhar. The fighting began and Conall was mowing down the Turks as though it were a man who was cutting down sow-thistles. There was one big man amongst the Turks, and he was mowing down the people of the Iubhar in the same way. It was not going with any one to slay him, and they thought that no arms could touch him. He and Conall met each other in the fight. They tried their nimble feats upon each other, and Conall slew the big Turk. When the Turks saw that their champion was slain they fled; and the people of the Iubhar followed the rout,[282] and they thought that they had not left many of the Turks alive. In the night the people of Iubhar returned back, and they thought they would have peace on the next day and no one of them could understand who he was, the hero that had slain the big Turk, that had done them so much skaith.[283]

As on the other days Conall and Duanach went to the hostelry where they were the former night, they got food and bed, and they thought, by the number of Turks that had been killed, that the war was at an end, and they went to sleep.

The King of the Iubhar had never seen Conall before; but it seemed to him, by the look of his face,[284] that he was of the people of Eirinn. They went to rest that night full of joy, thinking that the Turks would not bring any more trouble upon them. But no matter. What they got in the morning was, the tale of horror that the Turks were coming forward as numerous as they ever were. They had for it but that they must arise, and put men in their harness, to go to give a day of battle to the Turks again; and Conall's morning waking was to hear the shout of the chiefs calling out their soldiers to give a day of combat to the Turks.[285]

Conall sprang out of his bed and he put on his array and armour,[286] and he went with the host of the Iubhar to battle against the Turks. When the two hosts met each other, Conall saw the big Turk that he had slain the day before coming forward that day again, and mowing down the people of the Iubhar as he used to do.

Conall was mowing down the Turks till he and the, big Turk met each other, and tried their agile valour upon each other that day again; and the big Turk was killed again that day by Conall. When the Turks saw that their champion had been slain, they fled, and the people of Iubhar followed the rout, and killed so many of the Turks, that it seemed to them there were not many of them to the fore, and they returned joyfully, cheerily, thinking that there was an end of the war. When Conall returned to the hostelry, he ate his supper and lay down to sleep.

It seemed to the King of Iubhar, that the man who had done the great feats of valour was his sister's son Conall, and he went to inquire about him. He heard that it was in the hostelry that the gallant man was dwelling, and the king reached the inn.

Duanach knew him, and the king asked Duanach if his master were in.

"He is," said Duanach, "but he is in his sleep, and I will not wake him."

"I am anxious to see him," said the king.

[281] Oighich sluaidh 'a gleadhraich arm, clisg air gaisgich cumandairean a cuir an ordugh shaighdearan, gu dol a thobhairt latha blair do na Turcaich.
[282] An ruaig.
[283] Dolaidh.
[284] Fiamh a gnuis might, mean terror of his countenance.
[285] Eigh nan ceaunairdean, a gairm a mach nan saighdearn, gus, latha comhrag a thoirt do na Turcaich.
[286] Eididh a's armachd.

“If thou choosest thyself to go to wake him,” said Duanach, “thou mayest, but I will not wake him.”

“What is thy country?” said the king.

“It is,” said Duanach, the country from which my master came.”

“What is the country[287] whence came thy master?”

“That,” said Duanach, “is the realm whence came the King of Eirinn.”

“What is his name?” said the king.

“It is,” said Duanach, “Conall Guilbeanach Mac do Righ Eirinn.”

“Tell Conall, when he wakes, that his mother’s brother came to visit him, and that he wishes to see him at the house of the King of Iubhar to-morrow.”

“I will do that,” said Duanach.[288]

On the next day the Turks were coming on to drive the battle as they used, against the host of Iubhar; and it was rustling of plumes, and shouting of hosts,[289] that awoke Conall. Then there were chiefs setting soldiers in order to go to bold battle against the Turks. Conall arose and put on his armour, and as soon as he could, and he went with the people of Iubhar to the battle. Conall saw the big Turk coming opposite to him the third time; and Conall killed the big Turk the third time, and the rout went over the Turks. The people of Iubhar followed them, and they slew the Turks with a great battle;[290] and when no more of the Turks were to be seen., the host of Iubhar returned.

It seemed to Conall that there was something that was to be understood going on in the field of battle in the night; and he ordered Duanach to go to the hostelry to take his sleep, and that he himself would stay to watch the slain.[291] Duanach went a little way from Conall, and he stayed to watch Conall.

When the night grew dark there came a great Turkish Carlin, and she had a white glaive of light with which she could see seven miles behind her and seven miles before her; and she had a flask of balsam[292] carrying it.

And when she would reach a corpse, she would put three drops of the balsam in his mouth; she would strike three slaps on their hurdies, and she would say, “Get up, and go home; thy kail will be cold,”[293] and they would rise and go.

She was going from one to one, and bringing them alive,, and they would be ready to come to fight again on the next day. At last she came where Conall was himself; she put three drops of balsam into his mouth, and hit him three slaps, and she said, “Get up, and go home, thy kail will be cold.”

[287] Co i an duthaich. Who she the country?
[288] This is a good instance of the strange jumble of ideas which are found in popular tales. Here is Conall, the hero of romance, lodging at an inn, supping and going to bed like a Highland drover p. 289 while the king walks down in the evening, and calls and leaves a message with a gille, to invite the warrior to the palace, exactly as a hospitable Highland farmer often does when he hears of a stranger at the country inn, and asks him to his house. According to MacNair, this was the King of Eirinn, but as he was a prisoner or slain according to the others, I have substituted the uncle for the father.
[289] Is b’e fuaim dhos, is eidhich sluaigh.
[290] H-ar.
[291] Na àh-raice.
[292] Buideal lan iocshlaint.
[293] Eirich ‘s rach dachaidh bithidh do chàl fuar.

Conall sprang up suddenly, and she knew that he was not of the dead Turks, by his sudden rising, and she fled. Conall stretched out after her; she threw away the flask of balsam that she had, and the white glaive of light, but Conall ran till he was up with her; he gave a stroke of his sword, and he made two halves of her. He turned back, and he found the white glaive of light, but he could not find the flask of balsam. He was seeking it back and forwards, and hither and thither, and at last he saw Duanach, and he shouted.

"Is that thou?" Duanach.

"It is I," said Duanach; "and it well for thee that I am here."

"Hast thou got the flask of balsam?" said Conall.

"I have," said Duanach.

Duanach took the flask of balsam where Conall was, and Conall gave the white glaive of light to Duanach to lead the Turks who had been brought alive out of the field, and Conall went to sleep since he could do no more good till he should sleep; and he put the flask of balsam under his head, and he slept. Duanach went away with the sword, and he led the Turks out of the field; he led them through mosses and bogs, and when he found that they were in a dangerous place he would put the sword out of sight, and the Turks could not see, and they would fall into holes, and they would go down into marshes (criathraichean), and into well-eyes (suiltean-cruthaich), and they would be drowned. And again, he would bring the sword in sight, and the sword would shine, and the Turks that had not been drowned would follow, and Duanach would lead them through places where there were many scaurs, and Duanach would put a covering on the white glaive of light, and darkness would come, and many of the Turks would fall amongst the scaurs; and when they were out of that peril Duanach would bring the white glaive of light into sight to let them see, and he would lead them amongst crags; and he would hide the sword, and the Turks would lose their way, and they would go over the crags. It was thus that Duanach followed on till be had put an end to all the Turks by leading them over crags, and through scaurs, and amongst bogs. Then Duanach turned back to where Conall was, and be staid near him till he had got his sleep over. When Conall awoke, Duanach told him how he had done with the Turks, and Conall was pleased that the war was over.[294]]

MacNair.

Then Conall brought the people that were slain to life with the balsam. He went about the field, and he found one of his brothers there levelled, and he said to Garna Sgiathlais, "Come thou and take this one with thee, and take care of him till I come back." He looked, and he searched about, and he found another of his brothers, and he put him on the back of the King of Lochlann, and he asked him to take him with him.[295]]

MacNeill.

He went in where his father was, and the Great Turk came out on his hands and knees.]

MacPhie.

He found his father and the King of Laidheann bound. He loosed his father and the King of Laidheann, and he seized nobles as honourable as there were within, and he bound them instead of his father and the King of Laidheann.

[294] Here there is a hole in MacNair's version. No use is made of the balsam. It is evident that it ought to be used, and so I follow MacNeill and the Colonsay version.
[295] These were the Amhas Ormanach, and the slender black man, King of Spain, according to MacNeill.

Then he asked what death the Great Turk was threatening for his father and the King of Laidheann. They said that he was threatening to bang them to an oaken beam that was within, and to thrust two iron darts through the bodies of each one of them. “The very death with which he threatened you I will give to him,” said Conall.

He seized the Great Turk and he hanged him, and he thrust the darts through his body, and he did the very same to another great noble.[296]]

MacNeill.

The King of Eirinn was right well pleased, and that day they had peace. The King of Eirinn took Conall before the King of the Iubhar. The King made great rejoicings at seeing Conall, and because Conall had give peace to the realm of the Iubhar. No less would suffice the brother of Conall’s mother than that Conall should be crowned King of the realm of Iubhar. The nobles of the realm (flathan na Rioghachd) were gathered, a great feast was made, and Conall was crowned King over the Iubhair; but though he was he did not stay in that realm. He was in haste to see Breast of Light.]

MacNair.

He took his father with him and the King of Laidheann and they sailed to the island (na h-Otolia). They took Breast of Light on board out of that realm and they put the young King of Lochlann on shore in a fitting place for going to Greece, and Garna Sgiathlais on shore in France.]

MacNair.

They sailed to Eirinn,] and they sent a gille on foot, and a gille upon the top of a horse, and another gille swifter than that, to tell the Queen of Eirinn that the king was coming home, and that Conall was married, and that he and his wife were coming home with the king. When the message came to the Queen of Eirinn, that was the joyful tale for her. She made a great preparation that she might have a feast ready for them, and a cheery company gathered to give them a royal welcome, and when the King of Eirinn, Conall, and Breast of Light came home, there were there to welcome them, Duncan MacBrian, Murdoch MacBrian, Frenzy, and Whitebelly, red men from Mull, boatmen from Lorn, the brave blinding band of the King of Eirinn, and the great gentles of the realm, together as many as there were of them at the time.[297]

They had a hearty feast, with joy and solace; they raised music, and laid down lament, and each one was content, they never saw such rejoicing before; and when the people thought the time fitting to go home, each one went to his own place, and there was peace and quiet in Eirinn.

Conall and Breast of Light thought that they would go to the realm of Laidheann to see her father. They made ready a ship, they went on board, and they sailed: they reached the realm of Laidheann, and the king had no hope or expectation of them at the time, but he saluted them, and made them welcome.]

[296] MacPhie’s version agrees.

[297] Donacha MacBhrian, Muracha MacBhrian Taoig a’s Tarragheal fir dhearg o Mhuile fir chronaigea Latharna Buidheann chròdhalanda righ Eirinn. Agus mor maithean na rioghachd gu. leir mhead a’s a bha leis diubh san am.

I am not sure of the whole of this translation; the spelling of the scribes being somewhat independent of rules, these quaint old passages are not easily rendered. Cronnag, means a kind of basket. Crannag has the meaning of a boat, and this may mean the corracle meu of Lorne. Their passage from Eirinn was early enough to have been made in such vessels, and the name may have stuck to them.

MacNair.

Each thing was set in order to make Conall and Breast of Light happy and merry.[298]

And Conall and Breast of Light stayed in the realm of Laidheann till they had their first son, and they were happy and pleased together, but that she had had a cut slicing tongue at odd times, as happed to many of the women, and sure am I that Duanoch Achaidh Draodh stuck to Conall, and that his counsel was ever truly wise and truly moderate.]

MacNeill.

And again, their son was crowned Emperor of Eirinn, and King over--the realm of Laidheann, and over the realm of Iubhar, and he had the realm of Lochlann, the realm of Sorcha, the realm of Greece, France, and Hispania, under cess, and so be they left.]

MacNair.

According to MacPhie and others, Conall was the king's son, by a girl, who was daughter of a mysterious old man, and he was a comrade of the Finne, and lived underground; he is a magician always. Conall, at the end, puts a ring on the Queen's finger, it tightens, and forces her to confess that her sons are not the king's children, and Conall reigns as the king's only son. This incident ends several long Gaelic stories of the same stamp as this long-winded history of Conall Gulban, which has the name of being the best of its kind.

JUNE, 1861.--MacNair tells me that his authority, Livingston, was an old tailor, not the shoemaker mentioned by Dewar; and he adds, that several passages in which his story seems to vary from MacNeill's, are, mistakes made by the scribe.

There were three champions on board when they sailed from Lochlann, and two sailed to the realm of the Turk, so that all my authorities agree.

The Gaelic passage, page 293, is one of those which often give a clue to other stories and traditions; which are clearly old, easily remembered, and hard to explain. Wishing to get all I could out of it, I asked several men to translate the passage and the names, and to give any reason for the epithets. The variety in these translations will perhaps be the best excuse which I can give for my own shortcomings, so I give a few examples.

First, Scribe who wrote down *what he heard* according to my special request:--"Duncan MacBrian and Murdoch MacBrian, Passionate, and White Belly; Dearg's men from Mull, and Fortress men from Lorn; the King of Eirinn's valiant band, and the great chieftains of the realm, altogether all that were with him at the time (at the wars)."

This gives the sound "derag" as the proper name "Dearg," which "translators" made "Dergo," and which means Red; and it localizes an Ossianic hero in Mull. It gives "chrònaig" (genitive of cronag), the value of "fortress," and suggests the wattled forts found in lakes and mosses, which are, I believe, called cranogues by the learned in such matters. This is the simple country translation of an intelligent man, and it throws light upon the traditions and antiquities of his country.

Second, from a gentleman who for a quarter of a century has been occupied about Gaelic books and translations; a native Highlander, who is an authority in Gaelic writings, and lives in a city, but who had nothing to guide him but the words before him:--"Duncan, son of Brian; Murdoch, son of Brian; Thadeus and Whitebelly, ruddy men from Mull,

[298] Gu sonadh aiteasach.

swarthy men from Lorn, a valiant band from the King of Ireland, and all the nobles of the kingdom, as many as were with (or adhered to) him at the time."

The same authority informs me that there is a place in Lorn called Cill a chronaig, and another in Mull called Derbhaig.

This simply translates the Gaelic names into their modern English equivalents; Taoig into Thadeus, Murcha into Murdoch, Donacha into Duncan, and so on. It gives the passage reasonably, and as it were historically or geographically; and it differs from the others in the meaning of "chronaig," which it renders "swarthy," from cron, brown; and this is the usual method of translating doubtful Gaelic into English:--freely. I also had translated the passage freely. I was uncertain of the meaning of "Taoig," but as it is the genitive of Taog, a fit of passion, I gave it that meaning rather than assume that it meant Teague, Thaddy, or Thadeus; names which had some meaning once. It is established that a sound like Donacha shall mean Duncan and Muracha Murdoch, so I too followed the stream; but I should have done better to translate the names, for every Gaelic proper name has a meaning, which may be dimly seen in Gaelic, but is utterly lost in its English equivalent. The passage fully translated, as I understand it by the help of my peasant authorities and Armstrong's dictionary, would run thus--"Donacha'"[299] Brown of battle; "Mac," son of the judge (or ruler, or king; the man of words of authority. "Brian,"[300] Breean, Brethon, Bren). "Muracha,"[301] wall of battle; "Mac," son of Brian the ruler; Fury and Whitebelly; the men of the red, from "Muile," the bluff; Wattlefort, or boat-men from the grounds or settlements (from lar, a floor, the ground, etc.; or lathar, an assembly, from Larne, a loch in Ireland; or Latharna, a district of Argyll, now Englished "Lorne"). The camp-winnowing, or blind-valiant, or brave-blinding (chrò or chrodha-dhallan-da, from crò, a circle or fold, or enclosure, or cattle. Or from crodha, active, valiant, etc.; and dallan, a blind man, also a large fan for winnowing; from DALL, because of the blinding dust) hand of the king of the western island or islands (of which Ireland is one, and Great Britain another), and the great good ones of the kingdom altogether, as much as were with him in the time.

Dewar understands "gabhail iola" to mean "taking notice of without joining in what was going on." The first word is the only one used for singing or reciting a tune, a song or story; and it has the meaning of taking, and many other meanings besides. The second is not in dictionaries, and I did not know it; but iuladh and ioladh have nearly the same sound as iolla, and mean fun, sport; Iolach is a shout, mirth; Iùlach, guiding, directing; and from the context I believe the words to mean sometimes, that the lookers on were enjoying the fight, "taking sport;" and at others, that they were shouting or Singing to the combatants. Singing "iolla," a loud-directing or guiding song, such as the words of Duanach to Conall. If I am right, this is a new Gaelic word; if I am wrong I cannot help it, but this will, I hope, excuse mistakes in my translations, for it shews that authorities may differ, and that dictionaries are bad guides. It will also shew the object which I had in view in generally translating as closely as I could, in utter disregard of English composition, rather than freely and according to precedent.

[299] Donn-a-chath.
[300] Brian
[301] Mur-a-chath.
The first might also mean Brownfield. The second might be Murach-a-chath, able of battle; or Murcach, murky, gloomy. The third means "a word, a composition, a warrant, an author;" and it is close to Breith, a judge, to judge; and to the word Brethan, which is applied to a code of Irish laws, and suggests Bren, holy, and our old school acquaintance Brennus.

Dewar translates “Dos, a sounding horn;” and for “feet following,” he gives “rapid pursuit, toir chas.” He says, “There is an Irish poem about Conall Ghulbain coming to war against the Fiands; he killed many of them, at last Oscar fought him, and it was doubtful for a long time which of them would have victory; at last Oscar struck Conall’s head off and threw it off the battle-field. Music was got to cheer Oscar from his weariness, but the music that was best with Fionn was what happened. It is evident that this tale was composed a long time after the Fiand’s time.” Dewar does not himself understand Irish of some kinds, for I tested him with an Irish blind fiddler whose dialect I could only partially understand myself. I know nothing more about this poem; unless it be “Conull Ghulbuinn,” published by MacCallum, 1816, which is Gaelic taken down in Scotland (162 lines). In this, “Conull” is slain by “Oscar.”

XCII. John, Son Of The King Of Bergen

From Angus Mackinnon (tailor), South Uist.

1--COMHRAG.

“‘Tis the track of the youth beside the ford,
And the great impetuous stride.

2

“‘Tis not the daughter of Locha Luin,
And ‘tis not Diarmaid of the clear eye.

3

“It is not one of the band of Fionn
That wended last night in the heavy glen.

4

“I gathered my garments and wended forth;
The gathering was hard throughout the moss.

5

“I was rushing and bounding,
And the big man hard striding.

6

Then at the time I caught him,
And the precious woman between two scaurs.

7

I asked so quietly of him,
Great man, whence comest thou thus

8--SEATHAN.

But little one, there, little man,
Though thou asked, it was not wise.

SEATHAN MAC RIGH BEIRBH.

1

S lorg an òga seach an t-àth
‘S an ceum rodh a tha ro dhian;

2

Cha ‘n i nighean Locha Luin;
‘S cha ‘n e Diarmaid an ruisg ghlain;

3

Cha ‘n e h-aon a chuideachd Fhinn;
A dh’ imich an raoir ‘san troma ghleann.

4

Thruis mi m’ aodach ‘s thar mi as;
Feadh na mointich bu gharbh truis.

5

Bha mise na m’ ruith ‘s na m’ leum,
‘S am fear mor ‘s e ‘na chruaidh cheum.

6

An sin an uair a rug mi air,
‘S a’ bhean leig eadar da sgoir.

7

Gn ‘n d’ fhiosraich mi dheth gu foil,
“Fhir mhoir ciod as mar seo?”

8

“Ach fhir bhig sin--ach fhir bhig,
Gad a dh’ fharraid cha bu ghlic.

9

“Thou hadst need bring the whole of the Een,
To find out the race of a single man.”

10--COMHRAG.

“If I should bring the whole of the Een,
A whole bone wouldn’t be thy body within.

11

“That which they would not crush with their hands,
Sure with their breath they would consume.

12

“That was the time, when his weapon he cast,
The mighty spear that was in his grasp.

13.

“That he cast it beyond me, behind,
Seventeen feet into the ground.”

11--SEATHAN.

“Thy trimmed shaft has touched my heart,
And the leech will not make my healing.

15.

“Farewell, and arise to thy house,
Yellow-haired youth of the curling locks.”

16--COMHRAG.

“For thee, it is all the worse,
That thou didst not declare thy race.

17,

“That the head huntsman of Fionn.
Gave thee battle in the heavy glen.”

18--SEATHAN.

“I am John, son of Bergen’s king,
Son of the fierce one of the sturdy tread.”

9

“Cha b’ uilear dhuit an Fhinn uile
‘Thoirt gu slionneadh an aon duine.

10

“An Fhinn uile na ‘n d’ thugainn ann
An cnaimh slan cha bhiodh a’d’ cholainn;’

11

“A’ chuid nach pronnadh iad le ‘n lamhan,
‘S dearbh gu ‘n loisgeadh iad le ‘n anail.”

12

An sin an uair a thilg e arm,
An t-sleagh mhor a bha ‘na dhorn.

13

Gu ‘n d’ chuir e i tharum siar
Seachd troidhe diag anns an talamh.

14

“Bhoin do chrann gleusta do m’ chri,
‘S cha dean an lighich mo leigheas.”

15

“Beannachd dhuit ‘s eirich gu teach,
Oganaich bhuidhe ‘chuil chlannaich.

16

“Gur h-ann duitse ‘s measa sin,
Nach d’ rinn thu do shloinneadh a dheanadh.

17

“Gu ‘n d’ thug gille cinn Choin Fhinn
Comhrag diots’ anns an troma ghleann.”

18

“Mise Seathan, Mac Righ Beirbh,
Mac an fhir ghairg bu mhor trosd.

19--COMHRAG.

“MY name shall be, on coming home,
Combat of five hundred pounds.”

I have not found this fragment anywhere else. This seems to describe a raid made by the son of the King of Bergen, who carried off a woman, and was tracked and overtaken, and slain in a rift by Comhrag of the five hundred hounds, Fionn's head huntman. I am responsible for the division into stanzas of two lines. Siar generally means west; here it means behind, probably, for the same reason, that south and to the right are synonymous. A man facing the rising Sun has his back to the west, and his right hand to the south (deas). The left hand (lamh thosgail), to the north, and the sun (air a Bhevltaobh), on his mouth side, on Baal's side. This may be fancy, but unless some explanation is found, it does not appear how a man can have a north and south hand, and a western back.

J. F. C.

From Angus MacKinnon, tailor, Dallabrog, South Uist, who is a little dark-haired man, with quick-moving grey eyes, and lively, kindly manner. He wears neither shoes, nor stockings, nor bonnet, and seemingly never has. He sings these pieces with considerable pathos, and has a tolerably good voice. He appears to me to be about seventy years of age.

Beirbhe. Dictionaries translate Beirbhe, Copenhagen, but it is more probably the Gaelic form of Bergen, which was formerly the capital of Norway, which is part of the Gaelic Lochlann, as well as Denmark. How Bergen may have passed into the Gaelic Beirbhe, may be illustrated by the frequency with which bh passes into g, or gh, and vice versa; thus, ubh or ugh, an egg; dubh, or dugh, black, etc., *oov oog*, *doo*.

H. M'L.

September 16, 1860.

19

Gur h-e b' aimn dhomh tighinn gu teach
Comhrag nan coig ceudan con.

XCIII. The Master And His Man

From John Dewar.

THERE were at some time ere now bad times, and there were many servants seeking places, and there were not many places for them.

There was a farmer there, and he would not take any servant but one who would stay with him till the end of seven years, and who would not ask for wages, but what he could catch in his mouth of the seed corn, when he should be thrashing corn in the barn.

None were taking (service) with him. At last he said that he would let them plant their seed in the best ground that he might have, and they should get his own horses and plough to make the thraive, and his own horses to harrow it.

There was a young lad there, and he said, “I will take wages with thee,” and the farmer set wages on that lad, and the bargain that they made was that the wages which the lad was to have were to be as many grains of seed as he could catch in his mouth when they were beating sheaves in the barn, and he was to get (leave) to plant that seed in the best land that the farmer had, and he was to keep as much as grew on that seed, and to put with it what seed soever he might catch in his mouth when he was thrashing the corn, and to plant that in the best land which the farmer had on the next year. He was to have horses, and plough, or any other “gairios”[302] he might want for planting or reaping from his master, and so on to the end of the seven years. That he should have seen winters in the barn thrashing, seven springs to plant, seven summers of growth for the crop, and seven autumns of reaping, and whatsoever were the outcoming that might be in the lad’s seed, that was the wage that he was to have when he should go away.

The lad went home to his master, and always when he was thrashing in the barn his master was thrashing with him, and he caught but three grains of seed in his mouth on that winter; and he kept these carefully till the spring came, and he planted them in the best land the carle had.

There grew out of these three ears, and there were on each ear threescore good grains of seed.

The lad kept these carefully, and what grains soever he caught be put them together with them.

He planted these again in the spring, and in the autumn again he had as good as he had the year before that.

The lad put his seed bye carefully, and anything he caught in his mouth when he was thrashing in the next winter he put it with the other lot; and so with the lad from year to year, till at last, to make a long story short, the lad planted on the last year every (bit of) ploughing land that the carle had, and he had more seed to set, and the carle was almost harried. He had to pay rent to the farmer who was nearest to him, for land in which the lad might set the excess of seed which he had, and to sell part of his cattle for want of ground on which they might browse, and he would not make a bargain in the same way with a servant for ever after.

---

[302] Apparatus; also spelt goireas and gairaois.

This story only wants a moral to be a regular fable, and the meaning is so clear that to express it by a moral would be waste of words. Scotchmen, all over, the world, are noted for frugality, and here is the lesson taught by a Celtic peasant to his son. I suspect there has been a numerical puzzle upon the numbers 3, 7, and 20, which is lost. Words relating to agriculture are interesting, and this gives a number of them. I subjoin an attempt at phonetic spelling.

Siol, *sheel*; seed, the young of fish, oats, etc. etc.

Crann, *kr*A*n*; a tree, a plough, a mast, etc., etc.

Cliathadh, *Klee*A*ug*; harrowing, from cliath, basket work of any kind, a bush harrow, from which it follows that ploughs and harrows were made of wood.

Treabh, *Treo*; to till, plough, probably from troimh, through a thraive, a furrow. Sanscrit root, TRA, an instrument of any kind, a plough.

Biceannan, Beeganan; grains, beating, small, diminutive, Bigan.

Bualadh, BooAlug; thrashing beating, striking, hitting.

Sabhal, *SAvul* or *SA-ul*; a barn.

Arbhar, *Ar*A*r*; corn as reaped, standing corn. Sanscrit root, AR, to plough, to cut open; to plough the sea. Gaelic, Eithir, a boat.

Ire, *Eere*; land, also produce. Sanscrit, IRA, earth.

Earrach, *Yarach*; spring, caring time.

Cur, *Coor*; to plant, to put, to set.

Cinneas, *Keenyas*; growth, also kin.

Bar, *B*A*r*; top, point, crop.

Buain, *Booain*; to gather, pluck, reap.

Toradh, *Tawrug*; increase, probably from tor, a heap, a heaping.

Màl, *MA1*; mail, rent.

Tuathanach *Too*A*n*A*ch*; a farmer.

Gaelic omitted

From my father more than forty years ago.---JOHN DEWAR.

XCIV. The Praise Of Goll

From Donald MacPhie, Breubhaig, Barra.

There came a stranger the way of the Finne, and he asked what sort of man Goll was, and Fionn said--

1 High mind of Goll, Fionn's man of war,

2 Broad, burly hero, dauntless and hardy;

3 Fair generous hero, of sweetest speech.

4 His mildness mild, harmless his grace.

5 Of brightest mood, teacher of schools.

6 King-like is Goll, hide it not Fionn.

7 Might of the waves, by valour bright.

8 Lion like hind, valiant in deed.

9 Powerful his hand, choice of the kings.

10 Man friendly kind, forsakes not his friend.

11 In strife of kings, not slack his hand.

12 Crushing his shout, hound-like his might.

13 Youthful and soft, warlike and great.

MOLADH GHUILL.

From Donald MacPhie, Breubhaig, Barra, who says he learnt it from his uncle, Hector MacLaine, Breubhaig, Barra. October I, 1860.--H. M'L.

This is a traditional fragment of the poem given at page 29 of the selections from the Dean of Lismore's MSS. 1530. Of the thirteen lines here given, nine are almost identical with the Gaelic, as given by Mr. MacLauchlan. There are seventy-one lines in the oldest version. The corresponding numbers are here placed opposite to the lines for reference. Another version is printed in Gillies' collection, 1784. Page 34, there are eighteen lines, of which thirteen appear here slightly modified, and in a different order. There are considerable variations in several of the lines, for example, damhail, friendly, is deud-gheal, white-toothed. A fourth version, eighteen lines, was published by MacCallum, 1816, and has five lines which I have not.

XCV. Osgar, The Son Of Oisein

WHEN Osgar was a boy he was sent to a school. When they used to get out at the mid-day, they used to go to play shinny on to a strand that was there. At the time when he was sixteen years of age, there would be a like number of the lads working on each side, and the side on which Osgar might be, that was the side which would hold.

He became exceedingly big, so that there was no one of his contemporaries that he was not twice as much as he. At last there used to be two divisions against him, and one division with him. At last there would be no man with him but himself, and the rest altogether against him.

They were there on a day of these days playing shinny, and they saw a boat coming in, and one man in her, and they never saw a man equal to him. The scholars took great fear before the man when they saw him coming, and they gathered about Oscar, every begotten one of them, to make a protector of him, and this wild man that was here came down where they were, and not a bit of him to be seen but the eyes, with blue-green scales of hardening upon him.[303]

He came towards them, and every one on whom he would strike his palm be would level him on the strand. He struck Osgar and put him in a faint. It was but scarcely that be could rise; but he thought that it was best for him to lie still; if he should get up again that he would slay him utterly.

Then he seized on Osgar, and he put him on the end of a withy, and sixteen of the scholars on top of him, He put the withy on his shoulder, and he betook himself to the boat with it. He put in the withy, "and it's I that was under altogether," said Osgar.[304]

"I am saying to you," said Osgar, "that was as sore a blow as I have had, when be struck my ribs against the boat's floor, and the rest on top of me." Then he rowed the boat away for the length of a time, and he reached an island, and then he caught hold of the withy again, and he put it out. Then he took with him the withy on his shoulder, and I below. He reached a castle, and he went in. He left the withy there, and he went up to the end of the house, and there was a fine woman there. He said to her that he was going to take a nap, and when he should wake that the best hero who was there should be cooked before him."[305]

"She went where the withy was, and she began to feel them. And I was the biggest there. I caught her by the hand, and said to her to let me be for the present. She went and she took with her the best one she found of the others. She put the roasting stake through him, and she roasted him on the fire. Then he got up, and he asked if she had got him cooked. She said that he was. Then he said, "There was a better boy than this there; I am going to sleep, and unless thou hast him cooked when I awake, I will have thyself in his place."[306]

[303] Probably "tempered scale armour;" here a scaly monster. The phrase is not in Gaelic dictionaries, but it occurs pretty often slìgneach chruadhach.
[304] This idea is taken from the common method of carrying fish, viz., on "gad," a withy. A hook is left at the large end of a supple stick, and the small end is run through the gills of a lot of cuddies or trouts. Consequently, the first has all the others upon him, and he often has a rough time of it, for the boys do not trouble themselves to kill their prizes.
[305] That is to say, the castle was in the mind of the narrator a building like his own dwelling; a long room, with the wife at the end of it, beside the fire; and the fine lady was to cook a warrior as his wife would roast a herring.
[306] With proper audience and emphasis, with fish broiling on a peat fire, and a string of cuddies in a corner; with a ruddy light within, and a winter's night outside, this must be a thrilling passage.

She went down then again and said, “I must take thee with me now.”

“That is not best for thee, but leave me alive. Art thou his wife?”

“Not I. It is (so) that he stole me here seven years ago, and I in dread that he will slay me every day. Do thou help me, and I will help thee, and may be that we might put an end to the monster. Put thou the poker in the fire, and when it is red give me notice.”

She did this, and when it was red she gave him notice.[307] Osgar went up then when she loosed him, and he took the poker with him to where he was in his sleep. There was no part of his face bare, with scales of hardness, but his two eyes. He put the poker down through his eye to the ground; and she caught hold of his sword, and she struck off his head.

They went away then, and they took with them silver and gold enough, and Osgar hit upon the spot where they had left the little boat. He did not know to what side he should turn her prow, but they began to row, and they reached the very spot from which they had gone, on the strand. Then he reached the king of the Finne. They took exceeding good care of the woman that was there.[308]

The heroes of the Finne went one day to the hunting-hill, and they parted from each other. They went to a glen that was there, and they did not know that they had ever been in the glen before. They hit upon a kind of burgh there, and a great wild savage of a giant in the upper end of the house.

“What’s the news of the warriors of the Finne?” said he.

“Well, then, we have the news that we had no knowledge of ever having been in this place before.”

He arose, and he put a cauldron on the fire, and a stag of a deer in it.

“Sit,” said he, “and burn (fuel) beneath that cauldron, but unless the deer be cooked when I awake, you shall have but what you can take off his head, and by all you have ever seen do not take out the head.”

They were tormented by hunger, and they did not know what they should do. They saw a little shaggy man coming down from the mountain. “Ye are in extremity,” said he, himself, “why are ye not tasting what is in the cauldron?”

“We are not,” said they fear will not let us.”

They took the lid out of the end of the cauldron, when they thought it was boiled, and so it was that there was frozen ice came upon it.

The old carle got up so wildly, and when he saw the little shaggy man, he laid the one great grasp upon him.

The carle went down, and he asked battle or combat from them. Caolite rose in front of him, and they began upon each other. He was about to have got Caolite under him now, and the little shaggy man got up, and he shook himself.

[307] It is curious how often in this and in other cases the narrator identifies himself for a time with his hero. A story so told becomes a kind of dramatic representation, and the more untutored the narrators the more dramatic they are.

[308] This first adventure is like part of Nos. V. VI. VII., and of a vast number of other stories which I have. It is at least as old as Homer; but as the Gaelic versions invariably introduce a woman, I do not believe that the stories come from Homer. See notes, Vol. I., 156.

“Take notice that I am here,” said he to the giant. He took to the tuft of (fell upon) the giant, and he kept back Caolite. They arose against each other now, and the little shaggy man slew the giant.

“Go now, and be going home.” They went, and they were going before them, but they were not hitting upon the proper road. They saw the very finest man they had ever seen coming to meet them, and he met them, and he asked what was their wish.

They told him that they were seeking (to get) home to the Finne.

“It were right for me, Osgar, son of Fionn,” said he, “to tell the way to thee. I am the ugly man whom ye saw coming through the mountain, and that slew the giant. He has had me under spells for eight years there, and I should have been there for ever, unless thou hadst come to help me to kill him. I am the son of the King of Greece, and it was a sister of mine that thou tookest from the other giant in the island.”

They reached the Fhinn, and the son of the King of Greece and his sister knew each other. He kissed her, and he himself and she herself went, and Fionn, and Osgar, to Greece; and before they came back, Osgar married her.

The Gaelic is omitted to make room.

This then gives part of the early adventures of Osgar. If any reliance is to be placed on early Irish history, he was a real personage; and if so, this, stripped of the marvellous element, would seem to shew that he was carried off by a mail-clad warrior; that he escaped, and made his way to Greece. The reasonable explanation would be that this is part of the history of a sea-rover, who wandered, as the Icelanders did in the ninth century, from Labrador to Constantinople. The cauldron that froze, the more it was boiled, indicates a cold climate. But while there is a reasonable explanation for the story, there is a mythical element which cannot be reasonably explained; and probably the name of Osgar has attracted a lot of floating myths whose origin cannot be discovered.

The following poem relates the death of Osgar, and is more reasonable; it certainly relates to some real event in Irish history. The first volume of the transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin (1853) contains an Irish poem on the “Battle of Gabhra,” which embodies the main incidents, such as:--War between Cairbre, the red-haired, and the Feen; the death of Cairbre and his son, by the band of Osgar; the wounding of Osgar by a spear-thrust from the hand of Cairbre; the arrival of Fionn on the field after the battle; the placing of Osgar on a mound; the examination and nature of the wound, which had been foretold; the weeping of Fionn, who never wept but for Osgar and for Brann; the death of Osgar, and the lament for him. There is enough resemblance to shew clearly that the two poems relate to the same events. There are several stanzas which seem to indicate a common origin, but there the resemblance ends. The two poems are wholly distinct, and probably separated from one another by centuries; and yet they must have had a common origin, unless they are independent accounts of a real event. At page 75 is this stanza,--

When we marched from Binn Eadair.

“The bands of the Fians of Alba,
And the supreme King of Britain,
Belonging to the order of the Fian of Alba,
Joined us in that battle.”

Beinn Eadair, say the Irish authorities, is the Hill of Howth. It is the haunt of the Feen and of Conal Gulban, according to Gaelic stories, if it be Beinn Eudain or Eidain. In the introduction to the Irish poem, which was taken as it appears from a comparatively modern MS., a fragment is quoted, taken from an ancient Irish MS., now preserved in the College Library, and supposed by good authority to have been written prior to A.D. 1150. This contains the incidents of the death of "Oscar" by the hand of "Cairpre," the grandson of "Conn," and the death of Cairpre by the hand of Oscar, "by a mighty spear, on a white horse's back."

It seems, then, that this traditional poem, written from the dictation of a peasant in Barra in 1860, relates to a battle fought prior to 1150, near the Hill of Howth, at which the "Fenians" of Alba were present, and that the battle was called the battle of Gabhra in Ireland. The Scotch Gaelic word used means corpses. The Irish explain Gabhra to mean Garrystown, near Dublin.

At page 25 of the selections from the Lismore MSS., a Scotch poem on the same subject is given. It is attributed to Allan MacRuaraidh, and was written at least three centuries ago. The incidents are much the same, and several lines are common to this traditional version. Another version is quoted as written down in 1856, from the dictation of an old woman in Caithness It is therefore beyond a doubt that this is one of many poems relating to the same ancient event, some of which are orally preserved and still recited, and others are found in MSS. of various ages.

A poem, almost identical, was printed in 1787, at page 313 of Gillies' collection; another version of 120 lines is given at page 167 of the same book; another version, 247 lines, is at page 154 of MacCallum, 1816. The incidents are the opening of Macpherson's Temora, and I have heard of several other versions orally collected. Here, then, are seven Scotch versions--one orally collected in 1860, one in 1856, one in 1816, two before 1886--Macpherson's versions, of doubtful authority, 1760, and Dean MacGregor's MS. version of 1530, besides an Irish book of 1853, and an Irish fragment of some date before 1100; nine Gaelic poems, all different, yet all telling the same story, and there are many other versions.

The conclusion which I would draw is, that this was a Celtic popular ballad, composed to celebrate a real battle between an Irish usurper named Cairbre, and a band of warriors who spoke Gaelic, who were headed by the Osgar (the bounding warrior), who went from Scotland to Ireland on this occasion, whatever his native country may have been; who was the grandson of Fionn, the chief of the Finne, who on this occasion came from Scotland after the battle; and the son of Oisein, in whose person the poet speaks, and who is supposed to be addressing "Padruig." He would be an illiberal Celt who claimed this for Scotland or for Ireland alone, and a very prejudiced critic who could now attribute Temora wholly to Macpherson. This ballad is later than St. Patrick and earlier than 1530. The battle was earlier than 1100; I will not attempt to fix the date of either.

XCVI. The Lay Of Osgar

From Donald MacPhie, Smith, Breubhaig, Barra; and others.

IT was said at that time that Eirinn was the better chase than Albainn; that there were many great beamed deer in it, rather than in this Albainn. It was this which used to cause the Fhinn to be so often in Eirinn; but true Albanian Gaul (Scotch highlanders) they were.

The red-haired Cairbre came in as king over the fifth part of Eirinn, at the southern end. The Fhinn were now over in Eirinn, and Fionn had dwelling-houses in every place in which it was most usual for them to stay.

The ord Fhiann (hammer of Fionn) was a bell. It was not to be struck but in time of great rejoicing, and in time of bard straits, and it could be heard in the five-fifths of Eirinn.

They had a house on the land of the red-haired Cairbre, and they came on the northern side of Eirinn to bunt.

Padruig was asking Oisean--

“Would their set of arms be on them when they went to hunt?”

Oisean said to him--

“Without our armour and our arms;
We should not go to hunt like that.
There would be arms, and stout headgear,
And in each man’s grasp were two great spears.”

When the Fhinn went to hunt to the northward, they left Osgar to keep the house, and three hundred of the old warriors with him, for they were heavy for walking. Said Oisean, when he was going to tell the old story to Padruig.

LAOIDH OSGAIR.

Bha e air a radh ‘san am ud gu ‘m b’e Eirinn a b’ fhearr sealg na Albainn; gu ‘n robh moran de dh’ fheidh chabrach mhor innte seach an Albainn seo. ‘Se sin a bhiodh a’ toirt do ‘n Fhinn gu ‘m biodh iad cho tric an Eirinn; ach ‘se fior Ghaidheil Albannach a bha annta.

Thainig an Cairbre ruadh a stigh ‘na righ air a’ choigeamh cuid de dh’ Eirinn air a’ cheann deas. Bha ‘n Fhinn ‘san am seo thall an Eirinn, ‘s bha tighean comhnuidh aig Fionn anns a’ h-uile h-àite a bu tric leo a bhith stad ann.

Clag a bha anns an ord Fhiannta. Cha robh e ri ‘bhualadh ach an am toil-inntinn mhoir, ‘san am eigin chruaidh ‘s chluinnt’ ann an coig choigeamh na h-Eirionn e.

Bha tigh aca air fearann a’ Chairbre ruaidh, ‘s thainig iad air an taobh mu thuath de dh’ Eirinn a shealgaireachd.

Bha Padruig a foighneachd de dh’ Oisean,

“Am biodh an cuid arm orr’ uile nuair a rachadh iad a shealgaireachd?”

Thuirt Oisean ris,

“Gun ar n-eideadh, ‘s gun ar n-airm,
Cha rachamaid a shealg mar siud;

Bhiodh airm, agus ceannabheart chorr,
‘S da shleagh mhor an dorn gach fir.”

Nuair a chaidh an Fhinn a shealgaireachd do’n taobh tuath dh’ fhag iad Osgar a’ gleidheadh an tighe ‘s tri cheud de na seann laoich comhla ris, o bha iad trom gu coiseachd.

Thuirt Oisean nuair a bha e ‘dol a dh’ innseadh an t-seanachais do Phadruig. ([309])

1--OISEAN.

“I will not style my strain, ‘my Prince,’
How sad is Oisean to-night,
Osgar and the Cairbre stalwart
Ebb away in strife of corses. ([310])

2

“The venomous spear in the hand of Cairbre,
In anger’s hour, how baneful was it;
The raven would utter with fear,
That with it should be slain the Osgar.”

3--RAVEN.

“It is worse,” to himself he’d say
That black raven in his craze,
“These five to be washing about a trough,
Than blood of men to be gorging us.”

4--OSGAR.

. . . . . .
“Why should our own blood choke us?
What weakness is on our eyelids?
That we for such small cause should weep.”

5--WASHERWOMAN.

“The raven will croak to-morrow early
Upon thy cheek in the field of battle;
From the socket thine eye shall be forced;
Out of this thus much will come.”

Said one of the old warriors, as she saw the hue of the blood on the water that she had washing the clothes of Osgar.

1--OISEAN.

“Cha ‘n abair mi, mo thriath, ri m’ cheol,
Cia b’ oil le Oisean e nochd;

[309] This introduction is curious. The Irish tradition is, that Scotland was the hunting ground of Fionn. The lay is part of a dialogue between the old poet and St. Patrick, which savours of Irish extraction; but Barra is a Roman Catholic district.

[310] Cairbhre, abounding in carcases, producing carcases; from cairbh, a carcase. H. MIL. Gabhra, in Gillies. J. F. C.

Osgar agus Cairbre calma,
Traghar iad ann an cath cairbhre.([311])

2

"An t-sleagh nimhe, 's i 'n laimh Chairbre,
Gu'n craidhteach i ri uair feirge;
Theireadh am fitheach ri 'ghiomh,
Gur h-ann leatha 'mharbht' an t-Osgar."

3--FITHEACH.

"'S miosa theireadh e ris fhein,--
Am fitheach dubh 'na mhi-cheill;
A' choigear a' taiseadh mu ([312]) 'n chlar,
Ach fuil fir a bhith 'gar tacadh.

4

"Com' an tacadh ar fuil fhein,
De ghiamh a th' air ar rasgabh;
Nuair a chaoineamaid chaol reachdaibh.

5--BEAN NIGHIDH.

"Gairidh am fitheach, moch a maireach,
Air do ghruaidh-sa anns an araich.
Cuireader do shuil a gluchd;
As an sin a thig na h-uiread."

Arsa fear de na sean ii laoich, 's e 'faicinn dath na fala air an uisge a bh' aice a' nigheadh aodach Osgair. ([313])

6

"Surely it is a shroud thou washest
Red is the look that is upon it,
But until this day had come,
That shroud's spaeing was not evil."

[311] Cairbhre, abounding in carcases, producing carcases; from cairbh, a carcase. H. MIL. Gabhra, in Gillies. J. F. C.

[312] Moistening, Taiseadh. This seems to refer to some ancient method of soothsaying connected with washing clothes. In broad Scotch it is mentioned in an old song, which I quote from memory-
My droukit sark sleeve I was waulking,
His likeness cam ben the house stalkin',
The verra grey breeks o' Tam Glen." In Brittany (Foyer Breton, vol. i., 144), the night washerwomen (kannérez-noz) were a troop of ghosts, which appeared on a certain night in November. They washed, they dried, and they sewed the shroud of the dead who yet walk and talk, singing,--
"Till there come Christians' saviour,
We must bleach our shrouds,
Under the snow and the wind." They asked passengers to help to wring the wet sheets, and if a man turned the clothes with them it was well, if he turned against them he was crushed, and died.
Taisbean, s.m., means a vision, an apparition.
Taisbein, v.a., to reveal.
Taisgeal, s.m., the finding of something lost, and I have heard "an Taistear" used as a term of opprobrium. The collector is unable to explain the passage, but this seems to be an imperfect explanation of it. The raven has been a soothsayer time out of mind.

[313] Araon 's am fear a (laghadh Laoidheadh) dh'e. J. F. C.

7---OSGAR.

“Thou witch there thy clothes that washest,
Make for us a sure soothsaying;
By us shall a man of them fall,
Ere that we all go to nothing?”

8--SHE.

“Five hundred by thee shall die;
Wounded by thee the king’s self;
Thus much, and a man of law (cut) off,
Off the world all that came ([314]).”

9--OSGAR.

“Let him not hear thee, Rasg MacRuaidh,
Nor one that belongs to his people;
Let not the Een hear thee this night,
Lest we be spiritless all.”

10--OISEAN.

“Heard ye of the raid of Een,
The time he wended to Eirinn;
There came the fierce Carbre of spears,
And grasped all Eirinn under sway.

11

“Away went we with eager hurry,
As many Feen as were of us;
We laid our army and our people
On the northern side of Eirinn.

6

“‘S dearbh gur n-aobh sin tha thu nigheadh,
‘S dearg an t-aogasg a tha orra;
Ach gus an d’ thainig an diugh
An aobh sin cha b’ olc a h-inneal.

7--OSGAR.

“A bhaobh sin, a nigheas t’ aodach,
Dean-sa dhuinne faisneachd chinnteach;
An tuit aon duine dhiu leinn
Ma’n d’ theid sinn uile do neo-ni?

8--ISE.

“Marbhar leatsa coig ceud,
A’s gonar leat an righ fhein;

[314] This 8th stanza seems imperfect, and it is very hard to make any sense of it as it stands, but supposing that I am right in my explanation, this might be an exclamation of the mystic washerwomen previous to their disappearance.

Mar sin a's fear Lagha dheth ([315])
Bhar saoghail uile gu 'n d' thainig. ([316])

9--OSGAR.

"Na cluinneadh e thu, Rasg MacRuaidh,
Na duine 'bheanas dh' a shluagh;
Na cluinneadh an Fhinn thu nochd,
Ma 'm bi sinn uile gun mhisneach. ([317])

10--OISEAN.

"An cuala sibhse turas Fhinn
An uair a ghluais e gu h-Eirinn?
Thainig an Cairbre sleaghach, garg,
A's ghlac e Eirinn fo aon smachd.

11

"Dh' fhalbh sinne le than damhair,--([318])
A lion de'n Fhinn 's a bha dhinn;
Leagadh leinn ar feachd, 's ar sluagh,
Air an taobh mu thuath de dh' Eirinn.

12

"There was sent down by Cairbre
Word for Feene's hardy Osgar,
To go down to the Feen's carousal,
And he would get his cess according.

13

"He rose who never baulked a foeman,
The beauteous Osgar to the king's hearth,
Three hundred stalwart men with him,
To answer his will and need.

14

"We found honour, we found food,
As we ever before had found;
We were merrily within,
With Cairbre in the house of the king."

15--CAIRBRE.

"Upon the last drinking day,"
Said the Cairbre with a voice so high,
"An exchange of spear-shafts I'd like from thee,
Thou brown Osgar of the Alba."

16--OSGAR.

[315] Araon 's am fear a (laghadh Laoidheadh) dh'e. J. F. C.
[316] Together, and one who would sing of it (a reading in Gillies.) J. F. C.
[317] This introduction is given in Gillies; it varies somewhat from this, but it is not a whit more comprehensible. J. F. C.
[318] Damhair, hurry.

“What shaft’s exchange wouldst thou wish,
Thou red-haired Cairbre of the ports of ships?
Oft were my spear and myself with thee,
In the day of battle and combat (free).”

17--CAIRBRE.

“I’d need no less than cess and kain
From any warrior your shores within,
And I’d need no less for my life’s term,
Than to get as I ask for it every arm.”

12

“Chuireadh le Cairbre ‘nuas
Fios air Osgar cruaidh na Finne,
A dhol a dh’ ionnsuidh fleadh na Finne,
‘S gu’m faigheadh e cis a reir sin.

13

“Dh’ eirich, o nach d’ ob e namhaid.
An t-Osgar aluinn gu Leac Righ;
Tri cheud fear treun dh’ imich leis
A fhreasdal dh’ a thoil ‘s dh’ a fheum.

14

“Fhuair sinn onair, fhuair sinn biadh,
Mar a fhuair sinn roimhe riamh;
Bha sinn gu subhach a steach
Maille ri Cairbre ‘san Teamraidh.” ([319])

15--CAIRBRE.

“An latha mu dheireadh dh’ an ol”
Thuirt an Cairbre le guth mor.
“Iomlaid croinn sleagh b’ aill leam uait
Osgair dhuinn na h-Albann.”

16--OSGAR.

“Gu de an iomlaid croinn a bhiodh ort,
A Chairbre ruaidh nan long-phort?
A’s tric ‘bu leat mi fhein ‘s mo shleagh
An latha cath agus comhraig.”

17--CAIRBRE.

“Cha b’ uilear leamsa cis a’s cain
Bhar aon seoid a bhiodh ‘nar tir;
‘S cha b’ uilear leam ri m’ linn a bhos,
Gach seud a dh’ iarrainn gu ‘m faighinn.”

18--OSGAR.

[319] Teamhradh, a royal residence; from tàmh righ, king’s dwelling, or rest, “Temora.”

“In sooth, there’s nor gold nor precious thing,
That might be asked from us by the king,
Without dishonour or disgrace,
That were not thine, oh Tjeearnai’s.”

19

“But exchange of shafts without head’s exchange,
That were unjust to demand from us
The reason thou hast asked it is,
That I am without Een and father.”

20--CAIRBRE.

“Although the Feene and thy father
Were as good as they were ever;
I’d need no less for my life’s term,
Than to get as I ask for it every arm.”

21--OSGAR.

Were but the Feene and my father
As well in life as they were ever
That thou scarcely shouldest win
Thy dwelling’s breadth in Eirinn.”

22--OISEAN.

“Coldness fell on the warrior’s keen,
At hearing the skirmishing;
There were rough vows bandied there,
Between the Cairbre and the Osgar.”

23--CAIRBRE.

I will give a lasting vow,”
So would say the red-haired Cairbre,
That he’d plant the seven-edged spear
Between his reins and his navel.

18--OSGAR.

“Cha n-’eil or, na earras, gu flor,
A dh’ iarradh oirnn an righ,
Gun tair, na tailceas dhuinn e,
Nach bu leatsa ‘thighearnais.” ([320])

19

“Ach malairt croinn, gun mhalairt cinn,
B’ eucorach siad iarraidh oirnn;
‘S e’m fath mu ‘n iarradh tu oirnn e
Mise bhith gun Fhinn, gun athair.”

[320] Tighearn, a lord, or proprietor of land; from ti fhearann, person of lands. In this line tighearnas is used in the same sense as majesty. Tighearn was evidently synonymous with Righ, king, at one time, and is no doubt the same word as the Greek, turannos, a king. H. M’L.

20--CAIRBRE.

“Ged a bhiodh an Fhinn a’s t’ athair
Co math ‘s a bha iad riamh ‘nam beatha,
Cha b’ uilear leamsa ri m’ linn,
Gach seud a dh’ iarrainn gu’m faighainn.”

21--OSGAR.

“Na ‘m biodh an Fhinn agus m’ athair
Cha math ‘s bha iad riamh ‘nam beatha,
‘S teann air am faigheadh tu sin,--
Leud do thaigh ann an Eirinn.”

22--OISEAN.

“Lion fuarrachd na laoch loin
Ri claistinn na h-iomarbhaidh:--
Bha briathrin garbha, leith mar leith,
Eadar an Cairbre ‘s an t-Osgar.”

23--CAIRBRE.

“Bheireamsa briathar buan”
‘S e ‘theireadh an Cairbre ruadh;
Gu’n cuireadh e sleagh nan seachd seang ([321])
Eadar ‘airnean agus ‘imleag.

24

“Another vow against that,”
So would say the Osgar valiant,
That he’d plant the nine-edged spear
About the shaping of face and hair.

RECITER.

The Cairbre had a place made in a pillar of rock, and there would not be a bit of him out but his face.

25

“That lasting vow, then; that lasting vow,”
So would say the red-haired Cairbre,
That he would bring chase and sorrow
To Albainn upon the morrow.

26

“Another vow against that,”
So would say the Osgar valiant,
That he’d plant the nine-edged spear
About the shaping of face and hair.

[321] ‘Seang probably refers to the slender, sharp, tough, qualities of a spear. Three slender points and three thin edges make a barbed head, and a tough springy shaft makes a spear of seven “seang,” add to that a couple of slender cords for throwing the weapon, of which there are traces in Irish stories; and we have a spear of nine “seang,” Blenders, and a phrase similar to the “binding of the three smalls.”

27

“That night we were without aid,
Hither and thither about the river
There was an isthmus in the midst; ([322])
There was a great isthmus betwixt us.

28

“An olla was heard with a soft voice,
On a sweet-toned harp, bewailing death
Up rose Osgar in heavy wrath,
And seized his arms in his mighty grasp.

24

“Briathar eile ‘n aghaidh sin,”
‘S e ‘theireadh an t-Osgar calma;
Gu’n cuireadh e sleagh nan naoi seang
Mu chumadh fhuilt agus aodainn.

AM FEAR-AITHRIS.

Bha hit aig a’ Chairbre, air a dheanadh ann an carragh creige, ‘s cha bhiodh mir a mach deth ach an t-aodann.

25

“Briathar buan sin,--briathar buan,”
‘Se ‘theireadh an Cairbre ruadh;
Gu ‘n d’ thugadh e sealg agus creach,
Do dh’ Albainn an la’r na mhaireach.

26

“Briathir eile ‘n aghaidh sin,”
‘Se ‘theireadh an t-Osgar calma;
Gu ‘n cuireadh e sleagh nan naoi seang,
Mu chumadh fhuilt agus aodainn.

27

“An oidhche sin duinne gun chobhair
Thall agus a bhos mu ‘n amhainn;
Bha doirlinn leith mar leith, ([323])
Bha doirlinn mhor eadaruinn.

28

“Chualas Olla, le guth tim,
Air chlarsaich bhinn a’ tuireadh bàis.
Dh’ eirich Osgar ann am feirg,-
‘S ghlac e ‘airm ‘na dhornaibh aidh.

29

[322] This line is given in Armstrong’s dictionary under the word doirlinn.
[323] This line is given in Armstrong’s dictionary under the word doirlinn.

“Uprose we upon the morrow,
The whole of our people, as many as we were;
We raised a raid upon Sliabh Goill,
So swiftly, actively, strongly.

30

“When we arrived there within
The pass of combat of the narrow glen,
Then warmed the Cairbre high,
Brandishing, and coming to meet us.

31

“Five score of Gaidheal fierce,
That came to land in time of storm;
These fell yonder by the hand of Osgar,
‘Tis a rousing for the King of Eirinn.

32

“Five score of men and bows
That came to Cairbre’s succour;
These fell yonder by the hand of Osgar,
‘Tis a rousing for the King of Eirinn.

33

“Seven score of men of war,
That came from the snowy shore;
These fell yonder by the hand of Osgar,
The shame is for the king of Eirinn.

34

“Seven score men of gray glaives,
That never went backwards a single pace,
There fell yonder, by the hand of Osgar,
The shame is for the King of Eirinn.

29

“Dh eirich sinn an la’r na mhaireach,--
Ar sluagh uile,--sin na ‘bha dhinn,
Thog sinn creach air Sliabh Goill
Gu luath, lasgarra, lughar.

30

“Nuair a rainig sinn ann,--
Bealach comhraig nan caol ghleann,
‘S ann a bhlath an Cairbre ard,
A’ lannaireachd a’ tighinn ‘nar comhdail.

31

“Coig fichead Gaidheal garg ([324])
A thainig do ‘n tir an uair gharbh;--
Thuit siud le laimh Osgair thall,
‘S e mosgladh gu righ Eirionn.

32

“Coig fichead de dh’ fhearaibh bogha
Thainig air Cairbre g’ a chobhair;--
Thuit siud le laimh Osgair thall,
([325]) ‘S e mosgladh gu righ Eirionn.

33

“Seachd fichead de dh’ fhearaibh feachd ([326])
A thainig a tir m t-sneachd;--
Thuit siud le laimh Osgair thall,
Tha ‘mhasladh gu righ na h-Eirionn.

34

“Seachd ficheadh fear claidheamh glas
Nach deach aon troidh riamh air ‘n ais,
Thuit siud le laimh Osgair thall;
Tha ‘mhasladh gu righ na h-Eirionn.

35

“Four hundred of mighty men,
That came to us from the Lion’s land,
These fell yonder, by the hand of Osgar--
The shame is for the King of Eirinn.

36

“Five score of a royal breed,
Whose birthright was valour and great deeds,
These fell yonder, by the hand of Osgar,
The shame is for the King of Eirinn.

37

“Mangan MacSeirc, ([327]) who was a foe
That could combat a hundred gray glaives,
That one fell yonder, by the hand of Osgar--
The shame is for the King of Eirinn.

38

“The five who were nearest the king
Of great valour and deeds,

[324] From this line it might be inferred that the Gaels at some period were not the native race in the south of Ireland. H. M’L.
[325] Tha mhasladh gu righ na h-Eirionn.--Patrick Smith. This seems to me to be the better line, as the one inserted hardly makes sense. H. M’L.
[326] The Scandinavian race. H. M’L.
[327] Bear, son of Love.

These fell yonder, by the hand of Osgar--
The shame is for the King of Eirinn.

39,

“When the red-haired Cairbre saw
Osgar a-hewing the people,
The envenom’d dart in his hand
He let it off to meet him.

40

“Osgar fell on his right knee,
And the deadly spear through his waist;
He gave another cast thither,
And the King of Eirinn was slain by him.

35

“Ceither cheud de dh’ fhearaibh mora, ([328])
Thainig oirnn o thir nan leomhan; ([329])
Thuit siud le laimh Osgair thall,
Tha ‘mhasladh gu righ na h-Eirionn.

36

“Coig fichead de chlannaibh righ
D’ am bu dual gaisge ‘s mor ghniomh;
Thuit siud le laimh Osgair thall,
Tha ‘mhasladh gu righ na h-Eirionn.

37

“Mungan MacSeirc a bu namh,
A chomhraigeadh ceud claidheamh glas;
Thuit siud le laimb Osgair thall,
Tha ‘mhasladh gu righ na h-Eirionn.

38

“An coigear a b’ fhaisge do ‘n righ,
Bu mhor gaisg’ agus gniomh;
Thuit siud le laimh Osgair thall,
Tha ‘mhasladh gu righ na h-Eirionn.

39

“An uair a chunnaic an Cairbre ruadh,
Osgar a snaidheadh an t-sluaigh;
A’ chraosach nimhe ‘bha ‘na laimb,
Gu ‘n do leig e i ‘na chomhdhail.

40

[328] This stanza is from Patrick Smith, who, in the enumeration of the heroes, invariably uses ceithir ceud, four hundred. H. M’L.
[329] The Phoenician or Carthaginian race. H. M’L.

“Thuit Osgar air a ghluin deis,
‘S an t-sleagh nimhe roimh a chneas;
Thug e urchair eile null,
‘S mharbhadh leis righ na h-Eirionn.

41--CAIRBRE.

“Arise Art, and grasp thy glaive,
And stand in the place of my father;
And if thou get’st thy due of the world,
I’ll. think that thou art a king’s son.”

42--OISEAN.

“He gave another cast aloft,
Its height appeared to us sufficient;
There fell by him, by his aim’s greatness,
Art MacCairbre at the next spear cast.”

RECITER.

The Cairbre was dead, and Osgar was upon his knees, and the spear through him. Cairbre had a ceap made against the rock, and they put the ceap (helmet) on the crag, so that Osgar might think he was alive.

43--OISEAN.

“They set about the king his ceap,
Cairbre’s people, rough in fight,
That they might reap the fruit of the field,
When they saw that Osgar was wounded.

44

“He lifted a slab from a hard plain,
From off the earth of the ruddy side;
He broke the pillar on which was the ceap,
The last deed of my worthy son.”

45--OSGAR.

“Raise me now with you, Eanna,
Never before have you lifted me;
Take me now to a clear mound,
That you may strip off me my armour.”

41--CAIRBRE.

“Eirich Art a’s glac do chlaidheamh,
A’s seas ann an àite t’ athar;
‘S ma gleibh thu do dhiol saoghail,
Saoilidh mi gur mac righ thu.”

42

“Thug c urchair eile ‘n airde;--
Air leinne gu ‘m bu leoir a h-airde,
Leagadh leis, aig mend a chuimse,
Art MacChairbre air an ath urchair.”

AM FEAR-AITHRIS.

Bha Cairbre marbh, ‘s bha Osgar air a ghluinean. ‘san t-sleagh roimhe. Bha *ceap* aig Cairbre air a dheanadh ris o’ chreig, ‘s chuir iad an ceap air a chreig, air dhoigh ‘s gu ‘n saoileadh Osgar gu ‘n robh esan beo.

43

“Chuir a chum an righ mu cheap
Sluagh Chairbre bu gharbh gleachd,
An los gu’n buinte leo buaidh larach,
Air faicinn daibh Osgar gu craidhteach.

44

“Thog e leac a comhnard cruaidh,
Bhar na talmhuinne taobh-ruaidh;
Bhrisd e ‘n carragh air an robh ‘n ceap,
Gniomh mu dheireadh mo dheag mhic.”

45--OSGAR.

“Togaibh leibh mi nis Fhianna,
Nior thog sibh mi roimhe riamh;
Thugaibh mi gu tulaich ghlain,
Ach gu ‘m buin sibh dhiomh an t-aodach.”

46--OISEAN.

“There was heard at the northern strand,
Shouts of people and edge of arms;
Our warriors suddenly started,
Before that Osgar was yet dead.”

47--OSCAR.

“Death’s shrouds be about thee, thou victory’s son,
A second time will thou lie to us;
These are my grandsire’s ships,
And they are coming with succour to us.”

48--OISEAN.

“We all gave blessing to Fionn
What though he saluted not us
Until we reached the hillock of tears,
Where was Osgar of the keen arms.”

RECITER.

Fionn could heal any wound that might be on any being in the Een, unless there should be poison in it.

49--FIONN.

“Worse, my son, wert thou for it,
The battle-day of Bein Eidinn;
The sickles might float through thy waist,
It was my hand that made thy healing.”

50--OSGAR.

“My healing does not increase,
No more shall it be done for ever
The Cairbre planted the seven-edged spear
Between my reins and my navel. ([330])

46--OISEAN.

“Chualas aig an traigh mu thuath
Eibheach sluaigh a’s faobhar arm,
Chlisg ar gaisgich gu luath
Ma ‘n robh Osgar fhathasd marbh.”

47--OSGAR.

“Marbhphaisg ort a mhic na buadha,
Ni thu breug an darna uair dhuinn;
Luingeas mo sheanar a th’ ann,
‘S iad a’ teachd le cobhair thugainn.”

48--OISEAN.

“Bheannaich sinn uile do dh’ Fhionn,
Gad tha cha do bheannaich dhuinn;
Gus an do rainig sinn. tulach nan deur,
Far an robh Osgar nan arm geur.”

AM FEAR-AITHRIS.

Leighseadh Fionn creuchd sam, bith a bhiodh air neach san Fhìnn, ach gun puinsean a bhith ann.

49--FIONN.

“‘S miosa ‘mhic a bhiodh tu dheth,
An latha catha air Beinn Eudainn
Shnamhadh na corran roimh d’ chneas,
‘S i mo lamhsa rinn do leigheas.”

50--OSGAR.

“Mo leighas cha n ‘eile e ‘fas,
‘S cha mhò a niotar e gu bràch;
Chuir an Cairbre sleagh nan seachd seang
Edar m’ imleag agus m’ airnean.

51

“I planted the nine-edged spear
About the shaping of his face and hair;
The deep sting in my right side,
The leech has no skill to heal it.”

52--FIONN.

[330] Here Osgar exults in having given the nobler wound. H. M’L.

“Worse, my son, wert thou for it,
On the battle day of Dun Dealgan;
The geese might float through thy waist, ([331]).
It was my band that made thy healing.”([332])

53--OSGAR.

“My healing does not increase,
No more shall it be done for ever;
The Cairbre planted the seven edged spear
Between my reins and my navel.

54

“I planted the nine-edged spear
About the shaping of his face and hair;
The deep sting in my right side,
The leech has no skill to heal it.”

55--OISEAN.

“That was the time that Fionn went
Up to the mound above him;
The tears streamed down from his eyelids,
And he turned his back to us.”

56--FIONN.

“My own calf, thou calf of my calf,
Thou child of my fair tender child,
My heart is bounding like an elk,
Not till the last day, rises Osgar.

51

“Chuir mise sleagh nan naoi seang
Mu chumadh fhuilt-san agus aodainn;
An gath domhainn a m’ thaobh deas
Cha dual do’n leigh a leigheas.”

52--FIONN.

“‘S miosa ‘mhic a bhiodh tu dheth,
Latha catha sin Dhun Dealgain.
Shnamhadh na geoidh roimh d’ chneas,
‘S i mo lamhsa rinn do leigheas.”

53--OSGAIR.

“Mo leigheas cha n-’eil e ‘fas,
‘S cha mho a dh’ eireas mi gu bràch;

[331] (?) The winds.
[332] The geese might float. This, taken literally, is absurd, and is at variance with the spirit of the rest of the poem. I suspect, therefore, that the word which now means geese, and nothing else must have had some other meaning, as the word which means herons in verse 49 also means any crooked cutting instrument. It might be gaoithe, winds, and suggest the idea of the breath escaping from the wound.

Chuir an Cairbre sleagh nan seachd seang
Eadar m’ imleag agus m’ airnean.

51

“Chuir mise sleagh nan naoi seang
Mu chumadh fhuilt-san agus aodainn;
An gath domhainn a’ m’ thaobh deas
Cha dual do ‘n leigh a leigheas.” ([333])

55--OISEAN.

“‘Sin an uair a chaidh Fionn,
Air an tulaich as a chionn;
Shruthadh na deoir sios o ‘rasgaibh,
‘S tionndaidh e ruinn a chul.”

56--FIONN.

“Mo laogh fhein thu--’laoigh mo laoigh,
A leinibh mo leinibh ghil chaoimh
Mo chridhe ‘leumraich mor lon;
([334]) Gu lath bhràch cha ‘n eirich Osgar!

57

“The whining of the hounds by my side,
And the wailing of the ancient warriors,
The crying of women in turns--
These were the things that pierced my heart-strings.

58

“So it was that I ever thought
No fleshly heart was in my breast;
But a heart of the holly spikes,
All over-clad with steel.

59

“Pity it was not I that fell
In the battle of Corses, not scarce in deeds;
And thou in the east and the west ward,
Thou’dst be before the Fiantan Osgair.”

60--CONAN.

“Although it had been thou that fell
In the battle of Corses, not scarce in deeds;
Alas! in the east or the west ward,
Groaning for thee would not be Osgar.”

61--OISEAN.

[333] Na ‘n ruigeadh mo dhuirn a chneas,
Cha deanadh an leigh a leigheas.
[334] ’’Se mo chreach nach eirich Osgar.--Patrick Smith.

“We raised with us lovely Osgar,
On shoulders and on lofty spear-shafts;
We had a glorious carrying
Until we reached the house of Fionn.

62

“No wife would weep her own son,
No man bewail his brother kind;
As many as we were around the house,
We were all bewailing Osgar.”

57

“Donnalaich nan con ri m’ thaobh,
Agus buirich nan seann laoch;
Gairich nam ban mu seach; ([335])
Siud an rud a ghon mo chridhe.

58

“‘S ann a shaoil mi roimhe riamh, ([336])
Nach cridhe feola ‘bha ‘na m’ chliabh;
Ach cridhe de ghuin na cuilinn
Air a chomhdachadh le stailinn.

59

“‘S truagh nach mise thuiteadh ann
An cath Cairbhre, an gniomh nach gann;
A’s tusa, ‘n ear agus an iar
A bhiodh roimh na Fianntan Osgair.”

60--CONAN.

“Gad a bu tusa ‘thuiteadh ann
An cath Cairbhre an gniomh nach gann,
Ochon! an ear na ‘n iar
A’ t’ iargain cha bhiodh Osgar.”

61-OISEAN.

“Thog sinn leinn an t-Osgar aluinn
Air ghuaillibh ‘t air shleaghaibh arda;

[335] Gul a’ bhannail ‘caoidh mu seach--Donald MacPhie.
[336] These lines are put in the mouth of Oscar by some reciters, and in the version published by MacCallum, which would imply that Oscar’s fortitude gave way from the pain of his wounds; but this is altogether inconsistent with the character ascribed to Oscar in all Fenian tales and poems, while, on the contrary, when uttered by Fionn, the loftiest heroism that can be conceived is represented; the steel-encased holly heart overpowered by deep feeling; the stern, indomitable old captain completely subdued by the tears of warm and generous affection. H. M’L.
Part of this poem was recited to me by Patrick Smith, South Boisdale, South Uist, September 17, 1860. The whole of it as written here, excepting a few lines peculiar to Smith’s version, was got from Donald MacPhie, smith, Breubhaigh, Barra, October 1, 1860. It seems to be a fragment of a much larger poem, some peculiar ancient drama. The commencement is rather obscure, and it is not easy to make sense of some of the lines. H. M’L.

Thug sinn as iomchar ghrinn
Gus an do rainig sinn taigh Fhinn.

62

“Cha chaoineadh bean a mac fhein,
‘S cha chaoineadh fear a bhrathair caomh,
‘S cia lion ‘s a bha sinn mu ‘n teach;
Bha sinn uile caoineadh Osgair.”

63--FIONN.

“Death of Osgar that tortured my heart,
Eirinn’s men’s lord, our mighty loss;
Where in thy time was ever seen,
One so hardy behind a blade.”

64--OISEAN.

“Fionn never gave over trembling and woe,
From that day till the day of for ever;
He would not take, and he would not desire,
A third of his life though I should say. ([337])

[337] This abrupt termination seems to indicate more to follow, or a repetition of the first line, which seems to be the usual termination of these poems. J. F. C.

XCVII. How The Een Was Set Up

From Angus MacDonald, Stoneybridge, South Uist.

THERE was a king on a time over Eirinn, to whom the cess which the Lochlanners had laid on Alba and on Eirinn was grevious. They, were coming on his own realm, in harvest and summer, to feed themselves on his goods; and they were brave strong men, eating and spoiling as much as the Scotch and Irish (Albannaich and Eirionnaich; Alban-ians Eirin-ians) were making ready for another year.

He sent word for a counsellor that he had, and he told him all what was in his thought, that he wanted to find a way to keep the Scandinavians (Lochlannaich; Lochlan-ians) back. The counsellor said to him that this would not grow with him in a moment; but if he would take his counsel, that it would grow with him in time.

"Marry," said he, "the hundred biggest men and women in Eirinn to each other; marry that race to each other; marry the second race to each other again; and let the third kindred (ginealach) go to face the Lochlaners."

This was done, and when the third kindred came to man's estate they came over to Albainn, and Cumhal at their head.[338]

It grew with them to rout the Lochlaners, and to drive them back. Cumhal made a king of himself in Alba that time with these men, and he would not let Lochlaner or Irelander to Alba but himself. This was a grief to the King of Lochlann, and he made up to the King of Alba, that there should be friendship between them, here and yonder, at that time. They settled together the three kings--the King of Lochlann, and the King of Alba, and the King of Eirinn--that they would have a great "*ball*" of dancing, and there should be friendship and truce amongst them.

There was a "*schame*" between the King of Eirinn and the King of Lochlann, to put the King of Scotland to death. Cumhal was so mighty that there was no contrivance for putting him to death, unless he was slain with his own sword when he was spoilt with drink, and love making, and asleep.

He had. his choice of a sweetheart amongst any of the women in the company; and it was the daughter of the King of Lochlann whom he chose.

When they went to rest, there was a man in the company, whose name was Black Arcan, whom they set apart to do the murder when they should be asleep. When they slept Black Arcan got the sword of Cumhal, and he slew him with it. The murder was done, and everything was right. Alba was under the Lochlaners, and the Irelanders and the Black Arcan had the sword of Cumhal.[339]

[338] This seems to have a trace of probability about it. There must have been more spoil on the more fertile and accessible p. 349 east coasts of Ireland and Scotland to tempt invaders; and the Celts might well assemble amongst the mountains and wild islands of the western coasts of Ireland and Scotland to make head against the Norsemen, who certainly were settled in Ireland, about Dublin and elsewhere, in historical times. Cumhal and a warlike tribe might well have risen and set up in Scotland, and this story gives more standing ground for MacPherson's story of a king in Morven than anything which I have. This also explains one meaning of Cumhal, subjection.

[339] Supposing this to refer to an early attack on Ireland and Scotland by Scandinavians, the story is probable enough.

The King of Lochlann left his sister with the King of Eirinn, with an order that if she should have a babe son to slay him; but if it were a baby daughter, to keep her alive. A prophet had told that Fionn MacChumhail would come; and the sign that was for this was a river in Eirinn; that no trout should be killed on it till Fionn should come. That which came as the fruit of the wedding that was there, was that the daughter of the King of Lochlann bore a son and daughter to Cumhall. Fionn had no sister but this one, and she was the mother of Diarmaid. On the night they were born his muime (nurse) fled with the son, and she went to a desert place with him, and she was keeping him up there till she raised him as a stalwart goodly child.[340]

She thought that it was sorry for her that he should be nameless with her. The thing which she did was to go with him to the town, to try if she could find means to give him a name. She saw the school-boys of the town swimming on a fresh water loch.

"Go out together with these," said she to him, "and if thou gettest hold of one, put him under and drown him; and if thou gettest hold of two, put them under and drown them."

He went out on the loch, and he began drowning the children, and it happened that one of the bishops of the place was looking on.[341]

"Who," said he "is that bluff fair son, with the eye of a king in his head, who is drowning the school-boys?"

"May he steal his name!" said his muime, "Fionn, son of Cumhall, son of Finn, son of every eloquence, son of Art, son of Eirinn's high king, and it is my part to take myself away."

Then he came on shore, and she snatched him with her.

When the following were about to catch them, he leapt off his muime's back, and he seized her by the two ankles, and he put her about his neck. He went in through a wood with her, and when be came out of the wood he had but the two shanks. He met with a loch after he had come out of the wood, and he threw the two legs out on the loch, and it is Loch nan Lurgan, the lake of the shanks, that the loch was called after this. Two great monsters grew from the shanks of Fionn's muime. That is the kindred that he had with the two monsters of Loch nan Lurgan.[342]

Then he went, and without meat or drink, to the great town. He met Black Arcan fishing on the river, and a hound in company with him. Bran MacBuidheig (black, or raven, son of the little yellow).

"Put out the rod for me," said he to the fisherman, "for I am hungry, to try if thou canst get a trout for me." The trout laid to him, and he killed the trout. He asked the trout from Black Arcan.

"Thou art the man!" said Black Arcan; "when thou wouldst ask a trout, and that I am fishing for years for the king, and that I am as yet without a trout for him."

[340] This is manifestly the same story as that of the Great Fool (See No. 75), and it is in Irish also.
[341] This makes the date of Fionn later than the establishment of Christianity in Ireland.
[342] This gives the clue to another story which I have not yet got hold of, and seems to be a bit of mythology grafted on a tradition of some historical event.

He knew that it was Fionn he had. To put the tale on the short cut, he killed a trout for the king, and for his wife, and for his son, and for his daughter, before he gave any to Fionn. Then he gave him a trout.[343]

Thou must, said Black Arcan, broil the trout on the further side of the river, and the fire on this side of it, before thou gettest a bit of it to eat; and thou shalt not have leave to set a stick that is in the wood to broil it. He did not know here what he should do. The thing that he fell in with was a mound of sawdust, and he set it on fire beyond the river. A wave of the flame came over, and it burned a spot on the trout, the thing that was on the crook.[344] Then he put his finger on the black spot that came on the trout, and it burnt him, and then he put it into his mouth. Then he got knowledge that it was this Black Arcan who had slain his father, and unless he should slay Black Arcan in his sleep, that Black Arcan would slay him when he should awake. The thing that happened was that he killed the carle, and then he got a glaive and a hound, and the name of the hound was Bran MacBuidheig.

Then he thought that he would not stay any longer in Eirinn, but that he would come to Alba, to get the soldiers of his father. He came on shore in Farbaine. There he found a great clump of giants, men of stature. He understood that these were the soldiers that his father had, and they (were) as poor captives by the Lochlaners hunting for them, and not getting (aught) but the remnants of the land's increase for themselves. The Lochlaners took from the arms when war or anything should come, for fear they should rise with the foes. They had one special man for taking their arms, whose name was Ullamh Lamh fhaba (Pr. oolav lav ada, oolav long hand). He gathered the arms and he took them with him altogether, and it fell out that the sword of Fionn was amongst them. Fionn went after him, asking for his own sword. When they came within sight of the armies of Lochlann, he said--

"Blood on man and man bloodless,
Wind over hosts, 'tis pity without the son of Luin.

"To what may that belong?" said Ulamh lamb fhada.

"It is to a little bit of a knife of a sword that I had," said Fionn. "You took it with you amongst the rest, and I am the worse for wanting it, and you are no better for having it."

"What is the best exploit thou wouldst do if thou hadst it?"

"I would quell the third part of the hosts that I see before me."

Oolav Longhand laid his hand on the arms. The most likely sword and the best that he found there he gave it to him. He seized it, and he shook it, and he cast it out of the wooden handle, and said he--

[343] I have heard a similar story told of a saint who came to a fisherman, and got the promise of the first fish he should catch. The first was a large one, so he promised the next; but that was larger, so he promised the next; and so on till the thirteenth, which was a toad. He gave that to the saint, who cursed him and the river, saying that no more salmon should ever be caught there. The story was told of a small river which runs out of Loch Guirm in Islay, up which salmon cannot get for natural obstacles, but where salmon are often seen leaping in the sea. A similar story is told of rivers in Ireland, and I think. there is some such legend about Kent.

[344] This word is used for a crozier and a shepherd's crook. Bachal? Baculum. Here it seems to mean the method of roasting fish, which I learned from Lapps, and have practised scores of times. Wooden skewers are stuck through slices of fish, and a long rod is spitted through these, and one end is planted in the ground to windward of a fire of sticks.

The incident of saw-dust, as wood that grew and is neither p. 353 crooked nor straight, is proverbial in the Highlands, and common to many stories. So is the fish which gives knowledge when eaten. (See No. 47. Vol. II. 377.) This, then, is clearly some wide-spread myth about a fish attached to a Celtic hero. It is given in the transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin in another shape, and has very old Irish manuscript authority.

It is one of the black-edged glaives,
It was not Mac an Luin my blade;
It was no hurt to draw from sheath,
It would not take off the head of a lamb.

Then he said the second time the same words.

He said the third time--

“Blood on man, and bloodless man,
Wind o’er the people, ‘tis pity without the son of Luin.”

“What wouldst thou do with it if thou shouldst get it?”

“I would do this, that I would quell utterly all I see.”

He threw down the arms altogether on the ground. Then Fionn got his sword, and said he then--

“This is the one of thy right hand.”

Then he returned to the people he had left. He got the ord Fiannta (? Dord) of the Fian, and he sounded it.

There gathered all that were in southern end of Alba of the Faintaichean to where he was. He went with these men, and they went to attack the Lochlaners, and those which he did not kill he swept them out of Alba.[345]

Gaelic omitted

[345] This, then, seems to be popular history, interlarded with Celtic mythology. History of a successful rising of Celts in Scotland, headed by a leader who was a Scandinavian by the mother’s side; against the Scandinavians who had beaten them twice before. Once and for a long time in Ireland, whence they retired to Scotland, and again long afterwards, treacherously and by the help of Irish allies in Scotland.
The mythology has to do with fish; so has that of the two stories which follow; so, as an illustration, I have copied all the fish which are figured in the “Sculptured Stones of Scotland,” together with some of the characteristic ornaments which accompany them.
It is remarkable that, with the exception of two, all these are swimming from the left to the right of an observer, and that a nondescript creature which is often figured on the same stones with fish, heads the same way. I take the monster to be a representation of a water animal, a walrus, by an artist who had never seen one.
As no explanation has yet been found for the symbols, as fish clearly have to do with Celtic mythology, and as Celtic mythology appears to have been mixed with solar and well worship, it seems worth considering whether these symbols may not have an astronomical meaning. One of the signs of the Zodiac is and has been for many a day Pisces; and the symbol is ♓. The sun passes northwards through the constellation in the spring, and when the sun is travelling north “the fish” are swimming south. South and to the right are expressed by the same word in Gaelic “deas.” Fish swimming to the right are swimming south (deas). The sun crosses the equator at the vernal equinox; and one of the emblems here associated with fish consists of circles, which still stand for the sun in our almanacks; joined by two crescents which in like manner stand for moons or months, and separated p. 356 by a line. Another consists of a circle bisected by a double line, which also cuts two smaller circles, touching it on either side. May not all these symbols refer to the sun of winter and the summer sun; to the sun crossing the line at the vernal equinox; and may not these rude sculptured stones be erected to mark spots for celebrating festivals. A sword, a mirror, and a comb, or things like them, accompany the fish; and at first sight they would appear to have nothing to do with this supposition.
But the sword may be the bright shining mystic sword of Light of Gaelic stories, and an emblem of the sun, and it points to the left or north. The sun is the God of the long yellow bright hair everywhere, and the comb may be another of his emblems; and the looking-glass, if it be one, might be a third emblem. for its brightness.
This is but conjecture thrown out for the consideration of the learned. I am quite prepared to believe that the emblems represent the frying pans, gridirons, cauldrons, and spits on which ancient North-Britons cooked the fish whose portraits they drew so well.

From Angus MacDonald, Staoine-breac, South Uist, September 14, 1860.

This story is very popular in South Uist and Barra, and is known to the most of old people in these islands.--H. M’L.

XCVIII. The Reason Why The Dallag (Dog-Fish) Is Called The King's Fish

From Angus MacKinnon, South Uist.

WHAT but that the, King of Lochlann should come to the King of Eirinn to be a while along with him.

The King of Lochlann and Fionn went on a day to fish, and they had a little boat, and they had no man but themselves.

They spent the greatest part of the day fishing, and they did not get a thing.

Then there laid a beast on (the hook of) Fionn, and he fell to fishing, so that he put the hook into him.[346] He took in the fish; and what fish was it but a dog-fish. The hook of the King of Lochlann was in her maw, under the hook of Fioinn, and the hook of Fionn was in the outer mouth. Then the King of Lochlann fell to at taking out the dog-fish, since it was his hook that was farthest down in her. They fell to arguing with each other, and Fionn would not yield a bit till they should go to law.

Then they went to land with the boat, and they went to law, and the law made (over) the fish to Fionn; and that there should be a fine laid upon the King of Lochlann, since he had not felt the fish when first it struck him.

With the rage that the King of Lochlann took he went home to Lochlann, and he told to his muime and his oide (his foster parents) how it had happened.

The Muilearteach was his muime, and the Smith of Songs, who was married to her, was his foster-father.

She said that it was she who would bring out the recompense for that.

Then she came till she reached Eirinn, and the King of Lochlann with her, and the Smith of Songs.

The Dallag was never said after that but the king's fish.[347]

[346] This is peculiarly descriptive of handline fishing, when a "beast" takes, it feels as if a weight had *laid* quietly on the line, and a green hand often loses a fish by neglecting to strike, not knowing that the fish is there.

[347] A creature something like a king-fish, which is a sort of diminutive shark, is figured on the Sculptured Stones of Scotland. A version of this is already referred to, page 159. It is a kind of introduction to the Muilearteach, and explains who that personage was.

The Smith of Songs is probably the same as Loan Mac Libhinn, the maker of Fionn's sword, about whom there is a long poem, and. I suspect them to be mythological, perhaps Thor and his wife. Thor and a giant once rowed out together in a small boat to fish, and Thor hooked, and lost the sea-serpent. Perhaps the giant was Fionn.

The coming of the Muilearteach to Islay with the smith and the smithy on her back, is told in another story. See No. 85.

XCIX. The Lay Of Magnus

A poem so called is known in Ireland, and is preserved in MSS. in Dublin, according to writers in the transactions of the Ossianic Society.

A poem of 172 lines, “Comhrag Fhein agus Mhannis” was published in 1786, in Gillies’ collection. An Irish version was published by Miss Brooke, 1789. I have compared my version with the poem in Gillies. I find that they vary from each other; in words, in lines, and even in whole stanzas; but the two might be fused so as to produce a third, perfectly genuine, and more complete than either. The version orally collected in 1860 goes a step beyond the other, printed in 1786, and I feel certain that it is historical. This story is in substance the same as “Fingal,” and might be the germ of that poem. Irish writers claim it as Irish, and assert that the Lay of Magnus was MacPherson’s original for part of Fingal. It first appeared in print in Scotland, and it is still repeated there, wherever it was composed. Irish collectors have copies taken down orally in Scotland long ago.

Now, if Magnus can be identified, it would fix the earliest possible date for the poem, and a later date for the poet than is usually given to Oisean, by Scotch and Irish writers; and this opinion agrees with Miss Brooke’s.

The prose tale is also about Magnus; it was written by MacLean. I heard it recited by old MacPhie in 1860. He is failing fast, and cannot dictate slowly; I miss several of the measured prose passages, which I heard him repeat with the utmost fluency, when he was allowed to go his own pace. The story is manifestly incomplete; and it reminds me of one which old MacPhie repeated a second time for me. He then gave disjointed incidents, and broken sentences, instead of a connected story in very good language, with few repetitions, with curious rhythmical passages interspersed, which he gave the first time.

It is hard to say what this story means, unless it is Celtic mythology engrafted upon a bit of Norwegian history.

I give it with all its shortcomings, because, if Celtic mythology is ever to be discovered, it will be found in some such shape.

We have here, at all events--

The King of the World, whose life is in that of a horned, deadly or hurtful or venomous animal; and his son Brodram.

The King of Light, who is conquered by a lion; and his son, the white long-haired one, whose life is in that of three fish; who has twelve bald ruddy daughters; who marry twelve men, the foster-brothers of Manus the hero.

Balcan, the smith, who has twelve apprentices; and his son, who is a sailor, and has a wonderful spotted ship, and twelve sailors.

In short, there are many things which suggest solar worship and mythology--Aries, Taurus, Leo, Pisces--12 hours of day, 12 of night, 12 months, 12 signs of the zodiac, Light, the Smith or artificer Balcan; the sailor, his son:--Vulcan and Neptune, &c. But while there is much to suggest inquiry, there is nothing definite.

The poem, on the contrary, is definite enough, and in that respect it resembles other poems which I have collected, and differs from the prose romances.

I have endeavoured to restore this dress from various authorities. From grave stones; two in Iona, and two in Islay, of which I happened to have very rough sketches; and from tradition.

I leave the legs bare, because there is no indication of any covering on the legs of the sculptured figures, and because Magnus the great was called “barelegs” when he adopted the dress of the islands, and because there is no mention of any covering for the legs in the traditional descriptions of dress. On the contrary, at page 442, vol. ii., it appears that the warriors had shoes, but that their legs were bare.

Some stones indicate that the arms were clothed in some material, with longitudinal folds; others indicate no covering.

The shape of the shield is from a stone at Iona. On some there are traces of armorial bearings.

The lion, snake, and griffin, are from the story as repeated to me by old MacPhie. “His boss-covered, hindering, sharp-pointed shield on his left arm, with many a picture to be seen thereon. Lion and Creveenach, and deadly serpent.” A lion and a serpent appear in the Welsh romance of the Lady of the Fountain, which this story resembles in some degree.

The helmet and sword are copied from stones, some of which are roughly carved in relief nearly six inches above the surface.

The tippet and shirt are very like the dress commonly worn by the Lapps of the Luleo river, and by little Scotch children at the present day.

The Lapps wear a loose deer-skin shirt, and a belt round the waist, and a tall conical cap. In rainy weather they slip a tippet over their heads, which is tied round the forehead, and protects the chin, throat, and shoulders, covering all but the face.

Scotch children wear a kilt and sleeve-waistcoat in one, into which they slip, and which, with a shirt, often constitutes their whole attire.

The warrior’s outer dress was probably some such garment made of leather, with iron scales. The same Gaelic word means patched cloak, and coat of mail, and such a dress seems to be meant at page 205, vol. ii. The virgin and child are from the stone in Kilnaughton church, Islay, and the symbol indicates a Christian warrior and a date.

C. Manus

From Donald MacPhie; Iochdar, South Uist.

THERE was a King of Lochlann, and be married, and two sons were born to him. Oireal was the name of one, and Iarlaid of the other. Their father and mother died. A "Parlamaid" sat to put "Cileadearachd," a regency on the realm, till the children should come to age, and till they should take the vows of the realm on themselves. They sent word for the lads, and Oireal was a feeble man, and Iarlaid was the bigger. Oireal said to the "Parlamaid" that he would not have anything to do with the realm as yet.

"Clod of it you shall not have," said the Parliament, "unless you take it this day."

Said Iarlaid to Oireal, "take thou the one half, and I will take the other half."

"Well, then," said Oireal; "I will do that."

The realm was written upon the lads. In a few years Iarlaid married the daughter of the King of Greece, and Oireal married the daughter of King Sgiath Sgial, King of the Arcuinn.[348]

Sgiath Sgial gave six maids of honour with his daughter, and the King of Greece gave the very like with his own daughter.

Three quarters from that night the ailment of children struck the daughter of the King of Greece; and besides, the ailment of children struck the daughter of Sgiath Sgial, and sons were born to them, and twelve sons were born to maids of honour. Manus was given (as a name) to the son of Oireal, and Eochaidh to the son of Iarlaid. The sons began to come on; Manus was growing big, and Eochaidh was but little. They were sent to school, and his own foster brethren were together with each one of them.

They were playing shinny on the field, coming from school, and Manus drove the ball against Eochaidh.

"I will have my own father's realm," said Manus.

Said the daughter of the King of Greece, "It were my wish to put an end to Manus, of murdering and spoiling and slaying."

"Well, then, that were the great pity to put that (end) to the son of our brother," said the king.

"If thou wilt not do it, I will do it," said she.

She went in, and gave a slight box on the ear (Leideag) to her own son, and she drove him out of the house.

"Begone," said she, "and betake thyself to the four brown boundaries of the world, and let me not see thy sole on the same land as long as the world is set. I will take Manus with me, and he shall be a son for myself."

She took Manus in with herself, and she set her own son on a beautiful sunny single-stemmed hill, where he could see every man, and no man him.

Manus was within with her, and he was not getting to see his mother at all. Then his mother said that she would go where her muime was, and that she would take her counsel.

[348] I have no notion what monarch or realm is meant, but the Orkney would be appropriate.

At the end of a year she sent word for Manus. And in a few years the wife of his father's brother sent word for Manus.

"What, oh Manus!" said the daughter of the King of Greece, "art thou thinking of doing this day? If thou wilt marry, thou wilt get the third part of the realm; land, corn-land, and treasure."

"Well, then, I am not of age to marry at all," said he.

"Thou needst not (say) that," said she. "There is one man on my own land that will suit thee. Thou shalt go to ask his daughter, and thou shalt marry her. He is the Earl of Fiughaidh; thou shalt marry the daughter of the Earl of Fiughaidh."[349]

She went away, and she took with her high families, and she would take with her five hundred men. She reached the house of the Earl of Fiughaidh, to give her to Manus to marry.

Said the wife of the Earl of the Fiughaidh to her, "My daughter is not of age to marry yet, and Manus is not of age to marry."

"Well," said the daughter of the King of Greece, "house or heap thou shalt not have upon my land unless thou givest thy daughter to him."

The man thought that there was no good for him to refuse her, and Manus and the daughter of the Earl of the Fiughaidh were married to each other.

They lay that night in the house of his father's brother.

"Is it thou that art here, Manus, mighty son, and bad man? dost thou know what wife yonder one gave to her own son, Eochaidh? She gave him the swift March wind. It was not to a worldly wife she married him, so that he might take the head off thee. Thou with a wife on thy bed at this time of night! Thou wilt be going back every day, and thou wilt not hold battle against him."

"Is it thus it is?" said Manus.

He went where she was.

"Be leaving the realm," said the wife of his father's brother to him, "or else thou wilt have but what thou takest to its end."

"Clod thou shalt not have here," said she. "Thy share is under stones and rough mountains in the old Bergen."

"Well, then, since thou art putting me away, give me the six foster brothers of Eochaidh, that I may have twelve."

He got that; he went away, and he betook himself to the old Bergen.

When he reached the old Bergen, no man dared to come near his castle. There were sheep in the old Bergen, and sheep of Corrachar, is what they were called.

They fell to making pits in the earth; the sheep were going into the pits, and they were catching them and they were killing them, and keeping themselves in flesh thus in the old Bergen.[350]

[349] Here, again, I am at fault. This probably is a real name, but corrupted by transfer to another language, and by the lapse of time.

[350] I am not aware that there are, or ever were, wild sheep in Bergen; but a wilder hunter's land does not exist, and wild reindeer, and, I believe, wild goats may yet be found in the high mountains.

“Be it from me! be it from me said Manus, “it is a year since I saw my muime; I had better go and see her.”

“It were not my advice to thee to go there,” said they; “but if thou art going, thou hast twelve foster brothers, and take them with thee.”

“They were no sorry company for me to be with me,” said he.

He went. The daughter of the King of Greece was looking out of a window, and she perceived Manus coming. She went down to where his father’s brother was.

“The son of thy brother is coming here,” said she, “with costly coloured belts on his left side, with which might be got the love of a young woman, and the liking of maidens;” that it were for her pleasure to put an end to him, of murdering, and misusing, and slaying.

His father’s brother said that were a great pity, and that he would not be to the fore to do that to him.

“If thou wilt not do it, I will do it,” said she.

She went out of the house, and she took his twelve foster brethren from him, and she swore them to herself. He went back to the Old Bergen by himself, gloomy, tearful, sorrowful, and it was late. What should he see but a man in a red vesture.

“It is thou that art here, Manus?” said he.

“It is I,” said Manus.

“I think if thou hadst bad or good arms that thou would’st get to be King over Lochlann.”

“I have not that,” said he.

“Well,” said he of the red vesture, “if thou would’st give me a promise I would give thee arms.”

“What promise shall I give thee? I have not a jot to give thee.”

“Well, I will not ask thee much. I was the armourer of thy grandfather, and thy great-grandfather, if thou would’st give me a promise that I should be armourer with thee I would give thee arms this night.”

“I will give thee that (promise), if so be that I am ever a king.”

They went and they reached the house. The man of the red vesture took out a key, and he opened a door, and when he had opened it the house was full of arms, and not a jot in it but arms.

“Begin now and choose arms,” said the man of the red vesture.

Manus seized a sword, and he broke it, and every one he caught he was breaking it.

“Don’t do that Manus, don’t be breaking the arms, in case thou mightest have need of them yet. When I was a young man thy grandsire had a war, and I had an old sword, an old helmet, and an old mail shirt on, try them,” said the man of the red vesture.

Manus seized the sword, and it beat him to break it. He put the sword and the helmet on. What should he see but a cloth (hanging) down from the ridge of the house. “What is the use of that cloth?” said Manus. “It is,” said he “that when thou spreadest it, to seek food and drink, thou wilt get as thou usest. There is another virtue in it. If a foe should meet thee, he would give a kiss to the back of thy fist.”

He gave the cloth to Manus, and he folded the cloth in his oxter. What should he see but an iron chain (hanging) down from the ridge of the house.

“What is the good of that chain?” said Manus.

“There is no creature in the world that if yonder thing should be put about his neck the battle of a hundred men would not be upon him,” said the man of the red vesture.

Manus took the chain with him. When he was going, what should he see but two lions, and a whelp with them. The lions came in front of him to eat him, and to put him to skaith. He spread the cloth, and the lions came, and they kissed the back of his fist, and they went past him. The lion whelp got in amongst the folds of the cloth, and he wrapped the cloth about him, and he lifted him with him to the old Bergen.[351]

When he reached the old Bergen the daughter of the Earl of the Fiughaidh was within. He put the chain about the neck of the lion whelp. The lion whelp went, and he cleared the castle; he did Dot leave a creature or a monster alive in it. He set fire to the castle.[352] He was there a year, and he had no want.

He went out one day, and he said he would go to see his muime.

He took the lion whelp with him, and he went away. She perceived him coming. There was a sword at his side that day. She came out to meet him, and she had a brown lap-dog. He went to meet Manus with his mouth open, to put Manus to skaith, and to eat him. Away went the lion whelp, and he went before Manus, and he set his paw at the back of the throat of her “measan,” and he let out his entrails on the earth.

“There, Manus,” said she, “but put thy whelp in at the ridge of the lion’s house.”

He put the lion whelp in at the ridge of the house, and he put the chain about his neck, and he did not leave a lion under the ridge of the house unslain, and laid himself (down) stretched for dead along with them.[353]

Manus went home without whelp, without man, that night. What work should his twelve foster brethren be set to, but to clear out the lion’s house. When they were put out there was not a lion under the ridge of the house that had not his throat cut. The lion whelp was without a drop of sweat upon him, and the iron chain that Manus had put on him (was) about his neck. One of them said that the lion which was yonder seemed strange to him, without a drop of sweat upon him, unlike the rest.

“That is the lion whelp of the man of my love,” said one of the company. “The lion whelp of Manus.”

“Well, then,” said one of them, “though we are sworn not to go out of the town, before be rises we might go, and give a message.”

“There is no man who goes out of this town,” said the rest, “after the coming of night that there is not the pain of seven years upon him afterwards.”

[351] When the old man told me the story, he described devices on the shield of Manus, and a lion was one of them. This probably is founded on some lion on a flag. According to Gaelic poems Fionn’s people had banners with devices on them, and Icelandic warriors had devices on their armour in the ninth century, according to the Njal Saga. Some of the articles are amongst the gear of King Arthur in the Mabinogion.

[352] It is manifest that something is wanting here. There is nothing before said about an enchanted castle, beset by monsters, and an imprisoned lady; but there must have been monsters to clear out.

[353] This is like a bit of the story of Conall, and the house of the Tamhasg.

They went to the window, and when they went to the window the lion's whelp opened his eyes, and he came alive.

She went where her husband was, and she said to him to put the rough traveller[354] in order, and five hundred men in it.

He said that there would be the pain of seven years on any being who should go out after the falling of the night.

She said though there should be the pain of seventeen years in it, that they should go to seek the head of Manus.

The deaf haltman was what they used to call the man who was guarding the realm at that time, and he could not hear a jot till there should be nine nines shouting in his ear. He could kill nine nines backwards, and nine nines forwards with his sword. What should awake him but the stormy sound of the rough traveller coming, and he thought that it was a foe that was there. He arose upon the rough traveller, and he did not leave a mother's son of the five hundred alive, himself and the lion's whelp, and the twelve foster brothers of Manus went to the Old Bergen.

"Never thou mind," said she. "Though Manus did that to me. There is the Red Gruagach, son of the King of Greece, and he will take the head of Manus out of the Old Bergen."

Then went his mother here, and she sent a ship to Manus to the Old Bergen to take him away before the Red Gruagach should take the head off him. What should his muime do but put a sea thickening on the ocean, so that Manus might not get away. His mother sent a pilot in the ship, and what should the ship do but stop in the sea thickening.

"Is there a ship in the world that will take us out of this?" said Manus to the pilot.

"Indeed there is the speckled ship of the son of Valcan Smith," said the pilot.[355]

They were on board, and they could not stir.

At the mouth of the night the lion whelp thrust his head under the arm of Manus, and he went out off the ship, and Manus on his back. He went and he reached a scaur. He left Manus on the scaur, and he himself made a spring down the other side of it. Manus fell asleep, and he would like as well to find death with the rest, rather than be left by himself on a rock. There came a voice to him, and it said to him "Arise." He rose, and he saw a ship.

Who was here but the ship of MacBhalcan Smith, and the lion whelp in the shape of pilot at the helm, and Mac-Vic-Valcan Smith and his twelve sailors dead on her deck. He reached the ship, and he put his twelve foster brethren and the daughter of the Earl of the Fiughaidh in the ship of MacBhalcan Smith. He fell to at sailing amongst the thickening. What should he see but land, and when he saw the land he saw the very finest castle he ever saw. He went on shore, and he put MacBhalcan Smith and his twelve sailors on' shore on a point. He reached the castle, and he went in, and there was a fine woman there within, and twelve bald ruddy maidens. His twelve foster brothers sat beside the bald ruddy maidens,[356] and they said that they would never go for ever till they should get them to marry.

[354] Another possible meaning for this word may be the corpse buryer. It is often impossible to translate these names, the reciters do not understand them, and the context gives no help.
[355] Bhalcan. There seems to have been some Celtic divinity, who was a smith, and a sea god--a kind of Neptune and Vulcan in one. Bhalcan occurs in Irish poems, and modern Gaelic poets have introduced Venus, Cupid, and other classical names into their modern songs. See note at end of Gaelic version.
[356] Or cropped auburn maidens.

It was not long till there came home the White Gruagach, son of the King of the Light, and a great auburn clumsy woman, his mother.

"Who is here," said he, "looking my twelve brown ruddy daughters in the front of the face? and that I never saw a man that might look at them that I would not take his head off against his throat."

"These are my twelve foster brothers, and they have taken love for thy bald ruddy daughters, and thou must give them to me to marry," said Manus.

"Well," said the White Gruagach, "the covenant on which I would do that, I am sure that thou wouldst not do it for me, that is, to put me in against my father, and that I am out from him for seven years."

"I will do that," said Manus, "but that thou thyself shouldst go with me."

On the morrow they went away, and they reached the King of the Light. The King of the Light came out, and he gave his right hand to his own son, and his left hand to Manus.[357] The lion whelp went, and he seized him, and he levelled him.

"Choke off me the monster before he takes my life from off me," said the King of the Light.

"I will do that," said Manus, "but write with a drop of thy blood that thy son is thy beloved heir."

"Well, it's long since I would have done that, if he had come himself to ask it."

Then he went and he wrote, and they went away to come home. When they were coming the daughter of the Earl of the Fiughaidh was in a burn.

"O," said the White Gruagach, "I am dead."

"What ails thee?" said Manus.

"There is a stone," said he, "in the burn, and there are three trouts under the stone, and they are in thy wife's apron. As long as the trouts should be alive I would be alive, and thy wife has one of them now in the fire."[358]

"Is there anything in the world," said Manus, "that would do thee good?"

"The King of the Great World has a horned venomous (creature), and if I could get his blood I would be as well as I ever was."

They reached the house, and the White Gruagach was dead.

Then Manus went, and the speckled ship was stolen from him, and there was no knowing who in the world had taken it from him.

One of his foster brothers said that Brodram, son of the King of the Great World, had taken it with him.

He went away to Brodram. He asked him what made him take that ship from him. He said that he had stolen her himself before, and that be had no right to her. He said that his father had a venomous horned (creature), and that while the Beannach Nimhe was alive that his

[357] His south hand, and his northern hand.
[358] The word which now means trout in Gaelic means speckled, and is sometimes translated salmon. It appears that there were sacred salmon in Irish mythology. Fish appear on the sculptured stones of Scotland, and salmon commonly appear as something magical in other Gaelic stories.

father would be alive, and that if the Beannach Nimhe was slain that he would have the realm.

He went with Brodram, and the venomous horned beast was in a park. The lion whelp went into the park, and he put his paw into the hollow of the throat of the venomous horned beast. The venomous horned beast fell dead, and the king fell dead within.

Then Brodram was King over the Great World, and Manus got the blood, and he returned back, and with it he brought the White Gruagach to life.

"It may not be that thou wilt not go thyself with me now to put me in on the realm," said he to the White Gruagach.

The White Gruagach said that he would go. He reached Brodram, and he said that he. would go with him.

Balcan and his twelve apprentices were working in the smithy, and he revived his twelve sailors. He asked him to go with him, and Balcan said that he would. There went Balcan, and the White Gruagach, and Brodram, and the Gruagach of the Tower, son of the King of Siginn, with him.

They reached Lochlann,
There met them a man in a red vesture;
The White Gruagach, and the Red Gruagach began
Fearfully, hatefully proudly,
Three destructions they would drive off them.
To the cloud flakes of aether and heaven.
There gathered stag hounds, savage hounds,
To take pleasure in the monsters.
They would make the sea dry up,
And the earth burst,
And the stars fall.

The Red Gruagach[359] was slain, and his head stuck on a stake, and Manus was crowned King over Lochlann, and he did not leave a living man in Lochlann.

Here I had intended to give the "orally collected" version of the poem of Magnus as the fitting sequel and contrast to this story, but as there is scant room within my limits, I give the prose stories which go with it. The lay of Magnus has often been translated. I hope to be believed when I say that Magnus, as I found him in 1860, resembles Gillies, 1786, very closely. This is the opening story of Magnus.

"When the Lochlannaich came on shore, Fionn said to the lads that they should go to hunt; that he wished to give them a feast that night, because it was not likely that they themselves had much. They went to hunt, and when the hunt was over, Caoilte was sent to gather the game since he was the swiftest. It was three hundred deer they killed, and twenty boars.

"Now when Caoilte had gathered the game there went two hundred to gather heather to cook them, a hundred and a half went to set in order the stones under the caldron, and it was ten (deichnar) who were burning (the fuel) beneath it. Three hundred went to flay. Then Fionn sent Fearghus down to give a bidding to the Lochlannaich, and they did not deign to answer

[359] The Greek personage.

him. Fionn took much proud anger because the feast had been made and they had not answered."

The Lay of Magnus was written from the dictation of Alexander MacDonald, and subsequently compared with the recitation of the other authority.

Then follows the poem as repeated by Donald MacPhie (smith), Breubhaig, Barra, October 1860, who learned it from his mother, and traces it up, for six generations, to an ancestor who came from Kintyre.

The poet, supposed to be Oisein, speaks as one who was present at "Uisge Laoire nan sruth séimh," where the scene is laid. They see a thousand barks coming to shore. The Feinn gather from every place, and converse. Conan, as usual, is cross grained throughout. Feargus, the son of Fionn, the brother of the poet, goes, and finds that it is

"Mànus fuileach am fear fial
Mae righ Beithe nan sgiath dearg
Ard righ Lochlann ceann nan cliar," etc.

Blood spilling Manus, the generous one,
Beithe's king's son, of the red shields (? Bergen).
High King of Lochlann, chief of the brave, etc.

Come to seek Fionn's wife, and his famous hound Bran. A battle ensues, Manus is bound, and allowed to go home, and so it goes on for 164 lines of very smooth good Gaelic verse.

In Gillies there are 172 lines, or 43 verses, I have a verse which is not in Gillies, and the variations only amount to different readings, and to variations in language and orthography. After the poem comes the sequel of the story, also taken down from Donald MacPhie, which is not in Gillies.

"After the battle that was here, the Lochlanners, were three years in disgrace with their wives. Fionn had been before this in Lochlann, and the daughter of the King of Lochlann had taken love for him. The thing which they did was to send Athach (a monstrous warrior or giant) to ask him to a feast in Lochlann, to make the arrangement of a league between them, that there might not be disputes for ever."

"In the Athach there was but one eye, and what was the very day that he reached the house of Fionn but a day that Fionn had a great feast for his set of lads. It was late that they had the feast, and when the Athach came in they had just sat at the feast. The Athach took (his way) up without leave or bidding, and he sat at the right shoulder of Fionn. When Conan saw how bold he was, he arose and he smote him, and he levelled him. Fionn got up on the instant, and he seized his shoulder, and he raised him, and he set him sitting where he was before. Then Fionn asked the Athach what man he was, and he told who he himself was. He said that he was a herald (teachdair) from the King of Lochlann, that came to give a bidding to themselves to a feast in Lochlann; that the daughter of the King of Lochlann was in great grief with the love she had taken for himself, and, though he had another wife, if he himself should lay bare one sight of her, there was no knowing but that she would be the better of it."

"When Fionn heard that it was a herald from the King of Lochlann, he desired Conan to be seized, and the binding of the three smalls to be laid on him, and that he should be cast into a dark hole, where he should see neither night nor day till the feast should be finished. Conan was there but half an hour when Caoilte said,--

"I never saw a herald coming from the King of Lochlann, for whose sake I would leave Conan bound, and that there is no knowing but he did the better deed."

“He let Conan loose, and he brought him in to the feast. They took well and right well to the Athach that night, and on the morrow they made (ready) for going with him. Said Fionn to Goll,--

“It is a shame for us to carry arms to a feast. It will not be fitting to see them, but we will take with us knives, that we may hide under our cloaks, and do not uncover them for ever till I give you warning.”

“Then here they went, and they reached Lochlann.”

(And here let me point out how exceedingly inconsistent all this is with the common meaning of Lochlann, Scandinavia, and how simply is it all explained, by supposing Lochlann to be the possessions of the Lochlanners, the Scandinavians in Ireland, or in Scotland, or in any one of the islands.)

“When they arrived, the Athach steered them to a great long house, with a door at its end. There was a board there, from the door till it reached the upper end of the house. The way of sitting they had was, one of the company of Fionn was set about the board, and two Lochlanners at his side. When the house was filled, on each side there were two Lochlanners on each side of the Fiantan. The feast was on the board, but it was not to be touched till the King of Lochlann and the Queen should come in. The king came, and the queen, and their daughter. When the king came in, Fionn rose up standing to salute and welcome him (cuir failte air), and he would not take his hand. It seems that he would not take his hand till every one who had slain any of his lot of sons should tell in what place he had left him. Every man was telling where he left the son he had slain. It was from Osgar that he asked the last one, and said Osgar,--

Mharbh mis e air truigh Chliabhain mu thuath,
Far an do thuit do mhor shluagh
Gun taing do dhuin’ agaibh d’a chionn,
A dh’ fhas riamh an rioghachd Lochlann.

I slew him on the strand of Cliabhain in the north,
Where fell thy mighty host,
In spite of a man of you of any kin,
That ever waxed in the realm of Lochlann.

An seo nuair dh’ aithnich Fionn,
Gun robh miothlachd ri bhith ann;
Thoisich Fionn an sin,
Air deanadh rann.

Here now when Fionn perceived,
That ill blood was to be,
Then Fionn began
At making rhymes.

“Na’m bithinns’ a’m’ ghobha,
‘S math a dheanainn sgeanan,
Chuirinn cruaidh ‘nan saidhean,[360]

[360] SAIDHEAN. The part of a knife or sword which goes into the haft. There is no equivalent in English, so far as I know.

‘S chuirinn siom[361] ’nan roinnean.[362]
Chuirinn casan fraoich,
Le ‘n cinn bhuidhe,
Ann an cuil thiugha,
Nam faobhar tana.”

If I were a smith,
Well I’d make knives,
I’d put temper in handles,
I’d put shimmer on points.
I’d put hafts of heather,
With their ends of yellow,
In the thick backs
Of the keen edges.

Then they arose and they fell upon each other. They had but their knives, and the Lochlanners were under full arms.

Said Fionn--

“Where are thy great vows, Manus?
They were left where they were found,” said Manus.

“Cáite am bheil na mionnan mor a Mhanuis?
Dh’ fhagas far an d’ fhuaras iad,” thar Manus.

While the rest were at work, Fionn was in a dark corner making love to the daughter. The Fhinn beat the Lochlanners with the knives, and Manus was slain. Fionn took the daughter with him, and she was a year with him as a wife.

MacLean truly says, “this description of the manufacture of knives is wonderfully vivid and vigorous, and shews the richness of the language in such terms, while it appears to prove that the construction of warlike weapons was well understood in past times in the Highlands;” but the next story seems to shew that the smith’s art was not known in the days of *the* mythical Fionn, who got his sword from the fairy smith of Lochlann. Archæology seems to prove that the ancient inhabitants of Britain were once armed with bronze weapons, poor in iron, and rich in gold, and the Feinn were armed with pointed sticks, hardened in the fire, when they put gold rings on the fingers of warriors whom they had slain, and wished to honour. Icelandic sagas speak of abundance of gold amongst the Irish; Gaelic stories mention gold frequently, and abundance of gold ornaments are duo, up all over the United Kingdom: but iron swords are always mythical, and iron swords are rarely found, and their pattern is often Scandinavian on the sculptured stones, and when they. are dug up.

May not the Scandinavians have been better blacksmiths than the Western Islanders, and the Celts better goldsmiths, richer, and more civilized than the Norsemen, when they first met.

Gaelic omitted

From Donald MacPhie, Iochdar, South Uist, who learnt it from Iain MacDhomhnuill Ic Thormaid Domhnullach, Aird a mhachair, who died sixty years ago at the age of sixty.

H. M’L.

[361] SIOM. An image reflected by a blade from high polish.
[362] ROINN. The point of a sword, dagger, or knife.

I heard the man tell part of the story myself.

J. F. C.

Notes for Gaelic.

(*a*) Fonn, land generally on a larger scale than fearann. Probably fearann may be àrfhonn, arable land. the f slipping in as frequently happens in Gaelic words.

(*b*) Trath oidhche, the time of night; differing in meaning from trath ‘san oidhche, early in the night.

(*c*) A Bheirbhe, sometimes the old man said Bheirm. This word is translated Copenhagen by some scholars, I don’t know why. The sound is nearer to Bergen, for b and g frequently replace each other in Gaelic; *e.g.*, ubh, ugh, dubh, dugh, etc.

(*d*) Earradh, a dress, costume. Aodach trusgan, eideadh earradh. Aodach is any clothes good or bad; Trusgan is a good dress; Eideadh is a distinguishing dress or uniform; Earradh is a dress rather distinguishing an individual from others. Eideadh Gaidhealach, we could never say an t-earradh Gaidhealach.

(*e*) Brot, same as brat.

(*f*) Garbh-theaghlach, this seems to have been some large kind of vehicle. It is spelt as it was pronounced. It might have been garbh-shiubhlach or carr-shiubhlach.

(*g*) Muir-tiothach, some curious thickening of the ocean so as to prevent the ship from moving. Muir-teachd may be the same word as this differently pronounced; and if so, it means jelly fish.

(*h*) Mairnealaiche, a pilot.

(*i*) Balcan. Is this the same as Vulcan? Baile means a plunge, a flood. The smith constantly plunging his iron or steel in water might receive this name in consequence; fate is to bathe.

(*k*) Buinnseach, a big, strong, clumsy woman.

(*l*) Faolainn, same as foghlainte or foghlainteach, an apprentice.

(*m*) An gruagach dearg, a different person from the other fear earraidh dheirg.

(*n*) Cleid, a flake. Cleidean athair, sky flakes, clouds; probably the fine white clouds called cirri. May not this word be the root of cloud.

H. M’L.

(*o*) Fialchoin, so pronounced; probably Fiadh-choin, deer-dogs, or wild-dogs, wolves, probably the last.

J. F. C.

CI. The Song Of The Smithy

From Donald MacPhie, Breubhaig, Barra.

1--OISEIN.

On a day as were on wide spread Rushes,
A valiant four of the company,
Myself, and Bound, and Grey Earth,
Fair's self was there, he was Bondage's son.

2

There was seen a coming from the plain
The big young lad on a single foot,
In his black, dusky black skin mantle,
With his dusky head-gear so rusty red.

3

Grim was the look of the young lad,
Hideous it was, and disfigured,
With his largeheaded mighty helmet,
With his blunt ploughshare ([363]) that grew russet red.

4--FIONN.

Then spoke to him Fionn MacChumail,
As a man who was like to faint,
"At what place is thy dwelling,
Thou lad with thy dress of skins?"

5--SMITH.

"Blade, son of Furbishing, 's my right name,[364]
If you had the knowledge of a tale of me;
I was a while at the smith's mystery,
With the King of Lochlann at Upsala. ([365])

DUAN NA CEARDACH.

1

Latha dhuinn air Luachair leothair,
Do cheathrar chrodha de 'n bhuidhinn;
Mi fhein, a's Osgar, a's Daorghlas;
Bha Fionn fhein ann, 's b' e Mac Chumhail.

2

[363] Eite is a piece added to a ploughshare when worn, a periphrasis for an old sword? Eite is the word in Gillies.
[364] Gillies, 1786 Lun MacLiobhainn.
MacCallum, 1816 Luinn MacLiobhuinn.
MacPherson, . . Luno.
[365] I am indebted to MacLean for this clever suggestion. The grave of Thor is shewn at Old Upsala. The same Gaelic word is used in Gillies.

Chunnacas a' tighinn o'n mhagh
An t-olach mor 's e air aona chois,
'Na mhanndal dubh, ciar-dhubh craicinn,
Le cheanna-bheairt lachdann 's i ruadh-mheirg.

3

Bu ghruamach coslas an olaich;
Bu ghrannda sin agus bu duaichnidh;
Le 'chlogada ceann-mhor, ceutach;
Le 'mhaoil éitidh a dh' fhas ruadh dhearg.

4

Labhair ris Fionn MacChumhail,
Mar dhuine 'bhiodh a' dol seachad,
"Co 'm ball am bheil do thuinidh,
'Ille le d' chulaidh chraicinn?"

5

"Lon[366] MacLiobhann, b'e m' ainm ceart e,
Na'm biodh agaibhs' orm beachd sgeula;
Bha mi treis ri uallach gobhainn
Aig righ Lochlann ann an Spaoili.[367]

6

"I am laying you under enchantments,
Since you are a people in need of arms; `
That you shall follow me, a band of quietness,
Westward to my smithy doors."

7--FIONN.

"Upon what place is thy workshop,
Or shall we profit by seeing it?"

SMITH.

"Do you see it, if it may be,
But see it you shall not, if I can."

8--OISEIN.

Then they set them to their travel,
O'er the fifth of Munster in their hurrying speed,
And on the yellow glens about birch trees,
Then went they into four bands. ([368])

9

One band of these was the blacksmith,
Another band of them Daorghlas;

[366] LONN, a sword, a blade, a bar, a stake of wood, a bier pole, anger; a surge, a sea swell; strong, powerful. LONNRACH, bright, etc., a blaze, a gleam. LUNN, a smooth, rolling swell, an oar handle. Manks, *Lhun*, or *Lhunn*.
[367] Spaoili, probably Upsala.
[368] In Gillies this varies considerably.

Fionn was behind them at that time,
And a few of the chiefs of the Finne.

10

The blacksmith would cut but the one step,
On each lonely glen through the desert,
But scarcely his arms would reach to
A tuck of his clothes on his haunches.

11

Ascending the ground of the corrie,
Descending the pass of the edges;
“A little delay,” said the blacksmith,
“Shut not before me,” quoth Daorghlas.

6

“Tha mise ‘gur cur-se fo gheasaibh,
O ‘s luchd sibh ‘tha ‘m freasdal armaibh,
Sibh gu m’ leontail, buidheann shocrach,
Siar gu dorsan mo cheardach.”

7--FIONN.

“Co ‘m ball am bheil do cheardach?
Na’m feairde sinne g’a faicinn?”

GOBHA.

“Faiceadh sibhs’ i ma dh’ fhaodar
Ach ma dh’ fhoadas mise cha’n fhaic sibh.”

8

Gu ‘n d’ thug iad an sin ‘nan siubhal
Air Choige Mhumha ‘nan luath dhearg;
‘S air Ghleannan buidhe mu bheithe
Gu ‘n deach iad ‘nan ceithir buidhnibh.

9

Bu bhuidheann diu sin an gobha;
Bu bhuidheann eile dhiu Daorghlas;
Bha Fionn ‘nan deaghainn an uair sin
A’s beagan de dh’ uaislean na Finne.[369]

10

Cha ghearradh an gobha ach aona cheum
Air gach gleannan faoin roimh fhasach,
‘S cha ruigeadh airm ach air eigin
Cearbh dh’an aodlach shuas air mhasan.

11

[369] Teinne, a mass, or bar of metal.

A’ direadh ri urlar a’ choire,
A’ tearnadh ri bealach nam faobhar,
“Fosadh beag ort” ars’ an gobha;
“Na druid romham,” arsa Daorghlas.

12--SMITH.

“Thoud’st not be in the door of my workshop,
In a strait place, were I alone.” ([370])

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

13--OISEIN.

Then they got bags for blowing,
The workshop was scarcely found out;
Four men were found of the king of Bergen,
Of crossgrained men and unshapely.

14

To every smith there were seven hands,
Seven pincers light and substantial;
And the seven hammers that crushed them,
And no worse would it suit with Daorghlas.

15

Daorghlas who watched at the workshop,
‘Tis a certain tale that they fell out;
He was red as a coal of the oaktree,
And his hue like the fruit of the working.

16

Out spoke one of the blacksmiths
So gruffly, and eke so grimly,
“Who is that dauntless slender man
That would stretch out a bar of temper?”

17

Out spoke Fionn, who was standing,
The man of good answer at that time,
“That nickname shall not be scattered,
His name was Daorghlas till this hour.”

12

“Cha bhiodh tu ‘n dorus mo cheardach
An hit teann ‘s mi ‘nam aonar.”

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

13

[370] Here there is a break in Gillies also, and the meaning is obscure. MacCallum makes it, “Leave me not alone in a strait place.”

Fhuair iad an sin builg ri sheideadh;
Fhuaradh air eigin a' cheardach;
Fhuaras ceathrar dhaoine righ Meirbhe,[371]
De dhaoine doirbhe, mi-dhealbhach.

14[372]

Bha seachd lamhan air gach gobha;
Seachd teanchairean leothair,[373] aotrom,
'S na seachd uird a bha 'gan spreigeadh;
'S cha bu mhiosa 'fhreagradh Daorghlas.

15

Daorghlas, fear aire na ceardach,
'S sgeula dearbha gu 'n do throid iad,
'S e cho dearg ri gual an daraich,
'S a shnuadh a thoradh na h-oibre.

16

Labhair fear de na goibhnean
Gu grìmach agus gu gruamach;
"Co e 'm fear caol gun tioma
A thairneadh a mach teinne ([374]) cruadhach?"

17

Labhair Fionn a bha 'na sheasamh,
Fear a bu mhath freagairt 'san uair sin,
"Cha bhi 'n t-ainm sin sgaoilte,
Bha Daorghlas air gus an uair seo."

18

Then they got their stretched out
The arms that were straight and coloured,
The complete work that was finished,
Of finished arms for the battle.

19[375]

"Hiss" and "Fye" and "Make sure,"
And the "Like blade" the smith's shop's daughter,
And the long blade of Diarmaid
Many was the day that he tried it.

20

[371] Meirbhe, same as Beirbhe, Bergen?
[372] This verse is not in MacCallum's version.
[373] Leothair, substantial, from leor.
[374] Teinne, a mass, or bar of metal.
[375] The following verse from MacCallum gives the names of some more of the swords:--
The "Magic bladed" was the blade of Oscar,
And the "Hard Massacrer" the blade of Caoilte,
And the "Polisher" the blade of Diarmid,
Many a wild man killed she.

I had “the Tinker of striplings,”
Of loud rattle in the battle keen;
And “the son of the surge,” that was MacChumail’s,
Which never left a shred of the flesh of man.

21

Then we took to our travel,
To take a tale from the king of Lochlann;
Then out spoke the king so high born
With force of sweet words as became him well.

22

We would not give, by your fear,
A tale of six of our party;
We lifted up the spears,
And it was in front of the banners.

18

Fhuair iad an sin ‘nan sineadh
Na h-airm a bha direach daite,
‘S an coimhlionadh a bh’ air a dheanadh
De dh’ armaibh deanta na faiche.

19[376]

“Fead” agus “Fuidh,” agus “Fasdail,”
‘S a’ “Chomhlann” ‘Ic na Ceardaich,
‘S an lann fhada ‘bh’ aig Diarmaid,
‘S iomadh latha riamh a dhearbh i.

20

‘S agam fhein bha “Ceard[377] nan gallan”
A b’ ard farum ‘n am nan garbh chath
“‘S Mac an Luin” a bh’ aig Mac Chumhail[378]
Nach d’ fhag fuigheall riamh dh’ fheoil dhaoine.

21

Gu ‘n do ghabh sinne mu shiubhal
A ghabhail sgeula de righ Lochlann;
Sin nuair labhair an righ uasal
Le neart suairce mar bu chubhaidh.

[376] The following verse is from MacCallum:
Bi n Druidh lannach lann Oscair,
‘S b’ i Chruaidh Cosgaireach lann Chaoilte.
‘S gu’ m b’ i n Liobhanach lann Dhiarmaid,
‘S iomadh fear fiadhaich a mharbh i.

[377] Ceard, any kind of smith; or-cheard, a goldsmith; ceard airgid, a silversmith; ceard copair, a coppersmith; ceard stavin, a tinsmith, tinker; ceard spainean, a spoonsmith. Gipsies and travelling tinkers are pre-eminently ceardan or smiths, because they work in a great variety of metals. Ceard nan Gallan, the smith of the branches or youths, so called from being well adapted to cut down the young and strong.

[378] Irish, Mac an Loin.

22

Cha d' thugamaid, air bhur n-eagal,
Sgeula do sheisear dh' ur buidhinn,
Gu 'n do thog sinne na sleaghan;
'S gu 'm b' ann ri aghaidh nam bratach.

23

They were in seven battalions,
And no warrior thought of fleeing;
But on the ground of the field of Fine
We were there but six.

24

Two of these were myself and Caoilte,
Three of them was wily Faolan,
Four of them was Fionn the foremost,
And five of them was Osgar valiant.

25

Six of them was Goll MacMorna
That brooked no slur that I can mind;
Now will I cease from the numbering,
Since the Fhinn have gone to decay.

26

We were good in the day of the Teavrai,
In the workshop of Lon MacLiobhain;
This day how frail is my strength,
After having numbered the band.

So far this is almost the very same as the version given in Gillies, published 1786. The number of verses is the same, and the number of lines, and the order of the story the same; but there are considerable variations in a small way. In the 8th verse they set off to travel "as chuige mugha na luimedheirg," on a yellow mountain, as Beither, a dragon, which may mean, like the fifth of Munster of Limerick, but which I suspect refers to some other legend, for it does not appear how Munster should run like a dragon. In the 16th verse only one smith, he who spoke, has seven hands. In the 20th verse Ossian's sword is "Deire nan colg," the end of anger. In the 26th, the word is *teann ruith*, hard running, instead of the word pronounced teavrai; and there are many slight verbal differences and changes in orthography. The piece is without doubt the very same which is in Gillies, and if the book is in the Long Island it might have been learned from it. But, on the other hand, the book professes to be a collection made in the Highlands, its genuineness has never been questioned, and I believe that this is but a proof of the tenacity of popular memory for things which suit popular taste.

Another version was taken down for MacCallum, and published in 1816; I have indicated the chief differences in the footnotes. There is an Irish prose version of the story lately published (Ossianic Society's 2d vol.), which differs materially; it reduces the whole to a race; Fionn carried his sword with him; the smith is a giant with one leg, one arm, and one eye, who is bound by Fionn; his name is Roc, son of Diocan. As the Manks tradition (see introduction, vol. i. lvi.) agrees with these Gaelic poems, I suspect the Irish story is the tradition more fallen to decay.

Now as an example of the way in which these poems pervade the whole traditions of the country and are interwoven with each other, let me give the following account of a visit to pick up a version of the poem in Islay. MacLean's letter seems worth preservation.

Ballygrant, *May* 27, 1861.

Sir--I called on old MacPhail at Scanlistle last Friday; it wag the first time I had spoken to him for at least twenty years, for it is but lately that he has come to this parish. He left it fully more than twenty-five years ago, and was for a long time a workman with Doctor MacTavish. There the poor fellow got hurt, and the result was that he lost his leg. It may be well to state that he was a skilful and industrious workman, as there is a current opinion that these story-tellers are found among the worthless and lazy. Before he left this parish he was a workman with old Rounsfell at Persabas, and he was the person that was always sent to kiln-dry and mill the corn at Ballygrant. It was then, while kiln-drying corn, that he amused me with these Fenian stories. I regret to say that the verses are not so complete as I used to bear them from him. I reminded him of Sinsearrachd Fhinn, of which he was wont to give me a long list, but of this he could remember nothing the other day. I remember it went this way:--Fionn MacCumhail, 'Ic Trathuil, 'Ic treun-moir, 'Ic cham laora, but I cannot remember any other name beyond cam laora, or crooked toes.

When I entered the house he was sitting by the fireside with his wooden leg. The old fellow's eye brightened when he saw me, and I told him I wished to hear some of his old lore again. "O," said he, "b' abhaist domh 'bhith 'gan gabhail sin a chumail toil-inntinn riut" (I used to be reciting these to thee to keep thee pleased). "Cha bhiodh esan ach 'na phaisde an sin" (he would be but a child then), said his brother's wife. "Bha e 'na bhalach caol, luirgneach 'san am" (he was a slender leggy boy at the time), a description which is not altogether inappropriate yet. I inquired of him about the old people whom he was wont to hear reciting these stories in his youth, and he enumerated several, and said that the poems were long and beautiful, and that to listen to them was the delight of all. He quotes something here and there of almost all I have got. "Bas Gharuidh," he related to me, "The Incident of the Pigeons;" but with respect to Fioinn, he says his thigh was cut through, and that he was worthless ever afterwards.

"O bu lurach an eachdraidh i nuair a bhiodh i air a h-inriseadh gu ceart" (Oh that history was one of price when it was rightly told), exclaimed he with enthusiasm. During the conversation I gave him three glasses of good strong whisky, and you would not know that he had tasted it, further than being in good spirits. Verily alcohol is not always poison, as total abstainers pronounce it to be.--I am, Sir, yours sincerely,

HECTOR MACLEAN.

The conversation is written in Gaelic, but a translation is sufficient.

I give the verses as an example of the way in which scraps may be picked up, which might be used in mending other versions.

CII. Duan Na Ceardach, Etc

From Malcolm MacPhail, Scanlistle, aged eighty years. Learnt it from Alexander MacQueen, Persabas, sixty years ago. MacQueen was past eighty years of age at that time.

2.

Chunnacas a teachd ar coir,
Fear mor agus air aona chois;
Le a mhantal dubh ciardhubh craicinn;
Le ‘ionnar lachduinn ‘s le ruadh bheairt.

2-New verse.

Aon suil mholach an clar aodainn
‘Se sior dheanadh air MacChumhail,
“Co thu fhein?” arsa MacChumhail;
Na cia as duit?”

3--GOBHA. New.

“Thainig mis’ ‘ur cur fo gheasaibh,--
Seisear de mhaithibh na Feinne,
A bhith ‘gam ruith gun easraich
Siar gu dorus mo cheardach.”

4-New,

Thug e as mar ghaoth an earraich
Mach ri beannaibh dubha ‘n t-sleibhe.

10

Cha d’ thugadh e ach an aona cheum.
Thar gach aon ghleann fuarraidh, fasaidh;
‘S cha ‘n fhaiceadh tu ach air eigin
Cearb d’ a eideadh thar a mhasan.

FIONN RI CAOILTE.

“Freagair agus sin do chasan,
‘S gabh sgeula de ‘n rugha.”[379]

11

A’ tearnadh aig Alltan a’ chuimir,
Fosgladh gu ‘n d’ thug an gobha,
“Na druid romhan,” arsa Doorghlas.

7

CAOILTE.

“A rugha cait am bheil do cheardach?
Na ‘m b’ fheairde sinne g’ a faicinn?”

[379] Rugha, a smith. Reciter.

GOBHA.

“Mo cheardach cha ‘n ‘eil ri fhaotainn,
‘S ma dh’ fhaodas mise cha’n fhaic sibh.”

14

Labhair gobha de na goibhnean,
Le curam mor agus le gruaim;
“A righ co ‘m fear caol gun tioma,[380]
A shineas an sineadh cruadhach?”

15--FIONN.

A righ gu meal thu t’ ainm a Chaoilte
Cha bhi Daorghlas ort o’n uair seo.”

New.

A’ Chruaidh Chosgarrach lann Osgair,
An Leadarnach mhor lann Chaoilte,
Mac an Luin aig Fionn MacChumhail,
Nach fag fuigheall de dh’ fheoil dhaoine.

2--Various.

There was seen nearing us
A big man upon one foot,
With his black dusky black skin mantle,
With his hammering tools, and his “steel lathe.”

New verse--follows the 3d.

One shaggy eye in his forehead,
Making ever for MacChumhail,
“Who is thyself,” said MacChumhail,
“Or whence art thou?”

New verse--follows the 4th.

“I came to lay you under enchantments,
Six of the chiefs of the Feinne,
To be chasing me without hurry,
West to the door of my workshop.”

7--Half new verse; follows 7th.

He set off like the wind of the spring time,
Out to the dark mountains of the high grounds.

10

He would take but a single step,
O’er each single cold glen of the desert
Thou could’st have seen but hardly
A tuck of his clothing o’er his hurdies.

FIONN TO CAOILTE. New--follows 10.

[380] Sineadh, a bar of metal. Reciter.

Answer and stretch thy legs,
And take a tale of the blacksmith.

Rugha is a smith according to the reciter. Raute is a Lapp nickname for a smith, as I learned on the Tana, where I took the sketch of the skin-clad smith, whose portrait I give as an illustration. (*See Frontispiece*.)

Here the old man forgot his poem, but remembered a bit of his story.

"When Caoilte was at full speed, thou might'st see three heads on him. His two shoulders would be rising aloft, as though there were two heads, and his head would be crouching down, he would be going as it seems half bent." At vol. ii., 425, this occurs in the tale of the white chief, and this explains what I did not understand.

Then he went on with a few lines of verse.

11

Descending by the streamlet of the Shaper,
. . . . . .
At the opening that the smith made,
"Shut not before me," said Daorghlas.

7--CAOILTE.

"Oh, Rugha, where is thy workshop,
Or should we profit to see it?"

SMITH.

"My smithy is not to be found out;
And if I may, see it you shall not."

14--Various.

Out spoke a smith of the blacksmiths,
With great care and a grim frown,
"King! who is the slender fearless man,
That will stretch the tempered bar."

15--FIONN.

King! mayst thou snatch the name,
Thou shalt not be Daorghlas from this hour."

19--Partly new; follows 19.

"Victorious hardness," Osgar's blade,
"The big slasher," the blade of Caoilte,
"Mac-an-Luin" was Fionn MacChumhail's,
That never left a shred of the flesh of man.

Here this poem ends, so far as this old man is concerned; but enough remains to prove that he did not borrow from Gillies or MacCallum, for there are several lines and some verses which are not to be found in the books.

It is also manifest that there is a great deal missing. In the Lay of Diarmaid, he says that he was one of the party; his sword is mentioned here, but he is not.

MacLean writes:--"At the end of this verse. MacPhail relates that the arms required to be tempered in the blood of a living person; that the smith's daughter took a fancy to Fionn, who

had a love spot (which was Diarmaid's property), and that she told him, unless he killed her father with the sword, that her father would kill him. This Fionn accordingly did. This is different from the usual story, according to which the sword is tempered in the blood of the old woman, the smith's mother. Probably the variation may be owing to forgetfulness on the part of MacPhail, caused by old age and by having had a paralytic stroke last winter."

"This was when they got the arms; they had before but 'Tunnachan,' they were sticks with sharp ends made on them, and these ends burned and hardened in the fire. They used to throw them from them, and they could aim exceedingly with them, and they could drive them through a man. They used to have a bundle with them on their shoulders, and a bundle in their oxters. I myself have seen one of them that was found in a moss, that was as though it had been hardened in the fire."

This then gives the popular notion of the heroes, and throws them back beyond the iron period.

"There was a great day of battle between themselves and the Lochlanners, which was called Latha nan Tunnachan, the day of the stakes. I have heard old men speaking of it, and it was down thereabouts, about Chnoc angail that they gave it. They had a great day there."

This then fixes the period; at the time of the wars with Lochlann in Islay.

"It was in the side of a knoll at Alltan a chuirin that the fairy smith had his smithy."

"There was a great carlin once in Lochlann. It is Muirearteach maol ruadh that. they used to say to her. She came from Lochlann, and she brought a smithy and the smith (ceardach agus an Gobha) with her on her back to sharpen the spears; she was but a witch, but the Fheinn slew her. Said the King of Lochlann when he heard this"--here comes in verse 23 of the poem given already, page 144, with the English word sink introduced, and a few variations; and this joins the lay of the witch to the lay of the smithy.

"The Lochlanners were difficult (that is, cross and fierce); and they had so much iodramanach and witchcraft that it is thus they used to do much of their valour."

"Goll was the strongest man that was in the Fheinn, and he could eat seven stags at his dinner. Fionn was a patient worthy man, and they used always to take his counsel. Fionn and Osgar, Goll and Oisean, four 'postaichean' of the Feinne, the high law people, Luchd ladh."

This would seem to explain how three generations fill such a large space in Celtic popular tradition. If the names of the original warriors became the names of offices or officers they may have been Celtic gods at first and commanders of Irish, Scotch Scandinavian, and British Feinne afterwards, in the third century and in the twelfth. There were many Osgars at the battle of Gaura, and Fionn, who is killed in one century, is all alive the next.

"Fionn was not a king over land, he was but a chief over the men."

"Was there any other name said to him but Righ na Feinne, king of the Fane?"

"There was not."

"It is Conan who was the weakest man that was in the Fheinn, because they used to keep him maol (cropped). He had but the strength of a man, but if the hair should get leave to grow there was the strength of a man in him for every hair that was in his head; but he was so cross that if the hair should grow be would kill them all. He was so short-tempered (ath-ghoirid) that he used to be always fighting with them."

So all accounts agree; and Kai, Arthur's attendant, was of the same disposition.

"When Goll would be in great rage the one eye would come 'dorn gulban' out, and the other eye would go 'dorn gulban' in. I think myself that his appearance would not be beautiful then."

Neither narrator, scribe, nor translator knows what "dord gulban" means, but
Conall *Gulban* struck *dorn* a fist on a man, and knocked his eye out on his cheek.

"Did you ever hear," what Righ Mhor bheinn (king of Morven, of great hills), said to Fionn?

"I have heard it," (chual). This was put as an experiment to try the effect of a leading question, and it produced a contradiction; but he might have heard the name and have forgotten it till reminded.

"They would be always staying over at Fas Laigheann, at Goirtean taoid, when they were in this island (Islay), and the place for the caldron is there yet, and they say that the caldron is buried there. It is Eas Laigheann nan sruth seimh that they used to call it--lin of Laigheann of the still streams--they were so fond of it. They had no house at all there."

This joins Gaelic to Welsh and Irish traditions, for this caldron is often mentioned, and it upsets Scotch and Irish topography altogether.

"There came a woman on them there once from the westward, and they said to her--

Tha sinne 'cur mar choran 's mar gheasan ort,
Gu 'n innis thu, co thu fhein na co do mhuinntir?
'S mise nighean righ na Sorchann,
Sgiath an airm;
'S gur h-e 's ainm dha 'm Baoidhre borb;
'S gu 'n d' thoir e mise leis,
Cia mor bhur treis as an Fhéinn.
Cia b' fhada 'n oidhche gu latha,
Cha bu ghna leinn 'bhith gun cheol.

We lay it as a circuit and as spells on thee.
That thou tell us who thou art, or thy people.
I am the daughter of the king of Sorchann,[381]
Shield of armies,
And that his name is Baoidhre borb,
And that be will take me with him.
Though great our time from the Fane,
Though long be the night to day,
It was not our wont to be without music.

"They were is such a great (iomagain) trouble about the man who was coming that they did not set up any music."

"'We will rise out in the morning,' said they, 'to see who is coming upon us.'"

Chunnucas a' teachd ar coir fear mor air steud chiar-dhubh, rionna-gheal, a' coiseachd air an fhairge, staigh as an aird an iar.

[381] Sorchann, MacLean suggests, may be Droutheim or Trondjem. Sorchan used to mean au elevation on which a shinny ball was placed to be "bit off," and it meant any other hillock.
Baoidhre, from Beithir, a large serpent or dragon, and Righ, a king, so called probably from having a serpent as part of his armorial bearings.--H. M'L.

Cuireamaid ar combairle ri cheile,
Feuch co ‘ghabhas sgeula de ‘n oigear.
Labhair Goll le curam mor as le gruaim,
Co ‘theid fo m’ sgéith-sa chumail diom nam buillean cruadhach.

Bhuail am fear a thainig beum sgéithe ‘s dh’ iarr e comhrag coig ceud laoch. Leum an deo as a’ mhnaoi an an taobh eile dhiu leis an eagal.

“There was seen coming near us a great man on his dun black, white-haired steed, walking on the sea, in from the western airt.

‘Let us lay our counsel together,
See who will take a tale from the youth,’
Spoke Goll, with great care and a frown,
‘Who will go under my shield to ward off the tempered strokes.’

“The man who came struck a shield blow, and he asked for a battle of five hundred heroes. The life leaped out of the women on the other side of them for fear.

“They killed him at last.

Thiodhlaicear aig braigh an eas,
Fear mor bu mhor meas agus miadh;
Chuir Fionn MacCumhail fainn oir,
Air gach meur aig an onair an righ.

They buried at the top of the lin
The great man of great honour and esteem.
Fionn MacChumail put a golden ring
On each of his fingers in honour of the king.

“I saw a man in Goirtean taoid (in Islay), and he found one of the rings on the point of his sock when he was ploughing--Murchadh MacNeacail. It was one of the old Highland ploughs he had. There were great long beaks on them. The carle got much money for the ring.”

Now this is the story of the well-known poem of Fainesoluis, localized in Islay, and the finding of a gold ring assumed to be proof positive of its exact truth by the old man who tells it. I also have a gold ring which was found in Islay with a lot of others. It is said that the finder made handles for a chest of drawers of these gold rings, and that a pedlar gave him a fine new brass set in exchange for the old ones, which he carried off and sold. Some of them are said to be in the museum at Glasgow, one I have, and the rest were probably melted. I know of several discoveries of gold rings, chains, etc., made in Islay. Now it is possible that this tradition of the Feinne may be true. The story is in Dean MacGregor’s MS. as a poem of 161 lines, attributed to Ossian in 1530. It is claimed by Irish writers as Moira Borb, 1789, in vol. v. of the Ossianic Society’s transactions, 1860.

I have three traditionary versions as poems, one written down in September 1860, in Barra, called MacOighre Righ na lor-smàil; eighty-four lines from Donald MacPhie, Breubhaig, who says he learned it from Hector MacLaine (smith), an uncle of his who could neither read nor write, and who died aged about eighty some twenty years ago. In this, Padruig and Oisean, and Fionn, and Fionn’s four sons, and Osgar, and the daughter of the king under the waves, and a big man who comes in a ship, are the actors. The language is curious, and the poetry good. I regret extremely that I have no room for it.

The other is from Patrick Smith, South Boisdale, South Uist; an old man who learned it in his youth from Roderick MacVicar, North Uist, seventy-three lines, Macabh Mor Mae-Righ na

Sorcha. The story is the same, but Padruig does not appear. The burial of the hero at the top of a lin with rings on his fingers is given, which is in the Dean's version. The last line,

Tha sgeul beag agum air Fionn,

is the first and last line in the Dean's, and generally my version and this fragment and the Dean's might be fused so as to make a more complete story, and a longer and perfectly genuine poem in Scotch Gaelic. The third version is called Dan na H-ighean, and has eighty-four lines, written by Mr. Torrie in Benbecula, from the dictation of Donald Macintyre, who learned it some fifty years ago from an old man who afterwards went to America, John MacInnes or Iain og MacFhionlai. This joins Scotch and Irish traditions, MacPherson's Ossian, with genuine traditions and old MSS., and joins poetry to prose tales.

"There was a young lad in the Fheinn, who was called Coireall, and he used always to be in the house of the women, because he had not come to the age of a man. It is Goll that had Mir mora na Feinne, the great morsel of the Fane, that was every bit of marrow that was in every bone to be gathered together and brought to him. Coireall came in, and he took with him some of the marrow, and he and Goll fell out (went over each other). The law that Fionn made, was, that they should drive bones through the wattled rods that were dividing the house, and the one with whom the bone should go, the marrow to be his."

This is the common partition in Highland cottages, rods woven into a kind of rude basket-work, and plastered with clay. Rob Roy's house at the head of Glenshira, near Inverary, is so divided.

They did that, and Goll dragged Coireall through the wattled rods with the bone.

After that they went to try each other to the strand (cladach), and Coireall won of Goll, and he left the woman's house."

Cluiche ri cluiche nan soc,
Cluiche nan corcan 's nam bian;
A' chulaidh chomhraig a bh' aig an dis
Cha 'n fhaca mi roimhe riamh.

Each game to the game of the ends,
The game of the whittles and skins,
The battle array that these two had,
I never before have seen.

This then paints the dwellings of the heroes as very rude, and gives the clue to another poem which I have: sixty lines of very good popular poetry, describing how Goll slew Coireall at a merrymaking, and how Fionn lamented over his son, and why he hated Goll thenceforth. I have not found this in any book as yet.

"It must be that the Feinn were strong?"

"Hoo! They were as strong as the horses. There was one who was called Mileach Mor, and he sent word for them at once, and the chase fallen short. When they arrived, they were put into a long house there, and they were without anything. A big black girl came in, and she asked a battle of warriors from them."

"Let me get to her," said Conan.

Conan went, and she seized him, and she floored him, and she plucked three of her hairs, and she bound his three smalls. Then she went out, and they loosed Conan. She came in again, and she sought a battle of warriors, "Let me get at her," said Conan.

“What canst thou do?” said they to him. They let him go, and she floored him, and this time she did something else to him, and then she went out.

They killed the Mileach Mor, and they had the keep of a day and a year there.

This joins an Islay tradition to one published by Mr. Simpson in 1857, as current in Mayo (see pages 235 and 242), and it also joins in with a great many other stories which I have in manuscript, and with Magach Colgar, No. xxxvi., and so to ancient MSS. now in the Advocate’s Library. And thus one old Highlander with a failing memory, but who can still remember some scraps of what he learned in his youth, and could remember in his manhood, forms one mesh in a net-work of tradition, and manuscript and print; history and mythology, prose and poetry, which joins the whole Gaelic family together, extends over three centuries, and may be found to join them to the earliest records of the Pagan world. This is no solitary case. The man is a specimen of a class which survives in far-away corners, but which must soon vanish before modern ways, together with the Gaelic language.

CIII. Nighean Righ Fo Thuinn. The Daughter Of King Under-Waves

From Roderick MacLean (tailor) Ken Tangval, Barra, who heard it frequently recited by old men in South Uist, about fifteen years ago. One of them was Angus Macintyre, Bornish, who was about eighty years old at the time. Written by H. MacLean, 1860. I have selected this, because it shews one of the Ossianic heroes in a very mythological character. I omit the Gaelic for want of room, and translate closely but more freely.

THE Fhinn were once together, on the side of Beinn Eudainn, on a wild night, and there was pouring rain and falling snow from the north. About midnight a creature of uncouth appearance struck at the door of Fionn. Her hair[382] was down to her heels, and she cried to him to let her in under the border of his covering. Fionn raised up a corner of the covering, and he gazed at her. "Thou strange looking ugly creature," said he "thy hair is down to thy heels, how shouldst thou ask me to let thee in?"

She went away, and she gave a scream. She reached Oisean, and she asked him to let her in under the border of his covering. Oisean lifted a corner of his covering, and be saw her.

"Thou strange, hideous creature, how canst thou ask me to let thee in?" said be.

"Thy hair is down to thy heels. Thou shalt not come in."

She went away, and she gave a shriek.

She reached Diarmaid, and she cried aloud to him to let her in under the border of his covering.

Diarmaid lifted a fold of his covering, and he saw her. "Thou art a strange, hideous creature. Thy hair is down to thy heels, but come in," said be. She came in under the border of his covering.

"Oh, Diarmaid," said she, "I have spent seven years travelling over ocean and sea, and of all that time I have not passed a night till this night, till thou hast let me in. Let me come in to the warmth of the fire."

"Come up," said Diarmaid.

When she came up, the people of the Finn began to flee, so hideous was she.[383]

"Go to the further side," said Diarmaid, "and let the creature come to the warmth of the fire."

They went to the one side, and they let her be at the fire, but she had not been long at the fire, when she sought to be under the warmth of the blanket together with himself.

"Thou art growing too bold," said Diarmaid. "First thou did'st ask to come under the border of the covering, then thou did'st seek to come to the fire, and now thou seekest leave to come under the blanket with me; but come."

She went under the blanket, and he turned a fold of it between them. She was not long thus, when he gave a start, and he gazed at her, and he saw the finest drop of blood that ever was,

[382] A falt 's a fionna.
[383] This gives to Brat the meaning of the cover of a tent or booth, it generally means a flag, a rag, or a mantle.

from the beginning of the universe till the end of the world at his side. He shouted out to the rest to come over where he was, and he said to them.

“It is not often that men are unkind! Is not this the most beauteous woman that man ever saw!”

“She is,” said they, as they covered her up, “the most beautiful woman that man ever saw.”[384]

Then she was asleep, and she did not know that they were looking at her. He let her sleep, and he did not awaken her, but a short time after that she awoke, and she said to him, “Art thou awake Diarmaid?”

“I am awake,” said Diarmaid.

“Where would’st thou rather that the very finest castle thou hast ever seen should be built?”

“Up above Beinn Eudainn, if I had my choice,” and Diarmaid slept, and she said no more to him.

“There went one out early, before the day, riding, and he saw a castle built up upon a hill. He cleared his sight to see if it was surely there; then he saw it, and he went home, and he did not say a word.

Another went out, and he saw it, and he did not say a word. Then the day was brightened, and two come in telling that the castle was most surely there.

Said she, as she rose up sitting, “Arise Diarmaid, go up to thy castle, and be not stretched there any longer.”

“If there was a castle to which I might go,” said he.

“Look out, and see if there be a castle there.”

He looked out, and he saw a castle, and he came in. I will go up to the castle, if thou wilt go there together with me.”

“I will do that, Diarmaid, but say not to me thrice how thou did’st find me,” said she.

“I will not say[385] to thee for ever, how I found thee,” said Diarmaid.

They went to the castle, the pair. That was the beautiful castle! There was not a shadow of thing, that was for the use of a castle that was not in it, even to a herd for the geese.

The meat was on the board, and there were maid servants, and men servants about it.[386]

They spent three days in the castle together, and at the end of three days she said to him, “Thou art turning sorrowful, because thou art not together with the rest.”

“Think that I am not feeling sorrow surely that I am not together with the Fhinn,” said he.

[384] The very same idea exists in a Spanish legend of the Cid, who in like manner shewed kindness to, and shared his couch with a leper; in the night he changed into St. Lazarus, all bright and shining.
[385] Na can. Cha chan. This verb is not common in some districts.
[386] This description of magnificence is very characteristic. The narrator, knowing nothing earthly about castles, describes nothing, but leaves everything to fancy, except the goose herd, and the food, and the waiters. An Arabian story-teller would have given a long detail of eastern magnificence, the Countess d’Aulnoy would have filled in the picture from her own knowledge of courts, and when all is done the incident is the same. It was the most magnificent castle that could be imagined, and there were lots to eat, and servants to work, and there is an end of it.

“Thou had’st best go with the Fhinn, and thy meat and thy drink will be no worse than they are,” said she.

“Who will take care of the greyhound bitch,[387] and her three pups?” said Diarmaid.

“Oh,” said she, “what fear is there for the greyhound, and for the three pups?”

He went away when he heard that. He left a blessing with her, and he reached the people of the Finne, and Fionn, the brother of his mother, and there was a chief’s honour and welcome[388] before Diarmaid when he arrived, and they had ill will[389] to him, because the woman had come first to them, and that they had turned their backs to her, and that he had gone before her wishes, and the matter had turned out so well.

She was out after he had gone away, and what should she see but one coming in great haste. Then she thought of staying without till he should come, and who was there but Fionn. He hailed her, and caught her by the hand.

Thou art angry with me, damsel,”[390] said he.

“Oh, I am not at all, Fhinn,” said she. “Come in till thou take a draught from me.”

“I will go if I get my request,” said Fionn.

“What request might be here that thou should’st not get,” said she.

“That is, one of the pups of the greyhound bitch.”

“Oh, the request thou hast asked is not great,” said she; “the one thou mayest choose take it with thee.”

He got that, and he went away.[391]

At the opening of the night came Diarmaid. The greyhound met him without, and she gave a yell.

“It is true, my lass, one of thy pups is gone. But if thou had’st mind of how I found thee, how thy hair was down to thy heels, thou had’st not let the pup go.”

“Thou Diarmaid, what saidst thou so?”

“Oh,” said Diarmaid, “I am asking pardon.”

“Oh, thou shalt get that,” said she, and he slept within that night, and his meat and drink were as usual.

On the morrow he went to where he was yesterday, and while he was gone she went out to take a stroll, and while she was strolling about, what should she see but a rider coming to where she was. She stayed without till he reached her.

Who reached her here but Oisean, son of Fionn.

They gave welcome and honour to each other. She told him to go in with her, and that he should take a draught from her, and he said that he would, if he might get his request.

“What request hast thou?” said she.

[387] Saighead mialchoin; perhaps arrow, Greyhound.
[388] Flath a’s failt.
[389] Miorun
[390] Righin
[391] This is characteristic of Fionn, as he always appears in these traditions; he represents wisdom, but crafty wisdom, and gains his ends by stratagem.

“One of the pups of the greyhound bitch.”

“Thou shalt get that,” said she, “take thy choice of them.”

He took it with him, and he went away.[392]

At the opening of the night came Diarmaid home, and the greyhound met him without, and she gave two yells.

“That is true, my lass,” said Diarmaid, “another is taken from thee. But if she had mind of how I found her, she had not let one of thy pups go. When her hair was down to her heels.”

“Diarmaid! What said’st thou?” said she.

“I am asking pardon,” said Diarmaid.

“Thou shalt get that,” said she, and they seized each others hands, and they went home together, and there was meat and drink that night as there ever had been.

In the morning Diarmaid went away, and a while after he had gone she was without taking a stroll. She saw another rider coming to-day, and he was in great haste. She thought she would wait, and not go home till he should come forward. What was this but another of the Fhinn.

He went with civil words to the young damsel, and they gave welcome and honour to each other.

She told him to go home with her, and that he should take a draught from her. He said that he would go if he should get his request.

She asked that time what request that might be, “One of the pups of the greyhound bitch,” said he.

“Though it is a hard matter for me,” said she, “I will give it to thee.”

He went with her to the castle, he took a draught from her, he got the pup, and he went away.

At the opening of the night came Diarmaid. The greyhound met him, and she gave three yells, the most hideous that man ever heard.

“Yes, that is true my lass, thou art without any this day,” said Diarmaid, “but if she had mind of howl found her, she would not have let the pup go; when her hair was down to her heels, she would not have done that to me.”

“Thou, Diarmaid, what said’st thou?”

“Oh, I am asking pardon,” said Diarmaid. He went home, and he was without wife or bed beside him, as he ever had been. It was in a moss-hole he awoke on the morrow. There was no castle, nor a stone left of it on another. He began to weep, and he said to himself that he would not stay, head or foot, till he should find her.

Away he went, and what should he do but take his way across the glens. There was neither house nor ember in his way. He gave a glance over his shoulder, and what should he see but the greyhound just dead. He seized her by the tail, and he put her on his shoulder, and he would not part with her for the love that he bore her. He was going on, and what should he see above him but a herd.

“Did’st thou see, this day or yesterday, a woman taking this way?” said Diarmaid to the herd.

[392] This is foreign to the character of Oisein in all other stories, but he was the son of Fionn, and he generally tells his own story.

“I saw a woman early in the morning yesterday, and she was walking hard,” said the herd.

“What way did’st thou see her going?”

“She went down yonder point to the strand, and I saw her no more.”

He took the very road that she took, till there was no going any further. He saw a ship. He put the slender end of his spear under his chest, and he sprang into her, and he went to the other side. He laid himself down, stretched out on the side of a hill, and he slept, and when he awoke there was no ship to be seen. “A man to be pitied am I,” said he, “I shall never get away from here, but there is no help for it.”

He sat on a knoll, and he had not sat there long when he saw a boat coming, and one man in her, and he was rowing her.

He went down where she was, he grasped the greyhound by the tail, and he put her in, and he went in after her.

Then the boat went out over the sea, and she went down under, and he had but just gone down, when he saw ground, and a plain on which be could walk.[393] He went on this land, and

[393] This notion of a land under the waves is very widely spread, and common to many nations. The Arabian Nights are full of stories about people who lived under the sea, but this was not taken from the Arabian Nights, for it is common to all the surviving branches of the Celtic family, and to other races.
In the story of “Rouge Gorge,” Foyer Brenton, 1858, a maiden befriends a red-breast, and by his aid and advice gets magic sabots and a stick, walks over the sea to certain islands, where she knocks at a rock, and out comes--Mor vyo’ch, the sea cow, which only varies from other cows in being better, and magical. In Gaelic it would be muir bho. By thrice repeating the name of Saint Ronan d Hybernie, and stroking the beast with a magic herb, the cow which had been sold, and had returned, was transformed to Marc’h mor, the sea-horse, which again is like other horses, only ten times better. The word Marc’h does not now survive in the Gaelic, but riding is *Mar-cach*. The horse is sold, and returns, and is transformed by the same means into Mor Vawd. Mer veau, muir bho, the sea-calf or cow, which is a sheep with fine red wool, which is sold also, but jumps into the sea, and escapes to the Seven Isles, and vanishes into a rock.
In the story of the Groach d l’ ile de Lok (156), a man goes into a boat like a swan, and when he is on board the swan awakes, and dives down to the bottom of a pool in the middle of a Sea Island. and there he finds a magnificent dwelling, and a fairy, who treats him well for a time, but turns him into a frog at last.
In the Mabinogion it appears that Cardigan Bay was once dry land, and that the land sank, and the people survive, with their dwellings and possessions.
In a curious pamphlet which I picked up in Dublin--”The History of the Isle of Man,” etc., “with a succinct detail of enchantments that have been exhibited there by sorcerers and other infernal beings,” etc., 1780, I find the account of an English tourist, who, like Herodotus, wrote down all be heard, and seems to have believed a great deal of it. He mentions the “Mauthe dog,” which a Gaelic scholar would spell Madadh dubh, dog black, who is a Celtic goblin still, and endless other stories and superstitions which are familiar to me; but amongst others, he tells a tale of Port Iron, where the people were quite familiar with mermen, and had caught a merwoman in a net one moonlight night on the shore. She would not speak till she was allowed to escape to her own people. She had a tail like a fish. So has Abdallah of the sea in Lane’s Arabian Nights. But this is nothing. A company was formed for diving, “in glass machines cased with thick tough leather,” and a man was let down near the Isle of Man to seek for treasure. The diver passed through the region of fishes, and got into a pure element, clear as the air. He saw the ground glittering with all manner of magnificence, streets and squares of mother of pearl. He hauled his diving bell into a house, and almost within reach of treasures, but there was no more line, and he was hauled back empty handed.
This is a “story” in every sense of the term, and it is so elaborate and ornamented that it must have been cooked for the stranger, or by him, but the main idea is that there is a world under the waves, and the Manks sailors then declared that they commonly heard at sea the bleating of sheep, the barking of dogs, the howling of wolves, and the distinct cries of every beast the land affords, and they now believe in the water horse, and the water bull, and the sea man.
Being lately in Ireland, I proceeded to pump a carman, who had the reputation of being full of stories, and after many vain attempts I got him started, as we drove home to Waterford in the dark. The first thing he told me was a story which was perfectly familiar, though told with an Irish brogue, and with Irish characteristics--a story of a man who grew rich by getting sea cows and sheep. His place of abode, and all particulars were given, but I

he went on. He was but a short time walking, when he fell in with a gulp of blood. He lifted the blood, and he put it into a napkin, and he put it into his pouch. “It was the greyhound that lost this,” said he.

He was a while walking, and he fell in with the next gulp, and he lifted it, and put it into his pouch. He fell in with the next one, and he did the like with it. What should he see a short space from him, after that, but a woman, as though she wore crazed, gathering rushes. He went towards her, and he asked her what news she had. “I cannot tell till I gather the rushes,” said she.

“Be telling it whilst thou art gathering,” said Diarmaid.

“I am in great haste,” said she.

“What place is here?” said he.

“There is here,” said she, “Rioghachd Fo Thuinn, Realm Underwaves.”

“Realm Underwaves!”

“Yes,” said she.

“What use hast thou for rushes, when thou art gathering them?” said Diarmaid.

“The daughter of King Underwaves has come home, and she was seven years under spells, and she is ill, and the leeches of Christendom are gathered, and none are doing her good, and a bed of rushes is what she finds the wholesomest.”

“Well then, I would be far in thy debt if thou wouldst see me where that woman is.”

“Well then I will see that. I will put thee into the sheaf of rushes, and I will put the rushes under thee and over thee, and I will take thee with me on my back.”

That is a thing that thou can’st not do,” said Diarmaid.

“Be that upon me,” said she.

She put Diarmaid into the bundle, and she took him on her back.

(*Was not that my lass*!) When she reached the chamber she let down the bundle.

“Oh! hasten that to me,” said the daughter of King Underwaves.

He sprang out of the bundle, and be sprang to meet her, and they seized each other’s hands, and there was joy then.

“Three parts of the ailment are gone, but I am not well, and I will not be. Every time I thought of thee when I was coming, I lost a gulp of the blood of my heart.”

knew that the same story was told in Orkney, Harris, and Barra; here I had it at Waterford, and it was the same as the Breton story quoted above, for the end of it was that the cow and all her progeny ran off, and jumped into their native sea, because the man wanted to slaughter the cow.

The same idea is in Straparola’s, Italian. A man is swallowed by a mermaid, and restored from the bottom of the Atlantic. It is in old Scotch ballads where men fall in love with mermaids. It is in German stories where men are carried off by Nixies. It is in Norse and Swedish, and it was in Greek and Latin, for there were sea gods of old, and from all this fiction I would gather one probable fact. The men whose minds first conceived this idea was not bred near the sea, or used to it, they were not sailors. They surely came from some inland country to the sea, and peopled it with the creatures of the land. If they saw a seal they might fancy it a man. A walrus they might call a cow, and if the idea was so formed by those who first arrived at the sea, it has survived till now.

A mermaid was lately seen oft Plymouth, according to a young sailor of my acquaintance, and Diarmaid went to the land under the waves to search for the daughter of the king.

“Well then, I have got these three gulps of thy heart’s blood, take thou them in a drink, and there will be nothing amiss.”

“Well then, I will not take them,” said she; “they will not do me a shade of good, since I cannot get one thing and I shall never get that in the world.”

“What thing is that?” said he.

“There is no good in telling thee that; thou wilt not get it, nor any man in the world; it has discomfitted them for long.”

“If it be on the surface of the world I will get it, and do thou tell it,” said Diarmaid.

“That is three draughts from the cup of Righ Magh an Ioghnaidh, the King of Plain of Wonder, and no man ever got that, and I shall not get it.”

“Oh! said Diarmaid, “there are not on the surface of the world as many as will keep it from me. Tell me if that man be far from me.”

“He is not; he is within a bound near my father, but a rivulet is there, and in it there is the sailing of a ship with the wind behind her, for a day and a year before thou reach it.”

He went away, and he reached the rivulet, and he spent a good while walking at its side.

“I cannot cross over it; that was true for her,” said Diarmaid.

Before he had let the word out of his mouth, there stood a little russet man in the midst of the rivulet.[394]

“Diarmaid, son of Duibhne, thou art in straits,” said he.

“I am in a strait just now,” said Diarmaid.

What would’st thou give to a man who would bring thee out of these straits? come hither and put thy foot on my palm.”

“Oh! my foot cannot go into thy palm,” said Diarmaid.

“It can.”

He went, and he put his foot on his palm. “Now, Diarmaid, it is to King Mag an Iunai that thou art going.”

“It is indeed,” said Diarmaid.

“It is to seek his cup thou art going.”

“It is.”

“I will go with thee myself.”

“Thou shalt go,” said Diarmaid.

Diarmaid reached the house of King Wonderplain. He shouted for the cup to be sent out, or battle, or combat; and it was not the cup.

There were sent out four hundred Lugh ghaisgeach, and four hundred Lan ghaisgeach, and in two hours he left not a man of them alive.

[394] This personage plays a part which is common enough, that of the ferryman, of whom Charon was one. A little red-haired man rising in the middle of a river that was a year’s sail wide, and taking a great hero over on the palm of his hand, is not to be reasonably accounted for, and he should be some marine divinity. He tells his own employment below.

He shouted again for battle, or else combat, or the cup to be sent out.

That was the thing he should get, battle or else combat, and it was not the cup.

There were sent out eight hundred loo gaishgeach, and eight hundred lan gaisgeach, and in three hours he left not a man of them alive.

He shouted again for battle, or else combat, or else the cup to be sent out to him.

There were sent out nine hundred strong heroes, and nine hundred full heroes, and in four hours he left no man of them alive.

"Whence," said the king as he stood in his own great door, "came the man that has just brought my realm to ruin? If it be the pleasure of the hero let him tell from whence he came."

"It is the pleasure of the hero; a hero of the people of the Fhinn am I. I am Diarmaid."

"Why did'st thou not send in a message to say who it was, and I would not have spent my realm upon thee, for thou would'st kill every man of them, for it was put down in the books seven years before thou wert born. What dost thou require?"

"That is the cup; it comes from thine own hand for healing."[395]

"No man ever got my cup but thou, but it is easy for me to give thee a cup; but for healing there is but that I have myself about the board."

Diarmaid got the cup from King Wonderplain.

"I will now send a ship with thee Diarmaid," said the king.

"Great thanks (Taing mhor) to thee, oh king. I am much in thy debt; but I have a ferry of my own."[396]

Here the king and Diarmaid parted from each other. He remembered when he had parted from the king that he had never said a word at all, the day before about the little russet man, and that he had not taken him in. It was when he was coming near upon the rivulet that he thought of him; and he did not know how he should get over the burn.

"There is no help for it," said he. "I shall not now get over the ferry, and shame will not let me return to the king."[397]

What should rise while the word was in his mouth but the little russet man out of the burn.

"Thou art in straits, Diarmaid."

"I am."

"It is this day that thou art in extremity."

"It is. I got the thing I desired, and I am not getting across."

[395] The resemblance which all this bears to mediæval romance, and to Welsh popular tales, is striking. The subject is referred to elsewhere. Fionn had a healing cup, which he refused to give Diarmaid after the fatal boar-hunt, and a great part of mediæval romance hinges on the search for a mystic healing cup. There is another story of which I have read in which Conan goes to Ifrionn; the cold isle of the dead.

[396] Some Saxon foe relates that a Mac------ had proved unwittingly that his family were older than the flood. The other objected that there were none of that name in the ark, to which the highlander replied--"The Mac------s had always a boat o' their ain."

[397] The idea of the ferry is clearly that of one of the dangerous tidal fords which abound in the islands. One between North Uist and Benbecula is said to be six miles wide. It is crossed on foot at low tide, and in a boat when the tide is high, and at night it is dangerous enough.

“Though thou didst to me all that which thou hast done; though thou didst not say a word of me yesterday; put thy foot on my palm and I will take thee over the burn.”

Diarmaid put his foot on his palm, and he took him over the burn.

“Thou wilt talk to me now Diarmaid,” said he.

“I will do it,” said Diarmaid.

“Thou art going to heal the daughter of King Underwaves; she is the girl that thou likest best in the world.”

“Oh! it is she.”

“Thou shalt go to such and such a well. Thou wilt find a bottle at the side of the well, and thou shalt take it with thee full of the water. When thou reachest the damsel, thou shalt put the water in the cup, and a gulp of blood in it, and she will drink it. Thou shalt fill it again, and she will drink. Thou shalt fill it the third time, and thou shalt put the third gulp of blood into it, and she will drink it, and there will not be a whit ailing her that time. When thou hast given her the last, and she is well, she is the one for whom thou carest least that ever thou hast seen before thee.”

“Oh! not she,” said Diarmaid.

“She is; the king will know that thou hast taken a dislike to her. She will say Diarmaid thou hast taken a dislike to me. Say thou that thou hast. Dost thou know what man is speaking to thee?” said the little russet man.

“Not I,” said Diarmaid.

“In me there is the messenger of the other world, who helped thee; because thy heart is so warm to do good to another. King Underwaves will come, and he will offer thee much silver and gold for healing his daughter. Thou shalt not take a jot, but that the king should send a ship with thee to Eirinn to the place from whence thou camest.”[398]

Diarmaid went; he reached the well; he got the bottle, and he filled it with water; he took it with him, and he reached the castle of King Underwaves. When he came in he was honoured and saluted.

“No man over got that cup before,” said she.

“I would have got it from all that there are on the surface of the world; there was no man to turn me back,” said Diarmaid.

“I thought that thou wouldst not get it though thou shouldst go, but I see that thou hast it,” said she.

He put a gulp of blood into the water in the cup, and she drank it. She drank the second one, and she drank the third one; and when she had drunk the third one there was not a jot ailing her. She was whole and healthy. When she was thus well, he took a dislike for her; scarcely could he bear to see her.

“Oh! Diarmaid,” said she, “thou art taking a dislike for me.”

“Oh! I am,” said he.

[398] This bit bears some resemblance to the German story of Godfather Death, in that the messenger of the other world instructs a man in the healing art, and he heals a king’s daughter.

Then the king sent word throughout the town that she was healed, and music was raised, and lament laid down. The king came where Diarmaid was, and he said to him,

“Now, thou shalt take so much by counting of silver for healing her, and thou shalt get herself to marry.”

“I will not take the damsel; and I will not take anything but a ship to be sent with me to Eirinn, where the Fhinn are gathered.”

A ship went with him, and he reached the Fhinn and the brother of his mother; and there was joy before him there, and pleasure that he had returned.

MacLean quotes a Gaelic proverb--

“Cha d’ thug gaol luath nach d’ thug fuath clis.”

“None gave love quickly but gave sudden hate.”

Which might be the pith of this curious story. Unless it is mythological it cannot be explained. At all events, here is one of the heroes of Ossian meeting with the messenger of the other world in the Realm under the Waves, and crossing a river like the pious Æneas, when he went below. The story is manifestly imperfect. Something should have been done with the greyhound, but I have no version which fills up the gap.

There is an Irish story which seems to bear upon the incident. Tuirreann, the sister of Fionn’s mother, is married to Iollan Eachtach, and his fairy sweetheart transforms her into a hound, and takes her to Fergus. She there gives birth to a couple of puppies, “Bran” and “Sceoluing,” Finn’s favourite hounds, which were consequently his cousins. Diarmaid is one of the names mixed up with this strange Irish story, and this favourite hound might have been the transformed lady, and if so, Diarmaid’s relative-his grand aunt. It is not easy, then, to accomplish the feat of making the Fionn of the stories a real commander of mortal Irish militiamen.

The incident of the greyhound and her three pups, formed part of a story which was told to me at Polchar inn on the 3d of September 1860. The narrator was a slender middle-aged woman, with black hair and gray eyes, returning from durance at the jail at Lochmaddy; her offence had been the sale of unlawful whisky. I heard her crooning a very pretty old Gaelic love song to a baby, and went down into the kitchen. I found a whole tribe of black-haired girls, of all ages, barefooted, and barelegged, clustered about the peat fire with their bare arms all twined about each others’ necks and waists, and their bright eyes and teeth glancing in the red light over each other’s shoulders, as they peeped at the stranger. An old man was smoking on a bench and the singer with black elf-locks was dancing the baby on her knee. We soon got friends, and the story was the result. It was a stepmother story, and the wicked muime gave away the pups to a captain of a ship, and accused the king’s daughter of killing them, and broke candlesticks and laid the blame on the girl, till the king took her out to a lonely moor, and said--

“Whether wouldst thou rather that I slew thee outright, or that I should cut off one hand, and one breast, and one knee.”

Here the old dame used action and great emphasis, and a shiver of horror ran through the junior part of the audience, who were listening intently.

The deed was done, and the girl crawled to a house where there lived three king’s sons under spells, and she went in and found food. They came home and put off their cochal, that is their

enchanted form; and one of them said, “Here is a drop of king’s blood on the board;” and he sought, and found her, and dressed her wounds, and washed her, and “dried her with a towel.”

She married this one, and had three sons, and by the help of a poor woman, and through the agency of a well, recovered her lost members.

She went home at last, and found her father with a wounded leg, which would never be well, till his daughter cured it with her two hands. She laid her recovered hands on the knee, the penitent father cut a caper quite well, and the muime was roasted.

This joins the traditions of the Feinne to Grimm’s Handless Maiden.

The idea of a land under ground is also very common in Gaelic stories, and I had intended to give several illustrations of the belief. I had also selected a number of other specimens of traditions of the Feinne, popular history, and proverbs, stories of water horses, water bulls, and other such matters. The last number on my Gaelic list is 308, on my English list, 357, making about 665 stories, but the wish to give one long one as a specimen, and to preserve as much Gaelic as possible, has exhausted my alloted space.

In the oldest Gaelic manuscript in Edinburgh, an ancient scribe has written--”And I regret that there is not left of my ink enough to fill up this line; I am Fithil, an attendant on the school.” So I, like Fithil, must stop scribbling, though not for want of matter, and write

END OF VOLUME 3

CIV. Postscript

A WORKMAN has reason to be grateful to any one who will give him an honest opinion of his work; and he is fortunate if he has many able advisers, for when a number of independent opinions are brought to bear upon any one subject, a new light is thrown upon it. One critic may be a kindly, good-natured man, who wishes well to the work and its author, but knows little of the subject. Such a man will praise the work, and agree with the conclusions and arguments contained in it, and there is not much to be learned directly from him: but every man has a subject of which he knows more than his neighbours, and is apt to bring his special knowledge to bear upon other things, so it is a marvel if something is not learned from the criticism of any clever man.

Another may be more skilful, though new to the subject. He will take the arguments and make them his own, and use the information which he acquires, and draw his own conclusions; such a man sheds a new light on the matter, and there is much to be learned from him.

A third may have a theory of his own, by the light of which he peeps about, and pokes into holes and

corners to pick out that which suits his own purpose, and nothing else. From new materials so gathered, such a man will build up a structure of his own, and there is much to be learned from one who so treats another's work.

Then comes one with more extended views, who has studied the question, and knows a great deal about it, and is conscious of power, and who views the new work all round and round, and turns it upside down and inside out, and throws a new light upon it--the electric light of superior knowledge. But the eyes of such men are apt to be dazzled by excess of light; they have looked at so many large objects that they overlook the small; their vision is telescopic, they can see microscopic details; and a short-sighted theorist, with his dim lamp, will poke out many things which he of the great light and the strong eyes will never see. But whoever reviews a book fairly, teaches something to its author, and he who knows most about the subject teaches most.

Then come friends--one with pleasant praise, which, if he be a wise man, is a valued reward and a wholesome cordial; then one with unpleasant dispraise, which, if wisely administered and well taken, may be a useful tonic; then one who picks out the worst bit, for which no one has a good word, and says it is the very thing which he should have expected, and he shakes hands and departs radiant with the consciousness of a compliment well turned. One says the work is learned, perhaps because he has not tried to understand it; another more truly says that it is not. One says that it is too long, another that it is too short; one, that it should all be written over again, another, that it never should have been written at all; and so by degrees the workman gets to know his errors.

But at last there may come a great giant of a critic, armed with a brilliant intellectual sword of light, which makes smaller men quake; an author in his clutches feels that be is a small mortal in the presence of a very big one, that he must resign himself to his fate, and prepare for the worst. He may be cut up into little bits or eaten alive, and, if so, he is quite sure to disagree with the great man, but he must submit. He may hope to be as indigestible as Tom Thumb, who survived being eaten many times; but he may also hope to be raised up on the giant's shoulder, thence to see the world, or to be placed in the rim of his great hat, like Grimm's

tailor, there to walk about in the sunshine, and admire the prospect. He may be crushed under the giant's great splay feet, or helped on his journey by his long legs, but unless some other giant interferes, or a dwarf shews him a mouse-hole to creep into, he cannot escape.

But when all is done, giants and great men, purblind and keen-sighted, Grudgeon, Strongback, Bolagum Mor, and the rest of the gifted men and genii, friends and foes, are all working for good, and bringing stores of knowledge. If they are friendly, the mortal has need of friends; if unfriendly, be will, at all events, learn to keep out of their way; and if by any chance they should happen to go by the ears, and fight over his contemptible little body, he is not worthy to be the cause of such a fight who cannot pick up something worth having on the field of battle when the fight is done.

It would be ungracious not to thank those who have done me good service, so I thank my reviewers here for much valuable information. My work has been treated as an honest attempt to place what I found amongst Highland peasants within the reach of English readers; and if I have got an occasional buffet, such pain does but enhance the pleasure of being patted on the back. Some have added praise which I can hardly think my due, and of which I would willingly transfer a large share to those who have really earned it. The real workmen are the old Highland bodies, with their extraordinary power of memory, who told Gaelic stories, and the men who wrote them down--men who have shown an amount of industry, talent, and fidelity, in carrying out their work, of which I cannot speak too highly, and whose genuine, kindly, generous, clannish nature, has made it a real pleasure to work with them. "Sir," said one of them, "I send you the story of ------, which I wrote from the dictation of ------. I am paid enough already." And yet these are the people of whom one of a different stamp lately said that they were barbarians to be civilized, a people whose language should be rooted out as the worst of all the jargons inflicted upon the human race as a curse at the tower of Babel.

CV. Points for Argument, Statement of the Case, Current Opinions

The names in the following pages are variously spelt on principle according to the authority referred to. Oisean is probably the correct modern orthography, but the sound has been expressed in many ways and I prefer to preserve them. Osin is perhaps the oldest form extant.

I have learned from my reviewers that the Ossianic controversy survives, and that the vigorous centenarian is studied with interest; that these Highland stories which bear upon Celtic mythology are most valued by those who know most about popular lore, and that I am blamed for not holding opinions as to the origin of such stories. At the risk, then, of floundering out of my depth, I will endeavour to tell what I know, and what I think about these three subjects.

I. OSSIAN.

In 1760, and during some following years, certain English compositions, the work of James MacPherson, were published. There is no dispute so far; he composed the English Ossian, but he described his works as “translations,” and it was asserted that they were his “original compositions.”

It is well to define these two expressions here, for their meaning has been obscured in the controversy.

1. By a “close literal translation,” I mean that every word, phrase, and sentence in a composition in one language, has its proper equivalent in another.

2. By a “free literal translation,” that every phrase and sentence, but not necessarily every word, is rendered.

3. By a “close translation,” the expression in one language of the very same ideas which are expressed in another--such as the metrical translations of the Psalms; but prose may be verse, or verse prose.

4. By a “free translation,” I understand the same thing less accurately done--such works as “Pope’s Homer.”

In the strictest rendering, a “translator” has the choice of many words, and may thus lean towards the one language or the other. These volumes, for example, generally aim at a “close literal translation,” with a leaning towards the Gaelic idiom, but the loosest “translator” has no right to add one idea of his own, or omit anything.

5. The next step is not easy to define. The first “Scripture paraphrase” is not an “original composition,” yet it is hardly a “translation.” It is a “paraphrase.” If compared with its model, it gives the general sense, but it also gives something which belongs to the author of the paraphrase. There is no authority for “smiling ray,” “ancient night,” and a great deal is left out.

6. The next step where original composition begins is still harder to define. The “Idylls of the King” are original compositions, but only a step removed from paraphrases, for they are founded on, and contain whole lines taken from old poems and stories: and so there are endless gradations. English and Scotch popular ballads, for example, owe something to Percy, Ramsay, Burns, Scott, and others, but they are old nevertheless. Some have

equivalents in Danish, Koempe Visar, of great antiquity, and part of the story of the Heir of Linne is in Grimm's Eastern Tales. It would be hard to discover any one composition of any modern author in which something apparently borrowed from some other cannot be traced. Gray's poems, for example, are full of lines which are traced to the classics, and pointed out as beauties, the originals are quoted to enhance the poet's fame, and yet these are original compositions.

7. There are compositions which seem to have scarcely any relation to any that have gone before, such as "Vathek," and one question for argument is, to which of these seven classes do the "Poems of Ossian" belong?

Another question, and an important one is, "Wherein does the authority consist?" In the story or in the words; in the rhythm or metre of poetry, or its theme, or its ornaments and illustrations? Who, for example, will be the author of "Morte Arthur " when Tennyson's poem is completed?

In 1807, after MacPherson's death, the Highland Society of London published certain Gaelic manuscripts which were all in MacPherson's handwriting. These contained Gaelic poems, and are the equivalents of nearly the whole of his English prose; the one is in fact a free translation of the other. The argument is concerning these. Were they composed by Ossian in the third century as MacPherson "surmises?" Or by some other ancient or modern Gaelic poet? Or by MacPherson himself?

Were they translated from the published English prose, or the English prose from the Gaelic verse?

Were they compounded by any collector or collectors of other men's works, or were they original Gaelic compositions of the man in whose handwriting they were found

If they were compounded, from what originals

If they be original compositions, how far are the ideas contained in them and their language borrowed from older known compositions in Gaelic, or in any other language? Are they to be classed No. I or No. 7? for they must be classed somewhere. These are some of the questions for argument; the prevailing opinions differ as widely.

1st, The commonest English opinion is, that the "poems of Ossian" were composed in English prose by James MacPherson about 1760; that he was the inventor of the character and incidents, and that the poems had no previous existence in any shape.

To support this it must be shown that throughout all known Gaelic literature there is no mention of these names and incidents previous to 1760, and that no Gaelic poems concerning them existed previous to 1807.

To refute this it is only necessary to quote some earlier mention of the characters, and some one early Gaelic poem, Irish or Scotch, concerning their exploits.

This sweeping English theory, which ranks the poems in the seventh class, is quite untenable. The groundwork of much which is in Ossian certainly existed in Gaelic in Scotland long before MacPherson was born. There are many passages in ancient works written in some dialect of English, which prove beyond dispute that the chief characters figured in Gaelic compositions centuries ago, and Gaelic songs by well-known ancient bards, allude so constantly to Fionn, the Feinne, Oisein, etc., that there is no standing ground left for this theory. The *West of Scotland Magazine* for 1858 gives much information on this point, in a series of able articles on the poetry and traditions of the Highland clans.

2d, An opinion still prevails amongst a limited number of Scotchmen, that Ossian's poems are historical; that the Gaelic is genuine old poetry composed by a bard of the third century, who witnessed many of the exploits recorded; and that those passages which are said to resemble passages in Milton, may be the sources whence Milton borrowed ideas.

To support this opinion, it is necessary to produce some proof, some early manuscript containing the poems, or one of them, or some early account of them, or it must at least be shewn that their language resembles in some sort the earliest attainable specimens of Gaelic as written by rule or by ear; or that these very poems, or parts of them, are still, or were at some time, commonly known to some class of the population, and that they agree with all that is known of the history of these times.

It is not now easy to support or refute this opinion, or prove a negative. The language of traditional poems alters, manuscripts get lost, manners change, and men die; but it might be shewn that, so far as anything is known of early Gaelic literature, there were no such poems, and that their language is not that of some one period between the third and the eighteenth centuries, or that some one event which is mentioned happened later than the supposed date of the poet; and so argue on probabilities.

I could quote modern books which assert that the works of Milton and Shakspeare were composed by Scotchmen, while Ossian's poetry is a genuine work of the third century; and MacPherson tried to persuade the world that the poems were of that date. He maintained that they had been traditionally preserved in the Highlands, and written in ancient manuscripts which be had discovered there; that according to Irish history, Fingal died 283, and Osgur 296, and that these were the King of Morven and his grandson; that Caracul was the Roman Caracalla; and that Ossian, the son of Fingal, survived his father, and disputed with a Culdee concerning the Christian religion towards the latter end of the third or beginning of the fourth century; that Fingal in his youth, about 210, performed exploits against the son of the Roman Emperor Severus; that Oscar, the son of Ossian and grandson of Fingal, fought the Roman usurper Carausius at the winding Carron, which runs in the neighbourhood of Agricola's wall; and that Ossian sang of these deeds--all of which it is extremely difficult to disprove or believe.

3d, There is an Irish opinion, ably set forth in the fifth volume of the Transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin, and probably held by many, though it is not held by some of the best Irish scholars. It may be thus stated.

MacPherson stole the well-known poems of Oisin, who was an Irish bard of the third century, the son of Fionn and father of Osgur, and who shared in their exploits and survived them, and disputed with St. Patrick concerning the Christian religion, and boasted of his youthful deeds in his old age. These Irish poems were translated into English prose, and subsequently into Scotch Gaelic verse, and the Gaelic published in 1807 is the result of this double process, and of numerous forgeries, falsifications, and alterations, done and committed by James MacPherson to discredit Ireland.

To support this sweeping claim it is necessary to produce the Irish poems in question, and prove that they are genuine, old, and Irish--the work of Oisin and no one else; and then to point out the passages which are translations, and shew that they are not paraphrases, or the original compositions of MacPherson, or of some other ancient or modern bard.

To upset this claim it is necessary to produce old Scotch versions of the Gaelic poems claimed, and to shew that they were known in Scotland, or published there, before they were published in Ireland.

I hold that all these current theories are erroneous and as the Irish is the most modern, the best supported, and the most opposed to the common English view, which is furthest from the truth, I will endeavour to shew how far I agree with its supporters, and wherein they seem to me to err. I would willingly add all that I can to the larger stock of knowledge possessed by others, and I would gladly discover the truth if I could.

The arguments now used by the supporters of the Scotch and Irish controversy will be found in the publications of the Ossianic Society of Dublin, and in the *West of Scotland Magazine*, which works are well worth the attention of all who care for Celtic literature, and admire Celtic combativeness. Valuable information is given, but valuable space is occupied by suicidal. attacks on Celts, their language and their literature; old rusty taunts, which great men hurled at each other in their rage nearly a century ago, are picked up by smaller men, and thrown freely about still, though they have lost their point and fall harmless. Irish writers attack writers on the Scotch side, who retaliate, and the others retort, and so the cause of Celtic literature is damaged by both; for each is intent on injuring the other, on pulling down rather than building up. The only writer who has attacked me is a brother Celt, who uses a borrowed weapon which owed its sting to its owner's fame, and says, that I am so intensely Scotch as to "love Scotland better than truth," whereas I simply stated my opinion about the controversy which generated the taunt. I am ready to admit that Ossian or Oisin was an Irishman, when it is proved. I know that traditional and manuscript poems attributed to him have been known in Ireland for centuries. It is true that most of the old Gaelic manuscripts are written in the so-called Irish character; but nevertheless, I hold that the Irish scholar who writes the following passages does not succeed in proving that MacPherson stole his materials from Ireland:--

"It has also been shewn, on unquestionable authorities, that the Gael of Caledonia were colonies from Ireland, and spoke and wrote in the language of their mother country. From the continued intercourse carried on between the two nations from the third to the sixteenth century, it is evident that the same manners and customs, the same traditions, legends, historical compositions, poems, songs, and music, were common to both." [Page 227, Vol. V., Transactions of the Ossianic Society.]

In the first place, it is not clear that all the Gael in Caledonia emigrated from Ireland. It seems probable that a Gaelic-speaking population of Celtic tribes once pervaded the greater part of Europe and the whole of Great Britain; and some of these surely travelled north overland, if others crossed the sea from Ireland to Scotland. There are plenty of cases in which whole tribes have passed from Scotland to Ireland, for example, the MacLeans migrated from Islay. But be that as it may, if it be true, as it is asserted, that "many of the poems of Oisin, the Irish bard, and other Fenian poets, are still preserved in Irish manuscripts," some "as old as the eleventh and twelfth centuries;" if "these poems made their way to Scotland at an. early period," and if "there cannot be a stronger proof of their great antiquity than their preservation in that country for so many centuries by oral tradition, although with dialectic changes: "if all this be true, and. I neither admit nor deny the statement here, it does not prove the writer's case, though it supports mine.

He asserts that MacPherson stole Ossian from Irish originals; I hold that he did not; and he shews that the very poems on which he founds his case have been known for ages where MacPherson asserts that he found his originals, and that they existed in a traditional vernacular Scotch costume.

He proves, mayhap, that the muse who, for any thing I know, wears gilded vellum in Ireland, is a barefooted lassie dressed in ordinary homespun in Scotland; but who is to say which is nearest to the Poems of Oisin, the language of the people, or that of cultivated scribes? Who

is to decide whether these were popular ballads or courtly poems at first? MacPherson has enough to answer for without making him worse than he is; and it seems unjust to accuse him of stealing things which he found at home.

Ossian resembles those ancient Irish poems which I have seen, less than it does the traditional ballads collected and printed in Scotland at the end of last century, many of which were again collected from the people last year.

But this Irish "Introduction to the poems of Ossian by MacPherson" will astonish an English reader unacquainted with the Celtic side of this curious controversy. The arguments fight amongst themselves, and the authorities quoted contradict each other, while the writer contends with friends, and allies himself with foes. We, children of the Gael, walk "shoulder to shoulder," but we are apt to dig our elbows into each other's ribs. Thus it is argued that--

"If Ossian wrote his poems in North Britain in the third century, he must have been either an Irishman, or the descendant of an Irishman, who had recently come from ancient Scotia (Ireland) to settle in that country (Scotland); and his language must have been pure Irish, undefiled, of that period, and not the corrupt patois ascribed to him by MacPherson."

But at page 199 it is said that "the language of the poems, if properly spelled, and read by an Irish scholar, would be intelligible to the most illiterate peasant in Ireland."

But if Ossian's Gaelic is Scotch, modern, and a corrupt patois, and comprehensible in Ireland, so is the Gaelic of the traditional poems claimed, and Irish must be a corrupt patois also.

Further on, at page 227, the preservation in Scotland of certain poems in this Gaelic patois, common to modern Irish and Scotch Gael, is quoted to prove their Irish origin and their antiquity.

But if the preservation of poems in patois traditionally on one side of the water be proof of their antiquity and origin on the other, ancient Gaelic manuscripts, wherever found, should at least be common property, and count for both sides, for there are no manuscripts in the Gaelic of the third century, and one of the earliest known is attributed to Columbkill, the founder of Iona.

At page 179 Martin is quoted as mentioning the existence of Irish manuscripts in the Western Islands in 1716; and at page, 190 it is stated that the Bishop of Clonfert, in 1784, found Gaelic manuscript poems there, on which MacPherson had founded some of his English; but it is said--"It is now pretty certain that he (MacPherson) had no originals and Dr. Johnson's authority is used to show that "the poems of Ossian never existed in any other form than that in which we have seen them," that is, in English. These authorities disagree sadly. It is asserted, p. 178, that

"Fragments of the compositions of the Irish bard Oisin were conveyed to the Highlands of Scotland from time to time by the Irish Shanachies. They were there committed to memory by story-tellers, and recited as they had been in Ireland."

But a Shanachie means a teller of old tales and traditions, and some must surely have gone to Eirinn from Scotland since the supposed date of Ossian.

Martin, Johnson, the Bishop of Clonfert, and the writer who quotes them, cannot all be right. It is argued that Irish and Scotch Gael and Gaelic were identical in the third century, and are almost the same still; Gaelic manuscripts found in Scotland are quoted and claimed for Ireland, while it is said that the people bad all things in common, and are the same. MacPherson, it is said, had *no* originals--and stole them from Ireland. Johnson says there was nothing but English; Martin that there were old Irish MSS.; the Bishop that there were, and

that they contained poems which were the foundations of the English: but if MacPherson had access to “Shanachies” in the Western Islands, and there found old manuscripts which contained poems which he used, then he had originals; and the Doctor and the essayist who quotes him are in error. If he had none of these things the Doctor is right; but the essayist errs again, for in that case the English Ossian was the original composition, and Ireland has no claim at all, unless she will accept of MacPherson, who certainly was an original, whether he was a poet or not.

So, whether MacPherson mistranslated Irish originals, or invented the English of Ossian’s poems, the charge of theft is unjust, for a Scotch Celt had a right to use common Celtic property found in Scotland, and an author has a right to use his own ideas.

If the story told in Drummond’s Ancient Irish Minstrelsy, page 11, be true, MacPherson could not have used ancient Irish MSS. if he had found them in Scotland. He was shewn some in the Bodleian Library, and was forced to acknowledge that he could neither read nor translate them. If so, he must have worked from Scotch traditions, or manuscripts more easily read, or from his own head.

Again, the essayist, having made out that ancient and modern “Irish” and “Earse” were and are the same, at page 180, quotes Johnson--”There are not in the Gaelic language five hundred lines that can be proved to be one hundred years old.” He quotes the venerable Charles O’Connor of Balingare, who, in 1775, said the same on the great Doctor’s authority; and Dr. Young, afterwards Bishop of Clonfert, who, in 1784, held that “*Earse*” was not a written language till within a few years of the time when he was in the Highlands.

But at page 219, an account is given of an ancient “*Irish*” vellum manuscript, compiled in the twelfth century, which “contained two poems by Oisin, who lived in the third,” and it is added--

“We have no reason to doubt their genuineness as being originally the compositions of Oisin, when we remember the many liberties of modernizing the language usually taken by the scribes, through whom they have been handed down to us. One of these poems by Oisin relates to the battle of Gaura, and has appeared in one of the volumes of the Ossianic Society.”

If the poem meant be that on the “Battle of Gabhra,” the first book of Temora is founded upon the same incidents; and a traditional version, of 1860, is at page 304 of this volume, and that is almost the same as the traditional version printed at Perth in 1786, and got in Scotland. So the argument is all for MacPherson and against the authorities, for it proves that Temora is founded on incidents which were made the subject of Gaelic poems in the Twelfth century. A man cannot eat his cake and have his cake; he cannot claim property as common, and deny the right of a joint tenant; he cannot claim tradition, and withhold manuscripts; assert, and in the same breath deny the identity of Scotch and Irish Celts. Johnson, who knew neither Earse nor Irish, might err, but a writer who knows both should not use his authority, point out, and then adopt his error.

At page 190 it is said--”It is notorious that the poems of Ossian are not mentioned in any Scotch history a hundred years old;” but at 186 is a quotation from Bishop Carswell’s Gaelic Prayer Book, printed in Scotland in 1567, nearly three hundred years ago:--

“They (the Scotch Celts) for whom the book was printed, desire and accustom themselves more to compose, maintain, and cultivate idle, turbulent, lying, worldly stories concerning the Tuath Dedanans, the sons of Milesius, the heroes, and concerning Fioun MacCumhaill and na Fhianaibh .”

This seems to dispose of a good deal of the argument; it proves that Gaelic was not only written, but printed for Scotchmen to read at a very early date, and that Scotch Gael then composed and delighted in compositions relative to the same heroes who figure in Ossian, in ancient Gaelic MSS., and in modern traditional poems, Scotch and Irish. But Dean MacGregor's Gaelic MS. was written in 1530, in Scotland, and is mentioned in books which are quoted by the essayist; so those who held that Gaelic was an unwritten language till the eighteenth century clearly erred; and he who knows the error should not use their authority.

Again, it has been said that MacPherson had no originals, but at page 190 the Bishop of Clonfert is quoted to prove that he had. The bishop made a tour of the Highlands in 1784 to collect ancient Gaelic poems, and he there found several of the "Irish" poems on which, as he surmised, MacPherson had founded some of his English. These were contained in manuscripts which the bishop copied, and he points out how these supposed originals had been altered by the translator. He says (191)--

"Till the poems themselves be published, it will certainly be impossible to distinguish the ancient from the modern, the real from the fictitious, and therefore, however we may admire them as beautiful compositions, we can never rely on their authenticity in any question of history, antiquity, or criticism.

"When MacPherson professed to be merely a translator, he was not justified to omit what appeared to him to be modern fabrications, and in their stead to add passages of his own, as acknowledged by his advocates; he should have neither added nor mutilated his originals, but ought to have permitted the world to judge in these cases for themselves."

Against such reasonable arguments there is nothing to be said, but the Introduction to the Poems of Ossian aims at a great deal more. Its argument seems to amount to this--

The Gael of Scotland were an Irish colony who crossed from Ireland to Scotland before the third century, and placed about sixteen miles of sea between themselves and the mother country; they have been in constant communication with her ever since; they wrote Irish, and spoke Irish, and still speak a corrupt dialect of that language. Scotch lowlanders called it Earse, meaning thereby Irish; Celts call it Gaelic, and mean the same. Scotland means the land of an Irish tribe, from whom Ireland should be called Scotia; the Celts on both sides have gone on repeating the same poems and legends for centuries; they have all things in common, and are the same people; but the people on one side have no claim to anything.

Irishmen took over the Scone stone, and founded the dynasty which has been crowned upon it ever since. Ireland sent Columbkill to Iona, where a series of Irish, English, Scandinavian, and Scotch kings and chiefs were buried; and yet during all that long period of time, which includes nearly the whole history of England, and a large portion of that of the world--whilst the Norsemen, who possessed the islands of Scotland and a large part of Ireland, and migrated thence to people Iceland, were sailing about from Labrador to Constantinople, conquering Normandy and England, and making themselves a mighty name, and whilst Irish churchmen, some of whom reached Iceland before the Norsemen, wandered over great part of Europe, and Iona was a refuge for learning--the small strait between Ireland and Kintyre allowed no reflux. Whatever is Celtic is Irish.

I hold that this is claiming too much, and that MacPherson was scarcely more unjust when be threw discredit upon Irish antiquities. He made himself and a particular class of Gaelic poetry famous; but what be found was common property derelict--old Celtic poetry, little noticed before his day. When he claimed the whole, for Scotland, or altered what he got, he was unfair; but to maintain the identity of a people from the third century till now, and deny the right of Celts to Celtic literature, is unreasonable.

Whatever may be said, the poems of Ossian are printed in the Scotch dialect, in modern orthography, and Roman type, and some Gaelic poet must have composed them before 1807; they are poems, not prose translations from English prose; and their existence refutes this Irish theory, whose supporters refute each other. For example, at page 193 is the story of Colonel Shaw, secretary to the Marquess of Wellesley, who, when a boy, went to London and astonished an old lady there, who read him some of MacPherson's Ossian in English, by saying, "I have heard all these stories before from my nurse in Ireland, who related them in the original Irish."

Then, were they genuine, and composed by some Irishman? No, for at p. 195 is the other story that MacPherson, who was not Irish, acknowledged to a private friend "the imposition of this English publication, with the attempt of translating it into modern Earse."

Both these cannot be true, so it is best to believe neither, and follow the advice of O'Flanagan, who is quoted, p. 194:--

Let us both, modern Scotch and Irish, pursue the more honourable end of preserving the valuable remains of our own ancient literature, which was of yore, and may again be our common property."

So say I also; but common property does not mean, "What's your's is mine, what's mine's my own," as it seems to do in the "Introduction to the poems of Ossian." Let Ireland take her fair share of all the fame and all the blame that belongs to James MacPherson, for he was a Celt, and let her sons cease to run down poems which have gained a world-wide celebrity, because incidents recorded in old Irish manuscript poems can be traced in them, and Celtic worthies and real Irish wars are clearly referred to. Let Irish nurses, shanachies, and scribes, take their fair share of credit for preserving what is old and genuine, but without refusing the credit due to old Scotch Highlanders who have done the same. Above all, let us search for the truth rather than seek out faults, for Ossian is perhaps the most famous publication of modern times, and it is Gaelic now, and was founded upon genuine old Gaelic poems and traditions, all argument and authority notwithstanding.

While MacPherson's misdeeds meet their reward, let it be remembered that others similarly tempted have fallen and failed. Chatterton had no foundation for his attempt, and failed. MacPherson had a wide foundation, and built upon it, and succeeded, and made a fortune and a name; but honest Welsh Owen Jones, who followed them both, and whose work is all solid foundation, dug out of old manuscripts, is still almost unknown, though his patient industry commands the respect of all who know his history.[399]

I hold, then, that an unprejudiced man who has read this Irish argument, must attribute much of the groundwork of the poems of Ossian to unknown bards far older than MacPherson, but not one line as it now stands to Ossian, Oisein, or Oisin, if that bard lived in the third century. I doubt if any one old popular traditional ballad now exists anywhere in the same words in which it was originally composed, and I think that this national squabble between England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, Highlands and Lowlands, about poems which belong to the literature of the whole United Kingdom, should now cease. It is as if a man should fall out with himself, rap his own knuckles, tread on his own toes, punch his own head, bite off his nose to spite his face, and use his brains and his tongue to persuade and summon the rest of the world to help him to extinguish himself.

[399] Relies of Welsh Bards, by E. Jones, 3 vols. 4to.

The common opinion amongst Lowland Scots is expressed at the fourth page of Irving's History of Scottish Poetry, a work of great research, published in 1861; in which it is shewn that lowland authors, of all ages, have had a fling at Celts and their literature.

"It is no longer pretended that any Gaelic poetry has been preserved in early manuscripts, and indeed the period when Gaelic can be traced as a written language is comparatively modem."

But the next sentence admits that ancient poems were preserved in the Highlands of Scotland, and the notes flatly contradict the text. The Bishop of Clonfert and the report of the Highland Society are quoted. The discoveries of the one in 1784 are mentioned above, the other gives an account of many ancient Gaelic manuscripts which contain poems, including Dean MacGregor's, which is some forty years older than the MS. of George Bannatyne, and contains 11,000 lines of poetry, at least as old as 1530.

Welsh writers who have taken part in the Ossianic, controversy have generally taken a similar view.

And now, having said this much as to opinions and arguments from which I differ, let me give the facts which I have been able to gather during the last two years, and state my own opinions, so that others may judge for themselves, and give their verdict.

CVI. Authorities

The first question for enquiry is, who and what were the heroes of Ossian?

According to Professor O'Curry's Lectures, the following dates rest upon ancient authority--

B.C. 110.

Finn's pedigree begins. *Finn* son of *Cumhall*, son of *Trenmór*, son of *Snaelt*, son of *Eltan*, son of *Baiscni*, son of *Nuada Necht*, who was monarch of Ireland B.C. 110.

A.D. 288

Finn slain, in the reign of Cairbré Lifeachair.

284.

Battle of Gabhra. Death of Oscar and Cairbré (p. 304.)

A.D. 432.

Coming of St. Patrick to Ireland (p. 472), to whom Oisin, the son of Finn, and Caelte his kinsman and con temporary, recited poems describing the glories of the ancient race, and the localities of famous events.

In a matter of such antiquity it is of small importance that Oisin, who had a grown up son in 284, must have been about 180 years old in 432, and more than 200 before St. Patrick could have built the monasteries in which the poor old blind Irish bard was so grieved, starved, and tormented by jangling bells, droning psalms, and howling clerics; it is proved that the names of the old Fenian heroes were known when very ancient manuscripts were written, and that is enough. So, taking the third century as a starting point, let us take a rapid voyage of discovery down the stream of time, carrying with us the published Gaelic Ossian, and noticing anything old that bears upon Gaelic traditions at its proper place. If Scotchmen and Irishmen will not pull in the same boat, let there be no bumping, or jostling, or fouling, but a fair race for what may be left of the poems when the voyage ends; if any one is bored by such races he need not follow the boats, he may skip over a short cut to the winning-post, but if he does he must not give an opinion about the line of country which he is too lazy to travel.

First, then, let it be granted that FINN lived in Ireland at the end of the third century, an that the first book of Temora is founded upon an event which took place in Ireland before the book of Leinster was written, if not in 284; but it must be granted, on the Irish side, that Hector Boyce made Finn a Scot and a giant in 1526, when the Scotch historian published his work.

The passage is partly quoted in the Highland Society's Report on Ossian, and p. 170, Hist. of Scotch Poetry, and part of it is as follows:--"Conjiciunt quidam in haec tempora. Finanum filium Cœli (Fyn MakCoul vulgari vocabulo) virum uti ferunt immani statura septenum enim cubitorum hominem fuisse narrant."

So, in the sixteenth century, Fyn was the son of heaven, and the historian then ranked him with King Arthur; and tales and other compositions concerning Fyn with the Arthurian fables. It must also be granted that numerous Celtic worthies bore Ossianic names,. besides the Irish heroes. Engenius I., son of Fin-Cormach-us, was a king of Scotland slain in battle with the Romans, A.D. 357. Ferg-us (Wrath-us) was the name of a Scotch king who was lost in the Irish sea, B.C. 330, and many historical personages have borne that name: besides the Irish

bard Fergus, the son of Finn MacCumhal of A.D. 280. Cumhal, again, is like many Celtic names; it sounds like Coil-us, who was a king of the Britons, and if he be the hero of the English ballad, his was a rough age:--

"Old King Cole, unsophisticated soul,
Neither read nor write could he,
To read and to write he thought useless quite,
For he kept a secretarie."

Congall-us was a Scotch king in 501 or thereabouts. There were many Scotch kings called Donald, if we can believe Scotch history, and the men who wrote these names were generally of the race which now says "gar*song*, *ung* ver du *vang*, et *ung* morceau du *pang*." The sound of the French and Gaelic nasal o and u are identical, and a man who would write gar*song* because he seemed to hear that sound, would also write MacDonald, as it is now pronounced in Gaelic, Ma*con*gil, and one sound of MacCumhal would be Macc*ung*il and another Macooil. Now, if this erroneous *ng*, which expresses the Saxon value of the French and Gaelic nasal o and u, and the word Mac be struck out, there remains a nasal o-il or u-il, and so, instead of Cumhal, Coil-us, Cole, Cowl, Cool, C*ong*all-us, *D*onald-us, and *D*ugald-us, we come very nearly to Hoel, whose son would be ap Hoel, O'Hoel, or Mac-Hoel, and thus Fionn may be made the son of the mythical Welsh Howel, or of some great man who bore the same name before the flood. By a like easy process, Fionn becomes a Macdougald, and as Campbell is not an ancient Gaelic name, I may point out that Camul was the "Celtic Mars," and that Camel-ot, Camel-odunum, and other such names, all savour of Cumhal, though that word now means handmaid, or subjection, according to dictionaries.

Fenian names also appear in the Milesian story (p. 447 of O'Curry's Lectures.) Beginning with Japhet and Magog, the race is traced through Scythia, Egypt, Scythia again, Greece, and Spain, whence a colony came to Erinn in the year of the world 3500, at which time Ireland was governed by the three sons of Cermna Milbheoil (honey-mouth), Ethur, Cethur, and Fether; "mythologically known as *MacCuill*, MacCeacht, and *MacGréiné*; "who were Tuatha dé Danann, and reigned at Tara. Scota, the mother of the Milesian leaders, was shortly afterwards slain in a battle, and one of her sons was Eber *Finn*. So Finn was a mythological Milesian long before the Finn of the third century, and MacCuil Finn's patronymic was also that of the mythological head of the race which the Milesians found in Ireland.

Finn is also one of the commonest names in Scandinavia, and so is Köl, so we get Finnr Kölsen, the equivalent of Fin MacCowl. Oscar is also common, and is interpreted to mean As-gair the spear of the gods, and Oske is one of Odin's numerous names.

In the twelfth century Geoffrey of Monmouth names Coillas, and Coel, and Conan, as British heroes, and according to the chronicle Conan was made king of Armorica. Sir Gawain is probably the same personage as Gow or Gol, the son of Morna, so they may be Welshmen or Bretons. Phinn, MacPhunn, Fin-lay, and scores of other names common in England, Scotland, and Ireland, also resemble the Ossianic names. But the Finns or Lapps inhabit Finmark at this day, and have all along been magical people in the north, so the Celtic heroes may be Lapps. In the story of Gunnhillda (Njal Saga, vol. ii., 378), we learn how, in the tenth century, a beautiful maiden was sent to Finnark to learn magic from the Finns, and "some believed that MATTUL the FINNISH king himself was her master in magic," but Gunnhillda's story is mixed up with that of the whole of the west of Europe, in that she was a Viking's bride, and mother of Scandinavian kings, so her master in magic may be MacCoul himself in disguise.

Feinne may be Phœnician or Egyptian, if there be any truth in the old legend about Pharaoh's daughter.

In like manner "Art" is the Gaelic now commonly used for the Christian name "Art-hur," or Art is not to be appropriated to any one Irish king, though there may have been an early Cormac Mae Art, for there was an early British Arthur, of whose deeds romance is full. So Bran and Conan were early Welsh kings, though Brian and Conan may have flourished in Ireland. Brenn-us sacked Rome about 930 B.C., if Bran was Fionn's magic black hound, A.D. 280; and generally it must be granted on all sides that the early history of Great Britain and Ireland must be Celtic history, and that the best place to get at it is Ireland, where the Celts were not much disturbed till a comparatively late period. But Irish, Scotch, Welsh, Manx, and Cornish, and Clyde Celtic history, and all the early romance of Europe, is so tangled and twisted together, that it will be no easy matter to unravel the skein. Without some knowledge of Gaelic it is hopeless to begin upon this dark history. Let me give one example. There is a Lord Mayor in London, and in every town in England. Monsieur le Maire is a French official in every village in France; the mayors of the palace played their part in French history; the Maormors were anciently Scotch great men; but very few know that maor, pronounced nearly like the French word, is still the Highland constable and ground officer, and civil officer, though Inverness has a provost.

But I have now to do with the heroes of "Ossian's poems."

In Professor O'Curry's book, a vast amount of curious information is given relative to Irish writings. It appears that many hundreds of these are preserved in various libraries and collections at home and abroad. They contain histories, genealogies, codes of law, historical tales, and tales of all kinds; romances, legends, and poems of various sorts, and "numerous Ossianic poems relating to the Fenian heroes, some of them of great antiquity." The earliest writing is Latin, and attributed to the time of St. Patrick, about 480; others are attributed to St. Colum Cillé and the sixth century, others to the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and following centuries, and these are generally assumed to be Irish, not Scotch, because of their language and the character in which they are written. Most of them probably were written in Ireland, but such documents must be judged by their contents. I received a letter this year from a Scotch highlander in Glasgow, part of which was written in the old hand. A song composed by Duncan Macintyre, the Breadalbane bard, was written in the old character in 1768. It was commonly, though not always, used before that time; inscriptions on the cross at Inverary and other old stones in Scotland are in old letters and in obsolete language. St. Colum Cillé founded Iona; and if St Patrick's churchmen used old letters, the saint is accused of having been born in Scotland. Those who only understand modern Irish or Scotch Gaelic cannot, without study, read or understand the old written language, which is and always has called itself Gaelic. So Scotchmen and Irishmen would do well to make peace, and help each other to use these old records, and call their language Gaelic, instead of Irish or Earse, which words are only used in speaking English, and produce discord.

Now these ancient Irish documents and those which are preserved in Scotland, like Scotch and Irish traditions, are pervaded by the variously spelt names of Fionn or Finn and his worthies. There is hardly a grown highlander who is not familiar with their names-they are household words at the firesides, of Irish peasants; and the characters and relationships of these mythical warriors are almost invariably the same. They are the heroes of Ossian.

Professor O'Curry, who probably knows more about Irish lore than any man now living, and has spent great part of his life in reading and transcribing old manuscripts, holds that the "Fenians," who answer to the "Fingalians" of English readers, were historical Irish personages who flourished in the third century, but he shews, p. 10, that Fer Féne was written

in the book of Ballymote in 1391, in a poem composed in 1021, and be translates it “Féne men, these were farmers.” Still, Finn’s genealogy is traced to 110 B.C., and it rests upon ancient authority that Diarmaid O’Duibhne ran away with Grainne, the bride of Finn, and daughter of Cormac Mae Art, and that Finn’s son Oisin was a warrior poet.

Poems attributed to Finn Mac Cumhail, his sons Oisin and Fergus Finnbheoil, and his kinsman Caelté, do exist in Gaelic MSS. seven hundred years old. Five of these poems are attributed to Finn himself, and exist in the book of Leinster, which is said to have been compiled from older books in the latter part of the twelfth century; and in the book of Leacan, compiled 1416. Two poems attributed to Oisin are in the book of Leinster. One consists of seven quatrains, and records the deaths of Oscar the son of Oisin, and Cairbré Lifeachair, monarch of Eirinn, who fell by each other’s hands at the battle of Gabhra, “fought A.D. 284.” The second is longer, and records early races on the Curragh of Kildare, wherein Oisin, Caelté, and Finn were gentlemen riders, and magical personages acted the part of modern sharpers, and tempted the heroes into unhallowed dens near Killarney, where they spent a wild night after the races. Another Gaelic poem of undoubted antiquity is attributed to Fergus, and tells how Oisin his brother was enticed into a fairy cave, and discovered himself to Finn by letting chips cut from his spear-shaft float down a stream; as Diarmaid betrayed his retreat to Fionn in the tradition (page 43, vol. iii.) Another is a love story, which Caelté is supposed to have recited to St. Patrick.

Professor O’Curry nowhere says that the “poems of Ossian,” as published in 1760 and 1807, or anything like them from which they could have been translated, exist in ancient Irish manuscript, and gives no support to the argument of his countryman; but be also says, “Of MacPherson’s translations, in no single instance has a genuine Scottish original been found, and that none *will* ever be found I am very certain.” If he means that the Gaelic of 1807 never can be found in an ancient manuscript, he is certainly right, for the language must have obeyed the common law of change incident to all languages; but he has pointed out some of the incidents on which the first book of Temora is founded, in one of the two ancient poems which were attributed to Oisin in the tenth century; and it is beyond question that endless stories and poems about Fionn and his people have been for centuries, and still are traditionally preserved in Scotland, as well as in Ireland. According to Irish authorities, then, Gaelic poems are preserved in ancient manuscript, and some relate to the Ossianic heroes, but they were Irishmen, who lived, and loved, and fought in the third century, and not Scotchmen; but according to other Irish authorities, these men flourished much later. Scotch and British Fenians are mentioned, and Scotch Oscars appear in Irish poems, even Danish Oscars are named in Irish books; and the feats attributed to the ancient heroes who bore these Ossianic names, and whose chief was FINN, are often the exploits of giants and demigods.

According to MacPherson and “Ossian’s poems,” FINGAL was king of Morven, and lived about the same time; according to tradition, which scorns dates (see No. LXXXII), FIONN was the son of a Scotch king who came from Ireland, and of a Scandinavian princess, and drove the Scandinavians from Scotland, having first passed through many adventures in Ireland. Assuming that he lived in the third century, he may have been a leader of Celts in their early fights with the Northmen, Danes, or Anglo-Saxons, who followed the Romans; before any authentic account of their raids was compiled, and before men thought of distinguishing between Ireland and Scotland. But no tradition now current, and no ancient manuscript of which I have heard, makes any mention of the kingdom of Morven or its king Fin*g*al. I believe that the kingdom is an invention of the compounder of Ossian’s poems, whoever he may have been.

The name Fionnaghal is, however, no modern invention; Barbour knew it as “Fyngal” about the days of Bruce. It occurs in a Gaelic song printed by Gillies, 1786, and composed by lain Lom, a bard who sang about the time of Montrose, and died 1710 at a great age. It is in an elegy on Glengarry composed in the seventeenth century, in which the poet MacMathain or Mathieson, Seaforth’s bard, calls the MacDonalds *Sliochd righ Fionnaghail*, the race of King Fingal (Beauties of Gaelic Poetry, Mackenzie); and the name also occurs in a traditional story now current in Islay. Righ Fionnaghal according to this was a MacDonald, and “king of the Isles,” and lived in the island in Loch Fionn-lagan in Islay, where are the ruins of the habitation of the lords of the Isles. A family of Mac-in-tyres (sons of the carpenter) claim to be descended from an illegitimate son of this King Fingal; and Flora Macintyre, one of my peasant contributors claims to be one of them. The story goes, that the king and his son were at sea in a boat, when the peg in the bottom came out and was lost, and the water rushed in. The young man, who had never gained the notice of his father, thrust his thumb into the hole and chopped it off with an axe. “*Mo laochan air saor na h-òrdaig*!” “My fine lad, the thumb carpenter,” said the king; and from this MacDonald, son of Fingal, came the family of the Thumb Carpenters, who are still called Macintyres in Islay; or in Gaelic, “*Mac an t-saoir na h-òrdaig*.” MacDonald is often so pronounced as to make the name resemble MacCumhal. This story is well known about Arisaig.

As for the poet, to whom nearly all the old poetry in the Highlands is now attributed, his date and origin are as uncertain as his father’s. If he was Fionn’s son he could not have survived to converse with St. Patrick, and he could not have lived with a fairy lady in the land of youth; he is in Gaelic popular tradition and old Gaelic lore the counterpart of Thomas the Rymour, who was a living man in 1280, and yet went to fairy land, and has the credit of being a prophet, a magician, and a poet--the author of Sir Tristrem. That ancient Scotch poem “Sir Tristrem,” and the oldest Scotch poems known, treat mainly of Celtic worthies and their adventures, and include the incident of the good knight who slays a dragon, and the false servant who claims the honour and the princess, which is in the Gaelic “Sea-maiden;” and in a tale told to me by an Irish fiddler; in German, Norse, and other popular tales.

There is a popular saying still current in Islay, which joins true Thomas to a common Celtic British legend. He is supposed to be still living, enchanted in Dumbuck (Dun-a-bhuic, the buck’s hill), near Dumbarton (Dunbreaton, Mount Breaton); and he appears occasionally in search of horses of a peculiar kind and colour. He pays for them when they are brought to the hill; and the vendor sees enchanted steeds and armed men within the rock. It is said--

Nuair a thig Tomas an riom ’s a chuid each,
Bidh latha nan creach an Cluaidh.

When Thomas of power and his horses shall come,
The day of plunderings will be in Clyde.

The date of Fionn and his family may be the third century; but unless there were many who bore the same names, or the names were titles, the exploits of a series of men, and the fabulous deeds of mythological characters, must have gathered about the names of this single family. I am still inclined to believe that these heroes of popular romance were ancient Celtic gods.

Be that as it may, I will endeavour to shew that their names have been current for a very long time, and that Ireland has not an exclusive right to them.

203

According to a Scottish legend given by Fordun, etc., the nation of the Scots embraced Christianity in the reign of King Donald, consequently sculptured stones, even with Christian symbols, may be of very ancient, date in Scotland.

360

St. Ninian was born; he was son of a British prince, went to Rome, founded Candida Casa, or "Whitehorn," and converted the southern Picts, who are supposed to have been the people between the Firth of Forth and the Grampians.

432

St. Patrick preached in Ireland.

503

Fergus, son of Ere, who is said to have received the blessing of St. Patrick in his youth, led a colony of Dalriads from Ireland, and founded the Scottish monarchy.--(Ecclesiastical History of Scotland, pp. 4, 11, 44, 49.)

Fergus was succeeded by Domangart, Comgal, and CONAL, by whom the Island of Iona was bestowed upon St. Columba. The saint is supposed to have been born in Donegal, A.D. 521.

563

St. Columba landed at Iona, and shortly afterwards preached to the northern Picts. There are consequently good reasons why the traditions of Argyle should still resemble Irish traditions, and Conal and Patrick ought to be conspicuous names in West Highland tales, and Picts ought to appear.

The only Gaelic traditional reference to a people with Pt name like that of "the Picts " is an occasional, but very rare, mention of PIOCATCH, as a kind of men. The word, pronounced *Pyuchk-aich*, is common all over the west, but it means a cole-fish at a particular stage of its growth. Other sizes of the same fish are called CUDAINN, which, as "cuddy," is immortalized by Johnson as caught by Boswell. A larger size is CEIT-EAN-ACH, derived from *Ce*, the world, *tein*, fire = *ceit-ean* (part of April), the spring, directly after which came the festival of Beal-tainn and its symbolical fires. So "Ceit-ean-ach" means a "spring-fish," and something very like the fish meant is sculptured on a Pictish stone in Scotland (see vol. iii., page 356, left hand, upper corner), and these stones date from Pagan times, and probably have to do with Pagan observances.

The same fish, when grown very large, is called "UGSA," pr. *oox-e*, which is the Norse for a bull, and the whole tribe is called GLAS-IASG, grey or green fish. As every clan has some fish, beast, bird, and plant for a badge, perhaps the PICTS adopted this fish, or fish in general, as their badge, and thus the modern name of the fish may be the ancient name of a tribe. At all events, there are plenty of Lowland traditions about Picts as a different race, but there are scarcely any in the Highlands. The Irish call them "cruithnich," for which word all manner of meanings have been found, including "*cruinn-ich*," Round-ites. Some Irish writers hold that the Picts migrated from Ireland to Scotland before the Scots.

There is also good reason for the continual reference to the island with fire about it, and the Scandinavians, for the churchmen of Iona or men of their class visited and settled in Iceland before the Norsemen.

783

First recorded hostile appearance of the Danes in England.

871

Ingolf, first Norse settler, set out for Iceland.

880 to 900

Harold Fairhair, king of Norway, rooted out the Vikings in the west, and drove a rush of settlers to Iceland. In the Norse accounts of these events a story is told of a sea-rover who found his way to Iceland by letting ravens fly from his ship. I have a long Gaelic story in which a man finds his way over the sea in pursuit of a mysterious lady, by the help of three ravens, two of which he kills and tortures because they will not fly, but the third to save his life flies, and shows the way. Ossianic names occur in this tale.

700 to 800: A manuscript, supposed (for reasons given in the Appendix to the Report of the Highland Society on the poems of Ossian) to be of the eighth century, is believed to be somewhere in Edinburgh. It contains a version of "The Tain"--a poem relative to which the Ossianic Society of Dublin have lately published a volume of very curious matter, and which is also mentioned by Professor O'Curry. Whatever may be the real date of this ancient MS. it throws the date of Osin, or Ossin, or Ossian, and Finn, and of incidents in surviving traditions, both prose and poetry, very far back; but, so far as I am informed, it does not contain any of the Gaelic poems published in 1807. So we may pass on.

900 to 1000

An ancient Gaelic MS. has been lately discovered in, England. I am not aware that it is yet decided whether the language is most like Irish or Scotch Gaelic; but it is Gaelic, and contains, as it is said, a charter of lands near Aberdeen, and it was probably meant to be read by people who lived where it was written. I mention it as evidence that Gaelic was written in the east of Scotland in the tenth century.

The following sentence appears in the *Saturday Review* of December 8, 1860, as Gaelic taken from this MS.:--

FORCHUBUS CAICHDUINI IMBIA ARRATH INLEBRÁN COLLI ARATARDDA BENDACHT FORANMAIN INTRUAGAIN RODSICRIBAL

The translation given is--

Be it on the conscience of every one in whom shall be the grace of the booklet with splendour that he gave a blessing on the soul of the misellus who wrote it.

In this form I can make nothing whatever of the Gaelic, and not much of the English. There is not one word, except bendacht, which even looks like modern Gaelic, but the following sentence conveys as little meaning at first--

IAMY OURO BED IENTHUM BLESER VANTTO COMND.

The Gaelic, otherwise divided, looks better; the reader may puzzle out the other language for himself. Taking this to be phonetic spelling, it is not unlike modern Gaelic with one Latinised word, and would seem to be a formal gift of a wood on a hilltop, and a blessing on somebody mentioned before.

"To the Forchi (? the Farquhars). To every man to whom it may be said. The half of the wood on the high place to them. A blessing on the little soul of the poor little fellow before written."

It is difficult to know where a word begins or ends in old writings, and perhaps this arrangement of the letters may be as good as the other. I know nothing further of this manuscript, and very little of old manuscripts of any kind, so this is a mere guess at a puzzle.

1000 to 1100

Book of Leinster compiled, it contains numerous references to poems, tales, the Feine, etc.

1014

Brian's battle with the Norsemen was fought in Ireland. A description of this fight is given in the Njal Saga, and though it is interlarded with supernatural portents, it is an account written not very long after the event, and is probably very true in the main. Having lately visited the scene of the Njal Saga in Iceland, I have become impressed with the extraordinary truthfulness of every part of the story, which can now be tested. If a spot is described, the people who live there now will point it out, and the narrative there appears probable, for it accords with the locality. It is told that Gunnar stood on a height, and thence shot a number of men with arrows, and the nearest peasant mounted the only block of lava in the place that seemed to suit the description, and posed as Gunnar. Close to the spot, he pointed out a number of human bones, skulls, and teeth, which had been laid bare by a strong wind which had lately driven the black sand away from a small rising ground. Unless these were the bones of the men slain there by Gunnar, eight hundred years ago, it is not easy to make out how they came there, amongst the bare lava and sand near "the springs." They bear every mark of great age, there is no burying ground near, and it was no one's interest to play a trick upon travellers. Though I cannot believe that Odin appeared at Brian's battle, or his corse-choosers before it, or that ravens, and swords, and showers of blood, fell upon and attacked the pagan Norseman, I can readily believe that such stories were told, and believed, and written down in Iceland as true, and that the smaller incidents of Brian's battle were truly recorded nevertheless. It appears that king Brian's army had banners, and in a traditional Gaelic ballad, at least as old as 1784, and now current, is a description of the banners of the Feinne. The Celts had swords, and spears, and shields, and mail, like the traditional Feinne. Kerthialfad is mentioned as a leader of the Celtic army, and in the song of the Muilearteach, page 136, vol. iii., occurs the name Cearbhal as a leader in some great battle between Celts and Lochlanners, in which the Celts won, and where they displayed banners, one of which was the banner of Fionn, which is described in another poem. They used spears, and shields, and swords, and elsewhere it appears that they wore mail. A magic raven was the standard on the Norse side, and according to the Saga, ravens attacked Brodir's men; a raven plays his part in the Lay of Osgar. One of the Saga heroes, on the Celtic side, was Ospak; one of the traditional heroes was Osgar, and they performed similar feats. "Ospak had gone through all the battle on his wing, he had been sore wounded, and lost both his sons, before king Sigtrygg fled before him." Osgar, according to the Gaelic poem, broke his way through the battle to the king of Lochlann, whose name is not given, and slew him, and an Orkney Earl was really slain, if the king was not. Osgar, like Ospak, was sore wounded, if sickles or herons could go through his waist after the battle. "Ospak was a heathen Viking," but he would not fight against the good Celtic king Brian. Osgar was a heathen Celt, and according to part of his traditional history, he went to Lochlann as a boy, carried there by a scaly monster, who ate men, and came in a ship; a Viking might be remembered as such a being. If the man on the apple gray horse be meant for Odin by the Norse Saga writer, it is quite fair that a Celtic bard should bring down his Olympus, and Fionn at the head, and so this lay of the Muilearteach may mean Brian's battle, and be a tolerably true ballad account of that fight. It may also mean something much older, or more modern, but points of resemblance between a saga and a ballad are worth remark. Miss Brooke, in 1789, attributed the Lay of Magnus to the twelfth or thirteenth century, and assumed that the Norse invader meant, was the Magnus who worked so much ill in Ireland about the latter end of the eleventh century. This tells for the antiquity of traditional Gaelic poetry, and for the groundwork of "Fingal," but not for the Gaelic of 1807.

1220

In a charter of lands in Morayshire, the words ”Tubar na fein” occur. This is explained to mean “The well of the great or kempis men,” which proves that the name of the Feinne was even then associated with the topography of the eastern Highlands.--(Celtic Gleanings, MacLauchlan, 125.)

1238

A MS. in the Advocates’ Library contains, amongst other things, a version of the poem on which “Darthula” is founded. The character is “Irish;” but it seems, from internal evidence, to have been written in Cowal. Several traditional versions of a poem on the same subject have been collected in Scotland and printed. The story is claimed as Irish, and this probably was a popular Gaelic ballad long ago. This throws the framework of one of the published poems very far back, but does not affect the Gaelic of 1807, for “Darthula,” as published, is not there; but Deirdir sings a plaintive ditty in a language which is not very different from modern Argyleshire Gaelic, though differently spelt, in which she takes her leave of “that Eastern land, Alba, with all its lakes,” and names a whole series of places which correspond to places in Argyleshire about Lochawe, Cowal, Glencoe, etc. A specimen of the poem is at pages 298, 299, Appendix to H. S. Report. So the groundwork of Darthula is common property, and genuine and old, for Professor O’Curry finds mention of the tale of the children of Usnech in early Irish manuscripts (1319), and believes it to be as old as A.D. 1000; but the poem of Darthula must be carried further on.

1250

About this time the halls of barons, and even the courts of princes, were frequented by wandering minstrels, and in the romances of the period they are constantly mentioned.

The Northmen were accompanied by their skalds in their warlike expeditions, and the accounts which these men wrote were in verse and prose. The verse is quite different in spirit and metre from Gaelic verse; but “sgeulachd,” pr. skale-ach (tales), are often partly verse well.

In the history of the Norwegian expedition against Scotland, A. D. 1263, is an account of the expedition of Haco, represented as the most formidable that ever left the ports of Norway. The prize disputed with Alexander, son of William, king of Scotland, was the possession of the Hebrides.

In the manuscript, as described by the translator, are pictures, some of which represent a man killing a boar, and another fighting with a mermaid, both of which subjects form the groundwork of stories now told in the Highlands. Most of the figures are in armour. Their helmets are sometimes conical; so are the helmets sculptured on many of the Hebridian tombstones. The whole course of the expedition is minutely described. They sailed as far south as Loch Long, drew their boats over the isthmus now called Tarbert or draw-boat, harried the islands in Loch Lomond, and fought a great battle with the Scotch near the Kumrey (Cumbraes), after which Haco sailed by Botar; (Bute, Gaelic Bòt); (Hersey) Arran Ar fhinn, Fionn’s land, according to some), Sa-tir-is-mula (the Mull of Kintyre, maol-cheann-tire, bluff of Land’s end); Gudey (Gigha Giugha); Il (Islay, Ile), where he levied a contribution of cattle, meal, and cheese; Myl (Mull, Mul-e); Rauney (Rona, Rona, seal isle); Skidi (Skye, Eilan sgiathnach, the winged island), and thence by Harf (Cape Wrath), to Orkney, where the king sickened and died.

In this early account by an eye witness of a Norwegian expedition, mention is made of “Kiarnakr son makamals,” a Scot who harried the Isle of Skye, and whose men “had even taken small children, and raising them on the points of their spears, shook them till they fell down to their hands,” and in the story abstracted, vol. iii., p. 1841, and got in Islay, Fionn

MacChumhail goes from Islay to Skye to fight the Scandinavians. There is no mention of burnings and murders, but as such proceedings were then common amongst Vikings, according to Norwegian accounts, probably both sides were equally cruel. The translator suggests in a note, that as Makamal is elsewhere written Niachamal, it may be a mistake for "Nial Camal," a lord of Lochaw. The name was probably written from ear, and the name of the lords of Lochawe is not pronounced Kamal now-a-days in Gaelic. It seems possible that the name may be Ceathearnach (warrior), Mac (son of) Cumhail; but it might be a corruption of several other Gaelic names, as now pronounced, including the big Macaulay, of whose deeds there are so many traditions current in the Long Islands. Be that as it may, petty rulers throughout these islands were then styled kings, as they are in Gaelic stories. Ships were generally small enough to be drawn overland, as described in Barbour's Bruce, and in traditions; and there are many other traits which appear in popular tales still repeated in the places mentioned. This seems to give a vague reference to something like an Ossianic name. I have several Gaelic stories which clearly describe a Scandinavian descent upon the country about the Clyde, in which Fionn is made to play a part. So this tells for the antiquity of these traditions; and shows how old records may have been destroyed, for there were religious houses on the islands in Loch Lomond.

1314

Bannockburn was fought. According to Barbour the west Highlanders were there in force.

The ferd battale the nobill king
Tuk till himself in governing,
And had intill his company
The men of Argile and of Kintyr
And of Carrik all halely
And of the Ilis quharof was Syr
Angus of Ile and But all tha;
He of the plane land had alsua
Of armit men ane mekill rout
His battale stalwart was and stout.

It is strange to trace an ante-celtic feeling in the bard who wrote this passage, and it is equally strange to find so little about Bruce in Highland tradition now.

1375

Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, compiled his poem of "the Brus." The manuscript in the Advocates' Library contains the words, "hym all." Hart's edition, printed 1616, has "Fingal." Jamieson's 1820, has "hym all," and the edition of the Spalding Club, published from a collation of "the Cambridge and Edinburgh MSS.," follows Hart.

"The Lord of Lorne," enraged at his men who durst not follow the "Brus," sets them an "ensampill,"

He said methink Marthokis sone,
Richt as Glomakmorn was wone
To haf fra Fingal his memyhe,
Richt sa all his fra us has he.

The lowland poet here remarks that he might "mar manerlik" have "liknit" him to Gaudifer de Larys, and narrates an exploit performed. by that hero of romance, which he knew, and thought a better illustration of Bruce's valour; so he probably gave the words of the Lord of Lorne as he had heard them, honestly, though he did not see their force. The passage refers to

the strife which, according to tradition, was constantly going on between Goll Macmorna and Fionn; and the Lord of Lorne (MacCowl) spoke according to his lights, to men who understood what he meant. Irish history claims a real existence for Fionn and Goll, and modern lowland stories have added supernatural incidents to the real history of the Bruce and Wallace:

With respect to the various readings; “hym all” makes no sense, Fingal does not accord with tradition, but *fynn all* would remove all difficulties, and mayhap the scribe wrote *hym* for *fynn*, not knowing what was meant. Spelling and writing were not fettered by rules in the olden time, and the letter y might well express the existing vowel sound of Fionn.

MacDougald of Dunolly (Maccowle as anciently written) now owns a brooch which was won in fight with the Bruce in Lorne, near Morven, the supposed kingdom of Fingal. It is clear that Barbour then expected lowland readers to understand this allusion to two Ossianic heroes.--(Highland Society’s Report, p. 21. Hist. of Scotch Poetry, 275. Barbour’s Brus.)

1391

The Book of Ballymote, above referred to, was written, and contains something relative to the heroes alluded to by Barbour. So they were widely known about the time of Bannockburn, 1314, and the history of Bruce shews that be at least courted the aid of the men of the west, who “were stalwart and stout.”

1408

A charter of lands in Islay was written in the usual form of Latin charters, but in the Gaelic language and character, by Fergus Beaton, generally called the Mull Doctor. This proves that the Gaelic character and language were then used in legal documents in Scotland.--(Celtic Gleanings, 76.) This manuscript disproves the Irish claim to the exclusive use of the old character, and refutes the assertion that Gaelic was not a written language. It might as well be argued that English was unwritten because the Times does not use Chaucer’s language and black letter.

1416

The Book of Leacain, above referred to, was written.

1432

Sir Colin of Glenurchy, ancestor of the Breadalbane family, got a charter from his father, and set up for himself. About this time the name MACCOWLE was applied to MacDougald in Lorne. It is pronounced Macgooill now. This Colin is styled Black Colin of Rome. It is said that he was a knight of Rhodes, and that be was three sundry times at Rome.

Here then is a foundation for some passages in the tale of Conall Gulban, got in Cowal. Highland worthies went to the East and fought the Paynim. Amongst the movables at Taymouth, and the jewels of the house, mention is made “of ane stone of the quantitye of half a hen’s eg set in silver, being flatte at the ane end and round at the other end lyke a peir, whilk Sir Coline Campbell, first laird of Glenurchy, woir when he fought in battle at the Rhodes against the Turks, he being one of the knychtis of Rhodes.” This amulet appears to have been subsequently used as a charm for more homely purposes, and one like its description is still at Taymouth. I have seen many such amulets in the Highlands, and they are still used as charms,--so here is foundation for the amulet in Conall Gulban.

Printing invented by Koster.

1438

Guttenburg.

1442

Guttenburg's bible completed.

1460

About this time Blind Harry composed "Wallace;"

1450

William Dunbar was born; and wandering minstrels fell into disrepute in lowland Scotland and elsewhere. It seems that there were Celtic bards then wandering about as well as the lowland minstrels, who were all classed with sturdy beggars by an Act of 1457.

Holland, in a stanza (quoted page 181, Hist. of Scotch Poetry), abuses a bard out of Ireland, and mimics his language. It is bad Gaelic, written by ear by one who did not understand more than its general meaning. "Banachadee" is clearly *Beannachadh Dhia*, God's blessing, which is a common Highland salutation on entering a house; and equivalent to the Irish salutation "God save all here." Other two lines mean--Said--*Black Knee give us a drink--come, me drink. Sow of Mary's son, ach! great son! me dry lake*. The last lines quoted are--

O'Deremyne, O'Donall, O'Dochardy droch,
Thir are his Ireland kingis of the Irischerye;
O'Krewlyn, O'Conocher, O'Gregre, Makgrane,
The Schenachy, the Clarschach,
The Benschene, the ballach, The Crekery, the Corach,
  Scho kennis them ilk ane.

This is a list of names and certain words which mean "The reciter of old tales," "The singing woman" (or the fairy woman); "The boy;" "The spoiling;" "The battle;" and these I take to be a list of current songs or poems which such hungry, thirsting, black-kneed, and therefore barelegged, wandering minstrels recited, together with the genealogies; of kings and nobles. So here is a glimpse of Celtic dress and poetry, and it confirms the accounts given of bardic recitations.

William Dunbar, who flourished in the reign of James the Fourth, and was a churchman who satirized the church in the "Interlude of the Droichis" (Evergreen, p. 259), says--

My fair grandsyr hecht Fyn Makowll,
That dang the diel and gart him yowll.

My fader meikle Gow Max Macmorn,
Out of his moderis wame was shorne.

And hence it is evident that tales about the Feinne were then commonly known to those for whom the poet composed, that is to say, the lowlanders of Scotland.

In one of his satires, "The Daunce," Dunbar introduced the seven deadly sins performing a mummery in the dress of the period, before Mahoun and his infernal court, together with troops of those at whom the satires were aimed--nuns, loose livers, and above all, shaven priests and celts.

The fiend of the Lowland bard concludes his entertainment thus:--

"Than cry'd Mahoun for a Heleand padyane,
Sy ran a feynd to fetch Makfadyne,
  Far northwart in a nuke:

Be he the correnoch had done schout,
Erische men so gadderit him about,
  In hell grit rume they tuke;
Thae tarmegantis with tag and tatter,
Full loud in Ersche begouth to clatter,
  And roup lyk revin and ruke,
The devill sa devit was with thair yell,
That in the deepest pit of hell,
  He smorit them with smuke."

From this curious composition a great deal is to be learned about the manners and customs of these rough times, and we get another distant glimpse of Highland ways long ago. There was a fierce war of words between Highland and Lowland nationalities then, as there was between Celt and Saxon in the days of MacPherson, Johnson, and Boswell, and as there is in our own day when Bon Gaultier writes his famous Celtic ballad--

"Fhairshon swore a feud
Against the clan MacTavish."

It also appears that lowland bards, then as now, did not know much about the Gaelic language, and made no distinction between Irish and Erische; but they knew the customs of the race. MakFadyane shouted a lament for the dead, so that was a "Highland pageant," and all the Ersche gathered about him and began to "clatter," so the custom of crying the coronach, like that of keening in Ireland, was a Highland custom in the fifteenth century. This custom is clearly referred to in the traditional poem on the death of Osgur, and funeral processions are still followed by the bagpipes, and martial music accompanies a soldier to his last home. It also appears that these "Ersche" were a fierce race of termagants, dressed in "tag and tatter," some fluttering outlandish costume, wholly different from the fine lowland bonnet and flowing gown of " Pride," who leads the procession in the infernal mummery which Dunbar imagined and described. From the former quotation it appeared that they were bare-kneed "black-knees," and it seems that the poet hated the whole race and their language, and satirized them, with other objects of his aversion, with all his might.

It may be new to most English readers to learn that MacMhurich, Clanranald's bard, long afterwards composed a Gaelic satire on national music. In this the "coronach of women" (no longer that of men, be it observed), and "Pìob gleadhair," the pipe of clamour,

Highland sculptors also made stone satires upon the pipes: Above the door of ''Dundarav,'' a ruined castle near Inverary, there used to be a figure playing a tune upon his nose, which suggested the above design of the Spirit of the Pipes. Lowland view.

are called the two ear sweethearts of the black fiend--a noise fit to arouse the imps; and other epithets are used fully as bitter and coarse as anything in Dunbar's "Daunce."

Dancing to pipe music is a Scotch custom at least as old as the days of James the Fourth. It is a custom which still prevails in Italy, Spain, Ireland, and Scotland.

Dunbar in his Testament of Kennedy throws some light upon the manners and customs of Carrick, a Celtic district of Ayrshire. He makes a brother churchman, with whom he held poetic jousts, desire that no priests may sing over his grave.

"Bot a bag-pyp to play a spring,
  Et unum alewisp ante me;
Insteid of torchis, for to bring
  Quatuor lagenas cervisiæ,

“Within the graif to set sic thing,
  In modum crucis juxta me,
To fle the feyndis than hardely sing
  De terra plasmasti me.”

So the poet knew the sound of the bag-pyp, and thought it an instrument fit to fle the feyndis, as many lowlanders do still, but it was the music which a beer-drinking churchman would delight to bear “playing a spring.”

It seems that beer, *not whisky*, was old Scotch drink.

Caxton’s press set up at Westminster.

1471

First book printed in England.

1501

About this time, the beginning of the sixteenth century, Gavin Douglas, bishop of Dunkeld, inscribed a poem to James the Fourth, and wrote--

“I saw Raf Coilyear with his thrawin brow,
Craibit Johne the Reif and auld Cowkellpis sow,
And how the wran came out of Ailysay,
And Peirs Plewman that made his workmen few
Greit Gowmacmorne and Fyn MaCoul, and how
They suld be goddis in Ireland as they say.
Their saw I Maitland upon auld Beird Grey,
Robene Hude and Gilbert with the quhite hand,
How Hay of Nauchtan flew in Madin land.”

The verse is quoted in the Report on Ossian, and p. 170, Hist. of Scottish Poetry. It is part of “the Palis of Honour,” an allegorical composition, in which the poet introduces every famous personage of ancient or modern times, sacred or profane, of whom he knew anything; all the classical poets--Brutus of Albyon, Friar Bacon, Chaucer, and a mob of poets and their heroes. So here are two of the heroes of Ossian in good company at this court of honour, but even then their history was known to the author only by hearsay.

There is consequently a good deal to be found about Fionn in old times in the Lowlands, but nothing, so far, of the poems which are referred to. It so happens that some older than that period have been preserved. While polished bards, Highland and Lowland, were exercising their wit on such compositions as are found in old manuscripts, the “savage” Celtic people were repeating their own old ballads, and these were simple and free from the smallest tinge of coarseness. So far as I know anything of old Gaelic poetry, there is nothing to be likened to the satires above referred to.

1527

Bishop Percy, speaking of an Earl of Northumberland who died about this time, observes that he lived at a time when many of the first nobility could hardly read or write their names.

1512 to 1529

Dean MacGregor's MS. was written at Lismore; in Argyleshire.[400] It is not written in the Gaelic character and it seems to have been spelt by ear for the benefit of English or Scotch readers. Amongst other matters it, contains 11,000 lines of poetry, some attributed to Oisein and his comrades, some to bards of the period, including Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy, who fell at Flodden, 1513, and Lady Isobel Campbell, daughter of the Earl of Argyll, "8th MacCallen Mor:" she was sister to Lady MacLean. Part of this manuscript has been deciphered and translated, and is in course of publication, and the editors will describe it. It probably is a collection written from dictation, and gives, according to the writer's ability, a faithful representation of the current language and traditional poems of the district of Lorne in the sixteenth century. I have seen a few sheets of this publication, and these prove beyond question that the groundwork of the first book of Temora had been made the subject of a Gaelic poem which was written down more than three centuries ago, but the poem of 1807 is not there. This manuscript, then, disposes of a great deal of the Ossianic controversy, and clears the ground. A great many of the incidents in Temora, even minute details, are given in a poem attributed to Allan MacRoyre, in 1530, and some of the same incidents are in the Irish poem attributed to Oisin in the twelfth century; but Temora is attributed to Ossian who lived in the third; some twelve hundred years before Dean MacGregor wrote; and it seems highly improbable that a long and well-known traditional poem should have escaped the Dean's notice, while a short one on the same subject was written down. Lorne is close to Morven, but there is no mention of Fing*al* or his kingdom. It is thus proved that Fionn and his heroes are not simply creatures of MacPherson's brain, or worthies who belong exclusively to Irish romance; and it seems probable that some one has added a "gal " to Fionn, and given him a kingdom, in the same way that the Gaelic name Temair has been expanded to Temora and contracted to Tara since 1391.

It is proved that "Earse" was a written language three centuries ago, and has altered but little since, and that Johnson and his followers erred in many things. It is proved that old materials existed in Scotland from which some one might have concocted at least one book of Temora without stealing from Ireland. And the out-and-out supporters of the antiquity of the Gaelic of 1807 are bound to produce something like Temora as it now stands in some manuscript, equally old, though it has been ingeniously suggested that the great traditional poems were then so notorious and so well preserved that no one would take the trouble to write them down or multiply copies. The Gaelic, then, of the poems of Temora, as published, was probably put together by some Gaelic bard who lived between 1530 and 1763, when the Gaelic of the 7th book of Temora was printed, though Oisein lived and sung long before the twelfth century. It remains to be seen whether the probable date of the published poems of 1807 cannot be more accurately determined.

Dean MacGregor's MS. was partly written in Argyleshire, and some of the Gaelic poetry contained in it is attributed to Duncan MacCallein an dygriddir (Duncan, son of Colin the good knight), who fell at Flodden, and some to two ancestresses of the family of Argyll.

The following is a translation of six lines, which Mr. MacLauchlan was good enough to copy and spell for me from the Lismore MSS., and which are there attributed to "Ysboll ne Vc. Kellan" (Isabel, daughter of Colin's son):--

Woe worth! whose ailment's love,
Why-so-èèr,

[400] Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1856, p. 35; 1831, p. 317, Papers by Donald Gregory, Esq., and the Rev. Thomas MacLauchlan. Report of the Highland Society on the poems of Ossian, etc., *passim*, 1805.

I utter it.
‘Tis hard from a partner to part;
Sad is the case
in which I am.
That love which is given unknown,
Since it’s my wonted
Garden for lays (*light-ray in rhyming*)
Unless I plant passion betimes,
my flower will be
blighted and thin.
That man to whom love is given,
and must not be told
from on high (*out aloud*)
For him was I put into pain.
Heigh ho! for me (“*gymi*”)
‘Tis a hundred woes.
woes.

The rhythm indicates the division, and so do the assonances.

Mairg dha ‘n galar an GRADH
G bith *fath*
fa’n abrain E
Deacair sgarachdain r’ a PHÀIRT
truagh an *cás*
‘s a bheileam FHEIN.

Several lines contain words whose sound, now-a-days, would admit of a double or treble meaning, and some of these might be distorted by one who was led to expect something wrong, but there is no coarseness in this quaint little ditty; and if this be all her poetical sin, the poor lady’s character has been sadly maligned.

This class is amorous, moral and satirical, not Ossianic poetry; but if the nobility of those days who spoke Gaelic, composed in Gaelic, and wrote poems similar in spirit to those which were current at court, there were Ossianic poems of a different stamp then current amongst the people. If it can be shewn that nobles continued to use the language at a later date, it becomes not only possible but probable that some species of Gaelic poetry, different from popular ballads, but founded on Celtic traditions, might have sprung up in Scotland before the times when Shakspeare and Milton flourished in England, or even later, and yet before MacPherson’s time. If it can be shewn what were the manners and customs of the district in which lords and ladies wrote Gaelic poetry about these times, the kind that would be apt to please may be surmised. From the genealogy of the Argylls, from which I have quoted in the text, I copy the following passage relative to Lady MacLean, sister of Dean MacGregor’s poetess:--”She, according to common report, was exposed by her husband, the laird of MacLean, upon a bare rock in the sea, called Lersker, near the Island of Lismore, in view of the castle of Duart, that she might perish by the return of the tide, but people from on board a boat providentially passing that way, upon hearing the cries and shouts of the lady in distress, took her on board, and restored her to her friends, although, at the same time, these very men who were employed to expose the lady to the mercy of the sea returned to Duart Castle, where John Gorm, the first of the family of Lochnell, a boy of three or four years of age, was with his aunt, the Lady MacLean, whom they had left upon the naked rock. And as soon as they had entered the castle of Duart they kindled a great fire on the middle of the hall floor,

and formed themselves into a circle around the fire, and caused strip the boy John Gorm naked, and placed him between them and the fire, when the boy, by reason of the heat, was forced to run round the fire, while each of them, as he passed within the circle, rubbed his naked skin with an hot roasted apple, which occasioned blue spots on the boy's skin ever after, for which be was called John Gorm, or blue John. His nurse, though she ran into the hall in a furious manner, could not enter into the circle to preserve the child's life, until by means of one M'Gilvra of Glencannell, who had more humanity than the rest, and who, as they stood in a circle with their feet close, opened his legs a little (for he durst do no more for fear of suspicion), she rushed through the man's legs, and, entering the circle, snatched up the boy, and carried him off straight to the shore, which is hard by the walls of the castle, where, finding a boat at hand, they made their escape, and Providence so ordered matters that John Gorm and his nurse were out of danger before their enemy had full room to reflect upon their flight, for which cause the laird of MacLean was killed at Edinburgh by John Campbell, the first of the family of Calder, brother to Lady MacLean, and uncle to John Gorm, the first of the family of Lochnell, who, as soon as he saw the laird of MacLean, he thrust the sword, sheath and all, through his body. These things gave rise to a song composed in these days (take up MacLean and prick him in a blanket)."

The main incidents of this story were all told to me by an old woman in September 1861. She speaks hardly any English, and is very old, and, like many of her class, speaks oracular predictions now and then. It is to be hoped that she knows the future as well as she remembers the past.

"Earl Archibald was slain at Flodden." So says the Argyll genealogy, whence this story is taken, of the days when Dean MacGregor wrote, and Henry VIII. reigned, and Lady Casselis composed amorous Gaelic poetry, if she be the lady meant by the family history. There was a lady called "*Magrate nan oran*" (or something which looks like it), "for her inclination to rhyming," who was a younger daughter of "the, last Lord Lorn of the name of Stewart," and married Colin Earl of Argyll, Glenurchy's pupil, about 1460. But whoever the composer of these songs may have been, the fact remains, that before the times of Shakspeare, lords and ladies composed Gaelic poetry, and Dean MacGregor wrote some down as theirs; and they were people of a class likely to be affected by the court literature of their day and country, some of which was rude enough.

Now "Ossian's poems" are distinguished by a peculiar vein of sentimental grandeur and melancholy, and the popular manners and customs of the east and west in these days do not accord with such a spirit. Short, stirring, wild martial songs, like the current Ossianic poems, or political, or controversial, or amorous ballads, might suit the taste of the grim soldiers who roasted a boy, but a long epic would surely set them fast asleep; so unless the gentry or clergy wrote "Ossian," we must abandon the sixteenth century, and, as the builder of Taymouth said, "birz yont." But it must not be forgotten that, amidst all the ribaldry of ballads of that time, there is much beauty of feeling and sentiment in the lowland Scotch poetry of the clergy; and Shakspeare wrote as he did, although the amusement of roasting men had been pushed to the extreme about his time in England.

1535

Sir David Lindsay composed satires against the, clergy, some of which were acted before James the Fifth and his Queen, and are exceedingly coarse. In one of these compositions, a pardoner is introduced with reliques for sale, amongst which are the following:--

"Heir is ane relict lang and braid,
Of Fyn MacCoull the richt chaft blaid,

With teith and al togidder;
Of Collins cow heir is ane horne
For eating of Mak connals corne,
Was slane into Balquihidder."

In one of his interludes he says--

"But dowt my deid yone man hes sworne,
I trow yone be grit Gow Makmorne."

In another composition the poet says--

"Stewart of Lorne will carpe richt curiouslie."

And hence it appears that he knew something of west country traditions, and mayhap alluded to the Stewarts, of whose works some are preserved. Fyn MacCoull and Gol MacMorne were clearly known to the poet and his audience, if "Fingal" was not mentioned by this author. Colin and MakConnal and their cow might be a reference to some well known story about a feud; but a horn that was a "relic" must have been that of a famous cow, and there are plenty of such animals in the old stories mentioned by Professor O'Curry, in one of which ("The tain" above mentioned) MacCumhal plays a part. But, however he got there, Fyn went to court about 1535, and was presented by Sir David Lindsay in a dress of motley for the second time. (Hist. of Scotch Poetry, 376, 425).

1530

A manuscript attributed to John Beaton, one of the family which furnished the MacDonalds of the Isles, and even kings of Scotland, with physicians for several centuries, is preserved with other MSS. at Edinburgh. These are supposed to have belonged to the Beatons, and contain medical metaphysical, and mathematical discussions, all in Gaelic. If the dialect and character be Irish, it proves that early Irish and Scotch learning were identical, for this was part of the library of a Scotch family who flourished about this time. This also gives a clue to the knowledge of Gaelic matters, which Scotch courtiers who could not now speak Gaelic, evidently possessed.

1549

A provincial council of Scotch clergy were so scandalized by the flood of ballads poured out against them, that they enjoined every ordinary to search for them, and take steps for the punishment of the offenders who sang them. (Hist. of Scotch Poetry, 391).

1550

The first book was printed in Ireland--the liturgy by Humphrey Powel.

1565

In Lemoine's history of printing, it is stated that an Irish liturgy was printed in Dublin for the use of the Highlanders of Scotland. "Reid" supposes this to be an error. I have not heard of a copy, and the book meant probably is Carswell's Gaelic prayer-book, printed at Edinburgh in Roman type, Of this, there is a copy at Inverary, which I have seen. It is the first printed Gaelic book extant; and in the preface it alludes to the habits of the Highlanders of Scotland, who then composed stories about the "Fianaibh," etc. It proves that the reformed clergy set their faces against the old heroic traditions which Dean MacGregor had striven to preserve thirty-seven years before, and which some of the reformed clergy now condemn.

1567

George Bannatyne collected Scotch poetry, and his 1568. manuscript is the chief source whence a knowledge of old Scotch poetry has been gleaned. MacGregor's far earlier Gaelic collection has been well known for a century, but such has been the neglect of everything genuine and Gaelic, that till now its contents have hardly been thought worth attention.

From Bannatyne, Ramsay drew his materials for the Evergreen, published 1724; and he "altered, added to," and "retrenched" his originals "with extreme licentiousness." (Hist. of Scotch Poetry, 416.)

It seems hard then to blame MacPherson as if he were the only man of his time who mangled old poetry to make new, and never to look at old authorities to see what was the truth. The fault has been as much on the Gaelic side as the other; but that fault is about to be amended.

1571

First book printed in the Irish character with a press and types got from Queen Elizabeth. It is a catechism; and, so far, it appears that Gaelic Scotland was a-head of Ireland in the literary race, for the first known Gaelic book was printed in Edinburgh.

1579 to 1582

Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenurchay delighted in, and is supposed to have twice transcribed a ponderous romance, which is at Taymouth--"the Buike of King Alexander the Conqueroure," a translation of the great French "Roman d'Alexandre," executed by Sir Gilbert Hay, c. 1460, and extending to about 20,000 lines. This old knight died 1631, aged 86; he is styled Black Duncan of the cap, and his history is given in the black book of Taymouth, and in Sketches of Early Scotch History by Cosmo Innes. Here then we have foreign romances creeping in amongst the aristocracy of the West Highlands, in the very family whose ancestors had composed Gaelic poetry.

1594

Mr. Donald Monro, high dean of the Isles, wrote a statistical account of the Western Isles, which was printed in 1818. The first island mentioned is "Manain," or Man in "Erishe," which was "ordynit by Fynan, King of Scottis, to the priests and philosophers, called in Latin Druides, in English Culdees, and Kildeis; that is, worshippers of God; in Erish, Leid Draiche; quhilks were the first teachers of religion in Albion."

So here is another Fyn mixed up with Druids and Culdees, Paganism and Christianity, and located in that stronghold of the Fairies, Man.

No. 161 is the "Pigmies' Ile," in which the Dean had found "in a small kirk" the small round heads of small men. So here were the fairies themselves. The houses of a small race still exist in the Islands.

Martin also mentions these small bones (page 19) as these of "Lusbirdean," and I have many Lewes stories about pigmies.

Dean Monro gives very little about the manners and customs of the people of the islands, but he tells that they used to catch seals with certain "great doggis" in Loch Gruinart in Islay, which must have been a curious scene.

1598

About this time the Black Book of Taymouth was written in Latin and Scotch.

1603

New Testament printed in Irish, and dedicated to James the First.

In this year a manuscript was finished by Ewan MacPhail, at Dunstaffnage, in Lorne; it contains a prose tale "concerning a King of Lochlin, and the Heroes of Fingal;" and a poem which seems, from the lines quoted, to be part of No. LXXIX., which is still traditionally preserved, and was written down by Dean MacGregor in 1530. I have seen this Dunstaffnage MS. and can hardly read a word of the old writing.

1631

Sir Duncan of Glenurchay died; and in that year Calvin's catechism was printed in Roman type in Gaelic at Edinburgh, so the reformed clergy were making efforts to reform the Highlanders, and they had already condemned the "lying stories about Fin ma Cowl," which they probably supposed to be like the lowland ballads of the time; so profane literature of the old school was held at a discount all over Scotland; everything was changing, and the good was confounded with the bad.

1633

About this time, a correspondence took place which has been published by Mr. Cosmo Innes in his Sketches of Early Scotch History (p. 319), 1861. The correspondents are--Sir Colin Campbell of Glenurchy, Juliane Campbell, his wife, daughter of Hew Lord Loudon, the Marquis, and Earl of Argyle, who were both subsequently beheaded, and Margaret Douglas, Argyle's wife. It is a curious measure of the fee of the writer of the Argyle genealogy, that he omitted all mention of this death on the scaffold, with which, as Mr. Innes remarks, these "were subsequently honoured."

The spelling of the letters is obsolete; they give a curious picture of the times, and they are well worth perusal, but the reason of the correspondence is what concerns me. Argyle and his wife Margaret Douglas are anxious that their son Lorne should have a thorough knowledge of what they called "Erise," which Irish and Scotch Gael call Gaelic; and they send the young chief of the Clan Campbell to his relative to Balloch, now Taymouth, where his foster father, writing of his tutor, considers it--"requisit he be ane discreite man that is ane scollar, and that can speik both Inglis and Erise, quharof I think thair may be had in Argyll."

Accordingly, Lorne and Maister Jhone Makleine set off with "Duncan Archibald, and tuey horse with him, on to Mr. Johen, and on for my cariage;" soon after the "thretie day of September" when "Archibald Campbell of Lorne" wrote to his "louing foster-father" from "Inderaray," and Mr. Johen having misbehaved himself, some one else wss procured to superintend his studies. His mother, Margaret Douglas, writes 14th December 1637--"I heair my sone begines to wearye of the Irishe langwadge. I entreat yow to cause holde hime to the speakeing of itt, for since he has bestowed so long tyme and paines in the getting of itt, I sould be sory he lost it now with leasines in not speaking of it."

On the 14th Junii 1639, Margaret Douglas wrote to "Glenurchy" to Balloch for her son, and he came by the house in Glenurchy to Inverary with a sufficient company, if his mother's letter was attended to. It does not appear from his accounts that he wore the Highland dress; his tutor did.

"Item, given to Mr. Johnne M'Len, pedagogue to my Lord Lorne's sone, in September 1633, ane hewit plaid, pryce xii. lib." Item, the 18th of Junii, to be coat and brekis to him (my Lorde's sone), x. quarteris of fyne skarlet, xviii. lib. the ell, xlv. lib. Item, ane pair of silk stockings, "and there are 'French bever hats, orange ribband points, and a Spanish pistolet' for the young lord."

Now, from all this gossip about historical personages of Western Argyle, it would seem that Gaelic was still the language of the Highlands, the language which one who was to command its people ought to know, but that some of the nobility now had to learn it, and wore “brekis.”

This then would seem to be a time, for collecting all that could be got together, and modelling it into some connected shape, a period when Gaelic was a studied language, and when noblemen who spoke it delighted in the romance of Alexander, and all this took place in the immediate vicinity of “the woody Morven” where “Fingal” was supposed to reign, and in the district where discreet persons could be found acquainted with Gaelic and English.

There is no trace of the Ossian of 1807 to be found amongst any known writings of this time; but if the Bannatyne MSS. and some others had been destroyed, most early Scotch poetry would have been lost. Tradition has not preserved. the “Palice of Honour,” or “The Daunce,” though it has retained far older ballads.

1645

A deed of fosterage was written in Gaelic between Sir Norman MacLeod and John Mackenzie, which proves that Gaelic was then used in legal documents in the west.

1655

A miscellaneous collection of poems on various subjects, “partly Scots, and partly Irish, was written by Eamonn MacLachlan.” These are said to be very good.

1659

First fifty Psalms printed in Gaelic.

1681

Colville, in the Whigg’s Supplication, published in London (Part II., page 24), gives a version of a story which has some resemblance to the legend in No. LI., though it is not like Ossian’s poetry:--

One man, quoth he, oft-times hath stood,
And put to flight a multitude;
Like Sampson, Wallace, and Sir Bewis,
And Finmacowl, beside the Lewis,
Who in a bucking time of year,
Did rout, and chase a herd of deer,
Till he behind, and they before,
Did run a hundred miles and more,
Which, questionless, prejudg’d his toes,
For Red-shanks then did wear no shoes,
For to this day they wear but calf ones,
Or if older, leather half-ones.
He chased them so furiouslie,
That they were forced to take the sea,
And swam from Cowel into Arran,
In which soil, though it be but barren,
As learned antiquaries say,
Their offspring lives unto this day.

I may add, that at this day men still point out Dun Finn, in Arran, and explain “Ar-ainn” to mean Ar-fhinn, Fin’s land; and that Cowal, which sounds like MacCowl, is still brimful of Fenian traditions. On West Loch Tarbet are places called “Leaba Dhiarmaid,” the bed of

Diarmaid; "*Dùn 'a choin duibh*," the fort of the Black Dog, which is a curious old fort in a wood, and is said to be the place where Bran killed the black dog, as is told in the well-known ballad. Near that is "*Tor an tuirc*," the boar's heap, where, according to tradition the boar was killed by Diarmaid; and all these places are below "*Sliabhghaoil*," to which "Diarmaid," or, according to others, "an old hunter," addressed these lines when he was dying. They are known to many about Tarbert:--

Sliabh mo chridhe 's an sliabh ghaoil,
Innis nan crodh laoigh 's nan each.
Esan cha tearn a nuas,
Mise cha d' theid suas am feisd.

Mount of my heart and the mount of love,
Isle of the calving cows and the horses.
It will never descend,
I will not mount up for ever.

Another place in the district is called "*Leum na muice*," the swine's leap; and other similar names abound, which, together with Colville's verses, shew that Fingalian legends have been localized in the west for a long time.

1684

Kirk's edition of the Psalms has four lines of poetry which are quoted, page 21 of the report of the Highland Society on Ossian, and which may be thus closely translated:--

"Go leaflet boldly forth
With God's pure songs arouse them yonder;
Hail the generous land of Fionn,
The rough bounds and isles of the stranger."

Inseabh-Gall, the Hebrides were so called from their Norse masters. This then proves that Scotland was considered to be the land of Fionn eighty years before MacPherson published anything.

1690

First Irish version of the Bible, printed for the use of the Highlanders of Scotland; 3000 copies, Roman type.

1691

A manuscript written by a MacLean, at Ard Chonail, on Lochowe, in Argyleshire, contains tales and poems, one on the imprisonment of Archibald Earl of Argyll, at Edinburgh, about 1680.

This MS. is described is the Highland Society's report. So Gaelic continued to be written during the seventeenth century by Scotchmen in Scotland, they used it in legal documents, wrote tales about the ancient heroes, and poetry of various kinds; but the poems of 1807 are not yet found.

This was written (apparently) in the Scotch dialect, so it would appear that there was a popular and a cultivated dialect, both of which were supposed to pass current in Scotland.

1103. Martin, a Lewes doctor, wrote an account of the Western Isles, which gives a great deal of information about the ways of the people. At page 217 he speaks of the traditions of Fin MacCoul's, a great giant, whom he mentions as a well-known personage who had exercised

his valour on the inhabitants of Ar-Fyn or Fin's stronghold, which is the derivation given for Arran.

The standing stones are mentioned as confirmation of this story.

It so happens that the ground about many of these stones was lately searched, and it seems that they really do mark burial places of the stone period. Human bones, charcoal, and flint implements, were found about the centres of circles, in whose circumference four large stones or more are placed.

In one case the bones were much broken, and placed in a small grave about two feet long, scooped out of the rock. The bones were of the ordinary size, and did not appear to have been burned; so, unless the body was cut to pieces, it is not easy to make out how it was buried close to this grave, in a place called Dun Finn, Fin's fort. This seems to place Fionn in the "stone period," when iron was rare, and elk survived in Britain, according to antiquaries. Popular tales and songs appear to do the same.

1720

Clanranald's bard wrote in the "Irish" hand in the islands.

First Gaelic vocabulary printed. Macdonald's.

1740

First work published in the then Scottish dialect of Gaelic--Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, translated by an Argyleshire minister. (Celtic Gleanings, p. 138.) So far, then, the printing press had been employed solely in the cause of religion, and anything in the nature of profane Gaelic literature had been condemned in the first book printed in Scotland.

Or thereabouts, a Mr. Farquharson made a Gaelic collection about Strathglas, which he subsequently compared with MacPherson's English, which he pronounced to be a bad translation of good poems which he had.

1751

Alexander MacDonald's volume of songs, reprinted 1764 and 1802. These were much read and eagerly sought at the time, which proves that the old taste for native poetry was not extinct amongst the people.

1756. Jerome Stone's translation of Fraoch, of which the original Gaelic was recovered from his papers after his death, and is given in the report of the Highland Society (Appendix, p. 99). It still survives in fragments, in 1860, in Scotland, amongst the most unlearned classes. Stone was an Englishman, and his translation is a paraphrase, but faithful.

It was first published in the *Scots Magazine*, and is an indication of the taste of the period. Attention had been called to Gaelic poetry and the Gael by the battles of 1715 and 1745. The first who translated made a paraphrase, and thought more of himself than of his original; and almost every attempt since made to translate Gaelic into English, or English into Gaelic, has been of this kind.

1756

Mr. Pope's collection was made. He was minister of Reay, and his manuscript contains a poem which can be traced in Temora; "Erragon," called Dibird fli Lathmon; Cath. Gaur, with the death of Oscar; Duan Dearmot, an elegy on the death of that warrior, which was sung by an old Campbell, who, when he did so, always took off his bonnet in respect for his ancestor. These, and many other pieces, were sting in 1763 by people who had then never heard of MacPherson; but I have pieces, under the same names, which were still sung in 1860. It is not

said that any of these correspond exactly with MacPherson's published translations, but Mr. Pope compared them with his originals, and recognised those above mentioned in MacPherson's English. Were I now to read the first book of Temora for the first time in English, I should in like manner recognise my traditional version of the "death of Osgur," though it is not the Gaelic of 1807, nor Gaelic from which the English of 1760 could have been translated.

It seems, then, that during the eighteenth century, and before MacPherson's time, attention had been drawn to the manners and customs, poetry and amusements of the Highlanders, who, in 1715 and 1745, had startled England and the Lowlands out of their propriety; and the first bit of direct evidence which tells strictly for the authenticity of MacPherson's translation dates from about a period when some collector might be expected to cater for the public taste, as Stone did. I think it highly probable that some one before MacPherson may have done that which Dr. Smith tells us he did after him, namely, gather all he could get, and tinker it according to his own notions of what an old Gaelic poet ought to have written in the third century, but, with the exception of the Farquharson manuscript, I have found no mention of any thing to support MacPherson's publications, *so far*, either in manuscript or print, though MacPherson's heroes pervade a whole series of early documents and Gaelic literature of all ages, Scotch and Irish, and his poems include bits which are clearly old.

My theory then is, that about the beginning of the eighteenth century, or the end of the seventeenth, or earlier, Highland bards may have fused floating popular traditions into more complete forms, engrafting their own ideas on what they found; and that MacPherson found their works, translated, and altered them; published the translation in 1760; made the Gaelic ready for the press; published some of it in 1763, and made away with the evidence of what he had done when he found that his conduct was blamed. I can see no other way out of the maze of testimony.

If the statement of Mr. MacGilvray, given at page 50 of the dissertation prefixed to the large edition of Ossian, 1807, is not a deliberate falsehood, there is an end of the argument which makes MacPherson the author, though no early copy of the entire poems is known. It is said that the very poems which were translated and published, "Fingal; Temora," and many others, were collected, in Gaelic, in Scotland, from the people, long before 1760, and these were subsequently compared with MacPherson's published translations at Douay by the collector of the Gaelic, Mr. Farquharson, who did not know MacPherson; and the translations were found by Mr. Farquharson to be inferior to his Gaelic originals, inaccurate, but, in the main, translations so far as they went.

Mr. Farquharson's manuscript was afterwards torn, and leaves were used by the Douay students to light their fires, and if any part of it now exists, it is lost; but it was not written in the third century but in the eighteenth, chiefly in Strathglas. At page 75 of the dissertation is a statement which carries conviction with it, if such evidence has any weight; and, assuming the evidence to be admissible, and placing it beside what has been said above, there may have been some learned unknown Gaelic poet or poets who had collected, and arranged, and altered, the floating traditions of the country, between MacPherson and Dean MacGregor.

It is at least certain that MacPherson was a Highlander, and that some Gaelic bard wrote the Gaelic of 1763 and 1807, whatever his merits may have been.

1760

MacPherson's first publication appeared, "The Fragments;" a second edition was subsequently published, and these are now rare books.

A Mr. Ewen MacPherson, a schoolmaster, accompanied James MacPherson to Skye and the Long Islands, and gives an account of their journey in his affidavit (p. 95, H. S. Report). The schoolmaster wrote down a great many poems attributed to Ossian from dictation, and his companion took the manuscript away with him, as also a small manuscript belonging to Clanranald, and an order for a larger manuscript which was in Edinburgh. The schoolmaster declares his own conviction that the poems of Ossian are genuine, and that he had heard them. commonly repeated everywhere; but as there was no Gaelic Fingal. published when the affidavit was made, this does not apply to the publication of 1807. He had read Fingal in English, and thought, so well as he could remember, "the substance of the original," that the translation was "well executed." Another MacPherson, a residenter at Portree, deponed that his brother, a smith, had given his namesake a Gaelic quarto manuscript, which contained poems which the smith could then repeat, and which he had no doubt were the works of Ossian. But this does not prove that these were the originals of the translations; for as this witness could not write, it is not probable that he could read English.

The evidence of Mr. Hugh. MacDonald, given in Gaelic, and confirmed by a number of gentlemen of the Long Island, is also subject to this objection. They all knew something of Ossian's poems, and believed them to be genuine, of very great antiquity, distinct from and superior to all other Gaelic compositions; but there was only some published Gaelic, for the poems of Ossian which the English public knew, and the Celts seem to mean one thing, while the Saxons meant another. These collections have disappeared.

1762

The quarto edition of Fingal and other translations published, with a fine title page picture of Ossian, and a lady in flowing robes, who might pass for any classical characters that ever conversed.

1763

Temora and other poems; this volume contains the Gaelic of the seventh book of Temora, 423 lines. It is said that a manuscript copy in the handwriting of MacPherson of Strath Mashie, with all manner of corrections, still exists. I have not seen it.

This edition is commonly bound with that of 1762, and the selling price for the large quarto is now 5s.

The following are specimens of the Gaelic, as printed by MacPherson in 1763, in Roman type. He says it is "stripped of its own proper characters," that "a copy of the originals of the former collection lay for many months in the bookseller's hands for the inspection of the curious;" and that the "erroneous spelling of the bards is departed from in many instances."

Published Gaelic and English, divided according to the rhythm:--

O Linna doir-choille na *Leigo*,
From the wood-skirted waters of Lego,
Air uair, eri ceo taobh-ghórm nan tón;
ascend, at times, gray-bosomed mists;
Nuair dhunas dorsa na h' oicha
when the gates of the west are closed,
Air iulluir-shuil greina nan speur.
on the suns's eagle-eye.

Tomhail mo *Lara* nan-sruth
Wide over Lara's stream
Thaomas du'-nial as doricha cruaim:

is poured the vapour dark and deep:
Mar ghlas-scia, roi taoma nan nial,
the moon, like a dim shield,
Snamh seachad tu Gellach na h' oicha.
is swimming thro' its folds.

Close translation of the Gaelic, so far as it is understood by the translator.

From the pool of the dark woods of Leigo,
The blue-sided wave-mist rises at times;
When the doors of night are closed
On th' eagle-eyed sun of the skies.

Thick about Lara of the streams,
Black clouds of darkest frown are poured out;
As a gray shield, through the pouring of the clouds
Swimming past, is the moon of the night.

This is not like the style or the spirit ol popular songs and ballads. It is not modern vernacular Gaelic; it is not the old written language, so far as I know it, nor is it Irish; but it is not a translation of the English given with it, for it has metre, and assonance, and a meaning of its own. It bears a resemblance to "Mordubh;" and as it was published in 1763, it is a Gaelic composition at least 98 years old.

The following four lines have the metre and assonances of some current ballads:--

An taobh oitaig gu palin nan SEOID
Taornas *iad*
Ceäch nan SPEUR
Gorm-thalla do thannais nach BEO
Gu ám eri' fón
Marbh rán nan TEUD.

In the side of a blast, to the heroes' tent,
they pour out
the mists of the skies;
a blue hall for shades not alive,
till the rising time of the sound
of the strings' death-moan.

In this case the Gaelic, though it is not such Gaelic as men speak now-a-days, expresses more, and seems to me better than its published English equivalent, which is not a true rendering of it.

"Often blended with the gale,
"to some warrior's grave,
"they roll the mist, a gray dwelling to his ghost,
"until the songs arise."

There is a second metre, which also has its equivalent in popular ballads, and in "Fingal"--

Ta *torman* a machair nan CRAN
Se *Conar* ri Erin at' AN

a *taoma'* ceo-*tan*ais gu DLU'
Air *Faolan* aig Lubhair nan SRU.

The translation given is--

“A sound came from the desart
“it was Conar, King of Innisfail.
“He poured his mist
“on the grave of Fillan, at the blue-winding Lubar.”

The meaning, as I understand it, is--

“There’s a moan from the outland of stems;
It is Conar, Erin’s king,
pouring out ghostly-mist closely
upon Faolan at Lubhair of the streams.”

And here again the Gaelic, with all its grammatical peculiarities, seems to have the best of it, and it is no translation. And so it is throughout the specimen.

The Gaelic and English do not, quite fit each other, and the Gaelic seems to me to have been originally better than the English, though many words are used in strange ways, and the whole is spelt without any fixed rule. The Gaelic has most ideas, the English most words.

The orthography is, of course, the scribe’s. It is such as comes to me from men who have not studied Gaelic writing. It is like my own spelling when I, who never learned to write Gaelic, try to take down a story rapidly from dictation; it is like the spelling of Dean MacGregor’s MS. or the Manx system in a transition state; it is, in short, something between phonetic writing and old Gaelic, and that of 1807. As some one wrote in the Gaelic at the end of one of these ghostly passages--

’S doilleir so!
“This is dim!”

As MacPherson says in his rendering of the line, which I strongly suspect was a comment, which the translator mistook for a line of poetry--

“It is night!”

But through this dimness and night it may be discerned that the writer of the English was not the writer of the Gaelic. No forger could have written “‘S DOILLEIR” SO for “IT IS NIGHT.”

Strathmashie did not write Gaelic of this kind when he wrote in his own name; but, on the other hand, Chatterton afterwards spelt Rowly’s poems according to his notion of ancient English spelling, and so tried to make his language appear old, and succeeded for a time; and so Strathmashie, MacPherson, or some one else, may have done the same: but guessing is vain.

1768

Chatterton, in the earliest of his epistles extant, imitated the English of “Ossian.”

“My friendship is as firm as the white rock when the black waves roar around it, and the waters burst on its hoary top, when the driving wind ploughs the sable sea, and the rising waves aspire to the clouds, turning with the rattling hail.” So much for heroics, etc.

It is supposed that “Fingal” suggested the idea of Rowley’s poems “to that wonderful imitator and original genius, the author of the Rowley controversy, who poisoned himself at the age of eighteen.

1771

In this Year a clergyman published a book, which he dedicated to “Daniel Campbell of Shawfield, Esq.,” then proprietor of Islay. He called his work “Fingal, an ancient Epic poem in six books, by Ossian the son of Fingal, *translated* into English heroic rhyme by John Woodrow, M.A., one of the ministers of Islay.” (Edinburgh, 1771).

This seems to be the work of a truthful, unsuspecting, prejudiced, wrongheaded, worthy man, who had a talent for English poetry. He believed implicitly in MacPherson’ translation; he tells the exact truth so far as he knew it; he never appears to have suspected that any one could deceive him; he had a standard, and forthwith set to work to improve it, by “translating” MacPherson’s English prose into good English verse of his own; while he was surrounded by people who were constantly repeating Gaelic poems, which they attributed to Oisein; and which he neglected to translate, or preserve. There is a perverse simplicity in thus openly and obstinately going wrong in the wrong way; in sticking to supposed truth against all evidence, that would have made the worthy minister die a martyr for the false religion if he had been instructed in its tenets.

The book begins thus--

“To entertain any doubt of the antiquity or authenticity of the poems of Ossian, as some pretend to do, can only flow from an affected singularity of thinking, or from mere wantonness of prejudice.”

The grounds for this opinion follow:--

“As to their authenticity, it was never so much as called in question in Scotland; over all the Highlands and isles, it is universally acknowledged. It is well known that the most illiterate old people there, can still repeat great parts of many of the poems. Unhappily, indeed, they are often found much interpolated and blended with the wild chimeras and absurdities of the bards of degenerate days.”

Of MacPherson’s translation he says:--

“His translation is faithful, accurate, elegant, and masterly.” . . . “And it must be evident to many that be often falls short of his original.”

And having said so much, and some more on his own account, the minister gives an abstract of Blair’s criticism on the English Ossian, which, just as it is, was not that of a man who knew Gaelic. Then at page xc comes the evidence of the Islay minister himself, which is more valuable.

“For my own part, I frankly confess that I am not possessed of any of the originals; they are to be met with at greater length, and in greater purity, in those parts of the Highlands and isles most remote from Ireland, and furthest north. (*But when we get something traditional from the north this is found to be an error, unless Mordubh be a fair specimen*). “Yet in the southern parts of Argyleshire, I remember from my infancy to have been in use to bear fragments of them repeated by old illiterate people, and as soon as I could judge of anything, to have been much struck and astonished by particular passages. I now live in an island not half a day’s sailing distant from the north of Ireland, the very scene of action in the poem of Fingal; yet I could find but few that could rehearse any considerable portion of any of the poems, and that neither complete nor consistent with itself. What I have thus heard, commonly began and set out well in the pure and dignified style of Ossian, but soon fell off in mean conceits, disgusting absurdities, and ended inconclusively. The traditional stories, however, of these heroes are well known and abundantly familiar to all ranks in these parts. I have only mentioned this as an adminicle in support of Mr. MacPherson’s position, that they are Scots and not Irish poems.” . . . “There is scarce a hill, a heath, or vale where some large

stones erected, or other monuments, are not to be met with, which tradition always refers to the time of Fingal; and the vulgar bestow names upon them, alluding to him or some one of his heroes."

These are facts from which I would draw conclusions different from those of Mr. Wodrow; but he tells us more; he remembered to have heard of a class of historians inferior to bards, called "SCELLACHA, or narrators of facts." (Tellers of tales is the real meaning, and the word is clearly the same as the Norse SKALD) The BARD, as the minister says, used to sing to the harp; and the SCELLACHA to fill up the pauses by telling prose history. He says, p. xcvii:--

"I have met with some old people among the vulgar Highlanders, who, as a winter evening's entertainment, have rehearsed fictions, or tales of a very ancient cast; much in the same manner. The gallant or heroic parts were in rhyme or measure, and sung to an air; the ludicrous incidents, and such as were little interesting, were only told." . . . "Such as are acquainted in the Highlands must know that ballad singers of this sort are yet to be met with."

And having told us what there really was, the minister leaves it with contempt, and gives his reasons for *translating* the English Ossian into English verse; and gives us "Fingal" in a measure which has no sort of resemblance to that of any Gaelic composition which I know; still it is a very readable poem.

In the arguments we got some traces of Gaelic. The old superstition of corpse lights is given as derived from Ossian's ghosts. It seems that a ghost came mounted on a meteor, and surrounded twice or thrice the place destined for the person to die; and then went along the road through which the funeral was to pass, shrieking at intervals, though with a feeble voice, till it came to the place of burial and disappeared. The superstition survives; the telling of tales and singing of ballads goes on; but the poem is so far forgotten, that I suppose I am the only member of the family of the man to whom it was dedicated, who knows the book; even I never saw it till November 1861, though I have always heard that an Islay minister had collected the poems of Ossian in Islay.

The minister gives two specimens of his collection, but translations only, and they are not like the current traditional poems. I may as well say here, once for all, that I have been brought up in the belief that "The Poems of Ossian" were something familiarly known to the people of the Highlands at some former period. and that I have been told the fact by a great many trust-worthy witnesses. But I am now considering the "poems of 1807," and I can only regret that I have not got Wodrow's opportunity of forming an opinion.

1773

Dr. Johnson arrived on the 14th of August at Boyd's Inn at the head of the Canongate, and shortly afterwards made his famous tour, of which he and Boswell both published accounts. From these dates, it seems that Johnson might have seen part of Ossian in the Strand, printed in Gaelic, if he had been so minded, ten years before he went to the Highlands; and a lot of manuscripts at the publishers' in London before that.

1774 to 1783

A certain Duncan Kennedy collected traditional poetry in the West Highlands, and named seventeen of his authorities. The collection is now preserved in the Advocates' Library, in two bound volumes of manuscript. One is marked as the only volume given to Dr. Smith, and contains, besides a number of Gaelic poems, English arguments and versions of stories, many of which are quite familiar to me as current traditions still; some are given in vol. iii. The name Fingal is used in the English, but in the Gaelic the name is Fion or Fionn.

The other volume is better written, and the arguments are in better English. A great many of the poems are versions of ballads still traditionally preserved. These are in the usual traditional metre, and consist of smooth regular quatrains with assonances. Two words at the end of the second and fourth lines are similar in sound and quantity, and two somewhere in the middle of the second and fourth lines agree with the terminations of the preceding lines; the second with the first, and the fourth with the third. Thus, in the version of "Manus," on which poem "Fingal" is supposed to be founded, Oisein says--

1. A chlerich a chanas na *sailm*,

2. Air leam *fein*
Gur baobh do CHIAL

3. Nach eisteadh tu tamul *sgeala*

4. Air an *ffhein*
Nach cual thu RIAMH.

The poet is speaking to a churchman, "Padrac," and his exordium might have been addressed to Bishop Carswell, and those who have followed him in striving to extirpate Gaelic lore.

Thou clerk that utterest psalms,
To me it seems
Thy wits are bad,
Wouldst thou not hearken to a story
Of the Feine
Thou hast never heard.

Some of these are in the form of dialogues between Oisein and his father-in-law "Peter MacAlpain," and sometimes Oisein represents the Fein as warriors of Eirinn. Some one appears to have thought this anti-Scotch, and has improved upon the original by importing from another poem; for example, the following line is struck out in ink--

"Nur thional Fiann Eireann gu trai,"

When gathered the Fiann of Eirinn to the strand, and a line is written in the margin, in a more modern hand, which means--

"Our heads are bent in the strife."

"Padruig" has been struck out, and other words suggested, which make the passages which follow apply to the Feine, and not to the saint, of Kennedy's authority. The stanza is given at the bottom of the 248th page of the H. S. Appendix, and is there made up from passages taken from two other versions, in which Padruig was not mentioned. The original lines are not erased, so these are only suggestions, but this gives a curious indication of the unfair spirit which pervaded the Ossianic controversy.

The poems which I can trace as still current, differ from other versions, and from the marginal notes it appears that some portions of them were claimed by Kennedy as his own compositions. The bulk of the poetry is plain narrative converted into quatrains of smooth musical verse, which could easily be sung and remembered, and I believe that it was written down from dictation, as Kennedy said. Some of the passages claimed by the collector as his own are more sentimental, with more similes, different in rhythm, and as I think, far inferior. Other parts claimed by the scribe as his own, have been found in much older manuscripts, and it is quite possible that a man who had learned so much poetry by heart, might confound the old with the new, unintentionally. I hold Kennedy's to be a valuable collection of the traditional poems of 1774 and 1783, and the Fianaibh were then considered to be Irish

warriors by the people about Loch Awe, where Kennedy made part of his collection. About the same time a certain Fletcher learned a number of Ossianic pieces, chiefly in Argyleshire, which he had written down from his own dictation. He could hardly write at all, and could not read the manuscript which he sold to the Highland Society; but, nevertheless, be repeated to a justice of the peace, who knew Gaelic, one poem which is in the manuscript, the death of the children of "Usno," which is the foundation of, but is not "Darthula."

This bears strongly upon the controversy. Appendix B to the Report of the Highland Society, extends from page 190 to page 260, and gives part of Fingal in English at the foot of the pages, and a Gaelic composition, and an English translation by Dr. Donald Smith, and these three coincide tolerably well. But the Gaelic is not good poetry, for it is made up of a number of separate lines taken from a great many different collections of traditional poetry, to which references are given. Each line is genuine, and in Kennedy's collection, and the rest formed part of a poem which bore some likeness to the story of Fingal, or to parts of it. Some stanzas are left almost entire, but the new composition is not a genuine work, and it is spoiled. The lines detached from their fellows lose all the rhythm and assonance which gave them a musical cadence, and stanzas so broken and mended, and displaced, lose their original meaning. "Fingal" is like this.

The composition is no deception, but it is avowedly a mosaic constructed from several old works of high merit spoiled for the purpose. The makers took Fingal for a still older work, and pounded genuine old materials to make work like their model. As Dr. Smith did, so probably did the compounder of Fingal.

Ramsay had done something of the kind with Scotch ballads, and Percy had done the same as Ramsay. Burns and others did the same; it was the fashion of these times.

1779

The Rev. Donald MacNicol, M.A., minister of Lismore in Argyleshire, published a reply to Johnson's tour.[401] As the minister lived close to Morven, his evidence is worth consideration. Boswell's account of his journey was published in 1785, about nine months after Johnson's death. This, together with the Doctor's tour and the minister's reply, gives a view of three sides of the question; and when the statements are picked out of the mass of opinions, there is as little reason for Johnson's famous attack on Scotch veracity as there is for MacNicol's quotation, "*old men* and *travellers* LIE by authority."

It seems as if the combatants, blinded by national prejudice, spent their energy in fighting shadows. The books are brimful of national prejudice--English and Scotch, Lowland and Highland; but they contain facts which can be authenticated, and statements which I believe, because the rest are true.

It rests on Johnson's authority that there were plenty of Gaelic songs. Boswell gives the chorus of one by ear, and it still survives. It also rests on the Doctor's authority, that people made statements about Gaelic matters, and that be did not believe them, which proves nothing; and that he heard of Gaelic manuscripts which he believed to be Irish, but which be could not have read if he had seen them.

The minister, on the other hand, who understood Gaelic, says, p. 350--

"Every man of inquiry; every person of the least taste for the poetry or turn for the antiquities of his country, has heard often repeated some part or other of the poems published by Mr. MacPherson. Hundreds still alive have heard portions of them recited long before Mr.

[401] London, printed for T. Cadell in the Strand, 1779.

MacPherson was born; so that he cannot possibly be deemed the author of compositions which existed before he had any existence himself." "It is true that there is no man now living, and perhaps there never has existed any one person who either can or could repeat the whole of the poems of Ossian." . . . "Mr. MacPherson's great merit has been in collecting the *disjecta membra poetæ*; and his fitting the parts so well together as to form a complete figure."

This statement is supported by the Irish claim to the poems; and if it be remembered what people meant by translations in those days, it seems that the minister spoke the truth according to his lights, and the doctor according to his. MacNicol mentions a great many Gaelic MSS., and many of these are quoted above, and exist; and he also mentions a number of other manuscripts which probably did exist then, wherever they are now.

At page 360, MacNicol, in speaking of the forthcoming Gaelic Ossian, says--"It would be impossible for any person, let his talents be ever so great, to impose a translation for an original on any critic in the Gaelic language."

So the minister, knowing that there were Ossianic poems current, and recognising them in the English, believed in the forthcoming Gaelic; and Johnson, who knew nothing but the English, held that MacPherson was the father of Ossian; and neither of them, as it seems, had looked at the Gaelic of the seventh book of Temora, which might have prevented them from using such strong language. This seems to have been the prevailing spirit of the Ossianic controversy. Men have argued as partisans without first defining the points on which they would agree to differ; and like partisans, they have belaboured each other unjustly. Boswell states that a certain Mr. Macqueen told Johnson, as to "Fingal," "that he could repeat some passages in the original; that he heard his grandfather had a copy of it; but that be could not affirm that Ossian composed all that poem as it is now published." Johnson had contended that "it is no better than such an epic poem as he could make from the song of Robin Hood" (p. 127, Boswell, Routledge, 1860). Boswell held that Mr. Macqueen's statement amounted to what his hero Johnson had maintained; but Johnson called MacPherson "the father of Ossian," and he would not have called himself the father of Robin Hood if he had composed an epic about that half mythical hero; so be was scarcely fair even if he was right.

1780

Mr. John Clark published translations of ancient Gaelic poems, one of which was "Mordubh." Part of this was known to Mrs. Grant of Laggan, a lady whose "Letters from the Mountains," have made her name famous. The Gaelic appeared in Gillies, 1786. The English is like MacPherson's; the Gaelic like that of 1807, and I am inclined to rank "Mordubh" with "Ossian."

1780

Mr. Hill, an Englishman, got some copies of Gaelic poems from a blacksmith at Dalmally, in Argyleshire. These include a dialogue between Oishein and Padruig, given in the Appendix to the Highland Society's Report, "Cath Mhanuis," which survives, and a version of which was subsequently published in Irish by Miss Brooke. "How Diarmaid slew the venomous boar," which survives. "How Bran was slain," which survives; and the "Prayer of Ossian." These were published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and afterwards in a small pamphlet. The "Prayer of Ossian," the dialogue referred to, resembles closely some of the poems in the late publications of the Ossianic Society of Dublin. There are 36 verses, or 144 lines of religious arguments on one, side, praise of the ancient heroes, and pagan defiance on the other. I have not a doubt that these are perfectly genuine popular poems.

1760

About the same time Lord Webb Seymour and Professor Playfair also made a tour of the Highlands, and heard a poem repeated in Skye, which was translated, and which, from the description given of it, appears to be Moira Borb, or Fainesolis, of which I have several versions, and which is an episode in "Ossian," and these gentlemen heard, and heard tell of many other poems which seen) to be the same as those still current, though now far rarer. They met an old lady who had herself repeated one such poem to Dr. Johnson.

By this time MacPherson had risen in the world.

1785

Mrs. Grant wrote to her friend (Letter xxvi. p. 131, Vol. ii):--

"The bard, as I was about to tell you, is as great a favourite of fortune as of fame, and has got more by the old harp of Ossian than most of his predecessors could draw out of the silver strings of Apollo. He has bought three small estates in this country within two years, given a ball to the ladies, and made other exhibitions of wealth and liberality. He now keeps a hall at Bellville, his newly-purchased seat, where there are as many shells as were in Selma, filled, I doubt not, with much better liquor." . . .

1786

John Gillies, a Perth bookseller, who did not understand Gaelic himself, published a volume of Gaelic collected in the Highlands, which seems to deserve particular attention, and is referred to below.

1787

The Gaelic of Smith's collection appeared; it was avowedly patched, and mended, and pruned. It contains many lines and stanzas, which now survive in various shapes, and which were collected by others long ago, but it is not popular now, and it is little, if at all, known to the people. It seems to represent a different class of poetry, though the subjects are the same as the themes of the ballads which survive. Either these represent a class of poetry which had sprung up amongst the educated, and which is forgotten now that aristocrats have abandoned the old tongue; or these are popular songs mercilessly improved, till they have lost their character. I would rank them near Mordubh, but they are nearer to the ballads than "Ossian."

So far, then, all the collectors found something which had some relation to "Ossian's Poems," but no one except Farquharson had found the poems themselves; and every one who translated, had written paraphrases of what he found. Stone, and MacPherson, and Smith, all took liberties alike.

In this year Edmund Baron de Harold, gentleman of the bedchamber to the Elector Palatine, published an Irish Ossian, of which he says--"These poems, though founded on tradition, are entirely of my composition." Still, they were called poems "discovered" by the Baron, and purported to be taken from Irish originals. The book was dedicated to Grattan. Whatever can be said against MacPherson's Ossian applies to this, and it wants the merit of originality.

1789

Miss Brooke published an Irish collection with a very free "translation," but with the originals. It contains (1) Conlaoch, (2) Magnus the Great, (3) the Chase, (4) Moira Borb, (5) War Ode of Osgar, the son of Oisin, in front of the battle of Gabhra, (6) Ode to Gaul, the son of Morni, and some modern pieces; and this publication establishes the close resemblance which then existed, and now exists between Irish and Scotch Gaelic poetry; but as Gillies had published a "Lay of Magnus," and one of "Conlaoch," two versions of "Moira Borb," a "Death of Oscar," and an "Ode to Goll," and many more of the same kind, collected in

Scotland, three years before Miss Brooke's publication, which I believe to have been the first of its kind in Ireland--this does not support the modern Irish claim to everything, Gaelic and old, though it is a genuine work.

1796

In this year MacPherson died Mrs. Grant of Laggan describes his end in a letter dated February 20, and tells that one of his latest acts was to "frank a letter." So the Highland schoolmaster had risen high.

1803

A collection was made by MacDonald of Staffa. This contains pieces which I do not know. There are some prose tales, including one about "The Great Fool." There are also a number of other paper manuscripts in the Advocates' Library, which contain fragments of collections made in the Highlands about this time.

1804

A collection of the works of the Highland bards, collected in the Highlands and Isles by Alexander and Donald Stewart, contains 592 pages, about 11,000 lines of poetry; the greater part consists of songs whose authors are known. Some of these I have heard sung, some I can sing myself, and many may still be picked up in the Highlands, wherever the church has not stilled profane music. Amongst these are a number of compositions which differ from them as an oak does from a daisy. Such is the Battle Ode of the Clan Domhnull, composed by Lachlan Mor MacMhurrich on the Battle of Harlaw. It is a string of alliterative adverbs so arranged as to imitate the rhythm of a pibroch, and exhaust all the epithets available under all the letters of the alphabet in turn. There are eight other compositions which are old and "Ossianic."

Poems of Ossian were also collected by J. MacDonald in. the western parishes of Strathnaver, Ross, and Inverness-shire. These are of the usual traditional class.

There are many versions of well known ballads, but no epic poetry.

Now, all these were written while there was but little published Gaelic for "Ossian;" if there had been any epics then current, they would surely have been found; if there had been any inclination to make false translations there was ample opportunity.

1805

Report of the Highland Society on the authenticity of the Poems of Ossian.

CVII. Ossian. Published Evidence

If anything could be ascertained relative to the authenticity of the poems, it was to be done by going direct to the oldest surviving inhabitants of the districts where they were said to be found. That was done, and collections were printed and written, of which very little is known. I have gone over the same ground myself once more with able assistants, and I have gone through great part of the work of my predecessors, and I will endeavour to give the result as briefly as I can.

It has been proved that there were old Gaelic traditional poems, collectors of them, and men who made English paraphrases from them under the name of translations, long before MacPherson's time; and be, according to the evidence in the report of 1805, spoke with men who had written collections. The affidavit of Archibald Fletcher, January 1801, No. xvi. of the Appendix, gives a list of poems collected by Fletcher himself, filling 194 pages, and deposited with the Society; and he names men with whom MacPherson spoke, and who knew such poems.

No. xv. of the same Appendix gives 70 pages of comparisons between manuscripts in the possession of the Society and MacPherson's translation of Fingal; and these prove to demonstration that the poem in some form was known to the people, and that the published poem is not the popular version, though like it.

Captain Morrison's evidence, No. XIII., is conclusive on this point, and proves that MacPherson had in his possession a great many such poems orally collected in Scotland, and that they appear in his English works.

Kennedy gives a list of seventeen persons from whose dictation be procured Gaelic poems, which he sold to the Highland Society, and which he collected between 1774 and 1783. It is therefore beyond all dispute that there were traditional poems in plenty, written and unwritten, attributed to Oisein, current in the Highlands, and accessible to MacPherson; many of which can still be traced in "Ossian."

The letters of Mr. Andrew Gallie, published by the committee, and dated Kincardine, March 12, 1779, and March 4, 1801, shew that MacPherson had old authorities also, and had little respect for them. The letters raise the curtain, and shew the "translator" at his work so vividly, that I give the following quotations:--"I remember Mr. MacPherson reading the MS. found in Clanronald's (which was illuminated, and therefore old, and which is believed to be somewhere in Edinburgh now), execrating the bard who dictated to the amanuensis, saying) d---n the scoundrel, it is he himself that now speaks, and not Ossian." This took place in my house in two or three instances.

He goes on to say that it is well known that the poems as handed down got corrupted, and suggests that MacPherson had suppressed his old MSS., and he concludes thus--"I think great credit is due in such a case, to him who restores a work of merit to its original purity."

That is, great credit is due to MacPherson for distinguishing the work of a man who composed in the third century from all intervening additions and alterations; and certainly great credit would be due to the workman if such work could be done.

In 1799, Mrs. Gallie confirms her husband's statement, saying--"Not any one thing is more in my remembrance than seeing with Mr. MacPherson, when he returned from his tour, the

Gaelic MSS. as described by my husband; I remember Mr. MacPherson most busy at the translation, and he and Mr. Gallie differing as to the meaning of some Gaelic words," etc.

When such were the prevailing notions about "translating," what becomes of authenticity?

The report also gives a short history of MacPherson's start, and the evidence of those who placed him before the public, and it is not without interest.

MacPherson's first publication[402] was made at the suggestion of Dr. Hugh Blair, who published the work, wrote the preface, eight pages, and suggested a mission to the Highlands to collect more. The fragments are believed to be perfectly genuine, though very free translations, and include a bit of Fingal. The fight is about the next and following publications; and the evidence given by the men who set MacPherson to work is so strongly in favour of their general authenticity, so far as MacPherson is concerned, that it is hard to believe him to have been a mere forger; he must have had something more than we now know anything about. Dr. Blair saw his papers; Professor Adam Fergusson, who understood Gaelic, looked at them and compared them with the translations as they were made; and these appeared to be exact and faithful in any parts which were so read and compared. When this work was done, MacPherson went to London and published it; it was famous from the beginning, and soon after the grand battle began. It was a battle of giants, in which the burly figure of Johnson stalks in the first rank, with his shadow Boswell at his heels. David Hume, "Burke, a very ingenious Irish gentleman, the author of a tract on the Sublime and Beautiful," who told Hume that he had "heard his countrymen cry out as soon as MacPherson's book was published--we know all these poems; we have always heard them from our infancy;" but who, on particular inquiry, "could never learn that any one had ever heard, or could repeat the original of any one paragraph of the pretended translation." John Home, Mackenzie, Laing, and nearly every man of mark of that time, down to Humboldt and Lamartine of our own times, have all held opinions one way or the other, but the facts are the most important.

Dr. BLAIR, in his letter, describes MacPherson as irritable, obstinate, and affrontable; he avows the probability of a combination of several pieces, the omission of some parts, and the insertion of others, which MacPherson did not then deny. In December 1797, Dr. Blair wrote--"That his work as it stands, exhibits a genuine authentic view of ancient Gaelic poetry, I am as firmly persuaded as I can be of anything." The letter, which is too long for quotation, seems to establish beyond cavil, that the Gaelic was written before the English, and that the published English was a fair representation of the Gaelic as collected and brought to Edinburgh in 1761.

Dr. ADAM FERGUSSON, in 1798, writes--"The fragments I afterwards saw in Mr. MacPherson's hands, by no means appeared of recent writing; the paper was much stained with smoke, and daubed with Scots snuff;" and the Doctor had himself, in his youth, heard poems repeated by an old tailor, of which he quotes two lines, which, though strangely spelt, are versions of two lines in "Fingal."

The Rev. Dr. CARLYLE, the same whose memoirs have lately been published, who was at Prestonpans as a young man, and lived far on into this century, gives his account of the first starting of MacPherson, in which he had a large share, and of his intimacy with him in London in 1769 and 1770, when he saw him daily and lived in intimacy with him; and when he never was able to discover that he was any other than the translator.

[402] Now a rare book, "Fragments of Ancient Poetry," collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language. Edinburgh: Printed for G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, MDCCLX., 70 pages.

And Mr. HOME states that MacPherson was an exceedingly good classical scholar; that he himself, in 1758 or 1759, met him with his pupil (Graham of Balgowan, afterwards Lord Lynedoch) at Moffat; that he had heard from Dr. Fergusson, who understood Gaelic, that there were remains of ancient Gaelic poetry in the Highlands, particularly one which he had himself heard repeated, and thought very beautiful. That he questioned MacPherson concerning this ancient Gaelic poetry, found that he bad some pieces written down, and persuaded him to translate one--"the poem on the death of Oscar,"--which he brought in a day or two. In a few days he brought two or three more, which Home took to Edinburgh and shewed to Drs. Blair, Fergusson, and Robertson, and to Lord Elibank; and he subsequently, in the course of the year, carried them to London, and they were admired everywhere. Thus, in October 17,59, and in a few days, MacPherson must have composed a great English work, if he was the author of "The Fragments." A bit of his own original English composition may help to form an opinion of his merits as an original English writer--

"Oh discord! gnashing fury! rav'nous fiend!
Hell's sharpest torment! nauseous qualm of life,
You bathe the poniard oft in friendship's breast:
Peace, virtue, friendship, harmony, and love,
Delightful train of graces shrink from thee."

And so on.

Another publication gives some measure of his knowledge of the Gaelic language. In 1771 he published, at Dublin, an introduction to the history of Great Britain and Ireland, and at pp. 176-177, he quotes eleven lines of Gaelic and gives a translation. The poem is said to be older than Christianity, but it is not said where it was got. If he wrote it himself, of course he knew what he meant; but in any case he seems to have made a mistake, whereon he founded a theory, and this was eleven years after the poems appeared.

The Gaelic given is--

Marsin air Tón frioghach fa noir,
Nuar Shuanas GRIAN-AISE na nial fein,
Thic reoda air itta gu tean,
'Sé spairn 'Sé sguarta gu geur.

It seems to mean--

Thus on bristling wanton *wave*,
When sleeps "Grian-Aise" in *her* own cloud,

Comes ice upon feather, tightly (or wing, or fin, or down ?spray),
And *he* striving and keenly splashing (or roaring).

MacPherson translates it--

"Thus hovering over the bleak *waves* in the North,
When GRIAN-AIS sleeps, wrapt in his cloud,
A sudden frost comes on all his wings
He struggles, he loudly roars."

There are no words for "hovering," "wrapped," "sudden," or "all;" and *tón* is singular. It is not the sun who is frozen, but the *wave*, for Grian is feminine; but MacPherson argues that this sun, who could not resist a frosty evening but had his wings frozen, could not have been a Celtic god. But if the poet meant a wave, the argument is bad; and if he was MacPherson, and meant the sun, the Gaelic is not a good translation of the English, and it becomes highly

improbable that MacPherson was capable of imagining the English Ossian, or turning it into the Gaelic of 1807. So it is argued.

But direct evidence is better than argument.

Mr. Home goes on to say, that “in travelling through the Highlands”(which he did with MacPherson), he has met with several common people who repeated to him many hundred lines of the rhymes, as they called them. Mr. Home having usually with him one or more who understood the Gaelic language, made the rhymes be repeated again, which the person who understood both languages translated, so as to leave no room to doubt that the tales and songs sang by the boatmen and herds in the Highlands are the poems of Ossian.”

But the question is, were these the Gaelic poems of 1807? and of that Mr. Home could not judge. Having read one “translation” he heard another like it; but he should have had the written Gaelic, and some one to compare it with the Gaelic which he had heard; and so far as I can find out, no one ever thought of trying that simple experiment on the street porters of Edinburgh, who are men of the class described, and could solve the problem. But four of the gentlemen who started, MacPherson gave valid reasons for their belief in the genuineness of the Gaelic materials collected by him, and in the general correctness of the translations; while they admit that which no reasonable man can now doubt, that he worked up these materials, and that the long poems never existed in the form which they now bear, before MacPherson’s time. They held that Gaelic for nearly the whole of the translations had existed as detached fragments well known, and constantly repeated in the Highlands; but they did not maintain that “Fingal” and “Temora” ever had been repeated from beginning to end.

The report of the whole committee was in accordance with this evidence--1st, That there had existed an abundance of impressive, striking, eloquent, tender and sublime Gaelic poetry.

2d, That the translations often contained the substance, and sometimes almost the literal expression of passages in poems, and fragments of poems, which the committee bad been able to procure; but they had not been able to obtain one poem the same in title and tenor with the poems as published. They believed that they bad begun too late; that MacPherson had far better opportunities of collecting and collating, and rejecting, and putting together “what might fairly enough be called an original whole.” They point out modernisms in the later publications, such as Temora, and generally the committee having good opportunities, made a report, which seems to settle the question, as well as such a question could be settled.

But while all this argument and criticism and paper war was disturbing the non-Gaelic world, the Highlanders of the poorer class knew very little about the fight, and went on singing their own ballads, though people who sought for old poetry after MacPherson had set the world by the ears, found no epics.

It is useless to argue that the Highlands changed after the battle of Culloden. It is true that whole clans have been displaced since then, and that the whole population of Great Britain is now rapidly assimilating; but I have spoken with men who remembered the “forty-five,” and with one who had not left his native island during his life, 108 years. Men and women of seventy and eighty are to be found all over the Highlands, and many of these trace their descent for many generations, and occupy the old holdings of their ancestors. From such people traditions can now be got, and they were got before, and almost immediately after MacPherson’s first publication, and they were and are nearly the same still. I have already mentioned Stone, Farquharson, Pope, Kennedy, Fletcher, Hill, etc., as collectors; they found ballads, but “Ossian” is a collection of epics and they found none.

1807

The Gaelic of Ossian was published from a manuscript of MacPherson's; an edition was subsequently distributed gratis, in 1818.

1908

The Gaelic Society of Dublin, established for the investigation and revival of ancient Irish literature, published a volume which contains, amongst other matter, a story from the Irish, which is said to be "the foundation of Mr. James MacPherson's Darthula." It is the story of "*Deirdri*," and the sons of "Usnach," partly taken from Keating. In this occurs the following passage:--

"It happened then on a snowy day that her tutor killed a calf to prepare food for her; and on his spilling the calf's blood in the snow, a raven came to drink of it; and as Deirdri noticed this, she said to Lavarcam (her nurse chatter-awry), that she would be glad herself to have a husband possessed of the three colours which she saw; that is, his hair of the colour of the raven, his cheek of the colour of the calf's blood, and his skin of the colour of the snow. 'There is such a man, named Naisi, son of Usnach, of Conor's household,' said Lavarcam." (See vol. iii., 200.)

This incident seems to belong to the whole Celtic race. The story is followed by a version of the poem, with a translation, mixed with a prose story, which, as is usual in Gaelic recitations, helps out the poem. Most of the places named in the poem are in Argyleshire: Vale of Masan, Vale of Urchay, Vale of Eiti, Glenn dá Ruadh, translated "vale of the two roes;" Innis in Droighin, translated, "dear is Drayno," etc. The scene of the prose story is generally in Ireland, but nearly all the poetry relates to Scotland. The editor says that the tragic tale has been written since the sixth century, and if so, it is no wonder that it should be known both in Ireland and in Scotland in various shapes. The Irish version makes the children of Usnoth *cousins* of Cuchullin; MacPherson made them his *nephews*. The Irish story make them Ultonian nobles, "reared with Aifi in the military school of Skye," "where Cuchullin was also educated." The volume also includes an historic tale of the sons of Usnoth; a song to the blackbird; a hymn of Columcille; and a version of the ballad of Tale, the son of Trone, which is like "Fainesolis." The editor says, with reference to Irish Fenian poems and stories (page 211):--

"With every one of these, and all other stories in the Irish language, Mr. MacPherson appears to have been perfectly conversant; nor has he omitted one of their beautiful expressions or interesting episodes. In the execution of his scheme, however, he has been totally regardless of epochs, and with fastidious insolence he rejects the very sources of his reputation."

This is surely strong testimony in favour of the general authenticity of MacPherson's publication, from so keen an adversary and so good a scholar as the editor of this volume.

The Gaelic of 1807 he condemns; he points out the Irish metre, of which he says it is a bad imitation; and asserts that "Mr. "MACFARLAN" was a very incorrect Gaelic pretender, who did not know the original Irish, which MacPherson knew well, and so erred " in base modern corrupt Erse."

One Irish line mentioned, means--

"My heart leaping as a blackbird."

MacPherson gave it "pathetic expression," thus--

"The heart of the aged beats over thee."

Temora has it, as--

“Tha cridhe na h’ aoise fo spairn.”
The heart of age is under woe.

And this is said to be what “Mr. Macfarlan aped to translate in his corrupt irregular dialect.”

To me it seems that this publication tells very strongly for the general authenticity of MacPherson’s Ossian. If it be true that he lived for some years in the county of Limerick, with a cousin who kept a school there; and if he told the Bishop of Limerick that “Fingal was an original, but that the characters were Irish;” it surely is not advancing Gaelic literature to abuse the man who rescued it from obscurity.

1813

Turner’s collection contains, amongst a number of songs, the “Lay of the Great Fool,” of which a traditional version is given at page 160, vol. iii. The last is much longer.

A version was printed in Glasgow in 1800, in a collection without a name, 12mo, 12 pages, price twopence. I have not seen it, but it is mentioned by “Reid.”

In the 6th volume of the Transactions of the Ossianic Society of Dublin for 1858, published November 1861, there is a version of the same poem, 158 quatrains. On applying to Mr. O’Daly, the secretary to the society, I learn that this is taken from a manuscript made in Kilrush, county Clare, by a blacksmith named Martin Griffin, in 1844; that the poem is very popular in Ireland, and that there are older versions in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, as the secretary remembers to have seen a copy there made in 1737. Mr. O’Daly thinks that it must be a Leinster composition, because of the localities named; I cannot see the force of this argument, for it would make “Hamlet” a Danish composition, and “Macbeth” a Scotch one. I can only say that it proves the poem to be old, Gaelic, and genuine, to find it current from Stornoway, Gairloch, and Glasgow, to Kilrush and Dublin, amongst paupers, cottars, and blacksmiths, in Scotland and Ireland; and it seems to make the Scotch and Irish quarrel about old ballads which belong to both sufficiently absurd.

The Irish version, Turner’s, and mine, all vary from each other; but they were evidently the same composition at some period; I have much which the long Irish version has not; and it has a great deal which is not in my version or in Turner’s. There is an episode and a sequel, and it looks more like a fragment of a popular romance made up from ballads.

1816

MacCallum published a collection made through ministers and others, all of whom gave their names, which are published. If the people were apt to learn, MacCallum would surely now have found them repeating the poems of 1807; but the people are only sturdy to retain what they have learned from their fathers, or what suits their every day life; and MacCallum again found and published versions of old poems which had been printed in 1804 and 1786, which are in MSS. of 1530, and are still recited in 1860, chiefly in the Islands, poems which are not those of MacPherson or Dr. Smith, but which can be traced in their Gaelic publications, and form their groundwork.

It is proved, then, that before 1760, when MacPherson made his tour, there were plenty of manuscript and traditional poems current in the Highlands, and that he collected and used them; Mrs. Gallie, Lord Lynedoch, Dr. Fergusson, and others saw him engaged upon these materials, and he had no respect for his authorities, new or old. When he died, none of these materials were forthcoming; but those who know anything of Gaelic, know what some of them must have been. The Irish writer, to whom I have referred above, quotes an essay by O’Reilly, in which the “Irish poems” are named, from which “MacPherson stole his materials for Ossian.”

"Carthon" is founded on the Lay of "Conlaoch;" his Fingal is partly taken from "the Lay of Magnus the Great;" his Episode of "Borbar and Fainasollis," in the third book of his Fingal, is taken from "Moira Borb." (*Why not "Tate MacTrone?"*)

"The fourth book of Fingal is founded on the War ode of Goll." The combat between "Osgar and Iollan" seems to be a bad imitation of "Moira Borb." "The death of the children of Usnagh" is the poem on which he framed his "Darthula."

The original of "the Battle of Lara" is not given by the Gaelic Society in their printed Gaelic originals; but a poem in Gillies's collection of Gaelic poems, printed at Perth in 1786, called "Erragon," is the poem on which the Battle of Lara is founded.

(224.) "The death of Osgar," in "the first book of Temora," is grounded on "the Battle of Gaura," and many passages of it are indeed literally translated. But great liberties, as usual, have been taken with "the original;" and the writer again refers to "p. 313 of the Perth edition."

But this "Perth edition" is Gillies's, published in 1786, before Miss Brookes' work, and purports to be a collection, *not* of Irish poems, but of poems collected by gentlemen in the Highlands of Scotland; one of whom, Sir James Foulis of Colinton, Bart., procured and carefully revised many of them; so Gillies lands us in the Highlands of Scotland once more, and it is rather cool to quote him as an Irish authority, and ignore the collections of the Highland Society altogether. The book is now very rare; there is a copy in the Advocates' Library, but none in the British Museum. I have seen but two other imperfect copies, and never heard of it till 1861. When I read it first, I thought that my peasant reciters must have learned from the book, for it seemed to contain the very ballads which had come to me; but on looking closer at it, I was satisfied that tradition had borrowed nothing from this rare book, for there are endless variations. My collectors I can trust, and they are satisfied that Gillies' was taken from tradition, and that the book is unknown to the men who recited poems which they wrote. On procuring a very dirty, torn, thumbled copy from Glasgow, with many names scribbled over it, and a perfume of fragrant peat emanating from every page, I set myself to consider whether dirt might not be an index to the modern reader's taste; and by sight and smell it soon appeared that the heroic age had passed from the Firth of Clyde, where I bad found none of the old poems. Most of the names and occupations of the former owners savour of ships and Argyleshire lochs, of a life of industry, trade, and commerce, salt herrings, revenue laws, peace and plenty. The poetry which had delighted such men was not "The death of Osgar," which is still commonly sung in Uist and Barra, and used to be sung about Lochawe; and was sung in Lorne about the time that John Gorm was roasted, and which is the ground-work of Temora; that is nearly clean. Mordubh, the big black sentimental warrior, is nearly white, and so are most of the heroic pieces which treat of wars of the Lochlaners and the Feine; those which are old, and speak of a past age, and are claimed for Ireland. But "Braigh Loch Iall," a love song with a capital chorus, is nearly worn out; so is "The praise of a young man to his sweetheart;" and most of the love songs are in bad case; so is a lamentable ditty about an old deer hunter of "Adhoil," who used a gun; and one about a gentleman who was drowned. "Iseabail nic Aoidh," Isobel Mackay, milking the kye all alone, whom I have known all my life, is as black as the Hottentot Venus, and fairly torn to shreds by her numerous admirers. In short, it seemed that those who had read the book did not cultivate the class of poetry which prevails amongst the poorest class who cannot read at all, who recite these poems, and trace them to their ancestors, and believe in them. It seems that the thoughts of men of work and action, and some education, are of the present rather than the past; and that the heroic age is rapidly fading from the minds of people who rub shoulders with the rest of the world.

The copy in the Advocates' Library looks as if it never had been read at all. The copy of Ossian, presented to the parish of Dunoon, is almost perfectly clean; I firmly believe that it never had been read till it was put into the hands of an old shoemaker friend of mine to extract his opinion of the work.

How strange it is that poetry, which certainly is the germ of that Ossian which is still admired in palaces, should still be the fireside pastime of men described as savages, burrowing in middens, and furnishing good specimens of the "ape idiot;" while a "thriving peasantry" gets decorously drunk in its fine new house, and has no taste for pastimes which the palace and the hovel share, and utilitarians despise.

It seemed then that I might safely take Gillies as a standard to which to refer anything I might pick up from the people, or find in other books, and it seems evident that there are several different epochs of wholly distinct poetry there represented.

1st, Poems which might be divided into stanzas of four lines each, and which are so divided generally; which in spirit, in incident, in names, in rhythm, and in every respect resemble one another, and often refer to each other; many which are still recited and sung by the people of the remoter districts of the Highlands.

These are always attributed to Oisein by the people now; and Oisein generally appears as an actor in the incidents described. They relate to the wars of Lochlann and Eirinn. They are simple; they are like stories versified; there is no mention of Morven; Fingal is not once named; but Fionn, and the rest of his family and friends, are the heroes of nearly all these poems, and they invariably bear the characters now attributed to them by the people in the prose tales and traditions of Scotland and Ireland, so far as I know them.

These I believe to be popular ballads, many at least as old as 1530, probably very much older, and to be specimens of the poetry on which the Gaelic poems of Ossian were founded.

Fionn and Manus of Norway fight a battle in one of these; and it is worth considering whether the events can be reconciled with Norse history, and whether the real composer's date cannot thus be ascertained.

2d, There are comparatively modern poems by known authors, which differ from the first in every particular.

They are on different subjects, in different metre, and the ideas which they contain are those of a wholly different class of men; they are essentially modern, though some are as early as Charles the Second.

They are to the first class of songs what "The last Rose of Summer" is to "Sir Lancelot," modern poetry to an old ballad.

3d, There are two specimens of compositions which resemble in some degree the Ossian best known to the world.

These are to the ballads what Thomson's "Seasons are to "Chevy Chase;" they seem to me, when I read them, to want the stamp of antiquity, to be more polished, to be poetry of a different class and time.

They are like the popular ballads in incident, and in rhythm, but they have a dash of sentimentalism about them which seems foreign to popular taste. They are more refined and less quaint. It is hard to define an almost instinctive feeling, but the poet seems to have *thought* in English.

These I take to be more modern, but still old; specimens of poems such as MacPherson might have found ready made to his hand, by some previous educated collector, infected with the vice of mending what he found. One of these is the “Mordubh,” above mentioned.

Now, the average length of these pieces, which I believe to be genuine old poetry, all of which were printed twenty years before the Gaelic of Ossian, is from 100 to 200 lines; and there is nothing unreasonable in supposing that such compositions have been handed down from generation to generation, learned by sons from fathers, gradually altered, and so preserved. Gray’s Elegy has 128 lines, and I suppose there are thousands in England who can repeat it. “John Gilpin,” “My name is Norval,” and scores of other pieces might be taken down from dictation amongst certain classes of the community, who might be puzzled to say who composed them, or when; and if all books in England were now to be destroyed, a diligent collector might still recover whole volumes of prose and poetry in England. I know English students who think they could repeat about a thousand lines of various compositions; I have heard of one who repeated a book of the Georgics under the influence of champagne, and I know scraps of scores of songs myself.

It is surely not too much to assume that a peasantry who have few books, and who live apart from the world, a people who have been famous from the dawn of history for rhymes, should have preserved a few remnants of very ancient poetry to this day.

CVIII. Popular Ballads

It may be well here to attempt, a definition of the word “ballad.” I understand it to mean a bit of popular history, or a popular tale, or romance, turned into verse, which will fit some popular air. It is not something definite, like a printed song by a known author, but something which is continually undergoing change.

Chevy Chase is a familiar example of popular history versified. There are sixty-eight stanzas (generally of four lines) in the version in Percy’s Reliques, the story is simply told, and the whole is exceedingly dramatic, there is not a bit of sentiment or natural history in it, but there is something which has made it popular for centuries. Many versions of the ballad exist, and the original composer is unknown. The battle of Otterbourne is another example, it has seventy stanzas of four lines, it is like the other, and it has a foundation in fact, so that it cannot be older than a certain date.

An instance of a popular tale versified is “The Frolicksome Duke, or the Tinker’s Good Fortune,” (Percy’s Reliques, vol. i., 255). The story is the same as that of “The Sleeper awakened,” told in the Arabian Nights, but the whole machinery of the English ballad is English, not Arabic.

A similar instance is “The Heir of Linne,” the groundwork of which is in an Eastern tale, though the ballad is Scotch.

Another is “The King and the Miller of Mansfield.” The story of that ballad is very widely spread. Sir Walter Scott tells it as Scotch history in the “Tales of a Grandfather.” I have something very like it in Gaelic. The adventure savours of Haroun of Raschid wandering in disguise, and Percy gives a whole list of similar songs and stories, in which some king converses with a poor man, is entertained by him, and afterwards discovers his rank, and rewards his entertainer. The style of this English ballad is humorous, rough, and popular; its length, forty stanzas, is not such as to make it difficult to remember, and the rhythm is that of a jolly tune. The story and the ballad might suit the subjects of a whole dynasty by altering a few words, and a few changes would make them suit any place where there are kings and countrymen.

Thus even popular history has a vague date, but the popular tale has none.

An instance of a popular romance in the form of a ballad is “Sir Lancelot,” and another gives the story of “Morte Arthur.” Another old ballad contains the whole story of King Lear and his daughters, and there are many such. A good example of the changes which ballads undergo is to be found in the versions of one which is still current in Scotch drawing-rooms.

In the minstrelsy of the Scottish Border is a ballad whose chorus is--

“Binnorie, O Binnorie,
By the bonny mill dams o’ Binnorie.”

The story told in dialogue is that of two sisters, the eldest of whom, in a fit of jealousy, pushes the youngest into a river, where she is drowned. All versions agree so far, and their metre has a general resemblance, but the details, the language, the tune, and the metre, vary according to the district where the ballad is found. A version is given in “The scouring of the White Horse,” and is essentially English; there are many border versions, and a Tweedside antiquary might fairly claim the ballad, but another old version has the chorus of--

Edinburgh, Edinburgh,
Stirling for aye,
Bonny St. Johnstone stands upon Tay.”

Another version which I have has this chorus--

Oh ochone, ochone a rie,
On the banks of the Banna, ochone a rie.”

Of which one line is Gaelic. Another has--

“Bo down, bo down,
And I’ll be true unto my love,
If he’ll be true unto me.”

Miss Brookes transcribed a version which S. C. Walker, historian of the Irish bards, sent to Sir Walter Scott; the chorus is--

“Hey ho my Nanny O,
While the swan swims bonny O.”

And the lady got it from an old woman who sang it from memory. Drawing-room versions now current are generally traced to some old nurse, who sang them to the young ladies, and these vary more than some Gaelic ballads which are separated from each other by centuries, and about which Scotch and Irish Gael quarrel heartily.

Some verses are highly poetical, and savour of antiquity, others of modern times; some are almost absurd.

“He courted the eldest wi’ brooch and wi’ knife,
But he loved the youngest as his life,”

is pretty, but another is quaint--

“I did not put you in with the design,
Just for to pull you out again.”

One verse is picturesque, and another is almost ridiculous.

“They could na see her yellow hair,
For the pearls and jewels that were there.”

“Then up and spake her ghaist sae green,
Do ye no ken the king’s daughter Jean?”

In another version it was no ghost, but the lady herself who spoke.

“Oh, miller, I’ll give you guineas ten,
If you’ll send me back to my father again.”

“The miller he took her guineas ten,
And then he popped her in again.”

In one version, a harper made a harp of the drowned lady’s “breast bane,” and yellow hair; and it played magic tunes; another tells us that

“The sister she sailed over the sea,
And died an old maid of a hundred and three.
The lover became a beggar man,
And he drank out of a rusty tin can.”

A ballad then bears the stamp of originality, and the traces of many minds; it may be of generations of singers of all classes of society, and of many districts; it may even be found in several different dialects, or even languages, and yet be the same ballad nevertheless. To strike out any bit of a genuine ballad is to mutilate it; to add anything to it is to disfigure it; but it is quite legitimate to fuse as many versions as can be got, so as to complete the story, and to select the best of several lines, if the fact be stated. The banging of the miller, for instance, is a new incident, and should be added; and so should the verse--

“The miller’s daughter was at the door,
As sweet as any gilly flower.”

To sift out all the pretty bits of these ballads, strike out all that is quaint, compose a lot of similar poetry, and then attribute the whole to Thomas the Rhymour, would not be fair treatment of popular ballads; and yet something of the kind was done even by Percy in his Reliques, for he added verses of his own.

An event or incident must first be remembered as a tradition; therefore a popular tale is the oldest form. A popular ballad which can easily be sung, and remembered, is the next growth; and a romance or play, such as “Morte Arthur,” “King Lear,” “Fingal,” or the “Idyls of the King,” is the next and last.

Besides these old world ballads there are several other classes; sentimental songs which have no story; political ballads which are forgotten almost as soon as made; and ballads which never take hold of the popular mind, because their interest is local or temporary. Of these there is a crop every year, which springs up, and dies, like the undergrowth of flowers and grass, which springs up and decays under the branches of an old forest or a young plantation, and is mingled with its withered leaves.

CIX. Current Gaelic Traditions. Ossian And Ballads

In 1859, 1860, and 1861, I collected Gaelic stories and latterly such ballads as came in my way. Mr. Hector MacLean searched the Islands of Islay, North and South Uist, Benbecula, Barra, Minglay, Mull, and other places, for stories. Mr. Torrie, a native of Benbecula, tried some of the outer Hebrides and Skye. Mr. Carmichael visited Lismore, his native island, walked through part of Sutherland, and the main land of Lorne, and searched the districts where he was stationed in Harris, Skye and Islay. John Dewar and MacNair sent me what they had been able to learn about the traditions of Cowal. Hector Urquhart what be had collected about Inverary. Mr. Osgood Mackenzie searched the neighbourhood of Gairloch, in Ross-shire. Mr. Fraser of Mauld sent contributions from the eastern Highlands about Beauly. Mr. Hugh MacLean tried the district about West Loch, Tarbert; Mr. Pattieson and Mr. Taylor tried Islay, Glasgow, and Paisley; Mr. MacLauchlan sent something from Edinburgh, and I myself visited nearly all these places, and corresponded with a great number of friends in these and other parts of the Highlands, who corresponded with their friends. In short, though the search is incomplete, and I have often gleaned more than my collectors had reaped, it was sufficiently extensive to make certain of finding any widely spread class of poetry now current, and latterly we looked for it. In only one case have I been able to find any part of the poetry of 1807 in its present form known to reciters, nor have I been able to discover that any of the poems printed by Dr. Smith are ever recited in their published form. We have occasionally found copies of "Ossian," and Dr. Smith's work; but no one seemed to have read them. The Ossian presented to the parish of Dunoon and all the copies which I have seen or heard of are in good condition. I have a tattered "Seann Dana," but it is not thumbed. I may fairly say that the Gaelic Ossian of 1807, and Seann Dana of 1787, are almost unknown to the class who recite Gaelic poems which they attribute to Oisein.

It is argued that the day for collecting Ossian is gone; and it is true, but something still remains amongst those who can neither read nor write, nor speak English, as I shall endeavour to prove.

In 1786, that is, twenty-six years after MacPherson's first publication, and twenty-one years before the Gaelic Ossian was printed, and about the time that Dr. Smith's Seann Dana appeared, the publication of John Gillies appeared also. It is a very rare book; it has made no stir in the world, and it never was distributed gratis; it is hardly noticed by the Highland Society in their report; and MacPherson only refers to it in a note. There is every reason to suppose that "Ossian" and "Seann Dana" ought to be known, and "Gillies' poems" unknown to the people; but the reverse is true. Many of the poems collected in 1860 are versions of those collected about eighty years before by Gillies.

On looking through the books and manuscripts referred to above, I found the very same poems preserved in collections made in the Highlands long ago, together with other similar poems; but the "Seann Dana" and the "Gaelic Ossian" are nowhere to be found in any of these collections made from the people.

In 1530 Dean MacGregor's collection was written, and it contains versions of poems which are now current; and one of these is the Lay of Diarmaid; so I take it as an example. When my version was printed, I asked and obtained permission to compare it with that of 1530; and

I subsequently obtained another version, written at Gairloch for Sir Kenneth Mackenzie in 1850, from the dictation of John MacPherson, then eighty-eight years old. I am indebted to Mr. Nicholson for this. Other versions were written by Kennedy in 1774 or 1783, and printed by Gillies in 1786, and by MacCallum 1816; and I believe that there are many other versions. All which I have read vary from each other in length, in language, in arrangement of verses, and of lines. Kennedy's traditional version has 86 quatrains, but some of them are repeated several times mine has 125 lines, 33 verses incomplete; the Gairloch version has 21 verses, and of these 19 correspond with mine, though not exactly. Two verses I had not got, they are as follows:--

"Bu mhath mise dhuit Fhinn,
'S bu math mi dhuit gu beachd;
Bu mhath mi latha na tath bhrindhne,
'S bha mi 'n ceardach Lon mhic Libhionn.

"Tri righrean thanaig o'n tuinn,
Mo lamhsa dh' fhag iad gun chinn
'S a dh' fhuasgail thusa le fuil,
C' uime an treigeadh tu. mi dh aonfhear?"

"Good was I to thee, Fionn,
Surely to thee was I good
I was good on the day of the ford dwelling,
And I was in Lon MacLibhion's smithy.

"Three kings came from the waves,
My hand it was left them headless;
And it was I loosed thee with blood,
Why shouldst thou leave me of all men?"

On looking through Kennedy's version I find something like these in it, and they join in with three other Fenian traditions. For the Ford dwelling, see page 169, vol. ii.; for the blood which loosed Fionn, p. 179; and for old manuscript authority for a similar story, p. 187 of the same volume; for the Smithy story, see Nos. LXVIII. and LXXXV. in vol. iii. Neither of these verses are in the version of 1530, and I have several others which are not there. The variations in all these are remarkable, the lines vary more in sense than in sound, and the main story hardly varies at all; it seems as if successive reciters or scribes had caught up the story, and the assonance and rhythm, and substituted words, and transposed lines and stanzas from time to time; for example--"Righrean," kings in the Gairloch poem, is "nigheanan," girls or daughters in the story--*reeran* and *njeenan* being the sounds. "Coisinn, naire," earn, shame, is "toir taire," give disgrace, in which the sounds *oi* and *ai* are preserved, and the general idea is given, though the words are altered.

"An sgiath urla," the expert shield, becomes "sgiath shuthairle," the shield of Sutharle; the sounds are--*sgeea oorla, sgeea hooarle*; "o'n taigh," from home, becomes "a' t' aghaidh," against thee; *on-tai*, *at-ai-e*, and so on in many instances.

The verses also are differently arranged. In the Gairloch version and in mine, 1 and 2 agree, but 3 in the one is 10 in the other; 5 is 3; 4 and 6 are transposed; 16 is 30; 18 is 21, and so on. In short, this comparison of a number of versions of the same ballad, written down at various periods between 1530 and 1860, in different districts, is a very interesting study for a philologist, and for any one who takes an interest in traditional lore.

In the first place, there is a measure of popular memory; and it appears that tradition will not preserve a poem entire for 330 years, so it could not have so preserved much longer poems for 1600.

It appears also that the language spoken in the Highlands has changed, though far less than English that time; but the change is sufficient to prove that Gaelic of the nineteenth century cannot be the language of a poet who lived in the third.

It is also plain that the orthography of the poems of 1807, which is that of the Highland Society's dictionary and the modern Bible, is not the orthography of the scribes who wrote Gaelic at earlier periods; and, consequently, "the poems of Ossian" are not a standard for language or spelling.

Again, the rhythm and assonance of this traditional poem are such, that when I, on my own judgment, had separated lines written consecutively, into quatrains, I found, on inquiry, that previous collectors had done the same with similar passages; and our divisions correspond, and fit the music to which the pieces are still sung. Much of the Gaelic of Ossian and Seann Dana can be so divided, but a great deal of it will not break up into musical quatrains; and from this I would argue that it is not now in its original shape.

Now, a poem of Diarmaid was published by Dr. Smith in 1787, and the Doctor had then in his possession the version collected by Kennedy, but though the stories agree, the published poem and Kennedy's manuscript differ entirely.

Dr. Smith says of himself (Smith's Gaelic Antiquities, p. 128. 1780. Edinburgh)--

"When the materials were collected, his next labour was to compare the different editions; to strike off several parts that were manifestly spurious; to bring together some episodes," etc.,

and he tells us, that he pieced in lines and half lines, and sometimes threw in a few lines and sentences of his own. The result is, that there is no trace of Smith's Diarmaid to be found as an entire composition either in old MSS. or modern tradition; the poetry will not easily break up into quatrains, and but for occasional passages which can be recognised elsewhere, Smith's Diarmaid might almost rank with Ossian itself. But that was formerly considered to be the proper treatment of an original work of the third century, and the work so treated was translated and published, and the whole process was openly described by the able scholar who did it.

I have taken this poem as an illustration, because it has nothing to do with MacPherson's Ossian, and its history seems to indicate how the Gaelic of Ossian was put together, and from what materials it was made.

The value of the materials will best appear by comparing the versions of 1530 and 1860 with intervening versions. There are forty-two lines in the first which are clearly the same as lines in the last, and about twelve more which can be recognised; but no two lines are exactly the same, and those which resemble each other are scattered broadcast throughout the compositions; but the stories are almost the same.

The old version was attributed to an unknown Allan MacRoyre; tradition now attributes the Lay of Diarmaid to Oisein, and Irish scholars assure us that the main incidents are historically true, as this is but a part of the story of Diarmaid and Grainne, who lived about the third century. Few ballads have a better pedigree, or have met with worse treatment than this Lay of Diarmaid, 1530, Dean MacGregor, 104 lines--Kennedy, 1774, 314--Smith, 1787, 193--MacCallum, 1816, 161--MacPherson, 1850, 84--MacLean, 1860 (104). I have other versions, got from Mr. Torrie, etc., since the sheet was printed, and plenty more may yet be got, as the

ballad is common enough in the Hebrides, and the story is known everywhere, and often contains lines of the ballad.

This then is a Gaelic "ballad," a story made into verse, and sung by the people time out of mind. It was easy to build up a new structure with such excellent materials, and so give a tolerable idea of the poetry of the country, partly true and partly false, and I have no doubt that the poems of Ossian were so made.

Take one instance. What is true of Smith's "Diarmaid" is true of "Temora." I know no instance in which that poem can be repeated by any one, and no peasant of my acquaintance knows it. I got MacNair, a shoemaker, to read the Gaelic Ossian, and he said plainly and decidedly, "This is not the old stuff." "*Cha n' e so an seann stugh*." Hector MacLean entirely agrees, having read the book with the view of forming an opinion, and though many persons talk freely of Ossian, and give very decided opinions thereon, very few, indeed, have read the Gaelic. Now, if MacPherson's English Temora be compared with No. LXXXI., it will be found that the story of the first book and of the traditional poem is very simple, and that both agree generally. Moreover, stanzas 13, 14, 24, 15, 16, 39, 40, 46, 55, 56, 62, 57, 58, of the Gaelic, repeated in 1860, are represented by passages which follow each other in this order, about the middle of the first book; but the magic opening of the ballad, the talking raven, and the soothsaying, all which savours of a past age, is replaced in the epic by a vague but beautiful and masterly word-picture of a landscape, through which stalk the half-described indistinct figures of gloomy warriors whose dress and arms are barely sketched, but whose peculiarities agree with the traditional accounts of them so far as they go. Thus, Cairbre has a spear, and his eye is red, if his hair is not. In the epic, the opening scene is shifted to Cairbre's camp, and then back to Fingal's side, and the whole is pervaded by a general resemblance to the opening of Fingal, but the first book ends with something which I have not yet been able to trace elsewhere. The ballad, on the contrary, begins with Osgar, follows him to the house of Cairbre, and through his quarrel, and back to his own camp, and through the fight till he dies, and then it accompanies his friends in their lament, and procession, to his burial. The whole ends with a natural account of the grief of Fionn, by Fionn's son, the poet Oisein, who is supposed to be narrating the end of his own darling son, Osgar. The ballad is simple and natural; the epic is laboured and artificial, and it is no "translation," according to my definition of the word, but it is like something elaborated and built up out of the materials of one or more ballads. A few well-known Gaelic lines are scattered about in an English dress, such as "the sword was at his side that gave no second wound," and a man who read Temora for the first time, and held loose views of translation, and knew the traditional Gaelic ballads, might well say that the one was a translation of the other, but very inaccurate, and inferior to the original.

MacPherson knew of this ballad, and in his edition of 1790 quotes two stanzas of it, which were taken, as he says, from an Irish poem on the battle of Gabhra. These stanzas were printed by Gillies, and were found in Scotland at least fourteen years before, in 1786.

Versions of this ballad are very commonly repeated in the islands now, and No. LXXXI. might be considerably extended by further search in Islay, Barra, Uist, etc. I know that it was formerly recited about Loch Awe, and there is a man there still, who is said to know many such. In 1816, MacCallum got it from a Mr. Donald MacInnes, and published it, page 151 of his book. Gillies gives two versions in 1786, at page 167 and 313. Kennedy gives it in his collection of 1783, and got it in Argyleshire. MacPherson made it the groundwork of Temora, and of his first publication in 1760, and Dean Macgregor gives it in 1530. On the other side of the water, a similar poem was published in 1853 by the Dublin Ossianic Society, and in the twelfth century a short ballad, attributed to Oisin, was written down in Ireland, and the best

Irish scholars believe that the leading events recorded in the ballad, and found in Temora, the battle and the deaths of Oscar and Cairbre, are historically true, and happened A.D. 284, in Ireland, where the scene is laid in every one of the compositions named above.

This seems a respectable pedigree for a tradition, worked into an epic poem at least a hundred years ago, and one that excites regret for the neglected state of Gaelic literature of all kinds.

What has been said of “Diarmid” is true of “Laoidh Oscair.” No two version are identical; the language and orthography vary with the age and the scribe; rhythm and assonance are preserved, stanzas are broken, parts found in one version are not to be found in another; and there is ample room for honestly mending, with its own fragments, that which has gone to decay, without playing such tricks as Temora. There is not one line of the Gaelic of the traditional ballad in the Gaelic of 1807, and the first Gaelic book of Temora, as then published, has still to be accounted for.

It seems by no means a difficult task to make another sham epic out of genuine Gaelic materials. I have enough to make a goodly frame work, and here is a specimen of the kind of “translation,” which might be founded on, several measured prose passages, which are to be found in these volumes, and elsewhere. It is the sort of translation which some of my critics seem to have expected, instead of the “bald literal translation” which I prefer.

A few specimens of former work will shew, that if I have fallen into Charybdis, it was in avoiding Scylla.

Page 190. Smith’s Gaelic Antiquities.

“GRAINA, *dost thou not remember the moans of the crane, as we wandered early on the hill of our love*?”

With pity, thou didst ask the aged son of the rock, why so sad was the voice of the crane? “Too long,” he replied, “he hath stood in the fen; and the ice hath bound his lazy foot.”

A similar passage will be found at pages 42 and 47, vol. iii., and from the Gaelic quoted by Smith. His original seems to have been almost the same as mine. His Gaelic lines mean--

Early the Heron cries
On the meadow that is in Love’s hill (sliabh gaoil).

The same author translates--

“As it were a bulrush on a slender reed of Lego. He grinds the hard tough spear of Dermid.”

A similar traditional passage is given in vol. iii., 54 and 58.

Smith’s Gaelic is given by him at page 193--

Chagnadh e a shleaghan readh ruadh’
Mar chuilc na Leige no mar luachar.

And it means,--

He would crunch his tough brown darts
As reeds of Leige or as rushes.

Another passage is given by the same author at page 198, and whenever the Gaelic is placed beside the English, the spirit of the original poetry gives way to a prose imitation of MacPherson’s peculiar English. Though the Gaelic is in a metre which clearly indicates a division into quatrains, of which each line is a separate portion of a sentence, and makes sense alone, the English is all heaped together. The result is, fine English and something new.

I have striven to express, in the plainest words, the plain meaning of the old Gaelic as I got it. If my predecessors had been less free in their translations, and *their critics* less hard, I might have steered a middle course. As it was, my chief aim was to give a true rendering, without caring for my own "style" or that of "Ossian."--FALSE TRANSLATION OF GENUINE GAELIC.

They hoisted the lumbering yards, and the three great flappering sails, against the tall tough stringy bending masts, and the cordage rattled through the blocks.

There was a gentle little breeze, such as sailors like at sea, a sighing, singing, whistling, rushing wind, that threshed up the heather on the hill sides, stripped off the rustling leaves from the willow trees, and tossed the thatch of the houses on the ridges and furrows of the fields. The sides of the vessel creaked as they set the sails.

Then the ship went slipping swiftly along through the sheltered sound, while the rippling little blue wavelets came lipping gently against her bow, till she rounded the point with a whirr, and went into the surging broken water outside with a plunge.

Then the lumbering great ocean swell came thundering up against the dark rocks, and struck the ship's side with a heavy thud, as she bounded along. Their music then was made by splashing whales, and screeching sea-gulls, and silvery little fishes leaping through the waves before them.

She could almost catch the swift March wind before her, but the swift March wind that followed behind could not catch her; and so they sailed on, tearing ocean, till a little island rose before them, and then they reached the port where they wished to be, and the rattling chains rushed over the side, and the rusty anchor made her fast; and they were still and quiet in the calm bay.Then one hundred and ten heavily-armed, brave, active, valiant men landed, and then they advanced, with their booming, hindering, lumbering shields, on their left arms, and their sharp-pointed tall deadly spears, in their right hands; and the fighting began with the sharp singing sound of the swift flying spears through the air. But soon the close combat was joined, and the hard cruel blades were drawn out from their leathern sheaths, and whistled and clashed; and the creaking of armour was heard, and the crash of the battle; and the bright shiny clean sweeping swords hacked hard at the armour, and men met and struggled, and close locked together, they dashed down each other, while the shrieks of the wounded were heard, and the crashing of armour, crushed under foot; and the groans of the dying, and the shouts of the heroes, and the boom of the shields; and wild wailing piercing shrieks and cries made the terrible din of war.

Such, oh Clerk, were the heroes of old. There gathered the horrid hounds about them to watch the strife; the ravens croaked over the brows of the slain, and they rest till the stars shall fall and the earth burst.

The chief difficulty would be to find an audience now-a-days. A century ago it was different. The world was agape after the Highlanders who had raised such a stir. "The rebellion" had been put down; there was a kind of satisfaction in discovering noble qualities in the "unvanquished Scots," who had just been got to help to vanquish each other. Men believed in epics, and opened their mouths and shut their eyes, and swallowed what James MacPherson sent them, but when they had tasted the gift and opened their eyes, and began to suspect that they had been sold a bargain, men, like children, refused to take the nicest of jam, for fear of another dose.

So far then, current tradition gives no support to the entire authenticity of the "poems of Ossian," English or Gaelic, but it joins on to manuscript evidence and proves beyond dispute that there has been a mass of Gaelic poetry current in the Highlands of Scotland for a long

time, that it is "*Ossianic*," the germ of Ossian, but not "*Ossian*," as known to the world. It seems as if stories had produced a crop of ballads, and some one had reaped the crop and sold it in the sheaf.

The list of poems placed at the end of this volume will give some idea of the amount of Gaelic poetry of this kind which still exists, and where it may be found. The list has no claim to be complete, but will serve as a foundation for other inquirers, if such be found.

CX. Gaelic Ossian. Internal Evidence, Etc

The list will shew that the Irish claim to all genuine old Gaelic poetry is unfounded; but I have little doubt that versions of anything which has ever been extensively known amongst the Scotch Gael has been equally well known to their Irish brethren. The best course is to make peace; share this common Celtic property; make the best possible use of it; and preserve what is left.

But this long race was for “Ossian’s poems,” and the prize is not yet awarded. There is no direct evidence as to who compounded the famous work; and unless the poems will tell us, I know not where to seek for a reply to the questions which remain. Who wrote the Gaelic of 1807? and which was the first written, that Gaelic or the English?

The first question I cannot answer; but it seems highly improbable that MacPherson wrote it himself. Ewan MacLachlan, one of the best of modern scholars, wrote to MacCallum (see page 224 of the Gaelic book)--

“If the works of Ossian are a forgery, we have sufficient grounds to believe that the imposition cannot be charged on modern times.” “Antiquity has ascribed the contents of your work to Ossian.”

But MacCallum’s work consists of traditional ballads, not of the large poems, so the sentence of Ewan MacLachlan, which at first seems all for the Gaelic of 1807, is really for the Gaelic of 1813. As he truly says, most of *that* Gaelic rests upon manuscripts and traditions.

I am not aware that any Scotch Highlander of this day has given his opinion of the published Ossian. So it may be of some interest to read what men, who have studied it, really think of it; and, first, I will give the opinion which I bad formed for myself from reading the controversy, and from a knowledge of vernacular Gaelic, which passes unquestioned everywhere, and was acquired in childhood, but which does not include any critical knowledge of the niceties of the written language.

When the Gaelic Fingal, published in 1807, is compared with any one of the translations which purport to have been made from it, it seems to me incomparably superior. It is far simpler in diction. It has a peculiar rhythm and assonance which seem to repel the notion of a mere translation from English as something almost absurd. It is impossible that it can be a translation from MacPherson’s English, unless there was some clever Gaelic poet then alive, able and willing to write what Eton school-boys call “full sense verses.”

It is scarcely credible that such a man would conceal his name, unless he were both poet and translator; and all who have written on the subject deny that MacPherson had any great knowledge of Gaelic or power of versification.

Great part of Fingal might, with propriety, be divided into stanzas of four lines, having much of the peculiar assonance of poems of undoubted authenticity, which are still recited; the whole clinks and hangs together in such a way that no one but a poet could have so jointed words to express ideas.

The words also are often chosen for their appropriate sound, as well as for their meaning and rhythm--

“Fhreagair an sonn mar thonn air carraig,”
“Answered the brave like wave on a crag,”

has two long deep vowel sounds, something like MOAN, TONE, combined with other broad vowels; suggestive of the deep thunder of dashing waves, and of a grand deep voice, as the famous line in Milton is of the harsh grating of the Gates of Hell (Paradise Lost, book ii.)--

"------And on a sudden, open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder."

Nothing is more probable than that a poet should choose the Gaelic words if his ears were familiar with the loud deep roar of the Atlantic on a still evening; nothing more improbable than that they should happen to be chosen by one who was not a poet, who was translating prose ideas from another language. It is probable that the Gaelic in this case was first composed, though it can-not be proved.

Again, a mere translator would surely have taken the model before him, or some other; he would have written prose like MacPherson's, or he would have copied some known metre. The Gaelic is wholly unlike the English, and is not prose, and to the best of my knowledge the irregular metre has no exact counterpart, while the nearest resemblance to it is in the genuine Gaelic traditional ballads, which treat of the same people, and often describe the same incidents--

I saw the chieftain, said Moran,
Like to a crag was the NOBLE;
His spear like a pine on the steep hill,
Like the moon in its rising his SHIELD--

Is the metre and meaning without the assonance of four lines in "Fingal" of 1807, and the passage savours of originality, or a genuine model.

MacPherson's fragments, published 1760, which are the least suspected of all his works, contain the following as a translation (page 60)--"I saw their chief, says Morven, tall as a rock of ice. His spear is like that fir; his shield is like the rising moon."

There is nothing about ice in the Gaelic of 1807.

In the same page is the English equivalent for the Gaelic line, quoted above--

"He answered like a wave on the rock."

Now either the word "*sonn*," the hero which gives the assonance, was loosely translated by the pronoun "he," or some one in translating the English prose, changed "he" into "the hero."

Kennedy gives a traditional equivalent for the line,

"Bha *neart* a *ghair* mar bhar tuinne,"

which means--

The *might* of his *shout* was as billow's crest,"

and this was rendered by the reporters of the Highland Society "literally," thus--

"He spoke with the force of a breaking wave."

But if this English line were translated back into Gaelic, it would lose all its force.

"Labhair e le neart thuinn a bristeadh"

is English Gaelic, and prosaic prose, and so would be a similar translation of MacPherson's English line.

And so we must assume that two able Gaelic poets had freely translated one English line in two different ways so as to please the ear; or that the line in the fragments was translated from a line in Gaelic older than 1760, and different from that of 1807.

Again, the metre in this book of Fingal often varies to suit the meaning, and that is another argument for the originality of the Gaelic.

When the warriors are running together, the rhythm is rapid, and names are strung together in the same fashion as they are in ballads and similar compositions.

It is slow when the meaning requires it, while every here and there a single line stands alone, and seems to end a passage.

Some passages, such as the famous description of Cuchullin in his Car, are not in the same metre as the rest, and resemble the measured prose of the tales. Similar passages are in old MSS.

Other passages seem to be made up. Take, for example, the address to the sun in Carricthura.

It is given in "*Leabhar nan cnoc*," by Dr. MacLeod in 1834, by MacCallum in 1816, published in part by the Highland Society in their report, 1805; by Stewart, 1804, got by the Rev. Mr. MacDiarmaid from the dictation of an old man in Glen Lyon, about 30 years before 1801, say 1770. The old man had learned this and other poems in his youth from people in the same glen, so that this, at least, *must* be far older than MacPherson's first publications, 1760. It was repeated to my grand aunts when they were girls, with other Ossianic pieces, by people who lived in cottages far up in the hills above Loch Tarbert, and these were translated for them by a clergyman, as they could not speak Gaelic to the people themselves. It is still repeated in Skye.

As got from the people by MacCallum, in 1816, the first ten lines are connected in meaning. The sun sets and sinks down to his resting place, the waves come slowly about him, and timidly raise their heads to gaze on the beautiful sleeping sun of the skies, with his golden hair, as waves might seem to do when the setting sun was watched by a poet from a west country hill. The words follow each other harmoniously, they have the clink or "assonance" of Gaelic poetry, they make two and a half stanzas, and each line is complete in sense, which accords with other Gaelic poetry. So far the poem might be sung, and so far it is like other traditional poetry still extant, and so far MacPherson's translation agrees closely with the Gaelic.

The eleventh line is of a different length, and does not clink with the others, and stands alone. It joins the next two lines which belong to each other, and make up another stanza. This stanza (the fifth) is weak where it compares the sun to a sunbeam, but it would be a noble metaphor if it likened a warrior to a sunbeam rushing over a level sward, and I suspect that it was originally composed with that intention.

The last eight lines make two complete stanzas, but the last is in a different metre.

The main idea, again, is different from that of the first ten lines, for the last twelve are not applicable to the quiet summer evening, whose picture was so well drawn in the first ten.

These describe a winter day, not a summer evening.

On the whole, I should argue that the first ten lines were composed in Gaelic by some one who had great command of the language and poetical feeling, and who meant to describe a summer sunset; the last twelve by the same or by some other Gaelic poet, whose head was then full of the picture of a winter's day; and that the eleventh line is cement, composed to join these two fragments, or picked up and thrust in between them, or the final line of a piece.

It is the final line of the passage in Carricthura. I am convinced that these twenty-three lines never were composed by any one poet at one and the same time, but I am satisfied that the poet or poets who made the Gaelic verses composed poetry of no mean order, and MacCallum got them all together from a certain Mr. J. Mae-an-t-saoir in Ari-Chasteal.

I do not assert that the poet's name was Ossian. I deny on good grounds that it was James MacPherson. I maintain that a poet, and a Scotch Highlander, composed all those Gaelic lines separately, if not together; and judging from my own knowledge of the people, and their ways, it is possible that these may be fragments of sentimental poetry different from the popular ballads, more modern, but certainly older than 1730.

"Grian" is feminine, but the sun is here addressed as a male. The confusion is something like "Sa Majesté le Roi elle," etc.

The following translation is almost literal, and gives the musical rhythm without the assonance.

The Song of Ullin, in Carricthura, arranged in lines.

1

Hast thou left thy blue course in heaven,
Golden haired son of the sky!
The west has opened its gates;
The bed of thy repose is there.

2

The waves come
To behold thy beauty,
They lift their trembling heads;
They see thee lovely in thy sleep.

3

They shrink away with fear;
Rest in thy shadowy cave, O sun!

4

Let thy return be in joy.

OSSIAN TO THE SETTING SUN.

Close translation of Gaelic, assumed to be older than 1730.

1

Hast left the blue distance of heaven?
Sorrowless son of the gold yellow hair
Night's doorways are ready for thee,
Thy pavilion of peace in the west.

2

The billows came slowly around,
To behold him of brightest hair;
Timidly raising their heads
To gaze on thee, beauteous asleep.

3

They witless have fled from thy side.
10. Take thy sleep within thy cave,

4

11. Oh sun, and come back from sleep rejoicing.

5--Assumed to be joined to the first.

Like a sun-gleam in the winter tide,
Rushing with might down the plain greensward;
Such like were the days of the Feen,
As a sun between shower squalls fading,

6

Burst the dusky black clouds of the skies,
And snatched the loved beam from the hunter;
The forests' bare twigs are mourning,
And the moorland's soft plants are withering.

7

But the sun will return again,
To the beautiful woods of the fresh buds
And in the spring each stem will smile,
23. Gazing aloft to the son of the skies.

Take another example. At page 226, Appendix to the H. S. Report, is a Gaelic passage collected by Macdonald of Staffa about the end of last century. It is not in the language, or style, or metre of popular ballads generally, but it is good Gaelic, and a sort of cantering blank verse. The following is a "close translation," and imitates the metre:--

Oscar, quell the strong armed;
Give help to the weak-handed needful;
Be as spring-tide winter flood-stream,
To combat the foes of the Feinne;
But as summer mild still weak wind,
Be to those that seek thine aiding.
Such like was Treunmor of Victories,
Such Trathal of routs was after him,
And Fionn was a prop to the weak,
To shield him from tyrant's power.
For his succour stretched my hand,
With welcome I'd go to meet him;
And he'd find shelter and kindness,
Under shade of the gleam of my blade.

It will be seen that each of these lines is complete in sense. The passage might be finished at the end of each line, without making the rest nonsense, which is peculiarity of Gaelic poetry. Whatever the merits or demerits of this passage may be, its imagery is taken from nature, as seen on the tide-washed shores of the western coast; and the words of art are those used by boatmen. "Buinn sruth" is gaining tide the flood stream, when it begins to make strongly; "reabhairt" is the height of springs, when the tides are strongest; and to any one who has danced over the "spring-tide flood stream" in a fishing-boat on a winter's day, off the west of Scotland, near the whirlpool of Corriebhreacan, the line conveys the idea of irresistible

power, which it is intended to give. MacPherson's English loses all this, and he was a Badenoch man, who was not familiar with such scenes.

O Oscar! bend the strong in arm;
but spare the feeble hand.
Be thou a stream of many tides
against the foes of thy people;
but like the gale that moves the grass
to those who ask thine aid.
So Treunmor lived;
such Trathal was;
and such has Fingal been.
My arm was the support of the injured;
* * * *
the weak rested
behind the lightning of my steel.

(Fingal, book iii., 1763.)

The Gaelic of 1807 is something quite different from either of these passages. (Pp. 148, 149, gratis edition 1818.) Three versions therefore exist-two printed in Gaelic, and MacPherson's English; and of these I prefer Staffa's west country Gaelic, with which MacPherson had nothing to do, and which is not a translation of the published English, but a far better version of a similar passage. The Gaelic must surely be the original in this case.

Again, passages composed on the following principle must belong to the language in which the assonance exists, rather than to that which gives the meaning less forcibly, and nothing more:--

Then out sp*r*ang the warrior's BLADE,
and g*ai*ly
he w*av*ed
the f*l*ashing SWORD.
Let us meet the foeman, he CRIED;
let us *ri*de
and de*cide*
the AWARD.

There are numerous passages in Gaelic which have a structure as complicated as the above "nonsense verse;" for example:--

Dh' eirich *gu* SPAirneach na *sui*NN
Bu t*rui*me
no *tui*nn
*cui*lg an COS
Sroinich an *cui*m chl*uin*te CIAN
's an FhIAnn
gu CIAN-
-AIL fui SPROCHD. (*Bas Choirail*.)

Here surely the Gaelic was the original.

Such a passage as Fingal, Duan I., line 413 to 437, the most difficult of critics must admit to be very fine Gaelic, infinitely better than its English equivalent, though that passage will not scan at all.

In short, when I read parts of Ossian in Gaelic, I often feel that this is poetry of high order, of which no translation can give any just idea. Some poet might express the same ideas as well in another language, but no faithful translator can render the meaning and imitate the original.

When I read Fingal in the "original" I feel that this is poetry, that these are grand ideas clothed in magnificent sonorous language; on reading it in English, I often feel that there is something in it akin to bombast. In the one case I am drawn to the side of those who maintain that these are genuine ancient poems, in the other I feel driven to admit that they are not; and when all is done, I return to my first opinion, that, Fingal is a fiction founded upon a broad basis of fact; a book of Gaelic poetry of high order, but not poetry composed by Ossian about the time of the Romans.

I hold that it is manifest, from a consideration of the Gaelic poems themselves, that they were the work of one or of many able Gaelic poets. The question now is--when did they live? and who were they?

It has been argued that the language is modern, and, therefore, that the poems are modern; and to hold that the language spoken in the days of Caracalla was the language of the last version of the modern Gaelic Bible appears sufficiently absurd. The modern air of the language may, however, be accounted for.

Traditional poems alter with the age; I have already shewn how rapidly they alter, and in what manner. At page 92 of Sir John Sinclair's Dissertation, it is stated that the Rev. Mr. Thos. Ross, of Edinburgh, was employed to transcribe the whole work as left by MacPherson at his death in 1796, *agreeably to the orthography of the Gaelic Bible*, that is, to modern orthography. Mr. Ross found fault with the English translation, but he had no quarrel with the Gaelic.

MacPherson had tried to simplify Gaelic spelling, and having found some classical authority for the use of the Greek character by ancient Celts, he had begun to print Gaelic in Greek letters. Sir Roderick Murchison tells me that he has meteorological registers written in Gaelic, and in the Greek character, by his father.

When a man, whose standard of orthography was the modern Gaelic Bible, got hold of such a work as MacPherson's Gaelic MS., he would have small scruple in making it suit his standard; and so, between popular changes, MacPherson's interpolations, simplifications, and restorations, and Greek letters, and his successor's modern standard, the ancient form of the language, if it was ancient, could hardly survive.

What would become of Chaucer so maltreated, and finally spelt according to modern rules of grammar and orthography? I have found by experience that an alteration in "spelling" may mean an entire change of construction and meaning, and a substitution of whole words. I know that a change in the pronunciation of a single vowel sound will suggest such a change as this--

The geese would swim through thy waist.
The winds might float through thy breast.

The passage refers to a man thrust through with a spear. The first is the translation of the line as repeated now and in 1786, and has no meaning, unless it be a ludicrous measure of the size of the wound.

The second conveys the image of the breath swimming painfully through the blood of a wounded man, whose breast and lungs had been pierced, and the only change necessary to suggest these opposite ideas is from "GEOIDH," *geese*, to GAOITHE, winds;

the *dh* and *the* being silent letters. MacPherson would have made the change: I did not, though I believe it ought to be made.

I have compared versions of the same poem lately written down by different men, from different reciters, in different districts, at long intervals of time, with each other, with older MS., and with still older printed versions; and I find all manner of strange variations, in which rhythm and sounds often remain, while sense and words are altered; and I find that even the printed Gaelic of 1807 varies from that of 1763.

It has also been argued that because there is no mythology in Ossian, therefore it is a forgery; but it has been shewn, that the collectors of former days carefully weeded out all the mythology, because it was not quite reasonable. I have left all that I found, and it savours of Pagan sun worship.

To me, therefore, the modern language and English idioms of the Gaelic of the edition of 1807 appear to be no valid argument against the general antiquity of the poems.

Take one example from Smith's "Sean Dana," and the same thing appears; the Gaelic is better than the English. In "Tiomna Ghuill," page 57, is this line--

"Sgaoth eunlaith air steuda sàile;"

and it is translated by the English line--

"A flight of birds on the briny billows."

As it seems to me, the beauty of the line is thus lost by a free translation, whereas a close rendering would preserve its meaning better--

"A skiff of birds upon steeds of brine."

The passage describes a "play of fish," and the Gaelic line conveys to me the idea of a mass of sea birds clustered together, and riding over the long smooth waves of the salt ocean. It is a true picture in five short words, which every one must recognize who has ever watched a clump of dark razor-bills huddled together under a cliff on a summer's day. As each long Atlantic wave comes rolling in, the birds rise on the crest, and sink into the hollow trough, and the wave slips under and curls over, and thunders in against the rocks beyond--a mass of broken white water; but the clump of birds are on their "briny steeds," and they know how to ride them. A stroke or two, and they paddle out into the glassy water at the edge of the surf, and tuck their heads under their wings once more, and sleep. And there they will rest on the waves for hours, beneath a cliff, riding like skiffs (sgoth) at anchor till fishing time comes again; and then they are up and off, to ride their steeds to battle with the herring king.

Then comes a sight which must be seen to be appreciated. The birds gather on the surface in masses; great whales dash up, and spout, and turn over, and dive down again, leaving the sea all glittering with scales, and foaming and surging about their sides. The diving birds scatter and flap along the surface, and scream as they go; great green cole-fish leap high into the air; gulls and terns hang over head, and clatter and yell, and dart down, and the whole do their best to gobble up the king of the seas as fast as they can. And all this was in the mind of the man who composed the passage, in which the rushing of Goll to battle is compared to the rushing of the whale, and his foes to the scattered birds. And to my mind the Gaelic tells the story infinitely better than the English, though this is not the most popular ballad poetry now most commonly recited.

This is my own opinion, but no one is fit to judge whose earliest thoughts were not framed and expressed in Gaelic. One who has been accustomed to hear and speak, and to read all sorts of jargons, and jump at meaning without regard to grammar or spelling, is no fair judge

of a written language, in which he does not think; so I prefer the opinion of a shoemaker who reads his Gaelic Bible, and has a multitude of Gaelic stories in his head, and knows very little about anything else beyond his last. He says--

“This is not the old stuff.”

I also prefer the opinion of a man who began life in a Highland cottage, and lives near the place where he was born, who has worked at Gaelic books and traditions, and studied that language, and has taught himself to read half a dozen more, in which he reads poetry; besides acquiring the whole of Euclid, and the Differential calculus, and a good many “ologies” to boot--a man who thinks for himself, and is free from national prejudice at all events.

CXI. On The Gaelic Poetry Of Known And Unknown Bards, Published And Traditional. (H. Maclean.)

"The Gaelic poems which were published in 1807, from a manuscript in the handwriting of James MacPherson, differ very widely indeed from those which are handed down by tradition; very widely indeed from all known traditions about the Fenian heroes current in the Highlands. The kingdom of Morven is unknown either in traditional poems or stories. These do not represent the Fenian heroes drinking on all occasions out of shells, they frequently drink out of vessels of gold or silver, as the case may be. The traditional Fionn is not that grave, stately, Solemn, ostentatious, old monarch which he is in the Ossian published by MacPherson; but a being of more human sympathies, possessed of strong feelings and passions-a hero that might have been a brave, generous, chieftain, who was not entirely free from the frailties that flesh is heir to. Popular poetry or tradition never describes him as a venerable old monarch, with hoary locks, nor does it allude to his being aged, or weakened by old age. The death of all the other Fenian heroes is recorded, but there is not the least hint given of Fionn's death.

He is said to have been occasionally seen in Eilean na h-oige, the island of youth, also called *An t-Eilean uaine*, the green isle--an island which Hebrideans believe to be located somewhere west, and which many of them believe to have seen. The people of Islay believe it to be situated west of Islay of course; the people of Barra, west of Barra; the people of Uist, west of Uist; and the people of Harris, west of Harris; many are they who have had the good fortune to see this blessed island. I conversed in youth myself with old people. who did see it off from Portnahaven, in Islay, on a fine evening; but I have never yet had the good fortune to see it myself, though I have often seen the evening clouds piled up like hills on the horizon.

It is told that a Jura man, who owned a small vessel, once met a man on the pier at Greenock, who engaged the ship at a certain freight, to carry him and a cargo to the westward of Islay. The bargain was struck, and the cargo put on board, and they sailed round the Mull of Cantire, and through the Sound of Islay, where a thick fog came on. They got through the Sound and bore away to the westward, and, after a few days, they found themselves one morning close to land. They cast anchor and went to sleep, and when they awoke the man and his cargo were gone. The Jura skipper did not like to lose his freight, landed, and walked up to a large house, where he found "*sean duine mor còsgach*"--a large, big-boned old man-seated in an arm-chair, who offered him a drink. The drinking vessels were so large that the skipper could not lift them, so the big man called his daughter to give him a draught, and a girl came in and raised the vessel ("soitheach"), and he took a long drink of *beer*. He told his story, and the big man asked him if he could recognise the man who had engaged the ship. He said he could, and a number of people were sent for, and passed in review before him. At last the delinquent appeared, and was recognised, and made to pay the freight, upon which he thrust his finger into the skipper's eye, and put it out, saying, "If I had done that to thee before, thou wouldst not have known me."[403]

[403] There is a popular tale known all over Europe, in which a mortal acquires the power of seeing immortals, betrays the power by speaking to one, and is deprived of one eye. I have got the story in many shapes from the Highlands--J. F. C.

The inhabitants then made the Jura men brush every particle of the dust of the island from their feet, and sent them away with their money; and when they sailed, the island seemed to disappear in a mist. This Jura man, it is said, was well known afterwards, and was blind of an eye, and the big man is supposed to be "FIONN."

In Berneray, near Harris, a similar story is told of men still alive, but it wants much of the marvellous element. The men, as it is said, took a cargo from Stornoway to an island, supposed to be *Eilean uaine*, the green isle. They sailed westwards, and left the cargo, part of which was salt, got their money, and returned, after being required by the inhabitants to shake off every particle of the dust of the island which stuck to them.

There are many other stories current relative to these islands, "*Eilean na h-oige*," and "*An t-Eilean uaine*," the island of youth, and the green island, wherein Fionn is supposed still to dwell with his warriors.[404]

Blessed were they who could get to this Celtic paradise; for were they to land they would become as young as they were at twenty; fresh and blooming, and without gray hairs, or wrinkles, or ailments. A more comfortable and cheery habitation certainly this would be than the MacPherson "Ossian's" cloud palaces and mist promenades; his railways of moonshine rivalling Mahomet's narrow bridge across the gulf to paradise, which, though not broader than a needle, the faithful trip over safely. Although the ancient Hebrideans, subsequent to Norwegian sway, were very good sailors, and sometimes very good pirates also, as ransacked towns and villages on the mainland could well testify, they do not seem to have been over fond of aerial voyages; but preferred to stick to salt-water sailing, and chose rather to hope for a retreat in some pretty green mythical western island than for lofty habitations in the cold frosty regions of the upper air.

The traditional Fenian poems consist of pieces of various length, interspersed through prose narration; both poems and narration constituting what is usually Called "Eachdraidh na Feinne," the history of the Feinne. The prose narrative is varied, and consists, at one time, of common conversational language, at another of measured prose, a species of composition midway between prose and verse. Explanations and genealogies are given in ordinary conversational language, as well as other minor details; exciting circumstances are delineated in a more rhetorical style, while the most momentous events, such as are mainly connected with a great and important action, are given in verse. The verse itself varies widely, and as the subject is more elevated, it becomes more musical and metrical. The terms "*duan*," "*dan*," and "*laoidh*," are employed to distinguish the various kinds from each other. The *laoidh* (lay) is the most musical, and is generally sung to a simple, plaintive air. In the greatest number of cases it describes a tragic event, the death of a hero, or some other serious calamity. These poems are connected with each other by prose narrative, and stories, so as to make something like one united whole of the Fenian traditions. All these poems are of a narrative character, dwelling almost entirely either on human or superhuman action, and never referring either to

[404] This legend is very like that of Arthur, who, when he was sore wounded, sailed of in a boat to the "Island of Avalon" (Gaelic, "avlan," apples), where he is supposed still to live.
The curious ceremonies performed by the Hebrideans when they visited the Flannen islands, according to Martin, probably have to do with this old world belief. Flath-innis is one of the words still used for heaven. It means the hero's island, and Flath-innis-ean might easily be contracted to Flannen. There is a chapel on these uninhabited, westernmost of western islands which is of great and unknown antiquity; and there is a chapel on nearly every western island in Scotland and Ireland; and it may be that the first Christian missionaries planted their churches in these remote corners as the very strongholds of Paganism. There is a chapel in the Shiant islands, which I take to be a corruption of Eileanan nan sithichean, the islands of the fairies or peaceful people, and almost every small island to which a legend is attached, such as the haunted island, of the Rhinns of Islay, has its Christian chapel as well.--J. F. C.

animal or inanimate nature further than it is connected with human passion, sympathy, or interest. There are no long addresses to inanimate objects of nature; neither are there any refined speculations on human life and existence; there are no sentimental speeches on fame or glory. The men of the ballads fight not for glory, but in defence of some disputed right, or to avenge an insult, or to resist oppression, or to protect a woman in distress.

In these lays, similes and metaphors are very sparingly used; but this appears to result more from the intensity of interest belonging to the subject, than the want of power on the part of the poet; as similes and metaphors are very plentiful in these long epic tales which treat of like subjects. This will appear readily on looking over "The Knight of the Red Shield," No. LII., and "The Slim Swarthy Champion," No. XVII. C, in the West Highland Tales. The language of the old ballads is exceeding choice Gaelic, pure, idiomatic, chaste. There is no trace of Anglicism, or of classic idiom; it is the Gaelic of the people, but still purer and more elevated than that of common conversation, and with obsolete words interspersed. Clearness and conciseness distinguish these from the great mass of published Gaelic poems and songs; which bear evident marks of belonging to more modern periods, both in language and matter, and whose authors are known; very few of the more modern poems being at all comparable to the ballads in these qualities. These later compositions are frequently tautological, and profuse in epithets, abounding sometimes in long tedious lists of adjectives or adverbs, which make them look more like a vocabulary than a regular poem This is the case with regard to the war song of the battle of Harlaw, composed about 1411; much of *Coire an easain*, composed by the *Piobaire dall*, or blind piper; some of MacDonald's Song to Summer; a large portion of his Moladh Moraig; much of Coire Cheathaich by MacIntyre, and a large portion of his Beinn Dorain. In these poems there are scarcely any words to be found borrowed from English, and in this respect they form a strong contrast to all that has been published of the works of Scoto-Gaelic poets who flourished from the fifteenth century down to the present day. We find the word *puthar*, power, in the songs of MacMhuirich, Clanranald's bard, who lived in the seventeenth century. In the songs of Mari, nighean Alastair Ruaidh (Mary, daughter of Alexander Roy) MacLeod of MacLeod's bard, we find the English corruptions, *purpas*, purpose; *subsaint*, substance; and yet her songs are, and justly, allowed to be written in very pure Gaelic. The peacock figures as a simile also in one of her songs. In the poems of John MacDonald, usually styled *Iain lom* (bare-faced John, from his beardless face and impudence), who lived in the time of Montrose in the seventeenth century, we meet with the words Lieutenant, Lady Murray, Whitehall, adbhansa, *advance*; geard, *guard*. In the songs of MacMhaighstir Alastair, who took an active part on the side of Prince Charles in 1745, we find the words standard--moision, *motion*; canain, *cannon*. In MacIntyre, who lived at the same time with MacDonald, we meet with the words coitseachan, *coaches*; deasput, *dispute*; phairti, *party*. Such words are not to be found in the traditional poems ascribed to Ossian, or in those other pieces which belong to the same class. But yet in every-day conversation nowadays, we find such words as *chorner*, corner; *ghig*, gig; *dhisturbadh*, disturbing; *phortmnanteau*, *trunk*, *steamboat*, *railroad*, *story*, *confoundadh*, *drainadh*, *chaidsigeadh*, catching, and hundreds of other distorted English words which hardly ever find their way into the old ballads, though constantly used by the people who repeat them. Here then is a strong contrast between these ancient poems, and the works of those who have been considered the best bards of the Highlands for the last three centuries.[405]

[405] It is to be remarked that the published Ossian, and the whole of the suspected class, are also entirely free from any such words, though the construction of the language is different from that of the ballads.--J. F. C.

In comparing these ballads with the compositions of the more modern bards, the dignified simplicity of the language of the former becomes quickly apparent. Although their language, so far as regards inflection and structure, is modern, yet there are words and phrases which appear to be more ancient, and which are now obsolete, and these, as well as the absence of English corruptions, distinguish them from all other Scoto-Gaelic poetry; and with regard to peculiar phrases, and curious antiquated words and expressions, they strongly resemble the popular Gaelic tales.

The offensive weapons described are spears, “cranntabhaill” swords, and darts; there is hardly an allusion to bows and arrows; few to agriculture, to bread, corn, or to any kind of food, connected with an agricultural life. The food described is the produce of the chase. Deer and boars, and some species of deer which does not now exist, and which is supposed to be the elk, “Lon,” are the animals generally hunted; and dogs are the only domestic animals frequently mentioned.[406]

These are mentioned with as much affection as Byron’s dog--that animal, so faithful and so true to man, which has never been convicted either of treachery, insincerity, or ingratitude. Byron, Campbell, and the traditional Ossian agree in this. The events related are at times probable, at others improbable or impossible; at times superhuman, at others human, which evidently tends to shew that these poems unite many periods, and that probably they have embodied the substance of more ancient poems. At times huge giants and weapons are mentioned, such as--

Bha seachd troidhean arm air liad,
‘S ochd troidhe diag air fad ann.

Seven feet was he in breadth,
And in length he was eighteen feet.

A remarkable feature in these poems is the magnanimity and gallantry which distinguish their heroes, though mixed with much barbarism and fierceness. There is fair play given to the enemy; and when he is not fighting with them, he is invited to their feast; if he falls in battle he is honourably buried, and receives credit for his bravery; his memory is cherished, esteemed, and loved, for his valorous deeds. Women are always protected and treated with courtesy; nor is there the least hint given that they were either kept in bondage, or doomed to slavery; on the contrary, their wishes seem to have been considered as something to be gratified, but never to be contradicted; and yet some of the women who repeat such poems work hard as field labourers, and the men are of the poorest classes.

In their ballads the incidents are few, but elevated, and the narration flows along in an easy, simple, but dignified strain. No tedious verbosity mars or interrupts the vigorous character of the poetic stream. Rapidity seems to have been the chief aim of the ancient bards, and the action rolls along like the impetuous torrents of their own mountain country. There is no vagueness, no mistiness, no obscurity; the action is as vividly clear to the mind’s eye as the landscape is to the eye itself on a bright summer day. The introduction is always abrupt and simple, and this is the character of mostly all Scoto-Gaelic poetry; for in this manner all known Gaelic bards, learned and unlearned, begin their songs and lays. They invoke neither spirits or muses, but begin at once. If these ballads do not abound in long sentimental speeches, still genuine touches of true feeling are to be found most exquisitely and tersely expressed. In a warlike age the passions are strong, and not often under proper restraint.

[406] In this, the suspected Ossian resembles the traditional ballads from which it is supposed to have been taken.--J. F. C.

Strong attachments and resentments belong to the men of such an age. They are by turns fiercely cruel and nobly generous, but both their cruelty and their generosity are manifested in acts rather than in words. That sentimentalism which is rich in words and poor in deeds was but little known in those days. There is a sentimentalism which is after all but a poor shadowy substitute for genuine feeling. It showers oceans of tears on distress, but will not move a hand to relieve it; it gives soft and commiserating words to the needful, but clings firmly to its gold and silver; it pities in sighs, but not in sovereigns. Sterne wrote the *Sentimental Journey*, and lamented in dolorous strain over a dead ass, but he allowed his poor old mother to pine away in prison, and advanced not a stiver to procure her liberty. Though these lays are void of this tinsel, they possess what is really more valuable--truthful delineation of human nature, of lofty bravery, and of true and real feeling. Popular poetry has no morbid sentiment, and the people are kind to each other.

Besides the ballads, which form part of what is usually called "*Eachdraidh na Féinne*," the, history of the Feinn, there are numerous traditional ballads and scraps of poetry similar to them in character, which treat of giants, enchantments, and supernatural deeds; some which treat of fairies, and fairy lovers; some of the loves of men and women. Short passages, stanzas, and lines of poetry, ascribed to Ossian, are even still recited through a great many parts of the Highlands, and tales about the Feinn, interspersed with verse, are yet to be heard in many districts from old men. There are very few old Highlanders that cannot even now say something about Fionn and his heroes; how they fought and died. Proverbs, old sayings, and puzzles, are connected with their names. A proverb, which is heard at almost all convivial Highland meetings, is "*Cha do dhi-chuimhnich Fionn fear a dheas laimh riamh*," Fionn never forgot his right hand man. Rocks, hills, streams, and places are called after the Feinne. Surnames are derived from them; such as MacDhiarmaid, the son of Diarmaid; MacGhill Fhaolan, the son of the servant of Faolan (MacLellan); MacGhill Earragain, the son of the servant of Earragan (MacLergan); MacOisean, the son of Oisean; MacCuinn, the son of Conn (MacQueen); and generally the Feinne and their exploits pervade all Celtic Scotland and all Gaelic tradition.

If these poems be not ancient in substance, how is it that they differ so widely from the works of the best of the modern Scoto-Gaelic bards? How is it that they have not mixed up with other songs and poems? How is it that guns, powder, and modern dresses have not crept in? How is it that we have no lieutenants, captains, and colonels, dukes, marquises, and earls amongst the Feinn? How is it that we have none of the scriptural allusions and quotations which are scattered so plentifully through the works of Gaelic poets in general? How is it that we have nothing new in the ballads, while prose tales have altered with the age? We might expect that modern poets would have armed Fionn with a musket, or culverin; or even have made him and his followers use cannon. I heard a story told of Fergus the First, king of Scotland, in Barra, in which that ancient monarch was armed with a gun; strange that the Barra people never thought of arming Fionn and Diarmaid with one a-piece, more especially as these warriors are much more popular in that island than Fergus the First.

Much of the groundwork of these ballads, as well as the substance of many Fenian tales and traditions, are embodied in the Gaelic Ossian published from MacPherson's manuscript, but there everything has undergone an entire change. We have no longer the simplicity of the traditional poems; smoothness of versification is almost entirely wanting, and the idiom of the language is every now and then violated. Inversions abound, such as we find in learned English poetry, and words are so wrenched out of their general meaning, as to be unintelligible to the generality of Highlanders; but while this is the case, there are but few ancient or obsolete words. In this respect this Gaelic contrasts with that of traditional ballads. The difficulty of understanding the epic poems does not lie in ancient forms of speech, or in

old obsolete words, but in the strange liberty that is taken with words by using them in quite a new way, and in arranging them in a manner that is incomprehensible to those whose native language the Gaelic is, unless they happen to know English, or some classical tongue. In many lines the words only are Gaelic; the structure has nothing to do with that language. The sentences may be English, or Latin, or Greek, may, in fact, be specimens of a new universal language, but they are not Gaelic. Vagueness and obscurity abound everywhere, and like the darkness of night which makes hills and dales appear like lofty mountains and deep ravines, these poems impress a person, before he has examined what he has been reading, with something akin to sublimity. Some lines prove to be nonsense when closely examined. Bad grammar and violated idiom abound everywhere. Adjectives of more than one syllable are placed before substantives, which is much the same as if we were to say in English, “There is a horse beautiful; O what a house elegant!”

Heroes always drink out of shells, lead a hunting life, and address one another more like modern sages than barbarians. A teacher of ethics could not be more sententious or moralizing than they are.

“Màile” for mail is a frequent term, but it is a mere English corruption; *luireach* is the Gaelic word. On reading a line, containing this word, to an acquaintance, he understood it to mean *màl*, the bag of the bagpipes. This word does not occur in the popular poems, and is hardly known to Highlanders in general, in the sense in which it is used here. Endless passages might be quoted to illustrate the preceding statements.

In Carthonn, page 55, occurs the line--

“Tri giubhais ag aomadh o’n torr.”

This is exactly what might occur to a person translating the English expression “three firs,” but no name of any species of wood is ever used in Gaelic to designate a tree; we must say--

“Tri craobha giubhais,” three fir trees, and so with other trees. It is bad Gaelic to say--

“An cluaran glas air chrom. nan càrn.”

The green thistle on the bend of the cairns; for “crom” is never used as a substantive, and means “bent.”

“Mall ag aomadh mu uaigh an t-seòid.”

(Slow inclining about the grave of the hero) is bad Gaelic. “*Mall*” in this line would require “*gu*” before it to make it an adverb, and good Gaelic.

“Tha mo chlaidheamh crith mhosgladh gu cheann.”

My sword is shaking waking to its hilt. This line, as printed, is nonsense, but the idea of a sword quivering and awaking is good, and a small change would make the line Gaelic.

In “*Gaol nan daoine*,” page 75, the following line occurs:--

“Gu Selma nan lan-bhroilleach òigh.”

“Lan-bhroilleach” is here placed before the substantive, which is incorrect, and very bad Gaelic; the term is altogether very awkward, for were we to say, “nan òigh làn-bhroilleach,” it might convey the meaning of a maiden full of breasts, instead of full-breasted; but there is a Gaelic expression commonly used to convey the idea intended.

“Dh’ aom a shleagh ri carraig nan cos” is bad.

“Aom” implies motion into an inclined position, and this line means “his spear toppled towards the rock of crannies,” not “his spear leant against a mossy rock,” which the context shews was the intended meaning.

In p. 108 of Fingal occurs the line--

“Cuchullin nan gorm-bhallach sgiath.”

Cuchullin of the shields blue spotted, which arrangement of words violates Gaelic idiom.

Duan 4th, p. 264 of Tighmora--

“Thainig i le suilibh caoin,
A measg chiabh a bha taomadh gu trom.”

“She came with mild eyes among locks that were pouring out heavily.” These lines make no sense either in English or in Gaelic, but they are intended to describe mild eyes amongst *flowing* locks.

Tighmora Duan 7, p. 507-

“Tha ‘n speur an losgadh nan reul,” means--

“The sky is in the burning of the stars,” but is probably intended to mean that the sky is *in a blaze* with stars.

Carthonn, p. 63.

“Chunnaic oigh Dan uchd glana na tréin,” means--

“The maiden of the clean chests saw the heroes.”

“Thaom iadsa’ chéile ‘s a’ bhlàr,” means, to a modern Highland ear, “They poured themselves out into each other in the battle.”

These are a few examples of passages which seem to me obscure, improper, or nonsensical; they might be multiplied considerably.

The language of the printed Ossian of 1807 differs entirely from that of the traditional ballads now ascribed to Ossian; it differs entirely from that of other published Scoto-Gaelic poetry, except Dr. Smith’s Sean Dana, Mordubh, and a few other pieces published by Gillies, Stewart, MacCallum, etc., and the language appears to be more tinged with foreign idioms even than Sean Dana, or any other Gaelic publication which I have read, Mordubh and some modern translations from English only excepted; it differs entirely from Gaelic as spoken at present in the Highlands; and it differs entirely from that of the Irish Ossianic poems which have been published by the Irish Ossianic Society. All these have a common bond, a common idiom, a common structure, though they differ in minutiae, and the common general idiom is seldom violated by any of these.

Lastly, the Gaelic of 1807 differs from any specimens of ancient Gaelic which I have seen, but, there are some passages in it which strike me as good specimens of Gaelic and of poetry.

On examining other Gaelic poetry which has been published, it will be observed that it undergoes a gradual change in character from the more modern to the more ancient. The style and language alter as poems recede from the present day, and as it may be of some interest to the English reader to know something of this class of Gaelic poetry, it may not be out of place to give a short account of some few of the best known bards, and of a few of their works which bear upon Ossian.

We have Gaelic bards even in our own day, and these describe the life and manners which they observe around them-the dress, arms, food, drink and habits of the day. Peasant bards are by no means extinct in the Highlands, and if their composition be not poetry of any great merit, they generally contain good sense and sprightly humour couched in pretty smooth verse. Almost every Highland district has even yet a bard who enjoys a fair amount of renown in his own neighbourhood, and among his own class. Hector Boyd, who narrated to me so many tales, is reputed a bard in Barra; in North Uist, Christian Macdonald, of whom I received several tales, is highly esteemed as a poetess. I was recommended to call on a man near Stornoway who is rather famous in Lewis, and whose name reached me even in Barra, a hundred miles away I know some even in my own neighbourhood in Islay though I have been told somewhere that Islay never produced a bard. To this I replied, that probably that was because the calling was not now respected there; as a proverb current in the island would lead us to infer:--

"Bàrd, a's ceàrd, a's filidh."

A bard, a tinker, and a musician, which is the meaning of these words in Islay now.

In examining the works of modern Gaelic bards, we find that figures and phrases, nay entire verses, have been, considered common property. The same similes and phrases are used by all; and sometimes a new song is but an old one with new names and a few alterations. An old song seems to have been considered good material for a new one, exactly as the stones of an old house are taken to erect another, and Druidical circles are broken up to make farm-steadings.

It was quite a custom in the Highlands, and that not long ago, to meet for the purpose of composing, verses. These were often satirical, and any one who, happened not to be popular, was fixed upon for a subject. Each was to contribute his stanza, and whoever failed to do his part was fined. Whenever a verse happened to be composed that was pretty smooth and smart, it took well, as might be expected, and spread far and wide like ill-natured satire elsewhere. An exact counterpart of this custom prevailed among the ancient Icelanders, many of whom were descended from men: who emigrated from the islands where the custom still survives. The Burning of "Njal," whose name is now a common one in the Highlands, and is pronounced nearly according to the English value of these letters, took place in 1011, and many of the tragical events recorded in the "Njal Saga" grew out of a ballad composed and sung at a meeting of neighbours in the house of Gunnar of Litherende.[407]

Stanzas were at times added to old songs, and others were altered, but such alterations were not often successful, as old men and knowing critics objected. It was only when they possessed superior merit that they passed current; but as the Highlanders have a great veneration for their old ballads, any alterations made upon *them* gave offence, and were rejected with indignation. This spirit must have helped to preserve these.

Recent Gaelic songs describe the manners of our own times, the dresses, arms, and professions of the day, but allude to past ages, and often mention the Feinne as well-known heroes.

Among the latest bards, some of whose work have been published in the "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," is DONALD MACDONALD, who was born in Strathmore, Ross-shire, in the year 1780, and who died of cholera in 1832. Two of his songs only are published, one to Napoleon Buonaparte, and another to his sweetheart. In the song to his sweetheart, figure the

[407] Story of Burnt Njal, vol. i., 136.

words *parson* and *seisoin*. It is full of amorous sentiment; he must die without his sweetheart; the silver of Europe and the gold of Egypt would not avail without her.

The song to Buonaparte begins in rather a lofty strain; the bard stands on the pavement of Edinburgh and sees the banners flaming in the sun; he hears the guns, and he stays listening to them; he hears the echo of the rocks replying to them with joy; he hears music in every house; he sees bonfires on the hills. It is heard from the *gasaidean* (gazettes), read everywhere, that Buonaparte had to fly. Righ Deorsa, Cæsar and his legions, the most of the Highland clans, the ten plagues of Egypt, Fontenoi, Morair Hundaidh, Diuc Earraghael, Diuc Mhontrose, Hanobher, chomannda (command), retreat, are names and words that embellish this modern Gaelic lay.

ALEXANDER MACKINNON is another bard that was nearly contemporary with the preceding. He was born in Morar, Arisaig, in the year 1770, served in the 92d regiment, and fought in the battle of Alexandria, where he received three severe wounds, which disabled him for any future service. He died at Fort-William in 1814, at the age of 44. His songs are composed on the army, and on the battles fought between the French and British. He is extremely fluent in language, and his verse is very smooth. He seems to have been desirous of writing pure Gaelic, and avoiding English words; for Sydney Smith is called Mac a Ghobha, Smith's son; but for all that we have *comisari*. He compares Abercrombie to Fionn--not Fingal:

"Mar Fhionn a' mosgladh sluaigh,"
Like Fionn arousing hosts.

The names Alexandria, Aboukir, Abercrombie, occur. Sasunn, England, is mentioned as a place,

"Far am faigh sin leann am pailteas."
Where we shall get ale in plenty.

The poet describes the shock of battle with graphic vividness, and speaks like an eye-witness.

The style of EWAN MACLACHLIN, though he was classically educated, and composed in four languages, does not differ much from that of the other Gaelic bards; whom he seems to imitate closely. Though he helped to prepare the Gaelic Ossian for the press, and transcribed many old manuscripts into the Roman hand, he has taken very good care, not to imitate the Gaelic of the Ossian of 1807, in the least, in his songs. These are composed in pure and beautiful Gaelic; though, like the most of the Gaelic bards, he indulges in excess of epithets, many of his lines consisting of strings of adjectives or adverbs. *Phœbus*, *Bhenus* and Eolus lent their aid to the well-instructed classical Gaelic bards, as they do to the classical bards of other countries. Though the poet apparently has endeavoured to keep English out as much as possible, still he has failed, for a few English words have entered, such as *pacar*, will be packed; *sign*, for one of the signs of the Zodiac.

JOHN SHAW, Loch Nell's bard, was born 1758, and died 1828. Among his songs is one to Fionnla Marsanta, Finlay the merchant, who seems to have had some antiquarian taste and who dug up some old Druidical burying places, Carn nan Druidhneach, the Druid's Cairn. Of this act the poet expresses his disapprobation, and denounces Finlay for his conduct in very bitter words. There is a song to Buonaparte, whom the bard defies in strong language, enumerating the brave soldiers that were to meet him on British ground, and telling the hero of Marengo how he was to be treated; by--

"Na shracas t-eanchainn agus t-fheoil,"
Those who will rend thy brain and thy flesh.

A very pretty love song is also amongst his compositions.

We have in the song of Finlay a description of blasting rocks with gunpowder, which seems to have a double meaning.

“Bhi cuir fudair anns na creagan,
Chuireadh e eagal air bòcain
Bhi gan tolladh leis an tora,
‘S bhi gan sparradh leis na h-òrdan.”

“Putting powder into rocks,
It would terrify the bogles
To bore them with the jumper,
To be driving them with hammers.”

Tobacco comes in also--

“Tha Dughall trom air an tombaca.”
Dugald is heavy on the tobacco.

The narrators of stories and reciters of verses in the Highlands are generally fond of the weed; one storyteller makes a raven chew tobacco; but no reciter of Fenian poetry ever makes Fionn, Diarmaid, or Goll use the weed in any shape. The following English corruptions occur in the songs of this bard--bhaigeir (beggar); bhlastidh (blasting), fudair (powder), reisimeid (regiment), volunteers; and the dress of the volunteers of that period is concisely and graphically described. Boinneidean, bonnets; cotaichean sgarlaid, scarlet coats; suaicheantas an righ, the king’s arms; cocard de dh’ ite ‘n eoin, cockade of the bird’s feather; and this is a true description of the dress of that period.

There is an allusion to a well-known weapon of a preceding age which had fallen into disuse, to the poet’s regret;--for he says--

“‘S na ‘m biodh againn mar bu dual duinn,
Lann chinn Ilich air ar cruachain,
A sgoltadh an ceann gan guaillean,
Ga ‘m bualadh le smuais nan dorn.”

O had we as we ought to have
Islay-hilted blades upon our thighs,
Could cleave their heads down to the chin,
To smite them with the pith of fists.

ALLAN MACDOUGALL, Ailean dall, was born 1750, and died 1829. One of his songs is to Glengary, “Luchd bhreacan an fheilidh.” Those of the tartan dresses (now called belted plaids) are mentioned as those that would rise with Glengary their chief. “Fuaim fheadan,” the sound of chanters, and “binneas theud,” the melody of strings, are mentioned as pleasing to the chief, who therefore enjoyed pipe music, and that of stringed instruments. In his songs to the shepherds, who were not favourites with the poet, he says of them that they have a Lowland screech in their throats crying after their dogs, and earnestly desires to keep them out, and not let their nose in, the reason being given in the following lines:--

Bho nach cluinnear aca *stori*,
Ach craicinn agus cloimh ga reic,
Cunntadh na h-aimsir, ‘s gach uair
Ceannach nan uan mu ‘n teid am breith.”

Since no tale is heard with them,
But of skins and wool to sell,
Telling the seasons and every weather,
Buying the lambs before they are born.

This, then, was not an age of pastoral Gaelic poetry, and the poet seems to have foreseen what has happened.

The poet has a song to whisky also, in which he dwells on the wonderful virtues of that drink like a man who likes it. “It is delightful music to hear its murmur coming out of the stoup, heaping the cuach; excellent to excite to dancing in the winter time; it would make an old man hold up his head; it will make a soldier of the coward; it will bring out conversation at meeting and assembling; it is an unblundering physician; the children of the Gael have no disease or ailment that it will not heal.” But there is another song composed to drunkenness, in which the serious effects of the favourite cordial are very feelingly expressed. The whole drinking bout is delineated with great animation. The man loses his strength; his sight fails; coming home in the dark he falls on his back in the midden. Morning brings disgrace; his breast is in flames, the rest carrying him home, believing all the time he was strong; till at last he had lost his wits. After this come reflections on the folly of drinking and of emptying the purse. So modern Gaelic bards have been given to moralizing, and jollity, war, and love-making, but so far there is nothing in their compositions like the Fenian ballads, or the sentimental poems concerning their heroes whose authors are unknown.

WILLIAM ROSS was born in- Broadford, parish of Strath, Isle of Skye, 1762; and died in 1790. He was grandson, by the mother’s side, to another celebrated bard, known as the blind piper. At school he studied the classical languages, and in his songs the polish of the man of education may be traced, as his style is refined and cultivated, though remarkably natural and easy. The reader may perceive, without much difficulty, that he exerted his utmost endeavour to write his native language with purity and elegance. In his poetry we trace something like the gay, amorous strain of Moore, though not his richness of fancy; the spirit of the classical poets may be readily traced in his verses. Some passages in his love songs are real gems, the force of the following lines could not easily be rendered in translation:--

Tha deirge ‘s gile,
Co-mhire gleachdanaich,
Na gnùis ghil éibhinn
Rinn ceudan airtneulach.”

The following gives the idea, but the spirit is gone:--

“In her fair blythesome face, which has made hundreds long and grieve for love, the red and white are sporting with each other, and gently struggling for mastery.”

The Gaelic diminutives, which make this verse so pretty, have no English equivalents.

He composed an elegy on the death of Prince Charles, whom he calls “An suaithneas bàn,” the white badge. This elegy shows how deep the feeling of attachment to that unfortunate scion of an unfortunate house, had sunk into the hearts of the poet and his countrymen. The following are a couple of stanzas from this pathetic poem:--

Nis cromaidh na cruitearan grinn
Am barraibh dhos fo sprochd an cinn;
Gach beò bhiodh ann an strath na ‘m beinn
A’ caoidh an co’-dhosgainn leinn.
Tha gach beinn gach cnoc, ‘s gach sliabh,

Air am faca sinn thu triall,
Nis air call an dreach ‘s am fiamh,
O nach tig thu chaoidh nan cian.”

Now the sweet lyrists will bow
Their heads on the tree-tops in woe;
All that live on hill or plain
Their common loss with us bewail.
Every hill, and mount, and moor,
Upon which we saw thee move,
Now have lost their sheen and beauty,
For thou wilt not come back for aye.

This differs widely from the spirit and metre of Ossian, both traditional and published.

The Highland dress is a favourite theme with Ross, as with other Gaelic bards. In a song, which fits the music of a reel, he rejoices over the Act of Parliament which repealed the Act forbidding the national costume, and gives a glimpse of Highland manufactures, which still survive in spite of spinning jennies. He says-

Thainig fasan anns an Achd
A dh’ ordaich pailt am féileadh;
Tha éridh air na breacanan
Le farum treun neo-lapanach.
Bidh oighean thapaidh sniomh ‘s a dath,
Gu h-éibhinn ait le uaill;
Gach aon diu ‘g eideadh a gaoil fein
Mar ‘s réidh le’ anns gach uair.”

A fashion has come with the Act
That ordered kilts in plenty;
There’s raising of the tartan plaid
With dexterous busy noise.
Smart maidens now will spin and dye,
With mirth and fun and pride;
Each one adorning her own true love
As always is her joy.

This bard has also a song to whisky, and another to “Macnabracha,” the son of malt. Whisky is drink, par excellence, which would raise the mind to politeness; and not “druaib na Frainge,” the trash of France, by which he means wine; it will make the maidens speak, however modest; it will put gentleness in the boy; it will make the carl amorous. An t-Olla MacIain, Dr. Johnson, according to the bard, took a glass of it himself, notwithstanding his Greek and Latin, and thereby impaired the power of his tongue.

“Dh’ fhàg mac na bracha e gun lide,
Na amadan liotach dall.”

Mac malt has made him speechless,
A thick-speaking blinded fool.

Classical names are interspersed through all his compositions, while Greek and Roman deities are favourites. Phœbus gilds the mountains, Flora covers each hill and dale with flowers; his sweethearts have all the qualities of Diana; Cupid throws his arrows with a lavish hand, the flames excited by the love-god are to be quenched only by yielding to Venus and

Apollo; and the nine play their part. But English corruptions are not to be found, and the Gaelic is very pure and correct. Ross is not so profuse in epithets as the other poets, but he has enough to be in character with them.

DUNCAN MACINTYRE was born in Glenorchy 1724, and died in Edinburgh in 1812. The first of his ballads is composed to the battle of Falkirk, fought between the royal forces and the Highlanders who joined Prince Charles. The battle is described with very great graphic power; and though the bard fought upon the royal side, it is evident, from his song, that the Prince, and those who followed him, had a warm corner in his heart. His own flight, and that of his party, is told so as to lead us to think that he was not at all displeased with the result. "As a dog," he tells us, "chases sheep while they are running down the face of a glen,[408] so were they scattered on our side;" the horse of the enemy were well shod, well bridled, and marked out for murder. Moreover, be tells us also--

"Bha ratreud air luchd na Beurla;
'S ann daibh fein a b' éiginn teicheadh."

The outlandish speakers retreated;
It was they who had to flee.

Another song of his is composed to the musket, in which he personifies that weapon, calling it his sweetheart, and enumerating all its good qualities. "Seonaid" (Janet) is her name, and "George" is her grandfather. In Gaelic there are but two genders, so that every inanimate object is personified in ordinary speech, hence formal personification is seldom found in the poetry of the language. The poet tells that he scours his musket himself, and puts oil on it; that he puts it to his eye, and that it will not miss fire; it will keep him in drink in the alehouses, and it will pay each stoup that he buys; it will keep him in clothes and linen; so that he may lay the cares of the world aside.

One of the longest of his pieces is "Beinn Dorain," which is very much admired. It imitates a pibroch, and the stanzas vary exactly as the pibroch does; some of them being in a slow, and others in a quick measure. The poet is very happy in his verse, which is exceedingly smooth and fluent. This poem is entirely descriptive. Whatever is interesting about this mountain, which gained so much of his admiration, is given with great minuteness. The wood, the deer, the hunt, the wild flowers, and herbs, are portrayed with great vividness; still there is an excess of epithets, which is tedious. MacDonald composed a piece of the same kind previous to this, which Macintyre has imitated; but, in fact, the measure is but a mere extension of the poetical parts of the long heroic tales which were in those days, and still are, so abundant in every district of the Highlands. The measured prose of those tales resembles a pibroch, as may be seen by glancing at the tale of "The Slim Swarthy Champion," W. H. Tales, vol. i. "Coire cheathaich" is a beautiful descriptive poem, full and circumstantial, but less tedious than Beinn Dorain.

The following specimen will give an idea of this species of poetry, though translation cannot convey the original vigour of the reader:--

"Tha bradan tarra-gheal 's a' choire gharbhlaich,
Tha tigh'n o'n fhairge bu ghailbheach tonn;
Le luinneis mheamnach a' ceapadh mheanbh-chuileag,
Gu neo-chearbach le cham-ghob crom;
Air bhuinne borb, is e leum gu foirmeil;
'Na eideadh colgail bu ghorm-glas druim;

[408] This idea also occurs in measured prose in the tale of Murdoch MacBrian.

Le shoillsean airgid, gu h-iteach, meana-bhreac
Gu lannach, dearg-bhallach, earr-gheal sliom."

There's a white-bellied salmon in the rough grassy corry,
Coming from the sea of the wild raging waves;
With stalwart leapings catching the little flies,
Unfailingly, with his bent crook'd nose.
In the raging current as he leaps so cheerily,
In his gallant array of the blue-gray back,
With his silvery spangles well finned, and fine spotted,
Scale-i-ly, red-spotted, white-tailed, and slim.

This is genuine Gaelic poetry of a man who could read nature, though he could not read books; and his countrymen have done well to erect a monument to Duncan Macintyre near his favourite glens, at the head of Loch Awe.

In one of his love songs is the expression "Deud gheal *iobhraidh*," white ivory teeth; while his own occupation of huntsman is portrayed for us in the following lines:--

"Mharbhainn duit geòidh,
A's ròin, a's eala,
'S na h-eòin air bharraibh nan geug."

I'd kill for thee geese,
And seals, and the swan,
And the birds on the tops of the twigs.

In his song to the Black Highland Watch, in which the bard beautifully delineates the exploits of that regiment, they are mentioned as dressed-

"Le 'n osanan breaca
'S le 'm breacana 'n fhéil,"

with chequered hose and with belted plaids; armed with "glas lann," gray blade; "'s an dag," and the pistol,

"Gan tearmunn nan sgéith,"
Without protection of shields,

"Le 'n gunnacha glana,"
With their glancing guns,

"Spoir ur air an teannadh
Gu daingeann nan gleus,"

new flints tightened firmly in their locks; biodagach, daggered; fudarach, supplied with powder; adharcach, supplied with powder-horns;[409] so he describes the dresses which he saw; but, yet, in a song composed in praise of the Marquis of Breadalbane, occur the lines--

"'S tu thog na ciadan
A shliochd nam Fianntan;"

It is thou who hast raised hundreds
Of the offspring of the Fenians;

[409] These words made into English of the same construction, do not convey the meaning. "Daggery, powdery, horny," would be absurd in English poetry, but they are the words in Gaelic.--J. F. C.

from which it appears that the poet considered his countrymen to be the descendants of the Ossianic heroes.

He has a song to breeches, in which he complains sadly of being obliged to wear them; the tightness about the knees he considers extremely inconvenient.

“Putanan na glùinean,
As bucalan gan dùnadh,”

Buttons in its knees,
And buckles enclosing them.

Like Ross, Macintyre rejoiced at having the dress of his country restored, and at being no longer obliged to wear-

Cota ruigeadh an t-sàil,
Cha tigeadh e daicheil duinn.”

A coat that would reach the heel
It would not become us well.

Chuir sinn a’ bhrigis air làr,
‘S cha d’ thig i gu bràth a cùil.”

We have laid down the “breegis” on earth,
She will never come out of the nook.

Then comes something more agreeable--

“Osan nach ceangail ar ceum,
‘S nach ruigeadh mar reis an glùn.”

Hose that bind not our stride,
That reach not the knee by a span.

The Highland dress is a principal theme with all the bards that flourished at the same period with Macintyre. They grieve deeply for being deprived of it; praise it as the finest, the most becoming, and the most convenient of all garbs. Breeches, black hats, and long coats, are made the subjects of keen satire; and the bard taxes all his wits to make the lowland dress the most ludicrous and the most contemptible that can be conceived. Like other poets of the same period Macintyre composed bacchanalian songs, mostly in praise of whisky, but there is one to brandy, from which it appears that the Gaelic poet by no means coincided with Burns in his opinion of this drink, for he does not call it burning trash, but praises it.

In his “Moladh Dhun-Eideann,” the praise of Edinburgh, the appearance of the city, and the dress of the period, are described by the poet in his happiest manner,--

“‘S iomadh fleasgach nasal ann
A bha gu suairce, grinn:
Fudar air an gruagan,” etc.

Of the ladies he says--

“*Stoise* air na h-ainnirean
Gan teannachadh gu h-ard.”

“Buill mhais air eudainn bhoidheach.”

“Brog bhiorach, dhionach, chothromach,
‘S bu chorrach leam a sàil.”

Many a gentle youth was there
That was polite and kind,
Powder upon their hair, etc.

———

Stays upon the demoiselles,
To tighten them above.

———

Beauty spots on pretty faces.

———

Shoe pointed, tight and elegant,
And tottering seemed the heel.

There is no gas mentioned, for there was none; but what there was the bard tells--

“Bidh lochrainn ann de ghloineachan,
A ‘s coinneal anns gach ait.”

There will be lanterns of glasses there,
And a candle in every place.

“Clous na Parlamaid”--the Parliament Close--occurs.

So Macintyre described what he saw, in good Gaelic verse, which fits the music of his time, and alluded to the Ossianic heroes as to something well known to everything, though of a past age.

ROBERT MACKAY, a native of Sutherland, usually called *Rob donn*, Brown-haired Robert, was born in the year 1714, and died 1778. His Gaelic is full of English words, but there is no trace of English idiom. Among his songs is one in praise of Prince Charles, in which the prince is compared to Solomon in wisdom, to Samson in strength of hands, and to Absalom in beauty. There is a song, but not one of praise, to long black coats, “Oran nan casagan dubha.” Mackay is one of the keenest of Gaelic satirical poets. The following English corruptions are found in his songs--*line*, parlamaid (parliament), pension, sergent, *chomision* (commission), *choilair* (collar), gabharment (government), *prise* (prize), *strainsearan* (strangers), *tric* (trick), *ranc* (rank), *fhine* (fine), bhataillean (battalion), election, *chomrad* (comrade). While all these English words have crept into this bard’s composition, his Gaelic is, at the same time, strictly grammatical and idiomatic. The only allusion to the Feinn in his songs, is in the case of a servant whom he has nick-named Faolan, but that is enough to shew that he knew about the Feinne.

LACHLAN MACPHERSON of STRATHMASIE, was born in the year 1723, and died in the latter end of the eighteenth century. Four songs of his are published in the “Beauties of Gaelic Poetry,” and some are in Gillies. One is a lament for Hugh MacPherson of Cluny; one is a coarse satire on drunkenness; another, called “A’ Bhanais Bhàn, “ the white wedding, is a very humorous song, in which a newly-married couple, well advanced in years, are the subject; another to breeches, is rather indelicate. The language of MacPherson is entirely free from English words or corruptions; it is pure, grammatical, and idiomatic, whatever the ideas may be. The character of his poetry is that of the other popular bards, and bears not the least resemblance to that of the Ossian of 1807. In his lament, to Cluny he introduces the nine muses. The following is a specimen of his verse, from the White Wedding--

Labhair fear na bainse féin,
Tha dath airgeid oirnn gu léir;

Ciod an cron tha oirnn fo'n ghréin
Mar dean fear beurra rann oirnn?"

The bridegroom he spoke up himself,
We are all of a silvery hue;
What ails us beneath the sun,
Unless a ribald rhyme us?

It is said that a copy of the seventh book of Temora, in Gaelic, still exists in the handwriting of this bard, with all manner of corrections written in. The Gaelic of the seventh book, as published, is very different indeed from Strathmashie's songs, and it is hard to believe that he was the author of Ossian. There is no peculiarity in the idiom of the songs to countenance this theory, which has been adopted by many.

JOHN MACCODRUM was noted in his day for his knowledge of the Fenian poems. Sir James MacDonald of Sleat, in a letter to Dr. Blair of Edinburgh, dated Isle of Skye, 10th October 1763, says of him., "I have heard him repeat, for hours together, poems which seemed to me to be the same with MacPherson's translations."

MacPherson met him on his way to Benbecula, and asked him, "Am bheil dad agad air an Fheinn?" This mode of putting the question is fully as ambiguous as many passages of the Gaelic Ossian of 1807, for it may mean either, Do the Feinn owe thee anything? or, Dost thou know anything about them? The bard considered. it a fit subject for his humour, and replied, "Cha'n 'eil, is ged do bhitheadh cha ruiginn a leas iarraidh nis." "No; and though they did (owe me anything) it would be vain to ask it now." The poet's banter rather wounded MacPherson's dignity, so he cut short the conversation and proceeded. If the people of Uist were the same race then that they are now, a collector of MacPherson's temper would have very little chance of obtaining either poems or stories, though they were as, "plentiful as blackberries in August;" for whoever expects to be, successful in getting stories there, must cultivate patience and good humour, take a joke and make one; and, if he does that, he may be assured that he can get plenty of fun, as well as wit as brilliant and sparkling as he could meet with in Green Erin, *provided he understands Gaelic*. There is a lampoon composed by this bard to the bagpipe of one Domhnull bàn, Fair-haired Donald, which is exceedingly humorous, and in which he says--

"Shearg i le tabhunn
Seachd cathan nam Fiantan."

It withered with yelping
The seven Fenian battalions.

But he says, that the Gael loved the pipes as Edinburgh people ti (tea), though this old and execrable pipe had weakened for the first time--

"Neart Dhiarmaid a's Ghuill."
The strength of Diarmaid and of Goll.

Turcaich, Turks, *Gearmailtich*, Germans, *Frangaich*, Frenchmen, figure in this bard's verses. Scripture names are frequent. The names, Righ Phrussia, King of Prussia; Troidhe, Troy; Roimhe, Rome, are also found.

So this bard noticed the small circumstances which mark the manners of his own time, such as the tea-drinking of Edinburgh, and referred to the national music of the Highlands; and to the old heroes as equally well known.

ALEXANDER MACDONALD was born in the beginning of the eighteenth century. He joined Prince Charles in 1745, and many of his songs are composed in praise of the prince and of his cause. His language is exceedingly vigorous, and his poetry is impassioned. Classical names, as well as English words, are freely used, but there is not the least trace of classical imitation in his style, which is as characteristically Gaelic as can be. His songs begin in the same abrupt, simple manner, as those of the most illiterate bards do; and, like the most illiterate of them, he is guilty of an excess of epithets. His pieces composed to nature are purely descriptive. There is one long poem, composed to a ship, remarkable for the manner in which it brings out the power of the poet, and the conspicuousness of the language. Much of this bears a strong resemblance to the description of the sailing of boats in Gaelic tales. The bagpipe he prefers to the harp, which he calls *Ceol nionag*, maiden's music. Whisky and the national garb have received his greatest attention.

Phœbus does good work for the bard, Eolus will send good strong winds, and Neptune will smooth the ocean. Mars is also busy. Venus and Dido are equalled by his beauties. Telesgop (telescope), sign Chancer, sign Thaurus, Thropic, Chapricorn, Gemini, Mars, *puimp* (pomp), are terms that occur. Bacchus does not pass without notice either, for mention is made of "Altair Bhachuis," the altar of Bacchus. Scripture names are frequent. In this respect this bard differs from those who composed the Ossianic poems.

JOHN MACKAY, usually called "Am Piobaire dall, "the Blind Piper, native of Gairloch, Ross-shire, was born in the year 1666, and died in 1754. His versification differs considerably from that of the bards of the eighteenth century being a good shade nearer to that of the Fenian poems. The language also seems to be a good deal older than that of MacDonald or his contemporaries. He makes several allusions to the Ossianic heroes

"Mar Oisian an deigh nam Fiann,"
Like Oisian after the Fiann.

"Mac righ Sorcha, sgiath nan arm,
Gur h-e b' ainm dha Maighre borb."

King of Sorcha's son, shield of the arms,
That his name was Maighre borb--

which-is a quotation from an old ballad which is still repeated.

"'S dh' imich o Fhionn a bhean fhéin; "
And his own wife went off from Fhionn;

which alludes to the story of Graidhne.

Scripture words abound, such as "Gu'm beannaiche Dia," may God bless; "beannachd Dhé," the blessing of God.

The Gaelic of this bard is idiomatic, and not a single English word is to be found in his poems. In his "Coire an Easain," are strings of epithets, which peculiarity, as has been already observed, pervades the compositions of all the known modern Gaelic bards,

The drinking vessel mentioned is *corn*, a horn, and the drink, wine, not whisky.

RODERICK MORISON, commonly called "An Clarsair dall," the Blind Harper, a native of Lewis, was born in the year 1646, and died at an advanced age. His Gaelic is altogether free from English words and idioms, but is less ancient in structure than that of Mackay, the blind piper. Drinking is mentioned, but the kind of drink is not named. The word *stóp*, stoup, occurs. The following terms relating to the Christian religion are found:--*La Caisge*, Easter

Day; "*Seachduin na Ceusda*," the week of the Crucifixion; "*Dhireadh a' Charbhais*," the end of Lent; and these mark the existence of Catholicism.

LACHLAN MACKINNON, native of Skye, flourished in the middle of the seventeenth century. His language is remarkably pure, and without the least trace of foreign idiom; nor is there an English word to be met with in his verses. In a song composed in praise of a young lady, "Diarmaid" is alluded to--

"Fhuair thu 'n iosad buaidh o Dhiarmaid,
Tha cuir ciad an geall ort."

Thou gotst in loan a gift from Diarmaid,
That puts a hundred in pledge to thee.

This alludes to the beauty spot on Diarmaid's brow, which no woman could see without loving him.

In a satirical song on a certain dagger, the following reference is made to the enchantment of the Feen, W. H. Tales (XXXVI.):--

"Bu mhath 's a' bhruthainn chaorainn i,
'S an coannag nam, fear mor;
'S e Fionn thug dh' i an latha sin,
At t-ath-bualadh na dhorn."

Good was it in the Rowan burg,
And in the big men's strife;
It was Fionn who gave it on that day,
The next stroke in his fist.

The next stanza tells how many men Fionn slew on the occasion; so the poet implies that the dirk in question was a weapon of the time of the Feinne. "Breacan" and "Feíle," tartan plaid and kilt, are mentioned as the dress worn by the Highland chiefs of the poet's time.

NEIL CURRIE, native of South Uist, was born in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and was an old man in the year 1717. In the few pieces of his which are published, we have an insight into the manners of the time. There is the word "*puthar*," from the English word power. Brandy, French wines, and wax candles, are spoken of as luxuries with which the bard was familiar at the house of his chief. Among the musical instruments mentioned, are the bagpipes and the fiddle. No allusion is made to beer or whisky.

JOHN MACDONALD, usually called Iain Lom, lived in the reigns of Charles I. and II. and died at an advanced age, about the year 1710. His language is full of English corruptions, but is fairly grammatical; yet, upon the whole, in smoothness and elegance of expression be falls far short of a great number of the other bards. As a satirist he has no rival. Scripture names are very frequent in his pieces.

MARY MACLEOD, native of Harris, was born in the year 1569, and died at the advanced age of 105. Her language and verse are remarkably fluent and easy. English words abound, but the idiom is very pure. The harp, chess, and the tales of the Feinne, are mentioned as amusements common in MacLeod's castle. The bow is spoken of as an offensive weapon then in use, while fire-arms, targets, and swords, meet with their due meed of praise. Scripture names abound.

Many old songs, by known and unknown authors, describe battle-axes and bows, and these may be referred to a period later than the Fenian period, and earlier than that of the bow. Bows and spears are mentioned together in some ballads; spears drop out, and bows are

named along with battle-axes; in others, and further on, bows, battle-axes, and firearms, are mixed up together.

The following are lines recited in Islay, and assigned by tradition to the time of the battle of Traigh Ghruineart, fought between MacLean and MacDonald in the reign of James the Sixth:--

Fhir na feusaige ruaidhe,
Gur trom do bhuille ‘s gur cruaidh e
Bhris thu leithcheannach mo thuaighe
‘S gad rinn thu sin ‘s math leam buan thu.”

Man of the russet beard,
Heavy is thy blow and hard;
Thou hast broken the broad side of my axe;
And though thou hast, long mayst thou live.

How the old Highlanders fought with axes we learn from Barbour’s Bruce, book second, in which the following expressive lines occur:--

“But the folk of the other party
Fought with axes fellyly;
For thai on fute war ever ilkane,
Thait feile off their horss has slain,
And till some guiff they wounds wid.”

An old war song exists, styled, “Prosnacha catha Chloinn Domhnuill le Lachunn, mor MacMhuirich Albanaich, la Catha Harla,” “Battle incitement of the MacDonalds, by big Lachunn, son of Albanian Muireach.” MacMhuirich or Currie was Clanranald’s bard, and this song is said to have been sung by him at the battle of Harlaw. It consists of seventeen stanzas of unequal length, and every word in each stanza begins with the same letter of the Gaelic alphabet, which has but seventeen letters. The particle *gu* is prefixed to every word, which makes them all adverbs, and so every line of the song begins with g. The Roman order of the letters is followed; that is, a, b, c, etc., which is not the same as the Oghum, or old Gaelic alphabet. The whole is a list of adverbs, excepting two lines at the beginning, and eleven at the end, expressive of various military virtues, all set to a lively quick measure.[410] The number of lines is 336.

The following is the last stanza of this curious old song:--

Gu urlamhach, gu urmhaiseach,
Gu urranta, gu uraluinn,
Gu urchleasach, gu uaibhreach,
Gu uilfheargach, gu uaillfheartach,
Gu urchoideach, gu uabhasach,
Gu urrasach, gu urramach,
Gu urloisgeach, gu uaimhshlochdach,
Gu uachdarach, gu uallach,
Gu ullamh, gu usgarach,
Gu urmhailleach, gu uchdardach,
Gu uidhirnichte, gu ughdarach,

[410] The measure is exactly that of the quick part of a piobaireachd, or pipering, called “pibroch” in English. The conclusion fits the slow ending of such pieces.

Gu upagach, gu uilefhradharcach,
Gu upairneach, gu urghleusach,
Gu urbhuilleach, gu urspealach,
Gu urlabhrach, urlamhach, urneartmhor,
Gu coisneadh na cathlarach,
Ri bruidh'ne ur biughi,
A Chlanna Chuinn cheudchathaich,
'Si nis uair ur n' aithneacha,
A chuileanan confhadhach,
A bheirichean bunanta,
A leoghuinan langhasda,
Onnchonaibh iorghuileach,
Do laochraidh chrodha, churanta,
Do chlannaibh Chuinn cheudchathaich,
A chlannaibh Chuinn cuimhnichibh,
Cruas an am na h-iorghuil."

So dexterously, so gracefully,
Intrepidly, audaciously,
So actively, so haughtily,
All-wrathfully, so yellingly,
So hurtfully, so dreadfully,
Trustworthily, honourably,
So zealously, so grave-pit-ly,
Superiorly, cheerfully,
So readily, so jewelled,
Well-mailed-ly, high-breasted-ly,
Preparedly, authoritatively,
Pushingly, all-seeing-ly,
Bustlingly, right trimmed-ly,
Well-striking-ly, well-mowing-ly,
Eloquently, dexterously, all-powerfully,
To win the field of battle,
For the telling of your glory,
Children of Conn of a hundred fights,
This now is the hour to know you,
Ye furious whelps,
Ye stout dragons,
Ye splendid lions,
Ye standards of stout battle
Of brave gallant warriors,
Of the children of Conn of the hundred fights,
Children of Conn remember
In the time of battle hardihood.

The arms used at the battle are indicated in various lines throughout the piece. It is worth remark that no fire-arms are mentioned in the Owl, which is supposed to be still older than the Battle Ode.

"Gu cuilbhaireach, gu cruaidhlannach,
Gu sgabullach, gu srolbhratach,
Gu reimeil, gu ughfheinneach,

Gu suilfhurachair, gu saighid gheur,
Gu scianach, gu spionach,
Gu scaiteach, gu sciathach,
Gu tuadhbhuilleach gu tarbhach."

So culverined, so steel bladed,
So scabbarded, so silk bannered,
So powerfully, so Feinne king like,
So knife armed, so pullingly,
So choppingly, so shieldly,
So axe blow-ly, so bull-like,
So eye-watchingly, so arrow sharp-ly.

A "CHOMHACHAG," the Owl, is an ancient piece, published in Gillies, and also in the "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry." It is attributed to one DONALD MACDONALD, a celebrated hunter, who lived before the invention of fire-arms. This piece approaches nearer to the Fenian poems in character than anything to be found in the compositions of the above-mentioned bards. In one of the stanzas, there is an allusion to the confessional

"Deansa t-fhaosaid ris an t-shagart."
Make thy confession to the priest.

The erection of a mill is spoken of as something notable:--

"'S rinn e muillean air Allt-Larach."
And he made a mill on Allt-Larach.

The hunting life is delineated with glowing enthusiasm, and the various animals of the chase, as well as domestic animals, are enumerated--"eilid," the hind; "*feidh*," deer; *laogh*, calf; *meann*, kid; *earb*, roe; *lach*, duck; *gadhair*, hounds. *Bogha*, bow, is frequently named, but no other offensive weapon. The Fenians are introduced in one line--

"Chi mi Strath-Oisein nam Fiann."
I see the Strath of Oisean of the Fiann.

Though there is a reference to drinking, no special drink is named. Among the animals, there is no mention of "*lon*," which so frequently occurs in the Fenian ballads, and which is supposed to be the elk.

In this poem we meet with much of the poetry of nature, but it is very different from that which is found in the Ossian of 1807, or in Dr. Smith's "Seann Dana" (old poems), but it is similar in kind to that which is found in the compositions of the bards already quoted, to that of the Blind Piper, of MacDonald, and of Macintyre. It is descriptive, but neither philosophical nor contemplative. Natural objects are not so much matter of speculation as of feeling. The poet speaks of them as something that he strongly loves; something to which he is strongly attached; and which he praises as he does his friends, his home, or his country. When this Gaelic bard speaks of inanimate objects, he does it like those above named, he speaks as if they were his familiar friends-we think they live, and that they are in his mind by the fireside along with him. He enumerates every beauty and excellency connected with them; not so much because he admires the beauties that he finds in them, but because he loves them. This is the species of poetry which proceeds from the Celt's strong attachment to home and country-from that feeling which makes him sigh for his native home in a foreign land, though successful in life, and surrounded with comforts-that feeling which inclines him to prefer the barren heaths, foaming cataracts, and rugged mountains of the Highlands to the fairest lands on which the sun shines.

In following the long list of Scoto-Gaelic bards from the present day to the author of "A Chomhachag" (The Owl), we find the spirit of this poetry uniform and unaltered. From Macintyre's "Coire cheathaich" (the Corrie of Mist), to "A Chomhachag" (The Owl), it is very much the same in character. The following quotation from "The Owl" will illustrate what has been said:--

"Creag mo chridhe 's a' chreag ghuanach,
Chreag an d' fhuair mi greis de m' àrach;
Creag nan aighean 's nan damh siubhlach;
A' chreag urail, aighearach, ianach.

Chreag mu'n iathadh an fhaoghait;
Bu mhiann leam a bhi ga taghal,
Nuair bu bhinn guth gallain gaodbair
A' cur gràidh gu gabhail chumhainn.

'S binn na h-iolairean mu 'bruachan;
'S binn a cuachan, 's binn a h-eala;
A's binne na sin am blaoghan
Ni an laoghan meana-bhreac, ballach."

Crag of my heart, the lightsome rock,
The rock where I was partly reared;
Rock of the hinds and roving stags;
Rock that is verdant, and gay with birds.

The rock which the hunting shout encircles
To haunt it would be my joy,
When the voice of the baying hounds was sweet,
Urging the herds to a narrow pass.

Sweet sound the eagles in its braes;
Sweet are its cuckoos, and sweet its swan
Sweeter than all is the bleating
Of the spotted, fine-speckled fawn.

How different is this from the address to the sun and similar poetry in Ossian; yet it will be found to be the same in character with MacDonald's, Macintyre's, and all other modern Gaelic bards. The germ of it is to be found in the Fenian ballads, as, for instance, that line in the Lay of Diarmaid-

"'S gur truagh m' aghaidh ri Beinn Ghulbann."

From the traces of this style to be found in these old poems, it has expanded into its more modern form.

In the works of all these bards, which extend over a period of several centuries; for one piece, composed as a war-song for the Highlanders who fought at Harlaw, is referred to the same date, 1411, the manners of each age are delineated. There is a difference in the language corresponding to each period, but that difference is inconsiderable. The bards belong to different parts of the Highlands, but no marked difference of dialect appears in their compositions, and this agrees with the prevalent opinion among Highlanders that good Gaelic is something definite, though they are not unanimous with regard to the district where good Gaelic is to be found. The difference in spoken dialects is more in pronunciation, accent, and the use of certain words in one place rather than another, than in grammatical structure or idiom. In reviewing the compositions of these known bards, we observe that, as a rule, the

earlier the period the purer is the language, and the freer from English words. The idiom of the language found in this poetry is very far removed from English, and, on that account, it is very difficult to transfer the meaning of a passage accurately into English, and much more so to give its force and spirit. Though the works of these modern bards differ in language from the Fenian ballads, they vary in words rather than in idiom. The versification differs, but the songs approach the ballads nearer, the older they are; almost all these modern poems contain allusions to Christianity and scripture names. No superhuman deeds are mentioned, nor anything out of the range of probability; but when we look at "Mordubh," and the other poems of the same class, we perceive a style that stands far apart from all these, and from the Fenian ballads. Between the language of the Fenian poems, that of the works of the known bards, and that of spoken Gaelic, there is a common bond of union that is easily discovered; the others are something apart.

The preservation of these Fenian ballads for many ages may, at first sight, appear incredible, more especially when successive generations of poetry relating to historical events have died out, and when we have so little concerning the chiefs and warriors that flourished in Scotland during the seventh, eighth, ninth, and successive centuries, down to the fifteenth. We have no traditional ballads that refer to the wars of Wallace and Bruce, hardly a tradition relating to them. All these great men have passed away from the Highland popular mind as if they had no existence, and yet these prehistoric traditions remain. How is it that no succeeding poetry, no national history, has been able to supplant them? If they kept their ground in the midst of the compositions of successive ages, we must surely admit that they possessed a peculiar merit suiting those times, that they were superior to anything new that was produced, or at least that they were more fitted to take hold of the feelings of all periods. It may be asked were they not the compositions of modern bards? Those bards, so far as we know their history, quote them as something older than their own times. Granting that they are not the compositions of any known bard, may they not have been the compositions of bards previous to those, but still of a period not very remote--of the monks of a certain period? Had they been the compositions and inventions of such men, was it likely that there should be so little reference to religion, and to known general history, in the ballads which give the history of the Feinne, as told by Oisein amongst his dialogues with St. Patrick on religious matters, or as they are more commonly now sung, without these pagan polemics. In monkish compositions, Greek and Roman history are often present, and there is much in these poems which we can hardly think monks would be inclined to encourage. When then was this poetry composed? Was it in the tenth century? If so, what was the poetry of the Gael previous to that century? Had they any? Roman writers answer--"The Caledonians went to fight the Romans singing war songs;" but we are not informed what they sang, though we may surmise. Did Fenians or Fenian traditions exist in the time of the Caledonians? If so, probably there were Fenian ballads then also, and these may be the old ballads of the Caledonians modified, developed, and altered, but preserved from undergoing any radical change by popular veneration down to our own day.

Why these have been so well preserved, and have outlived so many historical periods, may be accounted for by their universality. Highland chiefs were at war with each other, and lasting animosities subsisted between them. A song in praise of a certain chief was not likely to be acceptable to an inimical clan. A ballad in praise of clan Chattan would not please the clan Kay. A poem that extolled the exploits of Robert Bruce, would meet with but a cold reception among the Macdougalls of Lorn, or among the dependants of the Comyns of Badenoch. The bard that would run the risk of praising the merits of James the First among the Grahams, or among the dependents of those relatives of his own whom he had so cruelly executed, might risk having his tongue cut out, but the Fenian ballads could be sung anywhere. They were not

likely to excite any feud, or awaken any old grudge, or recall any former disgrace. They were not calculated to wound either a reigning dynasty, or the partizans of a fallen one; and, indeed, during those wild times, when every man's hand was against his brother, what better code of honour could have existed among such fiery elements. When chiefs violated the principles of chivalry, and honour, and fair play, what better check could we conceive as a moral restraint upon their wild passions from the traditions of the Feinne, whose name is still the watchword for fair play. "COTHROM NA FEINNE," "Fenian's advantage," a fair field and no favour.

To the list of modern bards who refer to the Feinne, may be added the name of Evan MacColl, the Lochfine-side bard, who published a volume of very creditable English and Gaelic Poetry in 1836. At page 94 is a Gaelic stanza, which may be thus closely translated:--

And thou there standing all lonely,
As Oisian after the Feinne;
Small time, and thou followest kindred,
Oh Dun! death's strong hand is upon thee.

The Dun meant is "Castail Donnain," in Loch Dubhaich in Ross-shire. Other references also occur, and it may be generally said that there is hardly a Gaelic book that does not contain such references. William Livingstone, the Islay bard, who published clever poems in 1858, often mentions the Feinne.--J. F. C.

To this let me add the letter of a labourer, who has a good head and small learning, but knows his own language well.

Douchlais, 28*th October* 1861.

Sir,--I received your letter of the 24th Saturday last.

There is a good many words in Ossian's poems that is not common in modern Gaelic. I have Dr. Smith's Gaelic book, and I got it from a man because that there was so many words in it which he did not know the meaning of, and I understand them.

Them (the poem) that I heard repeated corresponds with those that is in the book.

I am quite convinced that the English was taken from the Gaelic, and not the Gaelic from the English.

It would be quite absurd to think that a man would spend his time studying old Gaelic for to translate English prose, and put it in Gaelic verse, and choose the words as they were spoken about seventeen hundred years ago: it would be a very laborious task; and if the publication was printed, the publisher would be a great loser by it, as so few would buy it, because they did not understand it; and none would be able to do it, unless he was a first-class Gaelic scholar, and a good poet; and also he would have to read some other poems, as old as Ossian's for to find the measure of the metre, as some of them is composed to a measure that is not used in modern poetry. I understand the Gaelic of the published books. I understand the words separately.--

Yours truly,
JOHN DEWAR.[411]

[411] It is to be observed that this witness says nothing of the Gaelic Ossian of 1807.

To this let me add a letter from Mr. Torrie, now a student at Edinburgh College, who has collected stories for me, and lives in Benbecula.

BENBECULA, SOUTH UIST,
19*th October* 1861.

MY DEAR SIR,--As I have conversed with almost all those from whom POEMS have been collected in this quarter, I flatter myself that I am now in a position to furnish you with my quota of information on this interesting subject.

Besides these POEMS which have been collected, the proof sheets of which I have perused, a great variety of other poems, which go under the name of "Ossian's Poems," are commonly recited by the people. A few of these I have already sent you; and I have still in my possession two long ones, called respectively--"*Teanntachd mhor na Feinne*," and "*Cath mac Righ na Sorcha*." "*Laoidh Dhiarmid*," "*Laoidh Fhraoich*," "*Laoidh an Amadain Mhoir*," "*Mhuileartach Bhuidhe*," and "*Laoidh a Choin duibh*," are, however, the most common. Fragmentary pieces of these I have heard recited by some of our highest class; but those who have them most entire, are, comparatively speaking, the poorest and most illiterate in the land--those from whom they might be the least expected--so circumstanced that they have had no access to books, and even should they have, the most of them could not make any use of them. Neither were they in a position to mingle among those who could read, and had books. Books, however, which contain collections of Ossian's Poems, are not so common here as might be expected. None of the reciters that I have met, ever heard of Gillies', MacCallum's, or Stewart's. I have never seen any of these in the islands; and if they are to be found at all, it is with those who prize them too much to lend to such of the poorer classes as could read, to run the risk of being disfigured with black drops, and sure to have the not very agreeable odour of peat-reek. Donald Macintyre, Aird, Benbecula, the best reciter of poems that I have met, and who can read Gaelic well, never saw any book of the kind until I shewed him Dr. Smith's collection. I have traced out another copy of Dr. Smith's at Iochdar, which was presented to one Peter M'Pherson, a bit of a poet, by the Reverend Duncan M'Lean, now Free Church Minister at Glenorchy, when missionary here about thirty-five years ago. Every person with whom I have conversed about Ossian's Poems, and who knows anything about them, admires them very much, and believes them to be the genuine composition of Ossian, as pure as might be expected, considering that they were handed down by tradition, and consequently lost a great deal of their pristine splendour; and received additions which, instead of adding, detracted considerably from their original merit. I believe there are very few in the Highlands, especially adults, but know something of Ossian's Poems. Like the "Popular Tales," which are universally found throughout the Highlands, Ossian's Poems have formed a very important part of the Highlanders' pastime through the long winter nights. When on my way home from Edinburgh last spring, I read "Laoidh Dhiarmid" to a few in Skye. They remembered to have heard it before; and some old men remarked that, when they were young, tales and poems were very common, and regretted very much that they were so much out of vogue with the present generation. I never met with any of Ossian books there but one, the Rev. Mr. MacLauchlan's "Gleanings," presented to a "guide" by an English tourist. I never heard of any Irish book containing these pieces in the islands, nor have I ever seen any myself. As I have not MacPherson's, which is the best known of them all, nor Gillies', nor Stewart's, I cannot say whether those who repeat, recite passages *a la* MacPherson, *a la* Stewart, or *a la* Gillies. Donald Macintyre recited to me a poem entitled "Cath MacRigh na Sorcha," which I find in Dr. Smith's collection, note page 176. They resemble each other very much; in some passages the language is the same; Macintyre's version, however, is longer, though Dr. Smith's, upon the whole, is more beautiful. In the course of a conversation lately with a gentleman of no mean authority, on the Ossianic

controversy, be expressed his surprise that the anti-Ossianics would use such futile arguments as that MacPherson was the author of these poems, or that the people get them from books, while he himself had a distinct recollection of bearing one Rory M'Queen, commonly called Ruairi Ruadh, who was a catechist in this parish, recite poems which can be found in MacPherson's. This M'Queen died about thirty years ago at the advanced age of eighty. He had a great many of Ossian's poems which he learned when a boy by hearsay, and with which he afterwards used to entertain his hosts when travelling from village to village on his catechetical visits. A niece of his, who now resides at Paible, North Uist, has the same hereditary talent which procured her uncle more celebrity than his catechetical acumen. This MacQueen was no less than fifty years of age when MacPherson's Gaelic was published, and fifty-seven before Stewart's, or M'Callum's appeared. In whatever way, therefore, people came to have these poems, it is a well-known fact that they never got them from books, for nothing can be more patent than the fact that these poems existed long before MacPherson's, or Stewart's, or M'Callum's, or Gillies', or Miss Brookes' came into existence. Nor is it consistent to suppose that MacPherson, were he *really* the author of the poems, would give them unto the world as the composition of Ossian, while they were of themselves sufficient to raise him to the pinnacle of fame, and establish his name as the greatest poet that Scotland ever produced. I do not believe, however, that these minor pieces are the composition of Ossian. They differ as much from them a school-boy's attempts at painting do from the sublime efforts of Raphael or Michael Angelo. As to the question whether these are Irish or Scotch, I cannot give a definite answer. After some reflection, however, my opinion preponderates to the latter, for though there are some words and phrases which to me were unintelligible until the reciters explained them, and which they considered Irish, still I would not be justified in calling such ballads as contain them Irish, on the slender ground of this more "ipse dixit," for they may have retained that much of the language in which they were originally composed, and which may have been the dialect common in Scotland at that time. They are apparently very old, and it is possible at the time they were composed the language of both countries was the same, considering they had one common origin. By whom they were composed, or at what time they were composed, cannot, with any decree of certainty be determined, They stretch back into a period of whose history I know very little, and, consequently I am precluded from adding more.--Meanwhile, I remain, yours very faithfully,

D. K. TORRIE.

J. F. Campbell, Esq., etc., etc.

To this let me add the opinion of a Highlander, who had had much to do with the publication of Gaelic books, and lives in a city.

62 ARGYLE STREET, GLASGOW,
November, 9, 1861.

My DEAR SIR,--In compliance with your request, I will now proceed briefly to give you my opinion of the poems attributed to Ossian and other ancient Celtic bards. Although a doubt never crossed my mind regarding the genuineness of these productions, yet after a careful investigation of the subject, I have now a more definite and satisfactory impression of the matter than I had heretofore. I believe that, "Fingal fought, and that Ossian sang," as firmly as I believe any other historical fact. I have now the same opinion of them that I had thirty years ago, when I first began to take an interest in these matters, namely, that such individuals lived many centuries ago, and composed poems that have been handed down from generation to generation by oral recitation, and that many of these fragments have been collected and translated into English, and published by Mr. James MacPherson of Badenoch, exactly a hundred years ago, and by others since, such as Dr. John Smith of Campbeltown, Duncan

Kennedy, Hugh and John M'Callum, etc. I believe all that is truly poetical and ennobling in MacPherson's translation are the productions of Ossian and other great bards of the same era; but while I believe and maintain all this, I gave it as my humble conviction that MacPherson used unwarrantable liberties with his originals. Ossian never composed "Fingal " and "Temora" as they are given by him, and it would be much more to the credit of our country had he given these fragments just as he collected them, without linking them together as he has done, and called them "Epic Poems." I also complain of MacPherson for excluding passages which accorded not with the theory which he wished to establish, and thus endeavoured to fix the Fingalian era according to his own fancy; but this is not the worst--I have a graver charge than any of these to bring against him. I have no hesitation in affirming that a considerable portion of the Gaelic which is published as the original of his translation is actually translated back from the English. I have discovered this by the aid of fragments (no doubt genuine) published in the Highland Society's Report. These fragments begin at page 192, and end at page 260. A literal translation is inserted on opposite pages, with MacPherson's translation in foot-notes. MacPherson's translation is pretty faithful, with the exception of omitted passages, which under other circumstances might be supposed to have been translated from a different version; but when we are presented with the Gaelic, purporting to be the original, the deception is too transparent to pass undetected. I am aware that this assertion is detrimental to the honesty and veracity of Mr. MacPherson, and perhaps to the character of those who superintended the publishing of the Gaelic after his death, but I affirm this as my honest conviction of the matter; and any Highlander of ordinary intelligence may satisfy himself on this point by comparing the Report and MacPherson's Gaelic. From this, and other circumstances, it is evident that MacPherson determined to appropriate to himself the literary glory of these productions. If not, why bequeath in his "last will and testament" £1000 to defray the expenses of publishing Ossian's poems in Gaelic, English, and Latin? This fact, I think, ought to exonerate those superintending the Gaelic, as they were merely carrying out his request as his executors.

But, notwithstanding all I have mentioned, we are indebted to Mr. MacPherson for what he had done. He was the first to draw the attention of foreigners to those wonderful compositions, and others following his example, matter has been collected and preserved that would have been for ever lost. Mr. MacPherson's translation, in my opinion, is superior to the paraphrase of Dr. Smith; but the Gaelic of Dr. Smith is genuine, with the exception of his emendations and occasional interpolations, where he thought the sense required it, and which he candidly acknowledged. Dr. Smith being a ready poet, and a thorough Gaelic scholar, spared no pains in making his "Seann Dàna" worthy of the patronage of his countrymen; and no wonder although he was disappointed when his labours were not sufficiently appreciated.

There are other parties who have done some harm, alleging that they were the authors of some of the compositions which passed as Ossian's. Mr. Kennedy claimed some of his collection as his own. Mr. M'Callum of Arisaig published a volume of Gaelic poems and songs in 1821, in which he gives a "*Seann Dàn*" under the designation of "*Collath*," which in course of time was honoured by a place in "The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," the editor endorsing it as an ancient poem; but in 1840 Mr. M'Callum published a new edition of his poems, and very coolly "removes the deception," using his own words, and avows himself the author of "Collath," and very *modestly* retains the fulsome notes which he himself appended to it on its first appearance. It is doubtful if the author would have been so ready to remove the deception had "*Collath*" not been so highly honoured by the editor of the "Beauties." Mr. M'Callum added a third part to "*Mordubh*," and 259 lines to the second part more than is given in Gillies' collection. He does not say that the supplement to "*Mordubh*"

is his, neither do I charge him with imposing on the reader by this; but I am not satisfied that either the first, or last, or any part of "*Mordubh*" is genuine.

I have mentioned these circumstances in order to remove, so far as I can, all that has the appearance of suspicion or doubt about the matter; but all the deceptions that have been practised do not affect the sterling worth of the poems of Ossian any more than the base coin affects the value of the real one. It will only make those into whose hands it may come try it and make sure that it is genuine.

It may be objected, "How could so much matter be preserved on the memories of the people without the aid of letters?" Those who have lived in the Highlands for any length of time know well how these productions have been preserved. In former times Highlanders bad very little else to remember; or, rather, they did not remember much else. Socially disposed, they spent much time together; on the long winter evenings they assembled in a certain house, rehearsed and listened to these records of Fingalian achievements which were thus interwoven with their mental development. Hence the continual opposition manifested by the religious instructors of the Highlanders to "*Sgeulachdan*" and Ossianic poetry. These teachers had serious difficulties in getting the attention of the people, in consequence of their minds being pre-occupied and absorbed by this ancient lore.

Bishop Carswell, in 1567, complains of those who spent their time and intellect in perpetuating the records "concerning *Tuath de dannan, Fionn MacCumhail* and his heroes, rather than write and teach and maintain the faithful words of God, and of the perfect way of truth." But Mr. Robert Kirk, of Balquhidder, who published the first metrical Gaelic version of the Psalms in 1684, is more charitably disposed towards the Fingalians. (See page 71.)

The assertions of Bishop Carswell are fully borne out by the well-known Christian poet, Peter Grant of Strathspey, who composed about forty years ago. He says in *Gearan nan Gaidheal*:"--

"An t-Sàbaid ghlòrmhor bu chòir a naomhadh,
'S tric chaith sinn faoin i o cheann gu ceann,
Le cainnt ro dhiomhain mu thiomchioll Fhianntaibh,
'S gach gnothach tiomal a bhiodh 'n ar ceann ;
Air cnuic 's air sléibhtean, 's na tighean céilidh
Bhiodh-mid le chéile a' tional ann,
Ach cha b'e 'm Bìobal a bhiodh 'ga leughadh
Ach faoin sgeul air nach tigeadh ceann."

The glorious Sabbath that should be hallowed,
Oft spent we in trifling from end to end
With useless chattering about the Feeantain,
And each timely matter that was in our mind.
On knolls or hillsides, or in visiting houses,
We would be together all gathering there;
But 'twas not the Bible that was read there,
But a silly tale told without an end.

I think these quotations prove two things; first, that Ossian's Poems are *older* than James MacPherson; and second, that it is not a matter of astonishment that Highlanders could preserve so much of the poetry of former ages, seeing that they applied all their mental powers in remembering and perpetuating it. I cannot, indeed, wonder at the clergy, teachers, and catechists opposing the "conventicles" (to use an ecclesiastical term) for rehearsing and hearing Fingalian lore, as the practice interfered so much with their usefulness. But these

traditions served a purpose, and accomplished their mission; and like other dispensations of antiquity they passed away. They were the “elementary schoolbooks” of the Celts in bygone ages; they helped to strengthen and expand their memories, and to sharpen their intellects; and the morals inculcated by them were generally sound. Those who are familiar with our national proverbs and maxims, must acknowledge that the men who first uttered them, and those who gave them currency, studied human nature deeply. The Highlanders had also many, problems and riddles, as you are well aware, that required much ingenuity and application to solve. I will refer you to one of these as a specimen; it goes under the designation of “*Aireamh Fir Dhubhain*.” You will find it, I think, in Stewart’s collection. There is much truth in what Dr. M’Leod of St. Columba, Glasgow, uttered on one occasion, although he was laughed and sneered at by some for it:--”Even the superstition of the Highlanders, dark and wild as it may appear, had a happy tendency in forming the character of the Gael.” Undoubtedly it had; and while I am anxious that my countrymen should possess knowledge that will be more serviceable to them in time, and shall make them happy in eternity, I am ready to pay my tribute of gratitude to the memories of the teachers of former generations, for inculcating a sense of the instability of everything in this world, and the folly of expecting much from creature comforts--for the love of country and kindred, and for the noble, generous, and hospitable spirit they infused into society--the fruit of which I, in common with my countrymen, am reaping in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

It is evident that the learned pride of many of our Anglo-Saxon neighbours was roused on the appearance of the Ossianic fragments. They could not conceive how an unlettered people could produce such poetry; but they ought to have remembered that the knowledge of letters is but one avenue for conveying knowledge to the human mind. I have met and associated with individuals who had “book knowledge” in abundance, but yet had neither the sense or the wit of some who knew not the letters of the alphabet, and could not be consulted with equal advantage in a case of emergency. A knowledge of letters, and of the English language, is the essence of all knowledge and wisdom in the estimation of the “*Gall*.” These two items are certainly requisites in our education; but it is doing the Celt great injustice to conclude that because he is ignorant of these he must be very stupid and ignorant of everything. Highlanders have serious difficulties to contend with, which require indomitable courage and perseverance to overcome. A young Celt leaves his native hills with scarcely a word of English “in his head,” and comes to the Lowlands. In course of time he masters the language of the “*Gall*,” competes with him, and often beats him on his own soil. There is no evidence of inferiority of intellect in this.

Fearing that I have done more than what you wished me to do, I remain, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR.

To this let me add the opinion of a Highlander who has been stationed in many districts of the country as an excise officer; a gentleman of good education, and well able to write Gaelic and English, who has been kind enough to collect stories, etc. for me.

“It is well known that, in the absence of literature, men supply the deficiency by tales, which may be of their own creation, or that of ages long gone by. It were strange if the imaginative, the sensitive, the enthusiastic Gael were without his. Strange it were if the children of the mist themselves were without this poetic element in their constitution. But it is not so. In all ages the Celtic tribes have been noted for their tales, poetry, and music, and all these are

characteristic. They breathe the same melancholy sadness, the same enthusiastic wildness, and the same daring chivalry. Their tales are pure and simple, their poetry is assuredly that of nature. It is wild and romantic, sensitive and sad, affectionate and kind. Their music is known and admired all over the world.

There are all sorts of Highland tales--fabulous, and romantic; fairy tales, and tales of superstition, family tales, tales of gallant deeds, and, I regret to say, tales of deadly feud.

The Highlanders distinguish between all these. To the fabulous tales they give no credence, but merely repeat them because they are curious. The romantic tales they do not exactly believe, but think they might possibly be true. Fairy and superstitious tales are not now generally believed. But family tales, feudal tales, and tales of other years form the history of the Highlanders. These they believe, and repeat with pride. A Highlander always takes pride and pleasure in the noble actions and gallant deeds of his country. His own clan is a special pride to him. It is his standard of honour, and he would as soon tell of anything disreputable to his own family as he would to his clan. His clan may be few now, its members may be scattered to all ends of the earth, but he speaks of it when it was a clan, and he recounts its fall with sorrow and regret. These tales are generally to be found amongst the poor and unlettered people. They cherish the memory of their fathers; they tell their tales, recite their poems, and sing their songs; they have the pride and generosity of their fathers, and, alas! the penury consequent on their fathers' misfortunes. These tales are to be found amongst the old. For obvious reasons, the young do not take the same interest in them. Consequently these relies of antiquity must necessarily be lost, and scarce a trace of them be found in another generation or two.

These old men and women are, indeed, generally poor, but they have generally seen more comfortable circumstances. Their houses may not be perfect specimens of architecture, but they are of kindness and hospitality. Their furniture may not be comfortable, according to the modern acceptation of the term, but it suffices for their use, and every article is endeared by family associations. Their dress may be humble, but it can boast of having been teazed, carded, and spun by a wife or a daughter. It may not be fine, but it is comfortable, and it is, notwithstanding, pleasant enough to look upon. Their fare may not be over plentiful, but the stranger is always welcome to a share of it.

They are never rude, boorish, or vulgar, uncivil, disrespectful, or insolent. On the contrary, they are naturally civil and deferential, but they are naturally reserved. This I have experienced. I have often gone to old men, and although I was told they had the greatest stock of old lore of any in the place, yet they would either equivocate, or maintain the most provoking silence. They would much rather know who I was, if they did not know me, and why I was so desirous to get *sgeulachdan faoin sheana bhan*--old wives' silly tales. I had always to wait till I had gained their confidence. To shew them that I was interested in their tales, I have often told them one myself--perhaps one I had got a few days before? If they knew of any expressions belonging to the tale which I had not, they would repeat them at my request. Thus I have often got many valuable additions.

Fabulous tales are the most difficult to get, not because they are the rarest, but because they are unwilling to tell them to strangers. Historical tales are the easiest to get. They are known everywhere, and, more or less, by every person. "*Sgeulachdan na Feinn*," or the Fingalian tales, are very common. Clan or historical tales, and those of the Fingalians, are the most admired. These are believed in, and consequently talked of seriously. Many of these correspond to a nicety with Ossian's poems. But many more have no coincidence with them.

I met an English tourist in summer, and we had occasion to speak of Fingal's Cave in Staffa. He said very authoritatively that Fingal, Ossian, and his compeers must have been all fiction--in short, mere creations of MacPherson's own fancy; that no person ever heard of Ossian till MacPherson's days; that no MSS. of Ossian's poems were ever seen; and, finally, that they were never known to exist amongst the people. This was certainly a new theory to me, but, like many others, I saw that the gentleman who felt himself at liberty to speak thus freely of Ossian's poems, did not take the trouble to examine for himself. That he heard or read of this, and believed it. I told him that hundreds of years before MacPherson existed, the poems of Ossian were well known, and alluded to in writing; that MacPherson stood exactly in the same relation to Ossian as Pope did to Homer, or Dryden to Virgil; that MSS. of Ossian's poems were well known to exist in the Highlands long before MacPherson's time. That some of those MSS. were to be seen at an eminent London publisher's at the very time Dr. Samuel Johnson was declaiming against the authenticity of Ossian's poems; and, lastly, I told him that, so far from it being at all true that Ossian's poems were not known amongst the people, if he would have the goodness to accompany me, and in less than five minutes' time I would bring him to a man who could repeat hundreds of lines of Ossian's poems.

While speaking of MacPherson, I may state that many Gaelic scholars think he might have done greater justice to their darling Ossian. Without averring that MacPherson might not have rendered Ossian much more effective, I think he has done remarkably well. He has deserved the gratitude of every Highland heart, and of every man of taste.

Ever since I remember myself I remember hearing of the Fingalians. Who that has lived in the Highlands but must necessarily have heard the same. Their exploits, bravery, and battles have been the theme and admiration of Highland *seanachaidhean* from time immemorial. That these may have been exaggerated is possible, that they had a foundation in fact is unquestionable.

I have frequently questioned old men concerning the Fingalians in almost all parts of the Highlands, from Cape Wrath to the Mull of Cantyre. If they had heard of them--what they heard of them--and if they believed in them? I have never in *one single* instance met a negative. All had heard of them, and all firmly believed in their existence. Some could give me anecdotes of them, some tales, some their poems, and all could give me something. I could mention scores, but I must necessarily confine myself to a few examples.

1. Dugald Bàn Mac a Chombaich, *i.e.*, Colquhoun, Port-Appin, is, I should think, somewhat over seventy years of age. He is a most decent old man. He could tell me lots about the Feinn. He heard much about them when a boy. They were believed in, and their memory honoured by his fathers, and he could see no reason why he should not do the same. I took down a few tales from him. One of them I had taken down previously from a decent old man in Islay, who lives at Cultorsay. Another was about Diarmad, how he killed the wild boar, and how he was killed in turn.

Diarmad was a nephew of Fingal, and one of the handsomest men amongst the Fingalians. He had a "Ballseirc," or a "Gràdh-seirc"--a beauty-spot on his forehead. To conceal this he was obliged to wear a vizer. Otherwise be was in danger of committing sad havoc amongst the tender hearts of the Fingalian fair. This is alluded to by one of our Gaelic poets. The passage may be thus translated--

Thou hast from Diarmad got a charm,
  And beauty rare, divine;
A hundred souls are bound to thee--
  A hundred hearts are thine.

This is a very common tradition that the Campbells are descended from Diarmad, and hence their crest--the wild boar's bead.

2. Alexander Macdonald, Portrigh, Skye, is eighty-four years old. Heard a great deal about the Feinn when young. Ossian's poems were quite common in his day. Had lots of them himself, and even yet can repeat a good deal. I took down some from him. Amongst other things, part of "*Laoidh na Nighin*." This old man was serving with the Rev. Mr. Stewart, who kept, he said (if I remember right), two clerks employed collecting the poems of Ossian throughout the country.

3. Donald Stewart, Ardfhraic, Skye, is ninety-two years of age. He is still hale and cheerful, and his faculties quite unimpaired. He is a quiet unassuming man, and is altogether a fine specimen of a fine old Highlander. He remembers well the days of his youth. Great and sad changes have come over the country since then. He heard much about the Feinn. Heard often the poems of Ossian. They were quite common in his day. Every person knew them, most could recite them, and all admired them. As long ago as he can remember anything, he remembers distinctly how the people used to collect to each other's houses in the long winter nights. They used to tell tales of all descriptions, sing the songs of their fathers, and recite the poetry . of Ossian. The old men recited while the young listened. Those who were the best recited, and all endeavoured to excel. They took a special pleasure in this, and in impressing the memory of the young with what they were reciting. Some of the men were very old. They said they got them from their fathers when they were young. That their fathers--that is, the old men of their day--told them they had those tales, traditions, and poems, from their own fathers. That Ossian's poems were then as well known and as much admired as anything at all could possibly be.

Assuming, then, that some of these men were as old as Donald Stewart is to-day, when he was a boy, we have thus direct and truthful evidence of the authenticity of the *Poems of Ossian* for the last one hundred and eighty-four years. What more need be said!

From Donald Stewart, of whom I have often heard, but whom I have only once seen, I got some curious old things. I shall endeavour to see him again ere long, when I have no doubt I shall get extracts from him of Ossian, in all his purity.

4. Kenneth Morrison, Trithean, Skye, is old and blind. I need scarcely mention that he heard much of Ossian in his young days. A very decent old man, John Macdonald, lain MacIain Eoghain, Talamhsgeir, Skye, used to come to Kenneth Morrison's house. This John Macdonald died more than twenty years ago. He was about eighty when he died. He was a very good poet, as were his fathers before him, and so are his sons. One of his sons, who composed some very popular songs, died some years ago.

4 *a*. John Macdonald was a passionate admirer of Ossian. He had a great many of his poems, and could recite them most beautifully. Wherever he went he was welcome, and every person was delighted to get hold of him. He was a very pleasant old man, but his recitals of his darling Ossian fascinated all. His own house was full every night, and whenever he visited any of his friends he was literally besieged. He oftentimes came to see Kenneth Morrison, and when he did, Kenneth Morrison's house was sure to be crowded--literally crammed. From him he learned the most of what he has of Ossian's. He has forgotten the most, but he has a good many pieces yet. Amongst other pieces, I have got from him "The Death of Oscar," "Ossian's Address to the Sun," "Fingal," the beginning of Duan iv. Also, "The Arms," and "*Laoidh an Amadain mhoir*," as in Smith's "*Sean Dana*." I have got another

piece from him, entitled "*Bàs Chaoiril*"--Caorreal's death. Caorreal was a son of Fingal and brother of Ossian. He and Gaul, the son of Morni, disputed. They fought, and Caorreal fell.[412]

5. An old man, whose name I cannot just now recollect, and who is now dead, lived at Toat, opposite Airdeilbh, Lochalsh; he was very old, and died some years ago; he had known almost incredible quantities of Ossianic poetry. I have been assured by more than one who knew him intimately, that this old man had as much Ossianic poetry as would take him whole days in the recital; yet he could recite for whole nights together without the slightest hesitation, with as much ease as he could pronounce his own name. Like all the rest of his class, he used to say that he heard Ossian's poems from old men when he was a boy; that they were perfectly common, and much admired in his day; that every person knew them; that most recited, and many sung them. This old man is understood to have given a great deal of Ossianic poetry to MacPherson's followers.

6. I have the pleasure of knowing a much respected, enthusiastic Highlander, a member of the Glasgow Ossianic Society, and a clergyman, who has many Fingallian airs; he is himself an accomplished musician, and a fond admirer of the airs and poems of Ossian.

Although I have frequently heard the poems of Ossian half-recited, half-sung, I never heard them before set to music. I can, however, assure those who have not had this privilege of hearing them, that the Ossianic airs are wild, melodious, and altogether most beautiful; they are typical of the poems.

7. Mr. Donald Nicolson, parochial schoolmaster, Kilmuir, Skye, had a great deal of Ossian's poems; his father, he assured me, had more Ossianic poetry than all ever MacPherson translated; and even he himself, when a boy, could repeat what would form a tolerable sized volume. These he heard from old men in the long winter nights; he personally was acquainted with many old men who could repeat lots of Ossian's poetry. These old men declared that Ossian's poems, in their day, were known by every person, and by every person admired. Mr. Nicolson says that much, and deservedly, as Ossian's poems, as given to the world, are admired, they are much inferior to the versions he was in the habit of hearing in boyhood; that he is of opinion MacPherson must have got his versions, generally speaking, from different reciters; I have heard others say the same. I believe those collected by Smith and some others, are generally thought to be purer versions than those collected by MacPherson.

Thus I have given the names of many unquestionable witnesses to the authenticity of Ossian's poems. Did necessity require it, I could easily give ten, aye, twenty times more.[413]

If the ancient Highlanders had not their gods and goddesses like the Greeks of old, they had what was much more natural, their heroes and heroines. If they had not an invulnerable Achilles, they bad their magnanimous Fingal; if not their bewitching Juno, they bad their Dearsagrena, whose resplendent beauty was like that of the sun. If they had not their Apollo, they had their venerable Ossian, "the sweet voice of Cona," the darling of Highland hearts.

If it should be said that Ossian exaggerates the gallantry, the bravery, the magnanimity of his heroes, why, Homer does the same. If there is poetic license, why should it be denied to those who knew no restraint but that of nature. "Saul slew his thousands, and David his tens of

[412] The poems in question have been sent to me, and are preserved with the rest. See list at the end.--J. F. C.
[413] January 1862. Mr. Carmichael has sent me the names of several other persons who can repeat traditional Ossianic lays, and specimens of these compositions, taken down from dictation. Many of these closely resemble ballads which I had got elsewhere, and prove to demonstration that these are very commonly known in all parts of the Highlands. Others resemble parts of the Ossian of 1807-such as "Cuchullin in his Car"--which I believe to be an old passage, and which has been found in Ireland also.--J. F. C.

thousands;" and why should not their enemies fall before Ossian's heroes, "like reeds of the lake of Lego," and their strength be terrible.

We have not only their names accurately handed down to us, but the names of many places were derived from those of the Fingalian heroes. There is *Gleann Chonnain*, Connan's vale; and *Amhain Chonnain*, Connan's river, in Ross-shire; and even Gleann Bhrain, Bran's-vale, in honour of Fingal's celebrated dog Bran. There is a Dun-Fionn, Fingal's height or hill, on Lochlomond. There is *Sliabh nam ban Fionn*, the Fingalian fair women's hill, in Liosmor.

Liosmor, it is said, was a favourite hunting place of the Fingalians; and there is even a tradition amongst the people, that here they had some of the very best sport they ever had. There is nothing improbable in this. Game must have been once very abundant in Liosmor; there are traces still to be found; antlers of the deer, the bison, and the elk, have been found in the bogs; these were of immense size. There is in Liosmor a place called *Larach tigh nam Fiann*, the site of the Fingalian's house; it is a large circular mound, of perhaps eighty yards diameter, and surrounded by a deep foss. There is a deep well inside, possibly it may have been used for the purpose of entrapping game. Dr. Livingstone, Gordon-Cumming, MacKenzie, all Highlanders by the by; and, if I remember right, Park, give a description of similarly constructed places amongst the Africans. Perthshire is replete with reminiscences of the Fingalians; there is Cill Fhinn, pronounced in Gaelic and written in English, Killin, "Fingal's tomb", here, tradition says, Fingal is buried. In the neighbourhood is *Sornach-coir-Fhinn*, "the concavity for Fingal's boiler." Sornach means thin oblong stones raised on end in the form of a triangle; a fire is placed between, and here the culinary operations are carried on.

In Strathearn is the village of *Fianntach*, of or belonging to the Fingalians; in the neighbourhood are numberless cairns raised to the memory of Fingalian heroes. These cairns are the "gray mossy stones" of Ossian.

"Carn Chumhail," CUVAL'S cairn, was opened some years ago and found to contain an immense stone coffin; near this was "Ossian's tomb." In 1746, when General Wade formed the road through the county, it came across this spot. A deputation waited on the General, asking if he would take the road to a side so as not to disturb the last repose of "the first bard of antiquity." The General, however, did not find it convenient to comply with this very reasonable desire. Perhaps the engineering would not admit of it; and perhaps he had a secret desire to put the merit of the tradition to the test. Certain it is that the inhabitants of the surrounding country collected; they opened the grave, and there, sure enough, found the mortal remains of their loved Ossian. The coffin was composed of four large flag stones set on edge, covered over by another large massy stone. They lifted all with religious care and veneration, and with pipers playing the wail of the coranich they marched in solemn silence to the top of a neighbouring hill. There, on the top of that green heathery hill, they dug a grave, and there laid the last mortal remains of Ossian, the sweet voice of Cona, the first bard of antiquity; and there they are likely to rest! no rude hand will touch them, no desecration reach them there.

There is a place in Glenelg called "*Iomaire nam-fearmor*," the tall or big men's ridge. Tradition says that two of the Fingalians were drowned whilst crossing Caol-reathain, and that they are interred here. A gentleman, an English gentleman I believe, who was travelling in the Highlands, heard of this tradition; he hinted that the tradition had no foundation, and, it is said, made many gratuitous remarks on Highland traditions in general, and those of the Fingalians in particular. To refute their "idle tradition," as he chose to term it, he insisted that one of the supposed graves should be opened. The people have a religious veneration for the dead, and perhaps a latent superstition against disturbing the grave, and consequently they

were very much averse to opening the mound. Rather, however, than that their venerated tradition should be termed a fable, they agreed to open one of the graves, and the grave was opened. It was very deep; first there was the gravelly soil common to the place, and then a thick layer of moss; after that the gravelly soil, when they came upon another bed of moss, in which was a skeleton. Moss preserves, and it was for that purpose the body was placed in it. The bones were found to be quite fresh and of an extraordinary size. No person ever saw anything to compare with them before, and it is said no person could at all credit or even imagine the size of them but those who saw them. One gentleman who was present, the late excellent Rev. Mr. MacIver of Glenelg, and father of the much respected present minister of Kilmuir, Skye, stood six feet two inches high; he was very Stout ill proportion, and was altogether allowed to be one of the handsomest men of his day. Every one was wonder-struck at the immensity of the bones; he took the lower jaw-bone and easily put his head through it.

It is added that it was a beautiful day; but all of a sudden there came on thunder and lightning, wind, and deluging rain, the like of which no man ever heard or saw. The people thought judgment had come upon them for desecrating the bones of the dead, and interfering with what they had no right, so they closed the grave and desisted. Possibly some may think this bordering on the marvellous; but let no one gainsay the truth of it. There are many yet living who were present, all of whom declare that they "shall never forget the day and the scene till the day of their death." There were a number of people present, gentlemen from Skye, and many from the mainland.

I have never heard who the gentleman was whose scepticism caused the opening of the grave, but the incident took place about sixty years ago.[414]

Gleann-comhan--Glencoe, that is, the narrow glen--is said by tradition to be the birth-place of Ossian. If there is in Scotland one spot more than another from which such magnificent creations as Ossian's poems could be expected to emanate, that Spot is Glencoe. Nothing can be more terrifically sublime than Glencoe during a storm. "Their sound was like a thousand streams that meet in Cona's vale, when after a stormy night they turn their dark eddies beneath the pale light of the morning." . . . "The gloomy ranks of Lochlin fell like banks of the roaring Cona." "If he overcomes, I shall rush in my strength like the roaring stream of Cona."

Ossian himself is frequently called "the voice of Cona." "Why bends the bard of Cona," said Fingal, "over his secret stream? Is this a time for sorrow, father of low-laid Oscar?" . . . "Such were the words of the bards in the days of song; when the king heard the music of harps-the tales of other times! The chiefs gathered from all the hills and heard the lovely sound. They heard and praised the voice of Cona, the first among a thousand bards!"

In *Eadarloch*--"'twixt lochs "--Benderloch is the Selma of Ossian. It is still called Selma. It is also called *Bail-an-righ*--the king's house or town; and Dun-MacSntheachain--MacSniachain's hill. Here also is the Beregonium of ancient writers. There are yet many traces that Selma was once the residence of regal splendour. There is a vitrified fort, in which are found "swimming-stones." There were found, some years ago, in a moss close by, some pieces of a wooden pipe. This pipe is supposed to have been used for the purpose of bringing

[414] I cannot answer for these facts, but I can vouch for the currency of this story in the district; it is fully believed there. Unless the people stumbled upon the grave of a real giant, they must have got hold of the bones of some antediluvian creature. A grave marked by two large stones, some ten feet apart, was once opened by a relation of mine elsewhere, and was found to contain large bones and coarse hair "like horse hair." It is asserted that the skeleton of a fossil man has lately been found, and that several "fossil" skeletons were found in France some time ago, and buried by order of a priest, The learned are engaged upon the discovery. One skull is said to be *small*, and of a low type; but there are giant Lapps now.-J. F. C.

water to the fort or castle from the hill hard by. It is said that *Garbh-MacStairn* set Fingal's castle on fire, after which Fingal left the place, and resided at Fianntach, already alluded to. This tradition seems very probable. The marks of some great calamity are yet to be seen.

In the neighbourhood of Selma are a great number of those stones that are supposed by some to have been Druidical temples. I think they are more likely to be stones erected to the memory of fallen warriors--"the dark gray stones" of Ossian. The Fall of Connel--Ossian's "roaring Lora"--is only about three miles from Selma. Not far from Connel is the "Luath," one of Ossian's streams. "Dwells there no joy in song, with hand of the harp of Luath?" Opposite Selma, on the other side of Loch-Etive, is Dunstaffnage Castle, the residence of Sir Angus Campbell, Bart., and the Dun-Lora of Ossian. The Lora-Loch-Etive-washes its base. The Gaelic name for it is Dun-sta-innis, but more properly Dun da-innis, from two islands near by. The noise of the roaring Lora is certainly awful during flood-tides. In a calm summer evening it is heard in the island of Liosmor, distant at least ten or twelve miles.[415]

After what has been said, I do not think it is necessary to say more. That there was a race of people called the Feinn or Fingalians, I think no unprejudiced mind can question. That these Fingalians were traditionally remembered through-out the Highlands is perfectly certain, and that much of their poetry has been plentifully scattered and is well known there still, is equally true.

I have given the names of some from whom I myself have got Ossianic poetry, and I could give the names of ten times more from whom I could get it. I know where and with whom it is to be got in abundance, and, did necessity require it, I could easily procure it. Some, I believe, imagine, in the simplicity of their heart, that MacPherson, the translator, was the author of Ossian's poems. Perhaps it was MacPherson that also composed the thousand and one Fingalian tales that are floating throughout the Highlands? and all the anecdotes of the Fingalians? Well, if so, I can only say that MacPherson must have been very busy in his day.

Why should not Ossian's poetry be handed down from generation to generation like the rest of the Fingalian tales? I do not think that any can be found bold enough to question the authenticity of the tales. I do not believe that any person doubts the antiquity of the Celtic fables and romances. It is more than probable they were composed at least three thousand years ago, and brought by the Celtic nations in their migrations from the East. If, therefore, the Celtae have preserved their fabulous tales and romances for the long period of three thousand years or more, and repeat them still, why not, on the same principle, preserve amongst them the magnificent creations of Ossian for, at least, half the time?

Homer flourished more than nine hundred years B.C., and his poems floated amongst the Greeks for more than five hundred years, till the Greek historian collected them. Yet their authenticity was never questioned. Were the ancient Greeks more addicted to poetry, and consequently more capable of preserving the creations of Homer than the Celtae those of Ossian? I can hardly believe so. There is a very strong resemblance betwixt Homer and Ossian. Both flourished in a primitive state of society, and both are equally the poets of nature and of nature's laws. If there is an analogy betwixt Homer and Ossian, why not betwixt the preservation of their works?

That poetry of the most magnificent description has been common throughout the Highlands from ages immemorial is unquestionable; that much of that poetry has always been ascribed to Ossian is equally certain; and that he was the author of much of it is more than probable.

[415] All this is very strong internal evidence that the poems published by MacPherson were composed by some bard well acquainted with the west of Scotland.--J. F. C.

The ancient Highlanders never for a single moment doubted the authenticity of Ossian's poems. The modern Highlanders believe in those which they know and repeat as certainly and as implicitly as they do in the Song of Solomon or the Psalms of David. This I can testify to from personal observation. I believe in them myself-fully believe. I am literally convinced that Fingal lived and that Ossian sang.

ALEXANDER A. CARMICHAEL.

SKYE, 28*th November* 1861.

Mr. Carmichael has also referred to many of the printed authorities quoted by me above, to prove that, shortly before MacPherson's time, collections of poetry attributed to Ossian had been made in the Highlands of Scotland.

In a letter dated December 9th, the writer of the above able paper gives an amusing account of a walk through rain and storm to visit an old dame, Catrina nic Mhathain, who is seventy-six, and fully confirms what has been said above. She is a capital *singer* of Ossianic lays, and praises the singing of a certain catechist, Donald MacIain ic Eoghain, of whom frequent mention is made, and who died many years ago. It was his wont to gather crowds of people by chanting these old lays. I have heard the same account of a Sutherland reciter. It seems that preachers and missionaries did not formerly condemn Gaelic poetry, and the minority who do so now are not of the best educated, so far as my experience goes.

The old dame was asked if she had ever heard tell of Osein. "Who, my dear?" she said in surprise. "Osein and the Fein; did you ever hear tell of them?" "Lord bless us!" said the old lady, "who has not heard tell of Osein! gentle Osein, the son of Fionn--Osein after the Feinne?"

I agree with Mr. Carmichael that this exclamation is worth volumes of argument.

And now, having given all the evidence which I have, let me give my own opinion on this much vexed question.

I hold that there is nothing to prove that MacPherson, Ossian, or any other individual, composed the Gaelic poems of 1807--or that they are older than MacPherson's time as a whole--but there is a mass of evidence to prove that he had genuine materials, some of which we also have got for ourselves, and there is a strong presumption that he had something which we have not. Nothing was forthcoming after MacPherson's death except his manuscript which was published; so that is one "fact," at all events.

When it is considered how much old poetry rests upon the existence of single manuscripts in other languages, and that MacPherson certainly had a mass of materials, it is possible that there may have been some compounder of poems far older than the man who gets the credit and discredit of "Ossian;" still there is nothing but "Ossian's Poems" to *prove* that their composer lived anywhere at any time. It is certain that the heroes have been Celtic worthies for centuries, and that their exploits have been celebrated in Gaelic verse ever since the ninth century, if not the seventh: but of the published Gaelic Ossian as an entire work there is not a trace before MacPherson's time. I have no doubt that the work is founded upon genuine old popular materials, and I would rank it for originality with Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," or "Homer," if the Greek poems were floating ballads before they were made into epic poems. But till the author is discovered, MacPherson's name must be associated with his publication. That must rank as a Scoto-Gaelic work at least a hundred years old, and till the contrary is proved, Ireland has not a ghost of a claim to it.

"MacPherson's Ossian" is, as I conceive, without doubt a composite work, to be ranked in the class which I have numbered 5th or 6th; poetry made up of various materials, ancient and

modern, like houses which I have seen in ancient Greece. There, an old Corinthian capital is placed upside down in one corner, its graceful acanthus leaves drooping upwards, and beside it lies a fluted shaft, with boulders and turf resting upon it,--sculptured white marble is mingled with ordinary stones of the roughest description, and the whole is bound together with lime and cement, overgrown with weeds, and, it may be, daubed with ignoble mud; but MacPherson's Ossian, like the Greek hut, is, in the main, composed of genuine materials, and a clever antiquary, or a good critic, might yet pick out all the old fragments, and mayhap arrange them more scientifically. To do so would be loss of labour, for we have a mass of similar materials, Scotch and Irish. The Greek hut, with all its incongruities, dirt, and discomfort, with its dress of shrubs and lichens, and utter disregard of the rules of architecture, is more likely to attract a painter's eye than the most symmetrical museum of antiquities, geology, and botany, or the most luxurious brick palace in London; and so Ossian has attracted the notice and the admiration of famous men, who would not have bestowed a thought upon popular tales and ballads separately arranged, and classed in due order, as I have striven to do with my stores.

Ossian is a fiction, but a structure founded upon facts, a work built mainly of Scotch materials, worked by Scotch minds long ago--a very famous work a century old, which is known far and wide, while that of honest John Gillies is almost quite unknown. But the fame of the architect is not to be coveted, for the stigma of dishonesty rests upon his name. MacPherson undoubtedly tried to deceive, and especially when he denied to Ireland all share in the heroes of Ossian, or seemed to claim the entire work as his own invention.

If this be correct; if such was the real nature of the work; when the author held his peace and refused any explanation; when party spirit ran high, and Scotch were rebels, there was room for controversy. Antiquaries might fall upon the traditional and genuine, because it seemed modern, and deny the antiquity of the whole. Irishmen might recognise bits of their property, and claim the entire work. Indignant Scotchmen, knowing their own, might fret and fume and plead possession, and defend the right and the wrong; and the "Gall," the stranger, knowing nothing of the case, hearing the din, and called on to accept the whole as historically true, and a genuine work, complete, and completely preserved by tradition alone, for some fifteen centuries, might well indignantly reject the whole as a set of impudent forgeries and fictions. John Bull is "not going to be gulled," and "he will not believe anything of a man who tries to do him once," and so everything Gaelic is suspected to this day. In this battle of the inky plumes all sides might well lose their tempers, or spoil them. But, for all that, truth may now be found amongst the relies of the strife, amongst wasted ink and spoilt paper; and the truth, as I imagine, lies as usual somewhere in the middle. She may be enticed out of her well by coaxing, patience, and perseverance, but she is only driven deeper, and far out of sight, by wrangling critics, who fight for her favours as men have fought, and are still fighting, for the truth of this Ossianic controversy.

When "Flosi (in the Njal Saga) undertook to tell the story of the burning, he was fair to all; and therefore what he said was believed." I have tried to tell my story fairly, and if any one holds a different opinion, let him not quarrel with mine.

"Cogadh na sith," strife or peace, is an old Gaelic watchword, We have tried the first for a century, and made very little by it, except bad blood; let Celts try a turn on the other road, and, at all events, let us give up fighting amongst ourselves.

There is an old monkey of my acquaintance whose wont it is to hoist his hind leg over his shoulder, and lean his head confidingly on the sole of his foot, and caress his cars with his toes, till his toes, in some strange unaccountable manner, excite his wrath; then he seizes the offending foot in both hands, and grins defiance at it, and cuffs it and bites it, till a new freak

comes over him, and he sits down upon his heels, and goes to sleep again, at peace with himself and the rest of the world.

I never see this venerable pug without thinking that he must be the embodied spirit of the Ossianic controversy, which it is my ambition to lull fast asleep for good and all.

CXII. Proverbs

Gaelic proverbs mention the Feinne, and do not indicate the existence of a petty quarrelsome spirit in former days amongst them.

396.[416] CLANNA NAN GAEL AN GUAILLIN A CHEILE.

Gaelic clans at each other's shoulders.

Shews at least an appreciation of the blessings of concord, and it is a great pity that they will not now act up to this, their favourite sentiment.

379. CHA B' IONAN O'BRIAN IS NA GAEL.

O'Brian and the Gael were unlike.

They certainly were once unlike those of the present day who quarrel with each other. These are rather like another worthy.

77. IS OLC DO BEATHA CHONAIN!

Bad's thy being Conan.

148. CHA D' FHUAIR CONAN RIAMH DORN GUN DORN A THOIRT G'A CHEANN.

Conan never got cuff without giving cuff back.

Their treatment of each other is ???.

154. CAIRDEAS CHONAIN RIS NA DEONABH.

Conan's kindness to the demons, i.e., "cuff for cuff," or "claw for claw."[417]

This quarrelsome spirit was not that of the Druids.

5. GA FOGASG CLACH DO LAR IS FOISGE NO SIN COBHAIR CHOIBHIDH.

Though a stone be near earth, nearer than that is Coivi's aid.

(The arch Druid Coivi or Cefaeus. See Bede.)

147. CHO TEOMADH RI COIBHI DRUIDH.

As clever as Coivi Druid.

This was a wise helpful character.

24. DEAS-AIL AIR GACH NI.

Sunwise (ready able) for everything.

Fionn was like him.

113. CHA D' CHUM FIONN RIAMH BLAR GUN CHUMH-ACHD (OR (?) CHUMHA).

Fionn never joined fight without might (or (?) wailing).

[416] The numbers refer to Macintosh's Collection. The first edition was published in 1785; second edition, 1819. A much enlarged and improved edition, edited by Alex. Nicolson, M.A., LL.D., advocate, was published in 1881.

[417] It is probably something like the story of the Master Smith in the Norse Tales.

229. CHA DO THREIG FIONN RIAMH CARAID A LAIMH DHEAS.

Fionn never forsook his right hand friend.

His was the character of a sagacious, successful military leader, who agreed with his friends, though he did not forgive one great injury till too late, and avenged it by subtlety.

178. CHO COMASACH LAMH RI CONLOCH.

As powerful-handed as Conloch.

There is a story which I have not yet got, about Conan going to the Isle of Cold and holding combat with its ghostly inhabitants.

336. CHO LAIDIR RI CUCHULLIN.

As strong as Cuchullin.

Are the characteristics of brave soldiers.

101. COTHRAM NA FEINNE DHOIBH.

Be theirs the Feine's advantage.

"Clean pith and fair play" (Kelly's Prov.) is a soldier-like motto, but it is not quarrelsome. It does not indicate the life which modern writers have led each other on this subject.

32. BEATHA 'CHONAIN A MEASG NAN DEAMHAN, MA 'S OLC DHOMH CHA 'N FHEARR DHAIBH.

Conan's life amongst the demons. If bad for me no better for them. A sort of dog's life.

46. MAR E BRAN IS E BHRATHAIR.

If not Bran, his brother.

A life of strife which destroyed the Fenians long ago, when they took to it, and fought till there was but one left.

66. MAR BHA OSSIAN AN DEIGH NA FIANNABH.

As Ossian was after the Fians.

A miserable old man in the house of a stranger to his race.

213. CHA 'N FHIACH SGEUL GUN URRAIN.

A tale without warrant is worthless.

2. MAS BREUG UAM E IS BREUG THUGAM E.

If lie from me it is, lie to me it was.

The Gael fell out amongst themselves, and thereby lost the plain long ago, according to the proverbs.

105. AN LON DUBH, AN LON DUBH SPAGACH! THUG MISE DHA CHOILLE FHASGA FHEURACH; 'S THUG ESAN DOMHSA AM MONADH DUBH FASAICH.

The black elk, the shambling black elk, I gave him the sheltered grassy wood, and he gave me the black desert mountain.

For whether the word means Elk or Ousel, and the proverb applies to Romans or Scandinavians, or to something else, it is applicable to the present time. The Gael have fought

till they have been driven to find other fields. Many an American back-woodsman may turn his thoughts to the old country and think of the old battle cry.

26. IS FAD AN EIGH GU LOCHODHA, IS COBHAIR O CHLANN O'DUIBHNE.

'Tis a far cry to Lochawe, and aid from the clan of O'Duibhne.

Whether the Fenians were Scotch or Irish it is the same. The most of their Gaelic descendants have left the hills and plains for which they fought, chiefly because they fought amongst themselves.

CXIII. Family History

About 1706, Mr. Alexander Campbell, second son of Campbell of Craignish, was employed by John Duke of Argyll to examine and sort his archives and charters, and he left what is called the "Craignish manuscript." He mentions old manuscripts in the Irish character then extant, genealogical and historical, and tells that Irish historians had traced the "clan Duin" from the Dalruadinian colonists of Argyll.

"The Craignish manuscript" is quoted in a history of the Campbells which was written about the beginning of this century, and is now in my possession in MS. The following passages bear upon the Ossianic controversy:--

"When but a boy, I listened with a greedy ear to the traditions and poems of my country, of which there are very many; ornate, flowery, and elegant as those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and had they but as much art, might, for natural invention, stand in the roll of fame, and vie with the most celebrated poems of these ancient nations, which have been handed down to our times!"

It is thus proved that in the youth of a man who wrote more than fifty years before "the fragments" appeared, *poems* existed in the West Highlands, which a well-educated gentleman considered to be comparable to the works of the classical poets, and these could scarcely be the popular ballads now recited. But they were not the poems of 1807, whatever they may have been.

"With regard to the Fingalians," he says, "they were an *Irish* militia, raised in the *ninth* century, under the command of Fion MacCouill, who was appointed by the provincial kings of Ireland General-in-Chief, with several inferior commanders, one of the most eminent of whom was Diarmid. This force consisted of 7000 men in time of peace, and 21,000 in time of war, and was levied and maintained for the purpose of repelling the Danes and Norwegians, whose frequent incursions and bloody invasions had desolated that country for many years before."

To this quotation the writer of the history, who was an implicit believer in MacPherson's Ossian, adds this note:--

"This mistaken idea, that Diarmid was an Irishman by birth, misled the ancient genealogists, of the family of Argyll and those of some of their kinsmen, as will appear afterwards; and they sought in *Ireland* for what was to be found in *Argyll*."

Hence it appears that m late as 1707, the author of the Craignish MSS., like the early genealogists of one of the West country clans to whose records he had access, claimed a descent from Diarmid O'Duin, and believed his clan to be of Irish extraction.

About forty years later, the existence of this belief was referred to by Duncan Forbes in his "Memorial on the Clans," drawn up for Government in 1745, when he wrote--

"The Campbells are called in Gaelic Clan Guin or O'Duine. The Duke of Argyll is their chief; he, is called in the Highlands MacCalain Mor."

It is thus made evident that Fingal's kingdom of Morven had not been heard of in Argyll in 1707, for those who claimed to be descended from Fionn's nephew would surely have mentioned Fingal's misty dominions. The man who admired the poems which were current in his day would never have claimed a descent from the Fenians of Ireland if he had known of a Scotch historical epic about "Fingal" and "Diarmaid" and the ancient poets, and family bards

and genealogists whom he quoted, must have heard of these poems, if they had existed in their day.

Several clan genealogists (e.g., the MacGregor's) claim a descent from Arthur, "Art," and Irish kings, but I have never heard of one that mentions "the King of Morven," though it has been common to speak of the Highlanders as the descendants of the Feinne. Thus family history agrees with tradition. There probably were Fenians, whose chief was Fionn, but in the lapse of time these have acquired a fictitious history, in which the traces of a pagan mythology appear.

Note.--On referring again to MacNicol's book, mentioned above under 1779, I find that he had read the Gaelic of the seventh book of Temora, and held that it was not composed by MacPherson.

CXIV. Traditions

BRITISH TRADITIONS.

In the preceding pages I have endeavoured to separate the “Poems of Ossian” from the popular traditions on which they are partly founded, and to shew that many of these are of great antiquity, whatever may be the real date of Gaelic poems, popular ballads, or their common heroes. It is now thought probable that old British traditions were the materials of which the romances of the middle ages were made; so it may be of interest to point out that Gaelic popular romances now current have some relation to ancient romance.

In 1805 three volumes were published by George Ellis, Esq., which gave specimens of “Early English Metrical Romances, chiefly written during the early part of the fourteenth century.” Amongst these an account is given of “Marie’s Lays,” which are twelve in number, and were offered by the authoress to the king “probably Henry the Third,” she says--

“Li Breton ont fait les lais,”

which she translated, “which she had heard, and had carefully treasured in her memory;” and which she knows to be true. This lady was the Armorican MacPherson of the thirteenth century.

Her heroes and heroines are all Celtic, and current Gaelic popular tales and Breton ballads can still be traced in her lays. No. 4, “Bisclaveret,” is the well known “Loup Garow” which the Normans call “Garwolf,” and which is well known to the peasants of France at this day, and was known to ancient authors. I have no story like that of the old lay, but a glance at these volumes will shew that the notion of men and women and supernaturals, who assumed the forms of animals, and resumed their own by putting off a “cochal,” a husk, or dress, is one of the commonest incidents in Gaelic popular tales; so this wolf is only one of a class.

We have transformed deer, seals, a hen, horses, ravens, crows, little dogs, grim hounds, and all manner of creatures; and in this, Gaelic tales do but resemble those of other countries, including those of India, which are full of talking creatures. No. 7, “Ywonec,” is very like the well-known story of “the blue bird,” and has relations in Gaelic. It is a story of a fair lady who was visited by a lover, a great personage, in the form of a bird, and had children by him, who lost him by a fault of her own, followed him to his distant country, where he was a chief ruler, living in splendour, and brought him back. No. 3 is a specimen of this legend; so is the story of beauty and the beast; so is No. 12; so is the legend of Cupid and Psyche; and the story in various shapes will be found in nearly every modern collection of popular tales. Marie’s lays varies from the usual ending of the story, for her great falcon prince dies. The characters go to “Caer-leon,” and I have no doubt this was a popular English story. No. 9, “Milun,” is about a knight of South Wales, whose reputation spread to Ireland, Norway, Gothland, Loegria (*England*), and Albany (*Scotland*); and his name is like Gaelic “Milidh,” a hero (Latin, miles). The story is something like that of the son of Cuchulin, of which MacPherson has made an episode. A knight has a son by a beautiful lady, and gives her a gold ring, which she ties about the child’s neck, and then they send it away to be brought up secretly. The son grows up, sets off in search of adventures, and finally has a fight with his own father, whom he does not know at first, but whom he afterwards recognises. The tradition varies considerably from the frame-work of the old lay, but it has been worked up into a vast number of shapes in tales preserved in Irish manuscripts. An abstract of a traditional version will be found at page 198, vol. iii. The scene of the legend is laid in Skye,

Scythia, England. Brittany and Cornwall; but I strongly suspect that it was originally laid somewhere in the far East. All these ancient lays are dressed by their authoress in the costumes and manners of the court of that day. There are knights, and noble ladies, tournaments, and churchmen; they are *not* true, for men do not assume the forms of animals, but they were surely founded on popular traditions, as their authoress said, and some of them are still popular tales in the West Highlands.

A glance at O'Curry's lectures will shew that the Gael have delighted for ages in dressing up their own traditions in a romantic dress of their own contrivance, and that they did not copy the decorations of such court bards as Marie.

"Sir Tristrem" is attributed to Thomas the Rymour and the thirteenth century; and Chrestian de Troyes, a French poet, is said to have composed a romance about the same hero in the twelfth; the incidents of the romance were very widely known and used in Europe. The hero is supposed to have been a chieftain of the sixth century, and one of Arthur's knights, therefore a Briton. The scene is laid in Cornwall, Wales, and other parts of Britain, by all the authors who made poems out of the story. The whole romance turns upon the attachment of a knight for his uncle's wife. It is said that "Mark," king of Cornwall, is not a Celtic name, but one derived from "Marcus," but it is a Celtic word, and means a horse. The whole story of the poem, as given in the history of Scottish Poetry, is like a building made of an old red sandstone, full of pebbles of popular tales. Tristrem disguised is like the story of the Great Fool, which is like the boyish exploits of Fin in old Irish. The sailing about in ships with the Norwegians, the landing in unknown countries, the travels through "the seven kingdoms," the chess playing, the "Croude" (harp), "Seyn Patricke," "Carlionn," the "Queen of Ireland," the ladies tending the sick knight, the dragon and the story of its death, the false steward and his punishment, the rash promise to give something before asking what is required-the names, which have a Gaelic meaning, and the ground work of the whole story, all point to a Celtic origin. It is but a phase of the story which Irish and Scotch Gael have worked into so many forms, the story of Diarmaid and Graidhne. But the language of the old ballad has nothing to do with Gaelic idioms, the metre is different from any Gaelic poetry which I have read, and above all, the spirit and sentiment are -wholly different from the Gaelic of "Ossian," "Mordubh," and "Seann Dana." It seems from Sir Tristrem that Celtic traditions were worked into poems in Scotland in the thirteenth century, and that they are now attributed to the mythical "Ossian" in the Highlands. But the Irish assure us that the elopement of Finn's wife was a real event, though the story is like that of Venus and Adonis, and is probably as old as Sanscrit mythology.

But of all these ancient romances the story of "Morte Arthur" and that of Sir Lancelot most resemble current Highland traditions. The story, when stripped to the bones, is almost identical with the love story of the history of the Feinne. Arthur, a king of the Britons, not in the prime of life, courts a fair maiden, Guenever, whom he afterwards makes his queen, and who was distinguished for cleverness as well as beauty. Fionn, the king of the Feinne, courts Grainne, daughter of Cormac, who was the wisest as well as the handsomest of women. Lancelot du lac, on his first appearance at court, inspires Guenever or Ganore with love.

Diarmaid, Fionn's nephew, at his first meeting with Grainne, inadvertently shews a spot on his forehead which no woman can see without loving him.

Arthur marries Guenever, Fionn marries Grainne. Guenever the queen is sent to a distant province, and Lancelot follows willingly. Diarmaid runs away from Grainne, and is pursued by her, and she by clever artifices obliges him to run away with her.

Guenever is carried off from Arthur by a felon knight. Grainne runs away from Diarmaid with a wild man. Sir Lancelot recovers the queen. Diarmaid rejoins Grainne. Sir Lancelot throughout the story is the queen's paramour. Diarmaid yields to temptation at last, or as the story is often told, does not yield at all. At last Arthur's eyes are opened, and he seeks revenge with perseverance, and determination, and rancour. Fionn, when be is convinced of his wife's infidelity, plots the death of his nephew, and pursues him to the death. Arthur pursues Lancelot with knights and armies, and besieges him in castles, but always within Celtic bounds. Fionn pursues Diarmaid all over Gaelic countries, and at last devises a treacherous hunting party for his destruction. In Irish versions of the story the castles are replaced by magic trees. In the Highlands they are simply eaves and deep glens. Lancelot is never overthrown, and is a full armed, peerless knight. Diarmaid is a peerless "Fenian," "the expert shield," armed with sword and dart and helmet, invulnerable save in the sole of his foot; and neither the Breton nor the Gael will do any hurt to his king and uncle when they meet in fight. Sir Gawain is Lancelot's foe; the name is Gaelic, for "Smith " now spelt Gobhainn or Gobha. Gow (or Goll) Macmorn was the rival of Fionn and his clan, and here the parallel fails, for the Gaelic hero was killed by a magic boar, by Fionn's contrivance, and the British hero survived Arthur, and there is no boar-hunt in the romance; but the parallel holds good with another story, which is also part of the history of the Feinne. Arthur loses his army, and destroys that of his foe in the great battle of Barrendown. When the fight was over, and no one left but the leaders and two of Arthur's knights, he rushed at Sir Modred, pierced him with a spear, and received a mortal wound from his expiring foe. So died Oscar and Cairbre. Arthur is led to the strand, where he is taken on board a ship, and carried to the isle of Avilion to be healed. Fionn is not killed in any tradition that I have collected, but Irishmen kill him before the battle of Gabhra, where there was a general slaughter of all the Fenians but two. He is supposed, by tradition, to live in the "Green Island," and the chief products of that Celtic paradise are "Avlan" apples. The body of Arthur is brought by ladies to a bishop, and buried, and Guenever, Sir Bedwer, and Sir Lancelot, all take refuge in convents, where they die devoutly. According to endless traditions Arthur is yet alive; according to popular tradition, James the Fourth survived Flodden; and in France, Napoleon the Great is supposed yet to live. Men voted for him in the west of France in 1849; and Fionn like these survives.

Ossian, the last of the Feinne, is always represented as the last of his race, living with a churchman or his father-in-law; and in Irish versions, he, like Lancelot, dies a good Christian. So here are the same traditions worked up into wholly different stories, and differently put upon the stage, according to the manners of the age in which romances are written, but the people go on telling their own story in their own way. The author of Morte Arthur dressed up his story according to his ideas, and made a connected story; the people of the Highlands tell their story in broken bits, but they also sing the fragments, and the music fits the Gaelic ballad, and would also fit the poem of Morte Arthur.

GAELIC BALLAD METRE AND ASSONANCE.

Hearken a space, if ye wish a LAY;
  Of the *days* that from us have GONE;
Of Mac*Coaill*, and of the FEINNE;
  And of Mac o' *Duine*, a woeful SONG.

MORTE ARTHUR.

Lancelot wist what was her will,
  Well he knew, by other mo;
Her brother cleped he him till;
  And to her chamber gonne they go."

The rhythm is nearly that of the old Irish air “The Groves of Blarney,” and probably the whole series of traditions, English, Scotch, Welsh, Breton, German, and Irish, have been sung by wandering minstrels, in various shapes and to various tunes, time out of mind. The story is at least as old as the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who relates that after the battle of Camblan, Arthur was transported by his bard and prophet Merlin to “The Fortunate Island, or Island of Apples.”

“Sir Guy of Warwick” is also like Gaelic stories. Like Manus he was attended by a faithful lion, and the story of Raymond, Sir Guy’s son, has much in common with one of Marie’s lays and the story of Cuchulin’s son above mentioned.

“Sir Bevis of Hamptown” is also very Celtic in character. The hero, like “the great fool,” loses his father, is nursed in secret, becomes a herd boy, and, as a child, performs the feats of a great warrior. When wounded he is cured with a wonderful balsam. One of his adventures is the slaughter of a boar which devoured men, which no spear would pierce nor sword bite--like the magic boar slain by Diarmaid. His sword is called MOR GLAY, which is evidently Gaelic, and two lines of the romance are in Shakespere--

“Rats and mice and such small deer,
Was his meat that seven year.”

Sir Bevis, like the man in Murdoch MacBrian, and other heroes, comes disguised as a poor man, and is recognised by his love. Lions are like Conall’s lions, they kill and devour a man and his horse, but lay their heads in the lap of *a king’s* daughter--

“For it is the lion’s kind y wis,
A king’s daughter that maid is,
Hurt nor barm none to do,
Therefore lay these lions so.”

There is also the magic healing well which is in so many Gaelic stories.

The romances which treat of Charlemagne also bear a strong resemblance to the rest. “Roland and FERRAGUS” introduces a Gaelic name, though it is that of the pagan villain of the piece, who is sent by the Soudan from Babylon to fight Charlemagne. He is a giant, black, and a great deal bigger than Fergus the son of Fionn--

“He had twenty men’s strength,
And forty feet of length,
And four feet in the face,
And fifteen in brede.”

“His nose was a foot and more.
His browe as bristles wore.”

Nevertheless, after a severe fight with Roland the Christian warrior, he is overcome, but first he sits down and argues against the true faith, exactly as Oisein does with St. Patrick in Irish Fenian tales.

The romance of “Cœur de Lion” makes that chivalrous monarch dine upon boiled Saracens more than once, and is as wild and impossible as any of its predecessors, though it treats of real events in the life of a real king.

And so, throughout these mediæval romances, and the history of the Feinne, the same stories and characters can be traced. There is always a leading king and a knight who is more valiant than his leader; a Fionn and a Diarmaid, a Charlemagne and Roland, an Arthur and Lancelot, a Mark and Tristrem, and a bard who is a chief actor in the piece, which generally ends in a

great battle and general slaughter, such as Roncevalles, Barrendown, Camblan, Gabhra, and, shall I add, the battle of Mons Grampius.[418]

There are, of course, two ways of accounting for this resemblance. Those who believe in creations of the human brain will look on the traditions as fragments of a ruined romance. Those who think that creations of the brain are very rare, will look on traditions as the quarry whence materials have been taken by a succession of romancers, who said nothing about their mine of wealth. The difference between the two may help to turn the scale. There is not a single mediaeval battle, or armed knight, such as Sir Lancelot and his fights, to be found in modern Gaelic tradition. There is not a trace of the Gaelic Diarmaid, as he is described by tradition, or of the battle of Gabhra, as described by the Irish, to be found in any mediaeval romance that I know of. But they have this common want: I know of no single description of a battle on the sea in any British tradition, romance, or popular tale, old or new, though people are always sailing about, and fighting battles on the strand. But the moment a saga is taken up, a sea-fight is a prominent object amongst the endless plunderings and battles on shores. The sagas are the history of the Northmen, and bear the stamp of matter-of-fact narratives. The romances in which the Northmen delighted, when they had taken root in France and England, were, as I believe, made from the Celtic histories, traditions, popular tales, and pagan mythology of the newly-converted half-pagan tribes of the now united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of ancient Gaul.

WELSH STORIES.

Now let me try to make peace with our Welsh cousins, for they have dealt hard blows at British literature. If they were provoked thereto by MacPherson, he did them good, for the work of Owen Jones, which is a standard work still, was not begun till long after MacPherson had set the world upon the study of Celtic literature, and Chatterton to invent African odes and Rowly's poetry.

As an example to be followed, let me point to the work of Hersart de la Villemarqué.[419]

The first thing which must strike the reader, is the contrast between the language of this distinguished foreigner in speaking of Welsh antiquities, and the spirit of most writers on the Ossianic controversy.

One aims at discovering truth, the others at proving their own case. Villemarqué is a Celt, but he upholds Celtic antiquities; he is no Welshman, but he upholds Welsh literature, instead of running it down; he can refer to hundreds of ancient Welsh manuscripts, but he does not therefore insist that all Welsh manuscript poems of great age are far more ancient than the manuscripts in which they are found; he can quote French versions of old romances, but he does not therefore claim them for France. Finding a poem attributed to Taliesen, written in a vellum manuscript of great antiquity, he does not therefore assume it to be Taliesen's composition; but working steadily onwards, he compares manuscript with manuscript, till he finally sifts out a residuum which seems to bear the stamp of age and originality, he assumes that this may have been the work of the ancient bard; he does not, like MacPherson, assert it; and he gives the original, and quotes his authorities; he alters the orthography, but he states the fact; and he translates the result of this process into the plainest of French, without aiming at anything but an honest rendering of what he believes to be genuine old poetry. He collected the traditional songs of the Bretons, and their prose tales; but he does not claim for Bretons all the traditions which he found in their country. In short, he is a man of sense,

[418] On this battle William Livingstone has published a Gaelic prize poem, called "Cath Monadh Bhraca." Glasgow, 1858.
[419] Poems des Bardes Breton, Paris 1850.

learning, and liberality; and the fame which be has acquired is well earned. He does not even stand up for the Celtic dialect of his native country, to the injury of all others; but in his difficulties he has recourse of all surviving Celtic dialects alike; and he seeks, and finds aid in translating old Welsh, in Irish, Gaelic, Cornish, and Breton, and thereby he arrives at a valuable result, instead of maintaining a contemptible squabble; and he can point to Owen Jones of Myvyr, a Welsh peasant, who devoted his life to the publication of Welsh poems from ancient manuscripts. He was the MacPherson of Wales, in that he drew attention to the literature of his country; but warned, perhaps, by the errors of his predecessors in the field of Celtic literature, his work was the very opposite of MacPherson's, for it was all Welsh, instead of all English, and all founded upon ancient documents which still exist. The work was published in 1801 and 1807--that is, at the same time as the Gaelic of Ossian. For the one there is old authority, for the other there is none.

Now, in this work of Mons de Villemarqué, I find traits which recal Gaelic traditions and Ossianic poems, as published by Gillies, Stewart, and MacCallum, in Scotland; and by Miss Brooke and the Ossianic society of Dublin in Ireland. For example, there are three chief Welsh bards, and all of these, like Oisein, join in battles, and sing of their own exploits. Two of them, like Oisein, live to a great age, and survive the friends of their youth. Liwarch Henn, Aneurin, Taliesen, and Oisein, have much in common in their story, if not in their poems. Taliesen ends his days with St. Gildas in Armorica; Aneurin laments the loss of all his friends and comrades; Liwarch Henn holds parley with an angel in the form of a churchman, and is urged to repentance in his old age; and Oisein holds parley with St. Patrick, and closes his life with him in the practice of forced austerities, in constant regret for the departed glories of his race. Even in Protestant Scotland the old blind bard is sometimes represented as singing his songs, and telling his stories to Padraig or Paul. If this religious element has been weeded from the Ossian of MacPherson, the bard is still an old man, singing of the past; he is always miserable and worn out, blind and deserted, but with the mind of a warrior still fresh within him, and the spirit of an old pagan to argue with Malvina, if she had been a Christian angel. So much there is in common, and it would seem to point to a struggle between the old religion and the new faith, Paganism and bards against Christianity and Church men. One poem, the song of Urien, is like the "Lay of the heads" published by MacCallum in 1816, and repeated to me by a man in Uist in 1860. Cuchullin had been slain by numbers, and Conall, his "oide," heard of it. The messenger told that Cuchullin had got a new house; when he lay down, his nose touched the roof, and the back of his head was on the floor; and when he stretched himself, his feet were at the lower end, and his head at the upper, and so the messenger saved his life, for Conall had sworn to slay any one who brought tidings of Cuchullin's death. Then Conall and another swore that they would not stop till they had filled a withy with the heads of king's sons, as eric for Cuchullin. They did so, and let the knot at the end slip thrice, and the song is a dialogue between a lady and Conall, who tells the history of the heads, and the exploits of their former owners. The traditional version of the song, as written down for me, gives the name of the comrade "Laoghaire," says that they filled seven withies with heads, and adds a great many details which are not in MacCallum. There are sixty-two lines instead of sixty, but there is little difference in the versions, except in arrangement and substitution of words. The song of Urien is in like manner a dialogue, and one of the speakers is returning from battle with a head, and he describes the prowess of the man who owned it.

But the Welsh poetry quoted differs entirely from the Gaelic. The stanzas consist of three lines instead of four; the whole system of assonance and rhyme, so far as I can make it. out, seems utterly different; there is hardly anything in common, except that both treat of heroic actions, war, and slaughter.

There is not much resemblance, then, between the poems of these two branches of the Celtic stock, and it would be strange if there were, for the languages, though Celtic, differ widely. But fortunately a distinguished lady of high rank has enabled us to judge of another class of popular lore, as it existed long ago in Wales--the popular tales of the fifteenth century-and in these I should expect to find the remains of something far older than Oisein ox Taliesen; the old myths which wandered westward with the Celtic race, which are embodied in Gaelic tales, written and unwritten, Scotch and Irish, and which seem to be common to most of the Aryan languages, of which the Celtic is one of the oldest. The poor despised popular tales, which are branded as wicked lies in the West Highlands, and which such men as Grimm and De la Villemarqué believe to be some of the oldest known products of the human mind. Let me shew, so far as I can, wherein Scotch and Welsh popular tales agree, and wherein they differ.

The Mabinogion, by Lady Charlotte Guest, is a collection of ancient Welsh popular tales, taken from a MS. supposed to have been written about the close of the fifteenth century. These contain the frame-work of many of the romances of chivalry which pervaded all Europe at a far earlier date.

For instance, “The Chevalier au Lion,” is the same story in the main as “The Lady of the Fountain”; and the romance is attributed to “Crestien de Troyes” at the close of the twelfth century.

These romances “are found in England, France, Germany, and even Iceland.” They are in various metres, but the same stories can be traced in all; the heroes are still British worthies, and their exploits are traced back to Welsh popular tales and to Celtic traditions.

It is impossible to read the text of the Mabinogion, and the notes, without seeing the strong resemblance which these traditions bear to modern Gaelic popular tales.

The resemblance is not that of one entire story to another; were it so, it would be less striking; but it is a pervading resemblance interwoven throughout, and which pervades in a less degree the whole system of popular tales, so far as I am acquainted with it. The Welsh and Gaelic stories are, in fact, often founded on, and consist of the same incidents variously worked up, and differently told, to fit the various manners and customs of different ages, different people, and different ranks of society.

Take, for instance, “The Lady of the Fountain,” strip it of all that is local, and makes it specially Welsh, and fixes a date, the names, the dresses, the decorations, the manners and customs, which were, without doubt, those of the people who delighted in the Mabinogion when it was popular in Wales, and there will remain a bare skeleton of incidents, many of which will be found in these volumes. These I take to be Celtic, to have travelled West with Celtic tribes, and to be founded on still older traditions--the common stock from which the popular tales of Germany, and of that whole family of nations were also drawn.

First, the frame-work is the same; one man tells a story, which starts another, as is the case in Conall, Nos. V. VI. and VII.; and in Conall Gulban, No. LXXVI.; in Murdoch MacBrian, No. XXXVIII.; and in many others which I have in manuscript. The knight comes to a castle, where he finds maidens who shew him the way, and entertain him, as happens in popular tales of all lands; for there is always some one who provides the adventurer with a bowl, or a clue, which shews him the road to his place of trial, or with some other means of conveyance, as in the story of the Calenders; but in this case the number is 24, as in the Gaelic story of Magnus, No. LXXXIV.; and the dress is yellow, as is the dress of the mysterious people in the Lay of the Great Fool, and generally in the Gaelic and Welsh tales, and yellow was the

colour of dresses of honour in the west long ago. The first person he meets is a great black giant with a club, who appears in the Breton tale of Peronek the Idiot, and in the Rider of Grianaig, No. LVIII., and in a great many other Gaelic tales. He comes next to a mystic fountain; and mystic fountains are the scene of wonders in endless Gaelic stories--for instance, Nos. XLVI. and LVIII., where the transformations occur at a fountain. Then there is the arrival of a man on a black horse in a shower, who insults the warrior; which incident occurs in Nos. I., LII., LXXVI., and is common to many others, and is especially distinctive of Gaelic tales. There is the healing vessel of balsam in the keeping of a female, which is continually turning up in every possible shape in Gaelic. There is the fight between a snake and a creature of another kind, which opens the story of the Battle of the Birds, No. ii.; and there is the animal who helps his deliverer, as the raven helped the prince; and as the lion, wolf, and falcon, help the fisherman's son in the Sea Maiden; and in Straparola's Italian version of that old tale, which is at least as old as 1567.

There is the knight who wanders about with his rescued lion, conquering giants and monsters, like Magnus, in No. LXXXIV.; and like the boy in the Norse tale of the Blue Belt; and like heroes in plenty of other tales besides.

In short, through these old Welsh tales of chivalry, there shines an older system of popular tales, as clearly as the Welsh tales shine through the French and English romances; and the remnants of these very traditions exist in fragments at this day amongst the other branches of the Celtic race.

I do not mean that Gaelic-speaking tribes have a peculiar claim to them, rather than the Welsh, or that Celtic tribes invented them; I mean that these traditions are Celtic, and probably were Eastern; and that the popular tales now current amongst the poorest and least instructed of the Gaelic population, dwelling in the far west, throw light upon the subject so ably treated in the Mabinogion by a distinguished lady, aided by Welsh scholars.

Compare the Breton traditions and popular ballads, founded on these same traditions of Arthur and his knights, with the next story in the Mabinogion, "Peredur, the son of Errawc," and with the story of the Great Fool, No. LXXIV.; and the general Celtic resemblance for which I am contending will appear in strong relief.

Peredur is the last of seven sons of the "Earl of the North," and he is brought up by a wise mother, in a distant country, so that he should not be a warrior, and perish as his father and brothers had done.

One day he sees some hinds, and not knowing what they are, he drives them in with the goats. So the great fool sees deer, and not knowing what they are, catches them by speed of foot.

On another day, Peredur sees knights on horseback, and knows as little what they are; but having found out, he gets him a horse, and goes to the king's palace, and there he begins by slaying a warrior. So the great fool catches a horse, and rides to the king's palace, and slays a man; and so Peronek, the Breton idiot, is a fool, and becomes a hero; catches a horse, and rides to Kerglas; and there are numerous other traits in Breton ballads which represent similar incidents, though in a wholly different dress.

Where the parallel fails with one story, it holds elsewhere. Peredur is recognised, and is saluted by two captive dwarfs, who had been his father's dwarfs. Conall Gulban is recognised, and is saluted by Duanach, who had been his father's "draodh."

Peredur, when he sets off in quest of adventures, comes to old men, brothers, who instruct him, and forward him on his way, as happens in the story of Black, White, and Red, in a story

told me by tinker MacDonald, in Norse Tales, and in endless popular tales besides. The old men replace the maidens, and the old man who entertains the knight in the Lady of the Fountain. And through all the magnificence of knightly pageantry, there peep forth such traits of popular manners as the scarcity of food.

When it comes to battles, the principle on which they are conducted is to be traced in Gaelic tales. There is the arrival of knights of increasing rank, and their overthrow by the hero; and further on, Peredur overthrows three hundred warriors exactly as Conall Gulban and other Gaelic warriors do; but these are not the mailed knights of the romances.

There is the incident of the bird of prey, the blood and the snow, which suggest love to Conall Gulban, and remind Peredur of the lady of his love; and that one incident joins the whole Celtic family, for it is all over the Highlands now. See page 201. It was in Wales in the fifteenth century. It is in a manuscript in the Advocates' Library, where "Darthula," in the story of the children of Usnoth, is joined to it. This is "Hiberno-Celtic," "intelligible to a Gaelic scholar," according to the account which I have of it; and the same incident is a Breton tale.

Kai, the counterpart of Conan, "ever in scrapes, ever ready for a fight," appears in his usual character.

Caerleon is the dwelling of King Arthur. Turleon is that of the King of Lochlann in "The witch," No. LXXIII.

There is the lady in the dwelling, of the wild heathen people who befriends the wanderers--the character who appears so often, for example, in Nos. I., V., VI., VII., XLIV., LII., LVIII., LXXX., and still oftener in Norse and German stories.

There are even such little touches of resemblance, as "Bald swarthy youths" in Gaelic "*Maol Carrach*;" and such strong bonds of kindred as the three wounded men, who are always fighting Addank, a monster, and mystic armies; who always conquer, but never win; who are wounded, and healed with precious balsam; exactly like the youths in the Knight of the Red Shield, who appear in many other Gaelic tales in other shapes.

There is even the Talisman, the stone of mystic virtues, which occurs in Conal Gulban, and elsewhere, and which is actually used at this day as an amulet to cure sick cattle.

There is the warrior who comes to a trial of arms disguised, who borrows money and clothes from a craftsman, wins, and will not come for his reward; who resists force by force, but comes at last for fair words; like the "*Gille carrach dubh*" in No. IV., vol. I., and the Smith's Apprentice in No. XVI.; and like Boots in many Norse tales, a character who appears in German also.

There is the hideous woman with the enormous teeth, who appears so often in Gaelic tales. There am sorceresses who, like the big women of Jura in No. XLVI., have to do with feats of arms, and generally, if this story of Peredur were modern, and the subject of adverse criticism, it might be said that it was composed of the incidents of half a dozen popular tales, disjointed, separated, shaken together, reunited, and polished; but as it is older than Straparola, an illiberal Welsh critic, if such there be, might claim all collections of later date as borrowed from Welsh ideas.

Now, this story of Peredur has been worked into romances, and exists in many of the languages of Europe, including Icelandic. The question for argument is, Did the old fishermen of the Hebrides, the old wives of Norway, the old nurses of Germany, the people of Brittany, and the writers of "Hiberno-Celtic" manuscripts, all learn their incidents, which they have in common with "Peredur," from their ancestors, the ancestors from wandering

minstrels, the minstrels from manuscripts, and the authors of the manuscripts from Welsh bards? or, Have the peasantry of Europe preserved the traditions from which writers and reciters made books and romances? and, in particular, have the Highlanders of Scotland preserved the Celtic traditions, which were also written in “the Welsh Red Book,” in another guise, in the end of the fifteenth century? I hold the latter as the more probable, if only, because I have found no trace of some romances which as are widely spread. The story of Geraint, the son of Erbin, is in as many languages, including Icelandic, as the Lady of the Fountain, and I have not yet found a single incident in Gaelic common to it, unless it be the old knight and the dwarf encouraging their friends in the combat with the knight of the Sparrow-hawk, as Duanach encouraged Conall in his battles; and the magic mist which was dispersed by the hero, which occurs in the lay of the Great Fool, which is in a Manx tradition, and which occurs in several Irish stories-for example, “The Chase,” in Miss Brooke’s collection of Irish poems.

Take the story of Kilwich and Olwen, in the second volume, as another example. It opens like many Gaelic stories. A king has a son, and marries a second time. He conceals his son with a swineherd, and the stepmother finds him out and brings him to court, and he is sent off to encounter great perils, and seek objects difficult of attainment--adventures suggested by the stepmother. So the son goes off in the “Knight of Riddles,” and one of his adventures is to obtain the hand of a lady, and so a whole system of popular tales is founded on a stepmother’s dislike for her stepchildren. The manner of telling the story agrees closely with the manner of telling Gaelic stories; many of the names could be explained by Gaelic--for example, Lychlin is surely Lochlann; Mil du, Maol dhu; Kilhwich, son of the king of Kellydon, is surely Gil mhuic, the swine lad; and the Welsh word has the same meaning, for the king’s son was so called because he was hidden in a swine’s barrow.

The whole principle of the story is popular, in that the hero rises to a palace from a stye.

The first thing he asks from King Arthur, when he gets to court, is to have his hair cut, and though this is said to have been an ancient ceremony, I am inclined to think it is nothing but the common incident in all popular tales, which the following sketch from nature, made on the Tana river, on the Russian bank, in 1850, may save me from explaining in words.

Here is a quotation from the Norse tale of Soria Moria Castle.

De satte sig da der, og da de havde siddet en stund sagde den yngste Prindsessen: “Yeg faaer vel lyske dig lidt jeg Halvor,” ya Halvor lugde hovodet i hendes havn, saa lyskede hun ham, og det varede ikke længe forend Halvor sov; etc. (page 153, Norske folke eventyr. 1852).

In the list of Arthur’s warriors, too, there are many old familiar friends, the gifted men of Fortunio, who appear in many languages, and who have counterparts in Gaelic, see vol. i., p. 250. In another story, Bolagam Mor, I have LURAGA LUATH, nimble shanks, who catches deer by speed. CLARSNEACHD MHAITH, who hears the grass grow. TOIN CHRUAIDH, who is found clearing a field of stones by sitting on them. CUIMSE DIREACH, the marksman who is found with a gun at his eye aiming at a bird in Eirinn; and BOLAGAM MOR Great Gulp, who is found swilling a lake, and spouting it out again. They all join “the widow’s son,” and sail in a ship which could go over mountain or sea, Muir Da Monadh, which is like Arthur’s ship, and they go to win a king’s daughter, and do win her by feats. Nimble shanks runs a race with “nighean dubh na luideag,” the black girl of the clouts, to try who could first take a bottle of water from the green well that was about the heaps of the deep. “Tobar uaine thu ‘n iomal torra domhain,” the keen eared man, hears all the plans, the swift man is enticed into falling asleep, and his head is laid on a horse’s skull by the black

girl who runs off with the water, but the marksman shoots the head away, and he awakens and wins.

The next feat is to bring "*Torc Neamha*," a deadly boar that is in a forest, alive to the king's house. Nimble shanks goes to catch him, and Hard haunches to ride him borne, and home they come with him, and here is manifestly the same boar with the deadly spikes in his back which appears in the story of Diarmaid and elsewhere.

The third feat is to sit at meat with the king in a chair with a deadly spike in it, and this Good bearing finds out, and Hard haunches performs.

And the fourth is to bring a loch from the hill top to a hollow near the king's house, which Great Gulp accomplishes by swallowing it, and spouting it out again till the people were nearly drowned, and then the lady was married and won, and she is the daughter of the king Of the island of women. This was written in 1859 by Hector Urquhart, from the telling of old John Mackenzie, and I know that I have not got half the story yet. There is a man who made a bridge of his foot, and another who shot arrows into the moon, of whom I have heard, and there is the man who produced intense cold by moving his hat, who is in Grimm, and who appears in a story which I got from Gairloch.

Now, all these and more are in stories collected in modern times elsewhere, and they are all in this Welsh story at the court of Arthur.

There is the man of sharp sight. "When the gnat arose in the morning with the sun, he could see it from Gelli wic, in Cornwall, as far as Pen Blathaon in North Britain," explained to be from the Land's End to the Ord of Caithness.

There is the "marksman," Gelli wic, "he could in a twinkling shoot the wren through the two legs upon Esgeir Oervel, in Ireland."

There is the man of hard feet who cleared the way for King Arthur, and struck sparks of fire from hard things with the soles of his feet.

There is Gilla coos Hydd, the chief leaper of Ireland was he.

There is the nimble man who could run over the tops of the trees.

There is Clust Reinad (? cluas an ear), "though he were buried seven cubits beneath the earth he could hear the ant fifty miles off rise from her nest in the morning."

There is the man who made a bridge of his dagger, like a lady who came to visit Fionn in a story which I have.

There is the man who could suck up the sea.

And there are many others of the same stamp, some familiar, some who, so far as I know, do not appear elsewhere in popular tales, but every one of whom is intensely popular, and mythological, and might be, and probably was the hero of a separate myth.

Kai, in particular, is here an epitome of much which is told of several gifted men in Grimm and elsewhere, and therein he agrees with Conan, who in a story about the Feinne (I think Irish) is invisible and able to fly, and blinds the Lochlanners with a sting.

Now, to leave the region of popular tales for a moment, and turn to mythology. In Gylfis mocking Thor, the Norse god goes to the land of giants, where he is cheated most ignominiously; but be plays the part of "Great Gulp," for he swills at a horn whose end is in the sea, and makes the sea sink down many feet by his mighty draught, but he cannot empty the horn. Loki plays the part of the great eater (vol. i. p. 138), but he is beaten, for his adversary is fire. Thor is the strong man who appears in Fortunio, but he is beaten again, for

he cannot lift up the great serpent, which appears to him as a great gray cat, though it goes round the world; and Thor's companion plays the part of the swift man and is beaten, for his adversary is thought, and no one can run a race with thought; and, as it seems to me, the same thing may be meant by the Gaelic "black daughter of the clouts." Anything which is invisible, and hidden, and incorporeal, is called "black." As--"*Each dubh 's each donn, bonn ri bonn 's luaithe 'n t-each dubh na 'n t-each donn*." A black horse and a brown horse sole to sole, swifter is the black horse (the wind) than the brown (water). And lastly, Thor is the wrestler, but he is beaten, for his adversary is old age; and this seems to indicate that Thor, though a divinity, had once been a mortal.

Here then is King Arthur placed on the same level with Thor, and the same incidents associated with both, the one in a Welsh MS. collection of popular tales, the other in a very early Icelandic manuscript, which gives nearly all that is known of the pagan creed of the Northmen, and tha very same characters and incidents are found to pervade the popular tales of the greater part of Europe, including those of the West Highlands.

The only possible deduction from these facts seems to be, that these are traces of a mythology once common to Celts, Scandinavians, Italians, Germans, and mayhap ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and Aryans. And so with the rest of the story of this Welsh prince of Kellydon. When he goes out with his gifted comrades, they meet with a mythical herdsman, a captive, with a (log as mythical as they are themselves, and he plays the part of the herdsman in the Slim-waisted Giant, as told me in Uist, and in the Red Etin of Ireland, printed by Chambers in broad Scotch in 1858. The herdsman, like the maidens in the Lady of the Fountain, shews the way, and tells what is to be met with in this land of wonders, and he entertains the adventurers; and when they are set tasks by the king whose daughter they have come to win, it is like reading a list of tasks picked out of a library of popular tales, with scraps of Norse mythology, and classical mythology all jumbled up with other tasks which I have not found elsewhere.

Here is list of similar tasks from the tale mentioned above, as preserved in the Advocates' Library, which I assume to be written in Irish. I quote from an abstract of an abstract.

Tale I. The fate of the sons of Tuireann. In the reign of Nuadh the silver-handed, the Foghmhairs, a Scandinavian race (I should say the giants), had the Tuatha de Dannans under tribute. The officers come to a king seated on a hill; Lughaidh Lamhfada comes in splendid attire, rushes on the Foghmairs and kills them all but nine, whom he sends back. They tell, and an expedition is decided on. Cian meets Uar, Ichuar, and Ichuarba, three sons of Tuireann Beagruin. Cian transforms himself into a swine. The sons transform themselves into swift hounds. Iuar kills him, and buries him under a heap of stones. As compensation for the crime, they are required to procure for Lughraich--

1. The apples that grew in the garden of the King of Hisbheirna. 2. A sow's skin that belonged to the King of Greece. 3. A Persian spear. 4. The horses and chariot of Doghoir innsefidhe. 5. The seven swine of Easol, King of Colchos. 6. A whelp in the possession of the King of Toruath. 7. Some magic rods from an island in the Tyrrhene sea, and seven other articles of magic properties, which are not given in the abstract. They were also to utter three cries on the summit of the hill of Miodachan. After sixteen quarto pages of adventures, they return with the articles, but have not uttered the three cries, so they ask for a magic curach and go. The eldest brother, in a cover of glass, explores the sea for fifteen days. They get a magic rod, utter the three cries on the top of the hill, after a severe battle return to Ireland, die, and are buried.

This manuscript is supposed to have been written about say 1750. “It is evidently a transcript.” The language bespeaks high antiquity. The man in a glass case occurs in a story mentioned to me in Uist in 1859, and the tale of the sons of Tuireann is one of those mentioned by Professor O’Curry as probably composed before A.D. 1000.

Now let these Irish tasks be compared with the Welsh tasks, and they will be found to resemble each other in nature, though they are not the same; and they also resemble, in the same general way, the labours of Hercules and the tasks in the Battle of the Birds, in the Master Maid, in Straparolas’ Fortunio, and in many of Grimm’s German stories.

When the Welsh heroes set off to accomplish their tasks it is the same thing. They go to the beasts, birds, and fishes for information, as men go to the winds in the Norse tale of East o’ the Sun and West o’ the Moon; and the three old men who herd the beasts, and the birds, and the fishes in the Three Princesses of White-land, characters who appear continually in Gaelic tales in various shapes, Sometimes they are old men, sometimes three old women, sometimes herds. These generally provide the wanderer with a cup, or a boat, or a pair of old shoes, which carry him on his journey, and come home. But the Welsh creatures are especially old and mythical; one is an eagle, which has sat on a rock and pecked at the stars for some extraordinary number of ages; another is a stag, who is as old; and the third is a salmon, who takes Kai on his back and carries him to his destination.

And when the grand climax is approaching, it appears in the shape of a magic boar, who is a transformed king, and behind whose ears are scissors, a comb, and a razor, which, like Gaelic combs and iron instruments, are the keys to the whole magic. King Arthur rouses the boar, and hunts him from Ireland to Wales, and over the Welsh mountains, and he is finally slain; and surely this magic boar and boar hunt by the mythical British king and his gifted warriors, is the same as the magic boar of Gaelic tales; and the hunt by Fionn, the mythical king of the Feine; and the hunt of Adonis, and must be some old myth as old as the races who have worked up the common stock into so many shapes.

When I first read this Welsh story, it was like a confused dream, made up of fragments from all that I had read and collected during the last two years, and vet though thus interwoven with the general mass of Gaelic, Norse, German, French, and Italian tales, the justice of the observation in the first note is undeniable. It is “purely British,” in that it has no parallel or exact counterpart in any other language.

The dream of Rhonabwy has few incidents that I can recognize. There is a horse who, like the giant in Conall, drew men towards him when he drew in his breath, and blew them away when he breathed out. It is a strange tale of chivalry, and Owen’s army of ravens are peculiarly mythological. I have a great deal about ravens, as, for instance, in the battle of the birds; but I have no army of ravens, and I know of no such army in any other popular tale; but in a note at page 436, is the outline of a story of which I have given an abstract at page xcv., Introduction. That story was repeated to me by an old tinker at Inveraray, and it is in the metrical and prose versions of Perceval de Galles, according to the note.

The story of Pwyll, prince of Dyved, has a great many incidents which I recognise. The opening is like the lay of the Great Fool. The prince goes alone to hunt, and falls in with hounds whose like he had never seen, “white with red ears.” They catch a stag, and he drives them away, and sets his own bounds on the deer; and there comes a man clad in garments of gray woollen, the owner of the hounds, who accuses him of discourtesy. He is Arawn, a king of the Annwoyn.

The next adventure is like the opening of Murdoch MacBrian, No. XXVIII., and an incident in Conall. The king sits on a mound, and there comes a maiden on a steed, whom no one can

overtake, which again has a relation to the opening of Boighre Borb, and the Irish story of the chase. Then comes the incident of a king disguised as a beggar, which is in the end of Murdoch MacBrian, in the Odyssey, and in many stories in Gaelic, Norse, and German.

And then there is the man enticed into a bag and beaten; as the giant's mother was enticed by *Maol a' bhoibean*, and beaten to death.

Then comes the woman who is mysteriously robbed of her children, and accused of eating them, which is in many stories; for example, in the French story of Princess Fair Star; in the Norse story of the Lassie and her God-mother; in the Hoodie, No. 3, and in No. 12 in Gaelic, and in endless stories besides. For example, in one called, "*An t-urisgeal aig na righre, Righ na thuirabhinn agus righ nan Ailp*," The king of the Ailp quarrelled with the Druids, and was killed, leaving a single daughter and a son. She was educated by the Druids till she was able to do many of their tricks, but they coloured her skin as green as grass. But the son fled up a mountain, called *Beinn ghloine*, because it was always covered with glass (or ice) in the winter, and he took his father's sword and sceptre. Then came a Druid and smote him as he slept, and turned him into a gray dog. Then he returned to the palace, leaving his sword and sceptre, and his sister got leave to come and see him, and there they staid; the green woman and the greyhound, and there they were to stay till some one would marry the greyhound of her own accord, and till the king's daughter should nurse three children, and get a kiss from the king's son. And no one was to bury the bones of those who fell in the Druid's battle till their grandchildren should do it. Then the king of the Urbhin went off with his men through the hills to fight with another king, and lost his way in a mist, and he cried out "keep with me;" and there answered him but a hundred. Then the mist was so thick that he could not see the end of his sword, and he shouted again, and there answered him but a score; and he cried out again, and there answered but three; and next time he cried, none answered at all; and so he wandered alone till he came to the palace, where he found nothing but a greyhound. He wandered about, found food and a bed, and ate and slept. Next day he wandered about and found a lot of bones, and began to kick the skulls idly, when the gray dog sprang upon him, and threw him down, and spoke, and abused him for kicking his father's skull, and then comes the story of beauty and the beast. The king had three daughters and a son, and he promised that a daughter should come in his stead, and the green girl went to carry the news. She put on "*a' chaisbhairt shiubhal*," her travelling foot-gear, and a face cloth, and went and returned with the three daughters in a trice, for she had travelling foot gear for them also. The youngest staid as hostage for the king, and the rest went home, and she slept in the same room with the dog and the green sister till the year ran out, and the king came back. Then, to save her father's life, the youngest sister agreed to marry the hound, and the green girl got a priest, and they were married. In the morning when she woke, of course it was a fine young man who was beside her; and she asked where was the gray dog. Then the two elder sisters were furious; and the king fell in love with the green girl after be had taken a draught of the "mheadair Bhuidhe," yellow mead, from her hand. The two sisters concoct a scheme with a Druid to become queens instead of the brother and sister; and the first step is to get hold of their sister's child, and give it to the Druids. They carry her off, and when the child was born, "there came a green hand in at a window, and it took away the child." So in Welsh there came a great claw, and so a lake fairy took away Lancelot in the romance. And so it happened thrice, but a drop fell from the eyes of the children, and the mother gathered the drops, and treasured them.

Then the king who had been twice deceived, and who did not know that he had seen his wife, determined to marry again, but he would marry none but she who could fetch his sceptre and sword of victory from the top of the glass mountains. Many tried, but failed; and the wicked sisters who had made the youngest lose the strength of her feet, cured her, and when she

succeeded, stole the prize, and claimed the reward. Then they were set to wash the bloody shirts of those who had been slain in the great battle of the Druids; the sister washed them all but one, and before she would wash that one, she must sleep three nights in the king's room, but he had his sleepy drink, and she sang--

Rug mi do thriùir cloinne dhuit,
'S dhirich mi a' Bheinn ghloine dhuit,
'S nigh mi do léintean fala dhuit,
'S tha mi nam laidhe maille ruit,
'S ciom' a gaoil nach teann thu rium.

I bore thy three babes for thee,
And I climbed the glass peaks for thee,
And I washed thy bloody shirts for thee,
And I am laid beside thee here,
And why my love not turn to me.

On the third night he heard. And in so far the story is like many others, but it has many adventures which I have found nowhere else.

The king, and his wife, and his green sister, go back to the palace of the Ailp, and hold a feast; Dubhmalurraidh the wicked Druid comes, and a wicked sister is transformed into the likeness of the queen, and when the true queen came her rival was in her place, and no one could make out which was the right queen. Then came the green sister, and produced a garter with which the queen had tied the sword and sceptre when she brought them from the glass hill, and the true queen had the other on.

Then the green sister brought in the three children, which she said she had carried off from the uirabhinn to save their lives, and they all three squinted for want of the drops that had fallen from their eyes, and the true mother had the drops, and put them back, and they saw straight.

Then the green girl marked the sham queen with a black spot, and put salt into the Druid's food, and a sleepy drink into his cup, and when he slept she put him amongst the bones, where he could work no more spells. The Druid, to get free, told her to wash in the water of the well that was at the foot of the blue rock, in the Island of Deer, in a high hill, and the young prince of the uirabhinn fetched it and she was cured, and they married.

The wicked sisters try to burn the house, and put magic draughts into their sister's drink, but they fail. The Druid is made drunk and beheaded; the sisters drink their own draught, lose the power of their legs, and fall into poverty and disgrace, and the young sister and the king of the Ailp who had been a gray dog, and his sister who had been green, and the young king of the Uira Bhinn, lived happily thenceforth, and their grandchildren buried the bones.

Now this was a nursery story told to John Dewar, by a servant maid, about 1812; and this rough outline will shew that it is a version of the same popular tale which was written in Wales about 400 years before, which was in the Golden Ass of Apuleius 1600 years ago, and has to do with Cupid and Psyche, and is in the Arabian Nights. I have other Gaelic versions of the same incidents, including a detailed account of the manner of climbing the mountains, and the accusation of eating the children; but my object here is to shew the relationship between Gaelic and Welsh stories, and this must suffice for the present.

In the next story, Branwen, the daughter of Llyr, which, if Gaelic, might mean black and white daughter of the sea, there is little which I can recognise. There is a great deal about ships which come from Ireland; and the caldron which brings warriors to life when they are

slain is like the vessel of balsam. The origin of the “five-fifths of Eirinn” is given, and, as I have not found the myth elsewhere, and as the term is common in Gaelic stories, I quote it. After a great battle there were left alive but five women, and they bore five sons, and these, when they grew up, took each other’s mothers to wife, and they peopled Ireland and divided it.

The name of the smith is like Gaelic. Llasar Llaesgywdd might be kindled flame.

I have nothing in common with the next story except a magic white boar, nor with the next, nor with the dream of Maxen Wledig, nor with the story of Lludd. Some of these I should class with popular history.

But the next, “Taliesen,” begins with the well-known incident of the man who mysteriously acquires knowledge by tasting unwittingly drops of magic liquor from a caldron. The man’s name is Gwion Bach; and the story is now told of Fionn MacCumhail. This seems to join Fionn and Gwion, and to this I have referred elsewhere.

The pursuit, in various forms, by the witch lady, has an exact counterpart in a story of which I have many versions, and which I had intended to give if I had room. It is called “The Fuller’s Son,” “The Collier’s Son,” and other names, and it bears a strong resemblance to the end of the Norse tale “Farmer Weathersky.” That belongs to the Arabian Nights also, and so carries us eastwards as usual.

The incident of sending a man to try the fidelity of a wife, and his deceit with a ring token, has a counterpart in No. XVIII. which leads to Shakespeare and Boccaccio, and proves what I bad suspected, that there actually was a British popular tale current before the time of Shakespeare, from which be might have taken some. of his ideas. The very same idea will be found in a Breton tale (Invention des Ballins Foyer Breton, vol. i., p. 180), where a Breton gentleman goes to court, boasts of his wife’s beauty and fidelity, and a French courtier goes to test his words. He gets a ring and other tokens, and sends them to Paris, and when the enraged husband comes home to take vengeance on his lady, he finds that she is innocent. The gallant is found weaving sacking in a room where he had been enticed by the lady, and where she had starved him into submission, and taught him to weave, after his own fashion, a new kind of cloth of his own invention. Here, then, one incident joins Gaelic, Welsh, and Breton, and joins them to English, French, and Italian tales, and brings them into contact with famous names, and carries them back a long way.

But while this is true of incidents, the groundwork of the Welsh story and the poetry of Taliesen have little in common with any popular tale of which I know anything. Taliesen, according to the notes, was a Welsh bard of the sixth century, his history is mixed with Irish adventures, he was a knight of the round table, with Arthur at Caerleon, upon Usk, in Glamorgan; but if so, the Taliesen of the story is a very different personage; he is a kind of demigod, and in likelihood ancient myths about the spirit of song have clustered round a famous name.

The names Taliesen, the offspring of GWION, and Oisein, the son of FIONN, suggest that these mythical bards may once have been the same.

In a note, I find that Cardigan Bay was once the site of a submerged country; the same, no doubt, which can be traced in Breton, in Irish, in Manks, and Gaelic; in Norse, and in Italian, a country submerged for wickedness, and whose houses can be seen under water, and occasionally rise to the surface; a tradition common to many nations which bears upon that of the mysterious western land hidden in the mist, which once was the Isle of Man, and is now to the westward of Man.

So far, then, I have endeavoured to shew that Welsh popular tales of the fifteenth century, and Gaelic popular tales of the nineteenth, have a strong relationship to each other, that they are both intimately connected with mediaeval romances, and with modern Norse tales, and with old Norse mythology; with the oldest known collections of popular tales made in Europe, and with the last; with Irish traditions in the Far West, and with the Arabian Nights in the East. My opinion is, that these are all founded upon incidents which have been woven into popular tales almost ever since men began to speak; that they are all Celtic only because Celts are men, and only peculiarly Celtic because Celts are admitted by all to be a very ancient offshoot from the common root. They are peculiarly Cymric or Gaelic, because each fresh branch has a separate growth, and different tribes have varied their stories, as they have altered their language.

CXV. Mythology

ORIGIN OF SUCH STORIES.

As to the origin of popular tales there are three current opinions.

First, it is said the minds of men are similarly constituted in all parts of the world, and when they are similarly placed will produce similar results, therefore similar stories have sprung up simultaneously all over the world, and though they resemble each other, they have really nothing in common. They are weeds of the human understanding which should be rooted out, but which spring up wherever there is a proper soil, and climate, and sufficient ignorance, idleness, and neglect.

Secondly, it is said "These were the work of wise men in the East, whose writings we know; we know when and where these writings first appeared in Europe, and these have spread all over the world." For example, "Cupid and Psyche," and all stories like it, originated with the author of the "Golden Ass."

Thirdly, it is held that these ideas were originally the offspring of the minds of men in the East, at a period when great part of the earth was waiting for men to own it; when language itself was young, before the ancestors of those who now dwell in India and in Barra set off on their travels, before Sanscrit grew to be a language. In short, it is held that these despised stories are the fragments of the early myths and beliefs, moral tales, and heroic pastimes of the early ages of the world, and that Cupid and Psyche is but one phase of an Aryan myth. I have been drawn to all these in turn.

When I sit in a room surrounded by printed books, and trace one through them for centuries; when I read an English translation of Apuleius, printed in 1566, and my own translation of a Gaelic story, like one of those told by "Lucius," that most amusing of asses, I am all for books; but when I sit in a cloud of peat reek beside an old Highlander, with white hair and a skin like crumpled parchment, who cannot speak English or read a word; and listen to the same incidents told in a language which is not in any such book, and in a style which is the narrator's own, I am driven from my paper entrenchments, and all theories, which are founded on books and writings, are scattered to the winds.

I am driven to remember that libraries are but museums, in which collections of ideas are stowed away in paper, like herbariums of dried plants, and that such mental plants grow in men's minds, and are propagated there, from seeds, like other plants. I feel that as every blade of springing corn is not a separate creation or a full grown plant, so ideas may spring and grow and come to maturity, and sow themselves, and spread far and wide, as plants do, without artificial culture. And so, after two years, I hold the third opinion, having tried the other two.

To make the first theory probable, it is necessary to shew some case in which two men similarly situated have composed the same speech, sermon, or novel, with some twenty or thirty common ideas, following each other in the same order; with the same end in view, and the same plot; and without any previous common knowledge of any historical fact or incident in every-day life from which to set out. We must have two separate creations of the mind.

We must have two "Waverleys," or two "Hamlets," without any historical foundation, the pure offspring of man's invention. It is not only possible, but exceedingly probable, that two men should each contrive a story, which should begin with the birth of its hero, go on with

his adventures up to his marriage, and either end with his death, or leave that conclusion to the imagination. Take almost any modern novel whose author is known, and strip it to the bones, and the skeleton will be found to consist of ideas about the birth, education, and marriage of one or more couples of human beings, and in so far popular tales do certainly resemble novels, and might spring up independently without a model, but that is not the resemblance with which we have to deal.

We have not simply a back-bone, but a whole skeleton. We have to deal with such a resemblance as exists between a Turbot and a John Dory. Both are fish, both are flat, both are good; their skeletons are made on the same plan, and consist of the same bones; they are creatures of the very same kind, though the one looks as if he had been crushed vertically, and the other as if his sides had been squeezed together; and a superficial observer sees no resemblance at all.

In order to maintain the second theory, it is necessary to shew how it is possible that uneducated men who never stir from the far west, the most unlikely to have any acquaintance with anything inside a book, should come to know that which is only to be found in rare Italian or Latin books, while a few of those who most cultivate books have the same knowledge. It must be shewn how Donald MacPhie, cottar in South Uist, and his class, came to be acquainted with the incidents of the story of Fortunio, in Straparola, and Cupid and Psyche in the "Golden Ass," and, when that is shewn, how Grimm's old German women got hold of the same incidents, and when that is done, how they got to Norway: and, when all that is done, it remains to be discovered how all the stories which resemble Fortunio have something which none of the rest have got, some incident which might be added without interfering in any way with the symmetry of the general plan, and which the oldest books want; some detail which helps out the plot.

Is it possible that a Minglay peasant and Straparola, neither of whom can have seen a giant, or a flying-horse, or a dragon, or a mermaid, or a talking animal, or a transformed man, could separately imagine all these impossible things, and, having imagined them, simultaneously invent the incidents of the story, and arrange so many of them in the same order?

Is it, on the other hand, possible that all these barefooted, bareheaded, simple men, who cannot read, should yet learn the contents of one class of rare books and of no others? I cannot think so.

I have gone through the whole sea-maiden story, and all its Gaelic versions, and marked and numbered each separate incident, and divided the whole into its parts, and then set the result beside the fruit of a similar dissection of Straparola's Fortunio, and I find nearly the whole of the bones of the Italian story, and a great many bones which seem to belong to some original antediluvian Aryan tale. The Scotch version is far wilder and more mythical than the Italian; the one savours of tournaments, king's palaces, and the manners of Italy long ago; the other of flocks and herd, fishermen, and pastoral life; but the Highland imaginary beings are further from reality, and nearer to creatures of the brain. The horses of Straparola are very material, and walk the earth; those of old John MacPhie are closely related to Pegasus and the horses of the Veda, and fly and soar through grimy peat reek to the clouds.

Fortunio used his magic power to become a bird, and fly to the chamber of a princess, who provided him with arms and armour; but the son of the fisherman won his fortune and his princess by hard blows, and by doing his duty faithfully. If it were possible that the rough Highlander had got knowledge of the work of the polished Italian, it is certain that he did not copy its morals. And what is true of the Italian and Gaelic versions is equally true of all others which I know. Shortshanks in Norse, Fortunio in French (Contes des Fees, vol. v., p.

49, the nix of the millpond, the ball of crystal in German, and any other versions, if examined, will be found to consist of a bare tree of branching incidents common to all, and so elaborate that no minds could possibly have invented that whole seven or eight times over, without some common model, and yet no one of these is the model, for the tree is defective in all, and its foliage has something peculiar to each country in which it grows. They are specimens of the same plant, but their common stock is nowhere to be found.

MYTHOLOGY--ARYAN THEORY.

I lately had the advantage of hearing the modern science of language explained by a master of that art. Its principles, as I gathered them, appear to be these. Men are different from brutes in that they are gifted with reason, and having reason they are also gifted with speech. Parrots have organs of speech, and speak, but they have no language, because they have no reasonable ideas to express. Such ideas as they have, they express in their own way, by tones, not words. Men then being gifted with reason and the faculty of speech, began to speak; and expressed their ideas by sounds, which are the roots of language. Languages pass through stages of growth and decay, and so far as has been ascertained, there are three stages, of which examples exist.

Languages whose words are all roots, which have neither verbs nor adjectives, not terminations, such as Chinese, which, as it would seem, has never grown, though much cultivated.

Languages in which one word is glued to another and becomes a termination, and loses its independent meaning.

And languages which have passed through these two stages, where the roots and terminations have become so intimately joined and altered by time and use that it requires a practised workman to distinguish them, and hunt them back to their sources.

All languages, it is assumed, have passed, or will pass, through these three stages of growth and decay; and the modern languages of the great Aryan family are in the third stage. Of the Aryan family of languages, the Sanscrit, is the oldest known, and this system of roots and growths, the principle on which letters change, and the framework of the whole science, existed centuries ago amongst the sages of the East, where writings have been discovered, read, and adopted, by modern philosophers.

A philologist, then, with sacred and profane history pointing eastwards, with Sanscrit books, and eastern learning at his command, with a stock of roots gathered in the East centuries ago, begins at some leaf or twig, some word, in the West, and works backwards to find the root; or he starts at the root, and works upwards fo the modern word, and so by patient grubbing, and bold leaps, by force of intellect and power of speech, men strive to reach the truth in this, as in other sciences. They use the faculties which have been given them to solve this problem, as other men have used the same implements to solve problems as hard. As geologists have dug into the history of the world, and astronomers have scaled the stars, so a philologist hops like a squirrel from bough to bough, and strives to understand the growth of the great tree of human language.

Now, surely if it be a study worthy of philosophers to trace out the sounds which are the seeds from which speech grew; it is at least as interesting to trace the growth of untutored thoughts which words express; and so this study of popular tales must come to take its place beside the science of language, if that is to be admitted to a high place in the mystic circle.

If men began to express ideas by language, they must have had ideas to express, and if ever these early ideas, the growth of unaided minds, are to be discovered, it will be by a process of

patient inquiry, and bold speculation, like that which has raised up the sciences of Philology, Geology, and Astronomy.

When we hold a tradition, we have something like a modern word, or a leaf; when we have ancient writings we have something like a Sanscrit root, and as time goes on and knowledge increases, the connection between the peasant's nursery tale and some old world belief will become clearer and clearer. And when that has been done, and when many old pagan beliefs have been hunted out, the truth will certainly appear beyond it all by following this road as well as another.

The science of philology has not yet proved, but it points to a single common language, and an eastern origin for the human race; comparative mythology points the same way, and this wonderful community of popular tales throughout the world joins with them in pointing to a common eastern origin for mankind.

And that origin certainly cannot be a gorilla, for in all their researches men find no trace of primæval gorilla roots, languages, myths, or tales.

Men are distinguished from gorillas, for they have intellects and tales; birds still differ from men in that they cannot learn the use of their organs of speech, though there was once a magpie who told tales of her mistress, and was taken in by her superior cunning, and unjustly put to death. On fine days the whole neighbourhood of a certain square in London echoes to the most lamentable sounds of human woe--heart-rending shrieks and wailings fill the air. It is a green parrot expressing his delight at the bright sun and the fresh air, by repeating what he must have learned in a very cross nursery.

Now if "storyology" be a science, it is worthy of a system and systematic study, and the process might be somewhat like this;--Begin anywhere; and read any collection, and there will appear a certain number of incidents which are repeated over and over again. They are never expressed twice in the same words, but they are clearly the same nevertheless, and they are easily recognised.

Take, for example, the idea of a giant whose life is not in his body, but stowed away elsewhere (No. IV., vol. i.), and wherever that idea turns up hereafter, compare it with the first mention of it; and so by degrees it will appear that the notion of a man with his life elsewhere is very commonly associated with certain other ideas which have to do with a hostile dragon, beasts, birds, fish, and trees, earth, air, water, supernatural powers, and the loves of a man and woman. When this cluster of ideas is commonly found in one country, it becomes an incident belonging to the people of that country, and all that specially belongs to that people and no other may be removed, and then with a fossil incident picked out of the stratum in which it was first found, the "storyologist" may proceed to pick out other notions in the same way. When he has subjected any one collection to this sifting, there will certainly remain a number of primæval fossil incidents, and a lot of historical debris which may be left, in the meantime, for historians to sift in their turn. With such a collection of incidents stored and arranged, it is easy to recognise similar specimens elsewhere, and it is startling to find them in some of their resting places. No doubt hereafter a scientific nomenclature will be devised. The incident which I have taken as an example might be called the hieroglyphic incident, for it occurs, as I am told, in an Egyptian papyrus, and the Norse giant with no heart in his body, and the Arabic djinn who kept his life at the bottom of the circumambient ocean might be called the Norse and Arabic varieties. And so when many collections have been made and explored, it will be found out who has, and who has not got this and that idea, and what ideas are common to all. I have little doubt that this particular notion will be discovered to belong to some ancient system of mythology, like that of Egypt, and to relate to a deluge

and a creation. It would seem to be very old, and it is very widely spread. The question is, who were the people who held this notion of a common terminable life for all nature, and a man and a woman who overcame the natural powers by the help of a superior intelligence, and when and where did they live, if they lived before the Egyptians.

I have formed no theory on the subject, but it seems worth inquiry, and this is one way to puzzle out some parts of the ancient history of the human race, from the traces of the human mind. Let a sufficient number of incidents be gathered together, and treated as roots, wherever they may be found; exactly as AR and TRA are hunted through forests of Aryan words, and storyology will become a science like any other ology, and it is fully as amusing as most of that dusty tribe. It is more amusing to read faces than it is to read books; it is quite as satisfactory to catch a new idea as it is to land a fresh salmon, bag a pheasant, run a fox to ground, or draw a badger, and the pursuit may best be carried on in the open air, amongst the wildest of glens, and mountains, and mountaineers.

And what were these first efforts of reason left to itself? Surely to find out the reason of things.

In early youth, I was taught a definition which I have never been able to forget.

Q. "What is a river?"

A. "A river is a stream of water running through the lowest accessible levels of a country into the sea, and returning to it the water which having evaporated had formed clouds and fallen over the land in rain."

A simple man in search of knowledge, who had found all that out for himself, might well think he had got the two ends of his chain of reasoning fast linked together, and describe a circle in the sand, to express the discovery completed.

The river runs because the rain falls; the rain falls because the rivers runs, so the chain is endless and unbroken, and the river something everlasting. Men having a tendency to admire the fruit of their own brains might well sit down content, and mayhap fall down and worship the river itself, or set up a circle, or a symbolical serpent with his tail in his mouth, to express eternity, and exclaim--"how beautiful is this great everlasting river, which is older than my grandfather, which flows down from his lofty clouds in the air to water my fields, and return to his native skies." And so the river might become a god, and acquire a name, and a history, and temples, and priests, and a religious system, and a form, mayhap that of a fish's tail tacked on to a human body.

But some other thinker might feel cramped within this water circle flowing about the earth, and seek to know why the river was material, and ran down northwards, and flew up and southwards, and suspect that the water god had more to do than water fields. If he thought hard, he might find out that water rose up when it was heated by fire, that the sun was hot, and that the river flew through the air because the sun shone; that the fields gave their increase, not because of the water god, whose own watery regions produced nothing but weeds and fish, but because the sun compelled the water to work, and then warmed the fields into fertility. And so a new astronomical circle, and a larger symbolical serpent, with his tail in his mouth, new priests, images and ceremonies, might be set up in honour of the bountiful Sun God, who rose and set to watch over the fields of his faithful worshippers. And then the dethroned river god, with his scaly tail, would sink in public estimation, and might become "Abdallah of the sea," and his wife a mermaid, and then all the history of the past religion would gradually sink into a nursery tale.

Another thinker might upset the worship of fire, and point out that the air in which the sun, and moon, and stars had their lofty being was something greater than fire, for no animal, or man, or fire could live without it, and a good blast of it would extinguish the best candle.

A fourth might discover, that without the earth all else was nought, and that everything grew and had its being from the earth, and returns to it. And so a whole host of elemental divinities might spring up from a study of nature, flourish and decay, and so become the spirits of the earth, and the air; the djinns of fire, and air, and water; Peris and earthly ghouls dressed in their idol forms, and retaining shreds of their former grandeur.

But as each new circle became too narrow for reason, one set of despairing philosophers might come to think the whole world of nature a fortuitous concurrence of atoms, and worship nothing at all; while a second worshipped their own passions; and a third still pressed onwards, and sought to know whence the atoms came, and why they concurred and how the particular concurrence of atoms, of which they were composed, managed to think about such things, or to think at all. Such thinkers must be driven at last to say, "We cannot explain this; but we believe that there is a reason greater than ours, which we cannot attain to, beyond it all."

So nursery tales are often the debris of natural religions, which are all fading away before the light of revealed religion, but subsisted along with it before the flood. Plain men and women are found dealing with heroes and heroines, mermaids, dragons, great birds, and subterranean powers; the powers of water, fire, air, and earth, who were once gods and goddesses; the elements personified, worshipped, dethroned, and now degraded to be demons and hobgoblins, fiends and fairies, ghosts and bogles, and monsters of land and sea. But above and beyond all these there is always some dimly seen power greater and more powerful than they; the hidden reason and cause towards which every train of just reasoning must certainly tend, though it never can reach it without its aid.

Jupiter was subject to the Fates; the world and its supporters stood upon a tortoise, or rested upon the shoulders of Atlas, but what they stood upon no one knew. Fairies are more powerful than mortal men, but they are but "fallen angels," and the wise man who advised the fisherman's son in the "Sea-maiden" was a greater power than he, or any of the monsters which he destroyed, or the magic creatures of air, earth, and water which aided him and his wife to overcome the evil powers of the sea.

WEST HIGHLAND STORIES.

Assuming that stories do really contain the debris of ancient beliefs, this particular collection should contain fragments of the ancient Celtic creed. They seem to me to point to an astronomical pantheon at war with meteorological, aqueous, and terrestrial powers.

The early religion of the Vedas seems to have been mixed up with solar worship; so was that of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. In the second century, in the days of Apuleius, who was a native of Northern Africa and manifestly a collector of North African popular tales, it was necessary, in order to propitiate the good powers, to "put the best foot foremost," as we say; to start with the right foot, not the left, as Apuleius explains, and in these days men still swore by the divinity of the Sun.

Irishmen will have it that they are of Milesian descent, and came from the Mediterranean. Scotchmen will have it that they, too, have a like origin-from Pharaoh's daughter--and Apuleius calls his "Milesian" tales, whatever he means thereby. It seems pretty certain, at all events, that Phoenician traders visited Britain at a very early date, whether the Celtic Britons first came overland or by sea. To secure a prosperous result in the days of Martin, in the Western Isles in 1703, it was requisite to take a turn sunwise at starting. A boat was rowed

round sunwise; an old Islay woman marched sunwise about the worthy doctor, to bring him good luck; the fowlers, when they went to the Flannen Islands, walked sunwise thrice about the chapel, saying prayers. Sometimes fire was carried round some object, sometimes they rode in procession. They made forced fire for mystical purposes by rubbing planks together. In short, there were then a number of superstitious observances connected with fire, and with moving in a circle from left to right if the back is to the centre, from right to left if the centre is faced; sunwise, east, south, west, north, and so thrice. Every English sailor coils a rope sunwise; but I have never been able to find out that he alters the direction of his coil when he crosses the line, and ought to coil it the other way. When a sailor faces about, he goes right about face; when boys play at rounders, so far as I can remember, they always run first to the stance on the left of the circle within which they stand. Girls dance in a circle, and all England commonly dances in a circle about the mistletoe when we dance the old year out and the new year in; and, so far as I can remember, the dancers face the centre, and move to the left, which is sunwise, and planetwise, if the earth be the centre intended. Long ago, when in Greece, I came upon a lot of peasants dressed in their white kilts, performing their dances. Men and women held hands in a circle, advanced and retreated, and moved slowly round to a very monotonous music, while every now and then one of them broke out into a fit of violent twirlings and eccentric whirlings in the midst, which, if originally astronomical, must have symbolized a comet.

This summer I saw the national dance of the Faroe islanders. A great number of men and women, boys and girls, joined hands and walked round a room singing old heroic ballads in their old Norse tongue. They walked sunwise. When we waltz we go sunwise round the ball-room, when we go round in a reel we do the same, and start with the right foot. The wine bottle and the whisky noggin both circulate sunwise about the table. Lawyers in their revels used to hold hands and dance thrice round the seacoal fire in the Inner Temple Hall, according to ancient usage. Boys hold hands and dance round bonfires. Men and maidens still dance round the Maypole in some benighted parishes in England. In short, this system of dancing, and doing things in circles, sunwise, is almost universal in the north.

Mons. de la Villemarqué tells us of a game which he saw played by children in Brittany. A small boy was seated on an isolated stone, and a circle of small Breton peasants revolved about him thrice, prostrating themselves thrice with their faces to the earth, and singing--

Roue Arzur me ho salud,
Me ho salud Roue a Vrud;

O! Roi Arthur, je vous salue
Jo vous salue, Roi de renom.

The hill known as the “Cobbler,” in Argyllshire, is called “*Aite suidhe Artair*.” The seat of Arthur, the hill above Edinburgh, is called Arthur’s Seat, and Art is one Gaelic word for a god. Art adhair would mean god of the air, which would be a fit name for the sun.

There is a childish game played in the Highlands called “*uinneagan àrda*,” high windows, in which a circle of children dance round one who tries to escape.

Another amusement is to whirl a lighted stick so as to produce a circle of fire, but that is forbidden by old dames, who say, “*Tha e air a chrosadh*,” “It is crossed,” or forbidden. There are plenty of crosses on stones which seem to have pagan symbols on them.

There are several “knocking-out games,” which are played in circles, or a half circle, round the peat fire in the middle of the floor.

A string of words is repeated by a performer with a stick in his hand, who strikes a foot of one of the players as he says each word, and at the end of the performance he says, "*Cuir stochd a staigh*," and the last player sticks his right foot into the circle. The game goes on sunwise till all the right feet are in, and then all the left, and the last has either to take three mouthfuls of ashes, or go out and repeat certain quaint disagreeable phrases, one of which is--

"My own mother burned her nails scraping the sowen's pot."

"Loisg mo mhathair fhéin a h-ìnean a sgrìobadh na poite cabhraich."

Another is, to light a stick and pass it quickly round while it is red. The player who has the stick says--

"Gill' ite gochd." The next to the left replies--

"Cha 'n fhìor dhuit e;" and the fire holder repeats as fast as ever he can--

"Cha 'n 'eil clach na crann.
'San tigh, mhor 'ud thall,
Nach tuit mu d' cheann'
Ma leigeas tu ás Gill' ite gochd,"

and when that is said he passes the stick to his left-hand neighbour as fast as he can. When the fire goes out the holder of the stick pays some forfeit. I have played this game myself as a child. The words mean--

"Servant of ite gochd."
Untrue for thee.

There's neither stock nor stone
In yonder great house,
But will fall on thy head,
If thou lettest out the servant of ite gochd."

What the last word may mean I cannot say.

Now, if a man anywhere north of the equator will face the sun all day, and the place where he is all night, he will revolve right-about-face in twenty-four hours, and meet the rising sun in the morning with his right hand to the south, his back to the west, his left hand to the north, and his face towards his object of worship, if he worships the sun. If he walks round the gnomon of a dial on the sunny side, seeking light and avoiding shade, he will describe a portion of a circle from left to right, and if he crosses the arctic circle he may so perform a whole circle in a summer's day; but if an Asian or European walks continually towards the sun at an even pace, whenever he can see him, he will necessarily walk westwards and southwards, in the direction in which Western Aryans are supposed to have migrated.

The Gaelic language points the same way. Deas means, south, and right, and ready, dexterous, well-proportioned, ready-witted, eloquent. Consequently to go south, and to go to the right; to coil a rope dexterously, or southwards; to be dexterous, southern, and to be prepared to set out are all expressed by the same Gaelic words--"*Deas*," "*Gu deiseal*," etc. Now all this surely points to a journey from east to west with the sun for a leader; to a camp awakening at sunrise and facing the great leader in the morning, watching his progress till noon, and setting off westwards when "DIA,"[420] god of day, was south;--Deas, ready to lead them westwards on their pilgrimage. Surely all these northern games, dances, and

[420] Pronounced Djee-A. *Djâys*.

ceremonies, and thoughtless acts, point to astronomical worship, and an imitation of the march of the stars round the world, or round the sun, if men had got so far in their astronomy.

A short ballad, taken down from the recitation of an old tailor in South Uist, who is utterly illiterate, and has hardly ever worn a shoe or a bonnet, begins thus

Gun d' dhùbhradh an Ràth soluis;
Fuamhair mor anns an iadh-dhorus;
Fuamhair mor a' tighinn o'n tràigh,
B' fhear an t-eug na 'dhol 'na dhàil.

Seachainn mi gu direach deas
'S nach ann air do thì a thainig.

The light circle was shadowed;
A great giant in the wheeling door;
A great giant coming from the strand,
Better were death than to go to meet him.

Pass me bye straight and south (right readily,)
For it was not on thy track I came.

So here is poetry, which is not to be found in any book that I know, and which is highly mythological. Caoilte, one of the Fenians, sees the circle of light (pronounced RA, spelt RATH; English RAY; Egyptian, according to Sir Gardiner Wilkinson, RA or RE, the sun god) shadowed by a great giant with five heads, who was in the wheeling door, that is, I presume, the sun, the door in the Zodiac, whence light emerged: and the giant desires him to pass him straight, south, and avoid him; but Caoilte will do nothing of the sort; they fight, and he slays the giant with a "brodan," a short spear, according to the reciter; but Caoilte was sore wounded in the fight; and Graidhne, the daughter of the King of Connachdaidh (Connaught) carries his shield to "Dun Til."

"Cha lotadh i 'm feur fo 'cois,
'S cha mhò a lùbadh i meangan."

She would not hurt the grass under foot,
No more would she bend a sprig.

The following is an air to which a song about Caoilte used to be sung. I have not got the old tailor's air, but it was very pretty and wild. I have but three lines of the other version.

DAN CHAOILTE, from Mrs. MACTAVISH.

A Chaoilte laoich a teannragan
Annir og an or-fhuilt reidh
Cireadh a cinn le cir airgiod.
. . . . .
Caoilte hero from battle.
Young maiden of smooth golden hair
Combing her head with a silver comb.
. . . . .

Villemarqué holds that Arthur and his knights are but Celtic gods in disguise. Surely the Fenians are but another phase of the same astronomical worship of f be host of heaven.

Again it appears in many ways that the dead were supposed to live; but far away to the westward, where the Sun God seemed to go to his rest. Ossian Fionn, The heroes

innumerable, were gone before towards the setting sun, and dwelt in a green island, where all the mysterious objects in Gaelic popular tales abound. The mystic fountain, which in the story of Cupid and Psyche is the river Styx, and flowed from a lofty mountain; the mystic apples which changed men into animals, and cured them; (in the Golden Ass a rose did the same); the mighty smiths who forged "Dure Entaille," for Arthur. "Avalon," the earthly paradise, and "Eilean iomallach an domhain," "Island uttermost of the lower earth," were surely the same mysterious country over which the Sun God was supposed to preside.

All these strange matter of fact stories which pervade the whole of the western islands, from north Ronaldshay to the South of Ireland, about seals which turned out to be men and women, who came from their home in the west to visit the world; all these strange semi-heathen practices of taking the sick to the shore; all these accounts of strange islands occasionally seen in the far west, are surely traces of the ancient Celtic notions of a future state; and the chapels perched upon the most distant western rocks on the coast of Europe, were surely set up to counteract and take advantage of this ancient heathen Celtic tendency to western worship, and the belief in an earthly paradise. Surely the same idea is expressed in the African fable of the hyæna and the weasel.

The one, who was a priest in other stories, pointed to the setting sun, and said, "there is fire, go and fetch it." The other went as fast as he could towards the sun, till it set, and then it came back, for the hyæna was a fool, and be lost his food and his tail; but the weasel was the wisest of all creatures, he was the philosopher, and got the prize.

But beyond the Green Island beneath the western waves, there was still something unknown and unexplored. When Diarmid had found his princess under the waves, he had to cross a great strait to get the cup of the king who ruled over the dead. And there was more beyond.

"They believe," says Giraldus Cambrensis,[421] "that the spirits of the dead pass into the company of the illustrious, as Fin MacCoul, Oskir MacOshin, and the likes, of whom they preserve tales and traditionary songs." Beyond the Green Isle and the land of the dead was the Island of Youth, which was further off, and harder to get to, according to a story got from Skye.

It would be tedious to point out all the mythology which is scattered through Gaelic stories, and it is impossible to unravel the details of the system without a thorough knowledge of the oldest Irish mythical tales, but this much appears--there is more foundation in Gaelic mythology for the Mediterranean, Phoenician, Trojan, Egyptian, and Milesian stories than is, generally supposed.

Taking Sir Gardiner Wilkinson's names of Egyptian gods, and his account of their attributes to be correct, a great many of the names have a resemblance to Gaelic words of appropriate meaning.

Thus, NEPH is the equivalent to Jupiter, and father of all gods. *Neùmh*-(*nêv*) means heaven; and *naomh*, often pronounced *nêv*, means holy.

AMUN was a name of the god who presided over inundations. *Amhain*, *avon*, etc., are words which mean river, and can be traced over great part of Europe.

AMUN RE was the ramheaded god, who was also the sun. *Reith*, pronounced *răy*, means a ram. *Rath*, pronounced *rA*, means a circle, and is applied to the sun in the ballad above quoted. *Ré* means the moon; *roth*, pronounced *răw*, means a wheel or circle.

[421] West of Scotland Magazine. 842. (1858.) I have not found the names or the passage in the author quoted, but he describes an island which rose from the sea, and sank, and became firm on shooting a fiery arrow Into it.

PASHT was Diana Lucina. *Paisde* means a child.

RA or RE, was the sun god of Egypt, and represented as a hawk; he was supported by lions "which are solar animals," and he is the equivalent of BAAL. *Beul* means the mouth, the front, the opening, the dawn of day, the mouth of night, the beginning. Every one has heard of *bealltainn*, the 1st of May, old style, and "belten-fires," when branches of the tree which bears red rowan berries were very lately placed over the cow-house doors in the west, and when all sorts of curious ceremonies were performed about the cattle. Birch branches, primroses, and other flowers, were placed upon the dresser, tar was put upon the cattle, snails were put upon a table under a dish, and were expected to write the first letter of a lover's name, holes were dug in the ground and fortunes foretold from the kind of animals which were found in them. People used to get up early on the morning of Easter Sunday and go to the tops of hills before sunrise, in the full belief that they would "see the sun take three leaps, and whirl round like a mill wheel" for joy, which seems to be a mixture of Paganism and Christianity. The ram, the hawk, the lion of Manus, and all that tribe of mythological beings may be derived from astronomical symbols, and those of Egypt and the far East may perhaps explain those on the sculptured stones of Scotland.

ATHOR presided over Egyptian night. *Adhar* means the sky. *Athair* means father, and night according to the ancients was the mother of all things.

OSIRI was the greatest of Egyptian gods. O-shiorrigh, king from everlasting, would be something like the sound.

Arabic popular mythology, as given by Lane (Arabian Nights, vol. i., p. 37), also bears upon that of the west.

GHOOL is a species of demon, and DELKAN is another. *Djeeoul* is the sound of the Gaelic for a demon, though the modern spelling rather points to a Latin derivation for the word.

SEALAH is a species of demon which haunts an island in the China sea; the Gaelic name for a seal is *Ròn*, but the seals are supposed to be uncanny everywhere.

GHADDAR is another demon of hideous aspect; *Gadhar* is a hound; *Gobhar* a goat; and there are plenty of stories of demons appearing as goats and dogs; *Boc* is a buck goat, and *Bòcain* are bogles.

SHIKK is a demoniacal creature, having the form of half a human being, like a man divided longitudinally.

THE NESNAS is described as having half a head, half a body, one arm, and one leg, with which it hops with much agility. No such creatures appear in German or Norse tales, but the smith, in the Lay of the Smithy, had one leg and one eye. In a very wild version of No. XXXVIII., got from old MacPhie, the DIREACH GHLINN EITIDH MHICCALAIN, the desert creature of Glen Eiti, of the son of Colin, is thus described:--"With one hand out of his chest, one leg out of his haunch, and one eye out of the front of his face." He was a giant, and a wood-cutter, and went at a great pace before the Irish king Murdoch MacBrian, who had lost sight of his red-eared hound, and his deer, and Ireland. In the same story a "FACHAN" is thus described:--"Ugly was the make of the Fachin; there was one hand out of the ridge of his chest, and one tuft out of the top of his head, it were easier to take a mountain from the root than to bend that tuft."

DJINNEE is a term for all sorts of magical creatures; *Djeeanan* is the sound of the Gaelic for "Gods."

And, on the other hand, no sort of Gaelic meaning can be extracted from names in other mythologies; for instance, from that of the nearest race, the Norsemen. HAR and OSKEE, which resemble Athair, father, and Oscar, are almost the only names in the Edda which seem to bear any likeness to a Gaelic word. When so many old fables point towards the eastern shores of the Mediterranean as the cradle of the Celtic race, it is surely worth considering such resemblances as are pointed out above, however far-fetched they may seem to be. The Scotch pleaded a descent from Scota, Pharaoh's daughter, against Edward's claim, founded on his descent from Brutus of Troy; the Pope was umpire, and Bannockburn the final action in the case, so this is no new idea.

If Celts be Aryans, and these followed the sun from central Asia, some of them would reach the *shore* about TYRE, if others made their way to Scotland, and called it "*Tir* nam Beann," the shore of hills.

It is at least certain that the groundwork of several popular tales now current amongst the peasantry of the West Highlands, were written by Apuleius in the second century, and it is probable that these were current about Carthage some seventeen hundred years ago. Nearly the whole of the story of Cupid and Psyche, as told by Apuleius, will be formed in these volumes, though in a very rough dress, Nos. II., III., XII., XXXIII., XXXIX, and the story abstracted above. It is all over Europe in all sorts of shapes, and it was in India as a tale of the love of the sun for an earthly maiden, who was also the dawn. It was part of classical mythology, though Venus had surely begun to lose her power when Apuleius made her a scolding mother-in-law. It seems hopeless to speculate on the origin of the story anywhere short of the dawn of time; but if there be any truth in the "eastern origin of Celtic nations," it is reasonable to look eastwards for the germ of Celtic mythology.

On the other hand, the bodily forms, which the creatures of Gaelic mythology bear, often seem to have a foundation in fact.

The WATER-BULL is like a common bull, though he is amphibious and supernatural, and has the power of assuming other shapes. He may have been a buffalo, or bison, or bos primogenious long ago; or even a walrus, though mythology may have furnished his attributes. There were human-headed bulls at Nineveh, and sacred bulls in Egypt, which had to do with inundations. Bulls are sculptured on ancient Scotch stones; and there is a water-bull in nearly every Scotch loch of any note. Loch Ness is full of them, "but they never go up to the Fall of Foyers."

Here are some conversations which took place on the hill-side and elsewhere.

D. "Water bulls! Did not the uncle of that man see him!"

C. "Well, what was he like?"

D. "Well, my father's brother was a herd, and he was herding at the end of that loch, and he saw the water-bull coming out of the water; he was close to him. He was a little ugly beast, not much more than the size of a stirk, and rough, and 'gorm-ghlas'--blue gray, * * * and my uncle marked down the day, and the hour, and all about it." (Here some details omitted.) "Now, my uncle was not a man to think he saw a thing when he did not see it; he was a quiet, steady man, and he told his master all about it."

E. Oh, yes; that's true enough."

D. I would not give a snuff for what a man sees in the night; he might go wrong. Many a time have I gone to look at a thing which I saw in the night, and it was but a stone or a tree. But

what a man sees in the bright, clear white day-light, that is another thing. There's my brother, he was working one day at the end of that loch. I remember the day chosen well. It was a choice fine day; I was working myself, at the end of Loch -, and it was so calm, and still, and quiet, not a breath of wind moving. Well, my brother saw that loch with great waves breaking all round it, from the middle on the shores, and that is certain sure; a thing which a man sees by the white light of day, in the light of the sun, is not like what a man sees in night. Well do I mind that day."

C. "And did you ever hear that the bull did harm to any body?"

D. "No, never; but it cannot be a good thing, or, in a small loch like that it would be seen oftener. It could not keep hid."

C takes a mental note of the narrator's earnest poetical figurative language and features, which tell of firm belief in the mystic bull, and proceeds to ask questions of other inhabitants.

Boy, "Oh, yes, they see water-bulls often about that loch. My father has been herd there for fourteen years and he has never seen anything, but there was a woman one evening coming across Loch ------ in a boat, and she heard him blowing and snorting, and she turned back, and left the boat, and stretched out home. That was the water-horse, not the bull."

C thinks of the rules of evidence and the blowing of an angry otter, and smokes gravely.

Boy No. 2, carrying knapsack along a road distant some twenty miles from boy 1. "There are no waterbulls down here (the sea), but up at the small loch which is in that glen there are plenty of water-horses. Men have seen him walking about the shore of the lake. He is just like another horse, but much wilder like. He is gray. There was an old soldier up at that loch last summer; he was living in a booth with his wife, fishing trout, and getting small white things out of shells that he finds there. He says he gets eighteen shillings and a pound for them; they will be setting them in rings."

"One night he heard the water-horse blowing and splashing in the loch, and he got such a fright that he stretched out and left the place, and he would not go there again."

C smokes, and sees a vision of a pearl fishery guarded by the water-horse-guards, of a knowing old genius whom he had met on the road, moving his camp to the south.

Man, a hundred miles away in another island, declares "that he has often seen bulls feeding about the lake sides with the cattle, and the cows often had calves. They are 'corcach,' short-eared, a cross between the water-bull and a land-cow. They are easily known. No one has ever seen a water-cow."

"*Loch Aird na h-uamh* is famous for water-horses. They have been ridden to market. Some men who mounted them have been drowned, others had very narrow escapes. The other water-horses sometimes tore the one that had been ridden to pieces. They are just like other horses, but live tinder water."

Boy in another island. "There are no water-bulls here, but in a loch near B------, where I come from, they are seen very often. I saw a man that saw one in that loch. He saw nothing but his back, but the loch was all in waves, though it was a calm day. That has been seen not once or twice, but various times.

Audience suddenly remembers that Scotland was shaken by a slight earthquake some years ago.

Boy in another island. "That is not the lake where the water-horse was seen. It was down south. It is a large lake where there might be many a thing that a man might not know; but the

man saw, as it were, the likeness of a man rising up out of the water, and that must have been a bad spirit."

As this was a place where the telling of stories, and music ar interdicted, and the poor, mild water-bull had now become a bad spirit, it seemed worth finding out what change had followed in the popular manners.

C. "Will there be many people at the market?"

B. "There will be a great many."

"Do they all come to buy and sell?"

"Oh! no; they just come."

"Will there be music there?"

"There will not."

"Or dancing?"

"No."

"Will there be drinking?"

"Oh! that there will indeed."

L. "They will be so wild after the market that I cannot let you take the gig, unless a big man goes with it; they would kill the boy and the horse."

C meets a most quiet, orderly, decorous set of polite, civil men and women going to market with their beasts, and wonders. He remembers the old fun and frolic of a Highland fair. the dancing, the games, the shinny, the processions, the races, the happy faces, the sober family parties returning home; and if he does remember to have heard of a drunken riot now and then amongst the wilder spirits, that was not the prominent feature of a Highland fair thirty years ago. At night he is told that if he persists in asking a man to play the fiddle, the neighbours will certainly "commit a breach of the peace." Wonders still more. A few days after he is overtaken by some very noisy, drunken, uncivil, riotous, quarrelsome creatures, who have not enough brains left to whistle a tune or to tell a story withal, and therefore the suppression of innocent amusement does not appear to him to have done much good. Here are men naturally polite, full of fun, wit, imagination, and poetry, forced to let off all the steam at once, and making beasts of themselves in consequence.

Within a few miles, men who had not been to market were sober, pleasant, and amusing, repeating good poetry to a pleased audience, but they too were very glad to have a dram. More's the pity.

Why should not the uneducated be taught with a liberal spirit?

But to return to the water-bull. The following story shews him as the friend of man, and the foe of the savage water-horse, and that is his usual character in popular mythology.

No. 383--In one of the islands here (Islay), on the northern side, there lived before now a great farmer, and he had a large stock of cattle. It happened one day that a calf was born amongst them, and an old woman who lived in the place, as soon as ever she saw it, ordered that it should be put in a house by itself, and kept there for seven years, and fed on the milk of three cows. And as every thing which this old woman advised was always done in the "baile," this also was done. (It is to be remarked that the progeny of the water-bull can be recognised by an expert by the shape of the ears.)

A long time after these things a servant girl went with the farmer's herd of cattle to graze them at the side of a loch, and she sat herself down near the bank. There, in a little while, what should she see walking towards her but a man (no description of him given in this version), who asked her to "fàsg" his hair. She said she was willing enough to do him that service, and so he laid his head on her knee, and she began to arrange his locks, as Neapolitan damsels also do by their swains. But soon she got a great fright, for, growing amongst the man's hair, she found a great quantity of "Liobhagach an locha," a certain slimy green weed that abounds in such lochs, fresh, salt, and brackish. (In another version it was sand.) The girl knew that if she screamed there was an end of her, so she kept her terror to herself, and worked away till the man fell asleep, as he was with his head on her knee. Then she untied her apron strings, and slid the apron quietly on to the ground with its burden upon it, and then she took her feet home as fast as it was in her heart. (This incident I have heard told in the Isle of Man and elsewhere, of a girl and a supernatural.) Now when she was getting near the houses she gave a glance behind her, and there she saw her "caraid" (friend) coming after her in the likeness of a horse.

He had nearly reached her, when the old woman who saw what was going on called out to open the door of the wild bull's house, and in a moment out sprang the bull.

He gave an eye all round about him, and then rushed off to meet the horse, and when they met they fought, and they never stopped fighting till they drove each other out into the sea, and no one could tell which of them was best. Next day the body of the bull was found on the shore all torn and spoilt, but the horse was never more seen at all.

The narrator prefaced this story by remarking that it was "perfectly true," for he had it from a lobster fisher, who heard it from an old man who witnessed the whole scene. It was suggested to him that the "old woman" was a witch, but he would have his story told in his own way, and said, "Well, I suppose she was a witch, but I did not hear it."

Mr. Pattison, who wrote down this version, regrets that he did not get a fuller description of the animals. I have a fuller description of them, and of the girl, with all the names of the people, and the places, fully set forth. The bull was large and black, be was found groaning in a peat hag, and was helped by the girl's lover, who brought him food, though he suspected him to be the water-bull. The girl was dark-haired and brown-eyed, and the farmer's daughter. Her lover was an active Highland lad, and a drover, who went by the name of "Eachan còir nan òrd," "Gentle Hector of the hammers," and he was fair-haired.

There was a rejected rival suitor who takes the place of the water-horse, who threw his plaid over the girl's bead when she is at a shieling, and carried her off, but the black water-bull rushed in just at the nick of time, crushed the wicked wooer to the earth, invited the lady to mount on his back, and carried her safely home, when he disappeared, singing--

Chaidh conadh rium le òigear caomh,
'S ri òigh rinn mise bàigh
Déigh tri cheud bliadhna do dh' aosa chruaidh
Thoir fuasgladh dhomh gun dàil.

Aid came to me by a gentle youth,
And to a maiden I brought aid;
After three hundred years of my hard age,
Give me my freedom without delay.

This clearly then is as mythical a bull as the "black bull o' Norroway," and Mr. Peter Buchan's bull in Rashencoatie, and the dun bull in Katie Woodencloak, the Candlemas bull which was looked for in the sky, and the sign Taurus; and perhaps the "Tarbh uisge," is of the

same breed as that famous Egyptian bull who was the god of the land of Scota, Pharoah's daughter.

The WATER-HORSE is generally but a vicious, amphibious, supernatural horse; and there is a real sea-creature whose bead may have suggested that there were real horses in the sea. But there were sacred horses every where in the East, so the attributes of water-horses are probably mythological. But the water-horse assumes many shapes; he often appears as a man, and sometimes as a large bird. In this last form he was "seen" by a certain man, who described him. The narrator waded up to his shoulders one cold day in February, in a certain muir loch, to get a shot at him; but when he got within "eighty-five yards" of him, the animal dived, and the sportsman, after waiting for "three quarters of an hour," returned to shore. There he remained for more than "five hours and a half," but the creature never rose. In form and colour he was very like the Great Northern Diver, with the exception of the white on his neck and breast; the wings were of the same proportion, the neck was "two feet eleven inches long," and "twenty-three in circumference;" bill about "seventeen inches long," and hooked like an eagle's at the end; legs very short, black, and powerful; feet webbed till within five inches of the toes, with tremendous claws. Footprints, as measured in the mud at the north end of the lake, cover a space equal to that contained within the span of a pair of large antlers; voice like the roar of an angry bull lives on calves, sheep, lambs, and otters," etc. If that "eyewitness" had only taken his long bow with him instead of his gun, I have no doubt he might have secured a specimen of the "Boobrie." Nevertheless, I have heard of the Boobrie from several people who were beyond the reach of this "eye-witness;" so he has a real existence in the popular mind.

The dragon which haunts Highland sea lochs and Gaelic stories surely had the same origin as the Norse sea-serpent, figured in the wood-cut, and the great sea-snake of the Edda, which encircled the whole world. The bodily shape might have been that of a survivor of an extinct species, the attributes those of a sea-god. The creature figured by Pontippidan has relations at the Crystal Palace, and in geological museums; and yet the bishop knew nothing of geology a hundred years ago.

Even the FAIRIES seem to have a foundation in fact. If the Dean of the Isles told the truth in his book of statistics, quoted above, the bones of pigmies have been found; and the ancient habitations of a diminutive race are still found occasionally in the sand hills of South Uist, and elsewhere. In a "Sithchean," near Sligechean in Skye, piping used to be commonly heard, according to some of my informants. One of my acquaintance is commonly reported to fly with the fairies. They take him to certain churchyards, and bring him back again. A lout of a boy, who informed me that stories were very wicked, nevertheless added--

"That fairies are, is certain. I know two sisters--one of them is a little deaf--and they heard a sound in a hill, and they followed the sound; and did they not sit and listen to the piping there till they were seven times tired! There is no question about that."

A worthy antiquary shewed me, amongst a lot of curious gear, a stone arrow head, and said--

"That is a fairy dart, which a man brought me a few days ago. He said he heard a whistling in the air, and that it fell at his feet in the road, and he picked it up, and brought it away with him."

A tinker assured me, with evident belief, that a man had taken such an arrow from an ash-tree, where he had heard it strike.

A doctor told this anecdote--

“Do you see that kind of shoulder on the hill? Well, a man told me that he was walking along there with another who used to “go with the fairies,” and he said to him--

“‘I know that they are coming for me this night. If they come, I must go with them; and I shall see them come, and the first that come will make a bow to me, and pass on; and so I shall know that they are going to take me with them.”

“‘Well,’ said the man, ‘we had not gone far when the man called out, ‘Tha iad so air tighin.’ These are come. I see a number of ‘sluagh’ the people; and now they are making bows to me. And now they are gone.’ And then he was quiet for a while. Then he began again; and at last he began to cry out to hold him, or that he would be off.

“Well,” said the doctor, “the man was a bold fellow, and be held on by the other, and he began to run, and leap, and at last (as the man told me) be was fairly lifted up by the ‘sluagh,’ and taken away from him, and he found him about a couple of miles further on, laid on the ground. He told him that they had carried him through the air, and dropped him there. And,” said the doctor, “that is a story that was told me as a fact, a very short time ago, by the man whom I was attending.”

Not far off I was told this in a house full of people, all of whom knew the story, and seemed to believe it implicitly.

“There was a piper in this island, and he had three sons. The two eldest learned the pipes, and they were coming on famously; but the youngest could not learn at all. At last, one day, he was going about in the evening, very sorrowfully, when he saw ‘bruth,’ a fairy hillock, laid open.” (There was one close to the house, which had been exactly like the rest of its class. It was levelled, and human bones were found in it, according to the minister). “He went up to the door, and he struck his knife into it, because he had heard from old people that if he did that, the ‘sluagh’ could not shut the door. Well, they were very angry, and asked him what he wanted, but he was not a bit afraid. He told them that he could not play the pipes a bit, and asked them to help him. They gave him ‘Feadan dubh,’ a black chanter, but he said--

‘That’s no use to me, for I don’t know how to play it.’

Then they came about him, and shewed him how to move his fingers; that he was to lift this one and lay down that; and when he had been with them a while, he thanked them, and took out his knife, and went away, and the ‘Bruth’ closed behind him.

“Now that man became one of the most famous pipers in ------, and his people were alive till very lately. I am sure you all know that?

Chorus--”Oh yes.” “Yes, indeed.” “ It is certain that there were such people, whether they are now or not.” “O yes, that is sure “--

“Do I not know a man who was in the island of ------, and he was sitting by himself in a hut, with a fire lit; and it was a wild night. The door was pushed open, and a gray horse put in his head. But the man was not afraid, and put up the palm of his hand this way to the horse’s nose, and he said, ‘You worthy horse, you must go away from this;’ and the horse went out backwards.” “And were there no horses in the island? “ “No; never, never.” Chorus--”Never, never.” “That was the water-horse.” “That’s sure.”

A boy, some hundreds of miles away, told me that there was a man who built a house, and as often as it was built it was burned down; but they told him to put a bit of ivy into it, and he did that, and the house was not burned that time.

All England was dressing its churches and dinner tables with Christmas ivy a short time ago, but few will think that this is a Celtic charm against the fairies, or that ivy was planted against houses to guard them from fire.

An old Welsh dairymaid, from near Shropshire, denied all knowledge of King Arthur. “She had never heard of him, not she.” She did not know of her own knowledge that the fairies carried people away, but she had heard that a woman, who lived some distance from her father’s house, had two children carried off by fairies. They left her two others, which were just like her own; but they were always crying. She went to a wise woman, and she told her to go to a river where there was a bridge--a single plank like--and to take one of the children in each hand, and drop them in the middle.

“Well, I cannot say if it is true. I can only tell it as I heard it; but I heard that the woman did take the two children, and drop them into the middle of the stream; and when she got home she found her own two children, quite safe and well, in the house before her.”

There must be some foundation for all this widespread belief in the existence of a small people. A woman lately described their dress and appearance as seen in Islay. “They were dressed in green kilts, and green coats, and green conical caps--sharp caps like the “Clogadan,” helmets which children make of rushes.” A rim is woven into a kind of basket-work coronet, and the points are gathered together and make a high cone. Swedish Lapps now wear caps of the same shape. Fairies thus dressed have been seen marching “like a wedding,” with a piper playing before them; and such a procession goes by the name of “Banais shith,” a fairy wedding.

“And did they ever wear arms?”

“No; they had not pith enough to bear arms; they were but spirits.”

Nevertheless, they had bodily strength, and worked hand mills, if all tales be true.

This class of stories is so widely spread, so matter-of-fact, hangs so well together, and is so implicitly believed all over the united kingdom, that I am persuaded of the former existence of a race of men in these islands who were smaller in stature than the Celts; who used stone arrows, lived in conical mounds like the Lapps, knew some mechanical arts, pilfered goods and stolen children; and were perhaps contemporary with some species of wild cattle and horses, and great auks, which frequented marshy ground, and are now remembered as water-bulls, and water-horses, and boobries, and such like impossible creatures.

I leave it to ethnologists and geologists to say, whether this popular supernatural history has any bearing upon modern discoveries; whether it may not be referred to the same period as the lake habitations of Switzerland, Denmark, Ireland, and the Scotch. Isles; the sepulchral chambers containing human remains, and surrounded by bones which appear to be those of animals now extinct; the works of art in the drift; and the relics of fossil men.

And here, with an apology for this lengthy postscript, I will leave Highland Tales for the consideration of learned men well read in mythology and like subjects.*

*NOTE To AVALON, on Page 242.

Another explanation of this ancient British tradition may perhaps be found in the discovery of America by the Northmen in the tenth century, described in the abstract of evidence taken from Icelandic Sagas, and published by the Society of Northern Antiquarians in 1837.

It there appears that in 986 Eric the Red emigrated from Iceland to Greenland, and in subsequent years other voyagers made their way down the coast of America, and named one

part of the country VINLAND, from the vines which a German who was of the party found there.

In 1006 a certain THORFINN, who was sprung from “ Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Irish, and Scottish “ ancestors, some of whom were kings of royal descent, effected a settlement in Vinland.

In 1003, an exploring party had fallen in with a place called “Irland it Mickla,” which was inhabited by white men, who had iron implements, and it seems to be implied that these were Irishmen settled in Florida. The stories of the voyages of Biörn Asbrandson, and Gudleif Gudlaugen, are extremely like the traditions now current in the west, about voyagers who discover a mysterious western land, and there find ancient heroes still living in their old way.

Some Norse traders; as it is said, after a trading voyage to Dublin, were driven far to the South West, and found an unknown land, where inhabitants spoke Irish, and who seized and bound them. A man of distinguished appearance, with gray hair, and with a banner carried before him, came riding down to the shore, addressed the strangers in the Norse language, and after some time the natives, who paid him great respect, agreed that he should decide the fate of the strangers.

He was Biörn Asbrandson, and he, after taking counsel with twelve of the natives, sent his countrymen away with gifts for his friends in Iceland. The voyagers returned to Dublin, and next year to Iceland. Now, if this is not a Celtic myth in an Icelandic dress, the Celtic myth now current has a foundation in fact. If the Sagas are to be depended upon, America was discovered by Icelanders, but by men who frequented the Hebrides and Ireland; and it is expressly stated in these Sagas that Hebridians and Irishmen accompanied some of these American expeditions. It seems quite possible that the real event may now be remembered as a legend in the countries whence voyages were made. There is a resemblance between Fionn and Thorfinn, and Fionn’s land and Vinland, and apples are now common enough in America, whether they grew there. Avalon is like *Avlan* (apples), as written by one of my correspondents.

CXVI. A Plea For Gaelic

And now let me add a word about the Gaelic language.

It is commonly said, “You have no literature; the language is not worth learning.”

A writer in the newspapers, who was kind enough to praise me, nevertheless found great fault with the publication of Gaelic. The publishers say, “Gaelic is a dead weight in the trade.” My friends say, “Give us no more Gaelic.”

The British Museum Library is a national institution, and spends very large sums on books, but such Gaelic books as “Gillies” and “Carswell” were not there in 1861. The Advocates’ Library in Edinburgh has “Gillies,” but no “Carswell,” not even “Reid’s Bibliotheca Scoto Celtica,” which gives a list of Gaelic books.

What there may be at Oxford and Cambridge I do not know, but I do not believe that the published Gaelic books are to be found together in any one public library. I bought “Gillies” for a few shillings in Glasgow, and the Duke of Argyll has “Carswell,” under lock and key, for it is valuable, and has been lost. I lately attended the lectures of one of the best of modern philologists, chiefly with a view to Gaelic as it relates to Sanscrit. The Celtic tribes were placed by him in the front ranks of the Aryan migration, the names of the most distinguished German scholars were associated with Gaelic learning, but still in lectures addressed to an English audience, of whom a large proportion must have had “Celtic Crania,” and all of whom use Gaelic words in their ordinary speech, there was scarcely a word about the old languages of Great Britain in early days, and yet Gaelic and Sanscrit are allied, and Gaelic throws light on the relationship which exists between Sanscrit and English.

Compare the form of the verb “to be” in the three languages. The Gaelic verb is an assertion of existence, followed by the name of the person or thing referred to; and if the corresponding English words be taken instead of the verb, and the Gaelic sounds are spelt, the three languages are like each other, and the

Gaelic is the simplest form.

I am thou art he is

English.

Ásmi ási ásti

Sanscrit.

hā-mee hā-oo hā-ê

Gaelic sound.

is me is thee is he

literal translation.

The past tense of the verb is an assertion of past being BHA, pronounced VA.

Gaelic is closely related to the classical languages. Pritchard’s Eastern origin of the Celtic nations, and Armstrong’s Gaelic dictionary, and similar works, will shew how much there is of resemblance between Gaelic, Latin, Greek, etc.; and it is generally admitted that a Keltic language is at the foundation of the classical tongues. An eccentric Gaelic schoolmaster is quoted in the West of Scotland Magazine, who used to spout intelligible Gaelic imitations of

Latin authors for hours--such as, “Arma virumque cano.” “Airm a’s fir’ se chanum.” The dominie said he was cracked, but there was method in his madness.

The following words which I have gathered from books and from my friends appear to bear upon Gaelic-

68th Psalm, 4th verse, “Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH.

The numeral 1 is UN--like “un” (Fr.) “one.” The numeral 5 coig, I cannot trace in Panchan, though it has a resemblance to *cinq* and *quinque*, which are traced in Sanskrit by experts, but 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 resemble the Sanskrit numerals. The formation of higher numbers up to 20 is on the same principle--one ten, four ten, etc. Thence the Gaelic counts by 20 and the Sanskrit by 10. The Gaelic says ten and two twenties, or half a hundred--the Sanskrit says five tens.

Any Gaelic scholar may extend this list by a reference to books on philology, but Gaelic ought most to resemble the oldest known Aryan speech, if it be one of the oldest survivors of the Aryan family. There is a likeness, but many surviving European languages are much nearer to Sanskrit.

A vast number of places out of the Highlands still retain their Gaelic names, and it is interesting to understand them; for example, TINTOCK is the highest mountain in Lanarkshire; and the name has a meaning in Gaelic, “The house of the mist” (Tigh n’ to-ag); and a local rhyme shews that to be the true meaning of the name, which has no English meaning.

On Tintock tap there is a mist,
And in the mist there is a kist,
And in the kist there is a cup,
And in the cup there is a drap
Tak up the cup and drink the drap,
And set the cup on Tintock tap.

There was a popular tale about this mountain which I have, failed to get; but a cup, with some mysterious drink, is common in Celtic traditions. There are cups taken from the fairies; cups from which all sorts of drinks came; the cup of Fionn which healed diseases; the great caldron of the Feinne, which is bidden somewhere; the kettle of the “Korrigan” of Brittany; the St. Graal of mediæval romance, for which there is no Scriptural authority; and the Ballan iochshlaint, or vessel of balsam. And when we get back to Sanscrit mythology, a chief object of worship was a drink, the juice of a plant, the “soma,” to which all sorts of virtues are attributed in the Vedas.

So lowland mythology is explained by Gaelic, and so is lowland topography. “Craignethan” Castle has no meaning; but a similar Gaelic sound means the crag of the rivulet, and correctly describes the site of the ruin of Scott’s castle of “Tillietudlem,” in Lanarkshire.

CAM, in Cambridge, means the crooked, which is a correct description of the river Cam; Bournmouth means Watermouth, and is situated at the mouth of a “burn” or rivulet; Bannockburn means *Cakewater* in Gaelic. In short, no history of the English language is complete without its Celtic first chapter; and no one has yet tried to write the Scotch Gaelic part of it.

Modern English is certainly more Teutonic than Celtic, but it is full of Gaelic words, and they are creeping in still.

Here are a few words, chiefly written down as they occurred in translating, and which seem to be common to Gaelic and English. Any dictionary will give many more.

GAELIC and ENGLISH.

Tuig (understand)

Twig (modern slang).

Gille (lad)

Gilly (sportsman's ditto).

Failire

Palfrey.

Steud

Steed.

Claidheamh

Glaive.

Saighdear

Soldier.

Sgath-dubh

Shadow.

Mireadh (playing)

Merry.

Monadh

Mountain moor (mons).

Muir (sea)

Meer.

Bùrn (water)

Burn modern words.

Loch

Loch ” ”

Srath

Strath ” ”

Gleann

Glen ” ”

Dail

Dale.

Gëil

Gill, a field.

Margadh
Market.
Sràid (a walk)
Street.
Rathad-mór
Road.
Bàta
Boat.
Sgoth
Scow or Skiff.
Seòl
Sail.
Ròpa
Rope.
Port
Port.
Lìn (lint)
Line.
Streng
String.
Bocsa
Box.
Bogha
Bow.
Sgiath (a wing)
Shield.
Casadh
Gnashing.
Teanga
Tongue.
Sròn (nose)
Snort, snore.
Slip
Lip.
Ameasg

Amongst.
Ruaig
Rout.
Corp (the body)
Corpse (corpus).
Cinne
Kin.
Càl
Kail.
Boglaichean
Bogs.
Bog
Soft.
Sgor
Scaur.
Creag
Crag.
Sòlas (joy)
Solace.
Cuist!
Hist! whist.
Pailliun
Pavilion.
Feachd (battle array)
Fight.
Sac
Sack.
Rannsaich
Ransack.
Roimhe’n t-sac
Through the sack.
Onair
Honour.
Sliom (smooth)
Slime.

Measan (lap dog)

Mesan.

Cart (to clear a byre)

Cart.

Stoirm (great noise)

Storm.

Halla (Talla)

Hall.

Bàrd

Bard.

Cathair (seat, city)

(Chester)

Dùn (heap, fort)

Lon*don*. *Dun*stable

Pairce

Park.

Tùr (a journey)

Tour.

Tùr

A tower.

Bid-eag

A little bit.

Braghaid

Brisket.

DrAchk (Phonetic)

Drake.

Dregan

Dragon.

Gànra

Gander.

All Gaelic words ending in *ear*, which mean a male individual who does something, embody the Gaelic word *fear* (a man, or a male unit), which word, when combined with another, is spelt *fhear*, and pronounced as *êr* or ηρ, if a sheep's note is properly spelt μη. Thus,

Muill*ear*

Mill*er*,

is a contraction for

Mullinn*fhear*

Mill*man*.

Saigh-d*ear*

Sold*ier*.

Saighead*fhear*

Sagitt*a*rius.

The Latin word thus seems to be founded upon *fhear* rather than *Vir*, though vir is supposed to come from the Sanscrit Vira; but of the Aryan languages (so far as I know) Gaelic alone explains how the V was lost, for Gaelic inflections are often made at the beginning of words.

Supposing that the word for an archer to be a remnant of the old Keltic of Italy, preserved in Latin, Sagittarius is made up of

Saighead-fhear-ius,
Arrow -man (with a termination.)

And if the g had the value which it has in many languages, the sounds would be almost identical in Latin and Gaelic.

If this be right, the termination *er*, and the (now) Gaelic word *fhear*, appear in most of the Aryan languages of Europe--Eng., Bak*er*; Gaelic, Fuinead*air*; German, Bäek*er*; French, Boulang*er*; Norse, Bag*er*; Spanish, Panad*er*o; Italian, Forn*ar*o; Swedish, Bag*ar*e; Latin, Pist*or*: but Greek ἀρτοποιὸς will not do, though the words *am fear*, the man, reappear in ἀνηρ, a man, and *aran*, bread, in ἀοτος.

It nowhere appears in Lapp, for *olmush* is the equivalent of *Fear*, a man, and *laibbo* is a baker, though *hepush*, a horse, is like ἱππος.

Now, any English tradesman may be named by adding er to the proper words, as trad*er*, railway-engine-boil*er*-rivet*er*. Any Gaelic tradesmen may also be named, in like manner, by adding *fhear*, or *ear*, or *air*, to other words; but neither in Gaelic nor in English will these terminations properly apply to a trades*woman*. In English the proper addition is seamstress, in French it is *euse*--and here again is Gaelic--*Ise* is the equivalent of she, and *esan* of he, and *aiche* is the termination which is common to both genders, as--

Ban-fhaughl-*aiche*, a female seamstress,

but in English there are two ways of forming such words. We say horse *man*, horse *woman*; but if we say rid*er*, we must add another word to express a *female* rider; so the termination *er*, if Keltic, is equivalent to *man* in horse *man*, which is Teutonic.

Any one who knows Gaelic can easily put a meaning on numbers of Italian names. For example, “Monte, Soracte,” Monadh, Sorachan (mountain, peak or hillock), is a small peaked mountain standing alone near Rome. “Monte Appennino,” Monadh na Beinne (the mountain tract of the hill country), is at least as descriptive in Gaelic as Italian, and the sounds are very like still.

In like manner, the connection between Gaelic and any one of a large class of European languages, can be shewn, but it has no apparent relationship to Lapp. Hence, Gaelic is useful to a Sanscrit scholar, and necessary to the full development of any system which treats of the Aryan family of races and languages; and it is a very useful accomplishment for any student of the Eastern languages, which pave the way to promotion in India. It is also useful to a classical student who wants to go deep into Greek and Latin.

No Frenchman can fully understand the origin of his own language without knowing Gaelic, for French is still full of words, and especially sounds, which seem to be Gaelic. If French be Latin, it is Latin spoken with a Celtic brogue.

Du blè, corn, and *bleth*, to grind, are pronounced in the same way. French sentences, which to the best-taught English tongues, are as hard as *th*is and *th*at, and *th*e o*th*er *th*ing, to a Frenchman, are easily pronounced by a Highlander. On dit, qu'un bon garçon gagnait cinq cent, cinquante cinq écus, and such sounds, present little difficulty to a Gaelic peasant; and there are Polish and Russian and Welsh liquids of which the same is true. *Puill*, holes full of mud, has the same sound as the Russian for dust, and the French *Mouillé*, wet, which are sore puzzles for a Saxon, but easy for a Celt. *Eala gheal*, a white swan, contains a Polish liquid sound, which a Polish lady assured me she had never heard mastered by a foreigner, yet it is one of the commonest sounds in Gaelic. So Gaelic is of the greatest use in learning to speak and pronounce other languages.

He who can utter the following sentence must have a nimble tongue for liquids--

"Laogh na laidhe an an lag an lochain air là luain 's ag òl leann laidir á ladar."

In the specimen of "old Saxon," given by Latham (p. 46, Handbook of the English Language), a few words which resemble Gaelic can be traced.

*Ehu*sealcos (horsegrooms)

Eich (horses).

Ueros (men)

Fear (a man).

Fehas (cattle)

Féidh. (deer).

*Uuar*lico

Fior (true).

Cu*dean* ("show strength)

Dean (do).

Cunneas (races)

Cinne (kindred).

Firiho (of men)

Fir (men).

Rikiost (noblest)

Righail (kingly).

Kind (child)

Gin (to beget).

Louodun (praised)

Laoidh (to laud. A hymn).

Rikea (kingdom)

Rioghachd (realm).

Spoken Gaelic has altered very little in the course of the last three centuries in the islands.

Dean Monro's statistical account of the Western Islands was written in Scotch, 1549, and the names are spelt phonetically. The names of the islands and families, as now pronounced, could hardly be better expressed for English ears. "Skibness; Ellan Ew; Lochebrune; M'Enzie; the haley isles of Flanayn; Ellan Vie Couil, perteining to M'Cloyd;" and some hundreds of names are so spelt as to express their present value. Icelandic, which has also been shut up in islands, has altered but little for many centuries.

To me it appears that a living language of this kind, which certainly is a dialect of "Keltic," which was spoken in Great Britain and Ireland in the days of Cæsar, and was also spoken in all the outlying corners of Europe, in Spain, and Portugal, France, Jutland, in Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor, and which is now spoken by settlers in America, and Australia, and India, is an interesting study.

It is peculiarly interesting, for the same reason, that a great auk's egg is now worth a large sum. Gaelic, like the great auk, will soon have ceased to exist, and the process by which it is extinguished may serve to explain the extinction of languages elsewhere.

Its very corruptions are lessons in the science of language. The manner in which a new word is altered, when it is received into common use, is a practical lesson, which holds good for all human speech, and serves to test the rules laid down for phonetic changes.

The inflections at the beginning of words, which are an essential part of spoken Gaelic, seem to be especially worthy of attention for their singularity. There is no good reason to suppose that "Gaelic," "Welsh," or "Dutch" was the "language of Paradise" but there is no reason why Gaelic should not contain remnants of some form of speech older than Sanskrit, and this may be one example. But my wish is to call attention to this subject, not to pronounce opinions on questions which require hard study, and knowledge which I do not yet possess.

In the Highlands generally, I find the language rapidly mixing with English; and striking illustrations of the changes which take place in human speech, phonetic and grammatical, meet me at every step; but they are all changes which tend to decay. I find that lectures are delivered to Sunday-school children to prove that Gaelic is part of a divine curse; and Highland proprietors tell me that it is "a bar to the advancement of the people."

Let me endeavour to show that Gaelic is good for something more; it has been shown above that it is good for something.

First, English is a "bar to the advancement " of proprietors, if they cannot speak to those who pay their rents; and it is the want of English, not the possession of Gaelic, which retards the advance of those who seek employment where English is spoken. So Highland proprietors should learn Gaelic and teach English.

Gaelic is no bar to advancement. It did not clog the steps of the Lord Justice General, or his brother the Ambassador, or of the Vice-Chancellor, or of dozens of other men of rank, whose learning included Gaelic. It has not weighed in my slower race through life; and it gave me a stock of sounds which occur in other languages, and which an English tongue can rarely pronounce. It is worth learning, if only to see the pleasure which shines like sun-light through a clouded Highland face, when Gaelic is unexpectedly heard.

Some time ago I was walking along a lowland road, dressed in the genteel chimney pot, and broad cloth of this age, and as I went, the sound of a plaintive Gaelic song caught my ear. It came from a bevy of girls who were working in a field by the road-side, and singing a lamentable love song over their work. So I called out over the hedge, "*'S math sibh fhéin a ghaladan*," "well done, girls." The whole field was in a pleased commotion directly, for these

were people from Skye; and we were friends on the instant, by virtue of a cabalistic word of our common language, and so it has been in thousands of cases.

Gaelic is the key to a Highlander's heart; and proprietors and utilitarians should learn it before they condemn it. They would not so easily part with their people if they knew them, and could talk with them.

If Irish proprietors would try to speak Gaelic to their people they would be better liked. Officers who speak Gaelic to Highland soldiers command their affection. If officers in Highland regiments would try more, they would have more recruits.

Without printed Gaelic I feel sure that I should now be enjoying the blame of another MacPherson. I submit to my adverse critics that they would not have believed in Gaelic stories without the originals, and that Gaelic as now spoken in various districts was something worth preservation, for they will find it nowhere else.

Let those who say that there is no Gaelic literature read Professor O'Curry's Lectures, and they will there find that the best scholars only distinguish between Scotch and Irish Gaelic as between dialects of the same tongue, and that there is a mass of unexplored Gaelic literature still extant. There are two Professors, one at the New Catholic University; a Government Commission is employed about "the Brehon laws," as they are called, and a Gaelic MS. about "Danish invasions," forms one of the historical series published under the authority of the Master of the Rolls. All sorts of questions are sure to arise as these documents are brought to light and read; and without Gaelic no scholar can give an opinion of them. Questions relative to early Christianity may turn on words in Gaelic manuscripts, and who is to say what may be found in such an unexplored field? Old Irish prophecies have actually been spread amongst the peasantry for political purposes. If it was important for the interests of the State to found a chair of Sanscrit, which nobody speaks, surely there ought to be some means of learning Gaelic devised for England, where a large section of the people speak the language still. Surely the few relies of Scotch Gaelic literature which remain are worthy of more attention. Till rescued from oblivion, and placed in safety by the patriotic exertions of Mr. Skene, their very existence had been forgotten, and some valuable MSS., the property of the Highland Society, have disappeared within the last sixty years. It is surely a mistake to say that there is no literature in a language, and to set about proving it to be true by allowing the little which remains to be destroyed.

Without a common language men misunderstand each other, and those who are employed in a country should be able to talk to its people. It is a rule of the Danish Government that no official shall hold office in Iceland unless he speaks both Danish and Icelandic, and the rule is good. A philanthropist who cannot speak to the people, and judges from what he sees, must describe the poor of the west as living in squalid hovels, amidst peat-reek; silent, and dull; for they cannot speak to him, and they are very poor, and they are awed into silence by the broad-cloth, and black hat, and gold watch and chain of a government gentleman who suffers from peat-reek. A few specimens of those most mysterious of beings, which are found in all classes, men without reason, may lead to the conclusion that the rest are but idiots of a higher grade; but one who understands Gaelic may learn a lesson beneath these lowly roofs. He may hear the story of Cinderella, and of the black, rough-skinned herd; and the "idiots" who all rose to be princes, and the song of the mighty fool who did his duty manfully and succeeded. He may look about him and find that very many historical names have in fact sprung from a cottage, and from such cottages; and if these are turf heaps over which a man can walk, he may be reminded that without Gaelic he can know as little of the better part of those who inhabit them, as Gray knew of the minds of those who mouldered beneath the mouldering heaps of a country churchyard. The Registrar-General and the clergyman will prove that

those who live in direct contravention of all the “rules of sanitary science” and “common decency,” because they are too poor to live otherwise, are at least as long-lived, chaste, and religious as any class of Her Majesty’s poor. Those who live in such houses claim their descent from, and trace it to the warriors buried under stones, some of which are figured above, and many of them are as proud of their ancestry as the Icelanders, some of whom claim to be related to the Queen of England, and live in similar buts. When they go elsewhere their strongest desire is to return; their bodies are often carried “home” when they die, far away; and history will show that many a distinguished man began life in a black house, and there listened to stories, and to better lessons first heard in Gaelic.

I have said this much, because there is a vague idea in English-speaking society that a Celt is an inferior animal, and that is a “vulgar error.” An Englishman, say what he will, has a large cross of the Celt in his composition, as the shape of his head proclaims. Many Lowlanders and the people of the midland counties of England are “Celts,” and a Frenchman is not inferior to an Englishman in most things. The purest specimens of Scandinavian blood are to be found in Iceland, and there are no signs of superiority of race there; on the contrary, there is a strong resemblance to the people of the West Highlands, and to many of their peculiarities of temper and manner. I doubt if even the country whence the Anglo Saxons came, can now shew any superiority over the countries where Celt and Saxon, and good feeding, have produced a good cross. In Norway, Iceland, France, Germany, and Italy, a man of five feet ten inches feels himself above the average size. He is below the average size of West Highland gentlemen. Whole families of men above six feet high could be named. I know a Highlander, who is a little over six feet, and measures fifty-six inches round the chest, and who in his youth was “as strong as a bull.” A London drawing-room is the only place in Europe where a race of men better grown than West Highland gentlemen is to be met. Having associated with peasants in every country which I have visited, mixing with all classes on equal terms, so far as I could, I have arrived at the conclusion that a Celt is an average human animal, equal mentally and physically to any other species of the genus homo similarly placed. Much the same can be said of Lapps, though they are a small race, and I am no believer in the natural superiority of any one race over another. It seems to be in the nature of races to dislike and despise each other, and I would willingly “speak up” for the minority, who cannot speak for themselves, “having no English,” and who are apt quietly to despise the Saxon fully as much as he despises them. Both are wrong, as much and as surely as the members and the stomach erred when they fell out. The one cannot suffer but the other must ache.

CXVII. Dress

Dress hardly belongs to my subject, but those who deny the existence of Gaelic poems, and affect to despise Celts, often assert that the Highland dress is of modern invention. I have so often heard this gravely maintained, that it may be as well to give some reasons for a different opinion, and quote some authorities for the antiquity of the “Garb of old Gaul.”

The patterns of tartan are produced by crossing and twisting threads of various colours. It is easy to dye hanks of yarn of single colours, and the simplest arrangement of coloured threads is to cross them; consequently the first effort to produce a pattern by the weavers’ art, generally results in squares and bars something like Scotch tartan. The South Sea Islanders, who wear home-made woven cloths, either colour them by painting patterns on them, or by crossing coloured fibres. The bands woven by the Lapps on their small hand looms have similar patterns; their coloured baskets are woven into squares, and the early weaving and basket-making of all nations have a general resemblance.

But each savage tribe has some peculiarity in its patterns which distinguish them from others, and the manufactures of savage and civilized communities are alike marked by the development of some original design, which must have been the invention of somebody.

The idea of ornamenting woven fabrics with stripes of various colours, crossing each other at right angles, and blending where they cross, would result from the simplest arrangement of coloured fibres that could be devised, and was probably the invention of the first maker of mats, but in Scotland that idea has produced an enormous number of “tartans.” Every year produces a new crop, but nevertheless there are a number of old “sets” which are of unknown antiquity, and these being made in particular glens or islands, came to be the distinctive uniform of the families or “clans” who lived in the glens, and who carried on the manufacture of tartan, spinning on distaffs, and weaving in handlooms at home.

The Irish, the Germans, the Celts, and many ancient nations, wore striped garments.

From the lives of the saints, it appears that in the seventh and eight centuries Scotchmen used cloaks of variegated colours, and fine linen, used chariots, and made swords and other weapons, had glass-drinking vessels, leather boats for the rivers, and oaken gallies for the sea.--(*Scotland in the Middle Ages*, 227.)

The oldest tartan “sets” ought to be those which can be made from native dyes, and this test will weed out a considerable number which profess to be “Clan tartans.” The art of dyeing is attributed to the Tyrians, and it is asserted that they visited the British Isles. There are fish which produce a dye on the British coasts, but the inhabitants do not use them, so far as I know. Neither “Tyrian purple “ nor “sæpia” are amongst Highland dyes; but the ancient Britons knew of a blue dye, the Irish knew many, and old wives still colour worsteds of their own spinning with plants that grow on their own Scotch hills.

With the root of the bent they make a sort of red.

With “máder” they dye blue and purple. With some other root, whose name I have forgotten, I have seen thread coloured yellow by boiling it in a pan, and thus the Highlanders still produce the three primitive colours from native dyes. Wool and goat’s hair give black and white.

Green they produce with heather, and a very rich brown of various shades from yellow to black with a species of lichen which grows on trees and rocks, and is called “crotal.”

The art is now giving way to improved manufactures, and there is often a kind of mystery about it. Some old woman is quoted as the authority, who knows a particular old Highland dye, and there is every indication of an old traditional art not quite forgotten.

Tartans, therefore, especially some sets, ought to be old. If not as old as the seventh century, they are at least as old as 1603, according to the author of "Certayn Mattere concerning Scotland," who says, "they delight in marbled cloths, especially that have stripes of sundrie colours; they love chiefly purple and blue; their predecessors used short mantles or plaids of diverse colours, sundrie ways divided, and among some the same custom is observed to this day, but for the most part they are brown, most near to the colour of the hadder, to the effect, when they lie among the hadders, the bright colour of their plaids shall not bewray them; with which, rather coloured than clad, they suffer the most cruel tempests that blow in the open fields, in such sort, that in a night of snow they sleep sound."

Tartan was worn during the thirty years' war, and the Germans thus described the wearers:--

In such dresses go the 800 Irrländer, or Irren, newly arrived at Stettin, A.D. 1631.

"This is a strong hardy people, content with common fare; if they have no bread they eat roots, when need requires it. They can run more than twenty German miles in a day; they have by them muskets, their bows and quivers, and long knives."

There are plenty of bits of old tartan preserved in Scotland. There are pictures at Dunrobin, at Taymouth, at Armidale, at Holyrood and elsewhere, all of which prove that tartan was anciently worn, and that particular patterns were worn in certain districts.

Dr. Johnson and Boswell saw men dressed in plaids and tartans when they made their tour in 1773, and whence the notion sprang that the Highland dress is a modern invention I cannot imagine, unless it is the offspring of the same spirit which passed an Act of Parliament to forbid the dress.

The form of the dress is undeniably old. A sculptured stone was dug up some years ago at St. Andrews, in a position which proves its great antiquity; and General Stewart's description of the dress of 1740 applies as well to the figure, probably sculptured long before St. Andrew's Cathedral was built, as it does to pictures at Taymouth, and prints of 1631.

Copies of some of the figures on the St. Andrews stone are at pages 38 and 390. I have endeavoured to trace every fold, and those who would look at the sculptured figures will find a cast in the Antiquarian Museum at Edinburgh. The whole design is given in Wilson's *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, and in "the Sculptured Stones of Scotland." The style of ornament is exactly that of old Gaelic crosses and manuscripts, and that is pronounced by good judges to be "British" or "Celtic;" but the general look of the sculpture reminds me strongly of similar Roman stone chests of the time of the Lower Empire. In was found in the immediate vicinity of St. Andrews Cathedral, which was founded by Malcolm IV., A.D. 1159, consecrated 1318, and destroyed after a sermon by Knox in 1560. The position in which the stone was found indicates that it was far older than the Cathedral; and as there are no Christian symbols on it, I suspect that the sculptor must have studied art from some Roman master, though he studied design and nature at home.

Apes and lions never frequented the forests of Caledonia, and these indicate some knowledge of foreign ways or of foreign design, unless the Romans exhibited such creatures in Britain, and the artist saw them there. Wolves, foxes, dogs, and deer, were clearly familiar to the sculptor, for they are well done. The men were probably copied from familiar models, and one of them (page 38) is dressed in a belted plaid, and armed with a leaf-headed spear.

Another wears a leaf-shaped sword, and such weapons are referred to a very ancient period by the best lowland authorities. A third is figured page 30, and he also wears a belted plaid.

The picture from which the woodcut on page 365 was taken, is at Taymouth, and is a well-painted full-length in oils. From sketches of *Early Scotch History*, page 350, it appears that Jamesone, the Scotch painter, worked at Taymouth between 1633 and 1641. In 1635 he executed a family tree, "in which Sir Duncan of Lochow, the great ancestor of the family, is represented in a red plaid and kilt, with a shirt of mail, checked hose, and bare knees."

Mr. Innes does not mention a picture of the "Regent Murray," so the owner may have erred; perhaps it is "Johne Earl of Mar, 1637." It is at least certain that before Jamesone's time kilts were worn by the nobility, and were supposed to have been worn by their remote ancestors. There are several other pictures at Tay mouth, which are portraits of men and boys dressed in kilts of various fashions, though the dress of the nobility generally must have been that of the Court, and the Highland dress was probably abandoned by Scotch kings at an early date.

We have foreign authority also for the antiquity of the Highland costume.

At the British Museum there is a curious collection of broadsides and ballads, printed in Germany during the thirty years' war. One of these designs heads a ballad, and represents an "Irländer," a "Lappe," and a "Findländer." In the ballad the Lappe asks what has brought them all so far from home, and the "Irländer" explains the reason of their coming, which was to assist the Protestant cause. This was in 1631. The Lappe is partly dressed in skins, and is armed with a bow and arrows. His face is very characteristic; his boots are of the same pattern as those now made in Lappmark, and his knife and its scabbard resemble those now used on the Tana river.

The Finlander is evidently in uniform; and the Lapp wears knickerbokers; so he was probably clad in part at the expense of his country.

The "Irländer" is dressed in tartan; his face is the. face of a Scotchman, and he carries a bow and arrows. All three have the same kind of guns, so probably they were partly armed and dressed according to their national costumes, and partly in uniform.

The Irländer has his feet and legs enveloped in something like the Gaelic "mogan," which is a bit of cloth or tartan cut into the shape of a stocking, and tied round the feet and legs, leaving the toes and the soles of the feet naked as often as not. The head-dress is a broad bonnet, which appears to be made in the same way.

Another print (789, g. 104, 24) gives four pictures of these Irländers, and was probably done by the same artist at the same time. As all the archers are shooting with their left hands, it was probably drawn on the wood direct, consequently the plaid is on the wrong shoulder, and the sword on the wrong side, but the drawing may well be taken from life.

The man with the walking-stick is dressed in the belted plaid, shirt, bonnet, brogues, and "mogans." The man next him is accoutred in a plaid, a bonnet, and a bow and arrows, and looks like a newly-caught very rough specimen of a "redshank."

The next has knickerbokers and a jacket, but mogans, and no brogues, and looks like No. 2, changing into a soldier.

The fourth appears to be another view of the man drawn in No. 1.

In the back ground the plaided army is seen marching to battle, while a lot of archers, apparently dressed in shirts only, are running in front, shooting as they ran at a scattered mass of cavalry, who, of course, are retreating in disorder. A mass of spearmen follow the kilts.

Thus we have the dress, arms, and mode of fighting of these strange, outlandish allies of the Protestant cause, as they appeared to the Germans when they landed at Stettin in 1631.

A third ballad represents one of these new allies with a cavalier in armour.

These three prints were apparently done for the purpose of informing the people of the appearance of their allies. Either these were called “Ersche,” and were Scotch Highlanders, whom the German understood to be “Irish;” or Irishmen then wore the same dress as the Scotch of an earlier period, and sported tartan, and supported the Protestant cause. The faces are remarkably like Scotch faces at all events.

It appears from the history of Gustavus Adolphus by Harte (1759), that about 1630, 700 Scots, who were coasting the Baltic from Pillau in order to join the main body of the Swedish army, were shipwrecked near Rugenwalt, and lost their ammunition and baggage. Monro, their commander, got fifty muskets from a friend in Rugenwalt, took the town by a midnight assault, and maintained himself there for nine weeks, till joined by Hepburn with a small army of 6000 men. These probably were the “Irren” of the German ballads, who are variously stated at 800 and 8000, and in 1631 are said to have newly arrived at Stettin. Monro published an account of his campaigns in 1637.

From that work it appears probable that the “Irren” of the print were the shipwrecked veterans of the “Scotch regiment,” which had received the thanks and commendations of Gustavus Adolphus a short time before in Sweden, which had done good service in former campaigns, and which did right good service afterwards.

Numbers of the officers bore Highland names. There were Munros, Mackays, MacDonalds, Guns, etc. “Murdo Piper “ was drowned in trying to swim ashore at Rugenwelt. They had a “preacher;” Monro himself was a stanch Protestant, and a very religious man; and yet he gives an account of a vision which one of his Highland soldiers had seen, and which came true in every particular. In short, it is manifest that these warriors, clad in tartan plaids, were Scotch Highlanders in their national costume, and lowland Scotchmen in tartan uniforms. Sir Donald Munro, High Dean of the Isles, writing in 1549, calls the people of the Hebrides, “Erishe,” and their language “Erishe” or Erish.” In 1633 the Countess of Argyll called Gaelic “Erise” and “Irishe,” so the German words “Irren” and “Irländer” are easily explained, if there were Scotch lowlanders in the regiment to name their Highland comrades.

About the same time a body of Scots, under one Sinclair, landed in Norway, and tried to force their way to Sweden. The people rose upon them, overpowered them, took some prisoners, and after a time killed them in cold blood. A small museum has been set up at the road side in Gulbrans-dal, and comprises dirks, powder-horns, and the clasps of sporrans. The shipwreck of the party, who landed at Stettin, would account for the absence of ornament in their dresses.

The Highland dress, then, of the beginning of the seventeenth century is well known, and corresponds with one of the oldest sculptured representations of dress known to exist in Scotland. It also corresponds with one form of the dress as now worn, though modern tailors have diminished the amount of tartan, and improved upon the ancient simplicity of the belted plaid.

In 1822 General Stewart published a work, called “Sketches of the Character, Manners, and present state of the Highlanders of Scotland,” which went through several editions, and the dress is therein described and authorities are quoted for its antiquity. There was the “truis” or tartan breeches and stockings in one piece, with a coat or jacket variously ornamented; secondly, the belted plaid, which was worn on guards and full dress occasions, in 1740, by the first Highland regiment embodied, the Black Watch. It was a tartan plaid of twelve yards

(that is, six yards long and two wide), plaited round the middle of the body, the upper part being fixed on the left shoulder, ready to be thrown loose, and wrapped over both shoulders and firelock in rainy weather. At night the plaid served the purpose of a blanket, and was a sufficient covering for the Highlander. “In the barracks, and when not on duty, the little kilt or philibeg was worn.”

This form of dress, then, was the simplest possible use of a web of cloth, as the pattern of tartan is its simplest ornament. The word plaid is the Gaelic *plaide*--a blanket. The Gaelic for a plaid is breacan, the variegated (garment); the Welsh is brychan. The Gaelic for a kilt is *féile*, the covering or the shelter; the garment now worn is called “*féile beag*,” the little covering which my friends often pronounce “filly-bag,” and suppose to mean the “sporran” or purse. The kilt is sewn, and is made of a web three feet wide instead of six. The wide web was put on by folding it backwards and forwards along a belt laid on the ground, lying down upon it, and fastening the belt round the waist. One half of the cloth fell in folds to the knee, the other half was fastened up to the shoulder, and in wet weather was raised over the head. At night, the whole could be cast loose and worn as a blanket, and the wearer was often buried in his plaid.

This striped blanket, then, ought to be a very ancient form of dress, and the early dress of most nations is something like a kilt. The Greeks and Romans, for example, wore kilts, and their great men wore a broader web of cloth variously wrapped about their bodies, as primitive people elsewhere in the world still do. The dress ought to be old, and it is old. The modern alteration is but an improved method of sewing the folds of one half to a band, and wearing the rest of the plaid over the shoulder, and in so far, but in no other sense, the dress is modern.

Again, it is said that gentlemen did not wear the Highland dress, that it was the dress of peasants, churls, outlaws, and such like, but this is surely an error.

Every Highlander thinks himself a gentleman by birth, and often behaves all the better for holding the opinion. The wearers of the kilt now include many titled names; George the Fourth and the Duke of Sussex wore it; the officers of the Black Watch and Prince Charlie wore it in 1745; Monro’s men wore it in 1630; the Regent Murray (or the Earl of Mar), Sutherlands, MacDonalds, and Breadalbanes, have been painted in the Highland dress; Magnus of Norway, who wore it, was surely a gentleman, if none of these were; and so, I presume, was the individual on horseback who figures on the St. Andrews stone, and has not a shred of covering on his bare legs, though he is going to ride into a wood, and get terribly scratched by a lion.

There is no standing ground for the notion that the dress is modern, or that it has not been the dress of gentlemen in Scotland from a very early period.

John, Duke of Argyll and Greenwich, is supposed to be the author of the well-known Scotch song, which, for popularity, almost equals “The roast beef of old England.” It begins thus:--

Argyll is my name and you may think it strange,
To live at a court and never to change
Falsehood and flattery I do disdain,
In my secret thoughts nae guile does remain.”

In the third verse the author of the song represents this “Argyll” returning to the Highlands, and arraying himself in the Highland dress.

“I’ll quickly lay down my sword and my gun,
And I’ll put my plaid and my bonnet on,

Wi’ my plaiding, stockings, and leather heel’d shoon,
They’ll mak me appear a fine sprightly loon.
And when I am drest thus frae tap to tae,
Hame to my Maggie I think for to gae;
Wi’ my claymore hinging down to my heel,
To whang at the bannocks o’ barley meal.”

Whether this duke ever wore the dress described or not, the author of this song clearly considered it a farmer’s dress; and if the popular tale is to be credited, some courtiers who invited him to a dinner of barley meal brose, were called to account for their joke. He praised the food set before him, and acted up to his principles; dined on the barley meal, but slew the man who had tried to make game of him.

Speaking from the experience of one who wore no other dress in his youth, and has worn it at odd times all his life, it is the best possible dress for shooting, fishing, wading, walking, or running one of the worst possible for riding, or boating; it is inconvenient at first for cover-shooting in whins or brambles, or for watching at a pass when the midges are out on a warm evening. It is a capital dress for a healthy man, and tends to preserve health by keeping the body warm and dry. Many a man has caught cold when he changed his dress, and exchanged the thick folds of a kilt for a pair of trousers. It is commonly worn by boys in the Highlands till they grow up to be striplings. It is hardly ever now worn by labourers, boatmen, or farmers. It is the dress of individuals of all classes--gamekeepers, deerstalkers, peers, pipers. It is worn by Highland regiments, and occasionally by all classes of the community as a gala dress, when they attend Highland demonstrations, or go to court; but it can no longer be called the common dress of the country, though there is not a Highlander in it, or out of it, whose heart does not “warm to the tartan.”

I have heard it related that a tartan plaid worn in Canada, there helped to rouse up a whole Highland country side, who flew to arms when it was known that one who wore that tartan was in danger, and rescued the wearer and the plaid.

CXVIII. Celtic Art

Celtic art, like Gaelic mythology, points eastwards, and to a very early origin. It may be new to many to hear of “Celtic art,” but nevertheless it is classed in the Grammar of Ornament by Owen Jones, who is an acknowledged authority in such matters. In books and sculptures, and in ornaments of known date, from the fourth and fifth centuries to the eleventh or twelfth; in ornamental writings, on stone, pottery, and metal, found in the British Isles, there is a peculiar style of interlaced Ornament, which is not to be found in Germany or in Norway, though it is similar to Anglo-Saxon ornaments found in England. Something of the kind has been found about Mount Athos, and in a few places in continental Europe where Irish or Anglo-Saxon missionaries have been. And as Britain was formerly celebrated for basket-work, it has been ingeniously suggested that these patterns, which can be imitated in basketwork, were copied from ancient British osier patterns, and so spread eastwards to Rome, and. Byzantium, and the East. It is said that in the oldest manuscripts, foliage is not represented. Basket work might well be the foundation of pottery and of defensive armour. It is quite common for herd boys to make bottles and shields of rushes, and even conical helmets and long swords of the same materials, and therewith to hold sham fights, with the cattle for spectators. Early British clay vessels seem to bear the mark of similar workmanship, and the crow, in No. viii., advises the girl to carry water by stuffing a sieve with clay. A basket covered with leather makes a good shield. Boats were so made, and a basket lined with sunbaked clay would serve to carry water, and the shape of the basket might well suggest decorations, but I would rather believe that the basket-makers brought their patterns from the East. At all events the interlaced design given below was taken from a bronze which belongs to a set on which the signs of the Zodiac, elephants, camels, lions, and Eastern emblems are represented, together with similar designs.

The Western tombstones of Iona are rich in such patterns, and so are the crosses of Ireland, the sculptured stones of Scotland, and crosses at Sandbach, in Cheshire. The pattern on the cover is taken from a stone in Islay, the tail-piece is from an ancient Gaelic manuscript; several interlaced designs will be found in vol. iii., and these complicated knots appear to be the distinguishing feature of ancient British Celtic art.

But on crosses and other monuments in Scotland these interlaced patterns are often found associated with other designs; with human figures, and those of monsters, and with certain symbols which have not yet been explained.

On the bronze vessels, from one of which the pattern below was copied, a great number of figures and symbols are also engraved, and as their meaning is generally clear enough, and the style of ornament is the same with that which is called “Celtic,” the bronzes and the sculptured stones may perhaps throw light upon each other. One of these Scotch hieroglyphics is very roughly drawn at page 220, vol. iii., and is better represented at page 499, *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*.

In the one case it forms part of a very rudely sculptured stone, of unknown date and origin, in the other it is part of a design copied from a suit of silver armour discovered in Scotland. It may be described as three spiral lines starting from a common centre, and comprised within a circle, and these spiral lines are characteristic of Celtic art according to Owen Jones. In the silver ornament this symbol is twice repeated, and is associated with the “Z ornament,” the “crescents,” and the head of some creature which seems to have horns. The question is, what do these symbols mean? for they are frequently repeated on sculptural stones in Scotland.

I have imagined that they have an astronomical signification, and that they may have related to solar worship before they were adopted as ornaments on crosses.--See page 356, vol. iii.

The Isle of Man has always been the stronghold of fairies, and it was the refuge of the Druids; the Druids were astronomers, as it is said, and the Manxs penny bears a device which is the same in principle as the three spiral lines, though these have grown into three armed legs; and thereby bangs a popular tale, and it is this:--

“Some fishermen long ago arrived on the shore of an island which they had never seen or heard of, because it was always enveloped in a magic cloud, raised by little Manain, the Son of the Sea. They landed, and presently there came rolling on the mist something like a wheel of fire, with legs for spokes, and the portent so frightened the men that they fled to their boats.” But the charm was broken, the Isle of Man had been discovered, and its possession has been disputed by men and fairies ever since.

The “legs of Man” then have to do with a wheel of fire.

It is common in the Highlands now to speak of the “wheel of the sun, and it was the custom not long ago to ascend some high hill on Easter Sunday to see the sun rise, and “Whirl round like a mill wheel, and give three leaps.” But a peasant of a practical turn of. mind rebuked a friend, saying--

“Fool! And dost thou think to see the sun rise from there, when she rises beyond Edinburgh, and so many hills as there are in the way?”

The characteristic spirals, the circle, the wheel, and the sun are thus associated by Celtic traditions and devices. The design given below was traced from the bronze vessel already mentioned, and it represents the sun, with three lines starting from its centre. These are not exactly the “Legs of Man,” but they are drawn on the same spiral principle, and the spaces enclosed are filled by three human faces, rudely carved. The design resembles that on the “Norrie’s law relics “ found in Fife, and in the east it clearly related to fire or light.

But the design given above is only one of a great many on the same vessel; all bound together and enclosed by endless lines, turning, and twisting, and sprouting into heads, leaves, and buds; and twelve of the designs represent the signs of the Zodiac. Thus the particular style of ornament which experts have agreed to call “Celtic” and “Byzantine,” here occurs on a “Hindu” sacred bronze almanac, and the sun in “Leo” has the spiral lines in its centre, so these once had an astronomical meaning.

The Lion’s tail grows into a serpent, and the interlaced ornament sprouts into a whole crop of buds, and monstrous heads, over which the lion stalks triumphant. “Aries” is a man riding on a monstrous ram with a flourishing tail; “Taurus” is mounted on a bull; “Gemini” are dancing about two bulls’ heads; “Cancer” has got the sun in his claws; “Leo” is described above; “Virgo,” men gathering autumn fruits; “Libra” is a lady playing on a guitar; “Scorpio” a man fighting with two scorpions; “Sagittarius” is a Centaur shooting back at a monster which grows out of the end of his own tail; “Capricornus” is looking back, and riding on a goat; “Aquarius” has a bird; and “Pisces” his two fish; so there is no doubt of the meaning of these designs at all events.

A six-pointed star, made of interlaced triangles and curves and interlaced patterns, is in the inside of the bronze vessel, and as the star is surrounded by fish, it is to be argued that the symbol relates to water, though it is also surrounded by forty-nine points like rays.

But the Scotch crosses, and standing stones, and sarcophagi on which interlaced designs appear, often represent animals with which Scotch artists could not well be familiar. There is an elephant on a very beautiful cross in Islay; there is a camel on another stone, figured in the

"*Sculptured Stones of Scotland*." On the St. Andrews sarcophagus there are lions, and apes with globes, a griffin, and a knot of snakes; and though the system of ornament might be of home growth, the most patriotic of Scotch antiquaries must refer these to some foreign source. The question now is, Whence did the Scotch artists borrow these ideas, which they could not have got at home? Beneath the signs of the Zodiac, on the eastern bronze, is a kind of frieze of figures, all fighting, and marching sunwise round the bowl. Beneath Aries are two men mounted on a camel, one shooting arrows backwards, the other shooting forwards at the tail of a nondescript animal like a hare. The falconer, in the wood-cut below, is between "Cancer" and "Leo." Beneath "Virgo" is a man on foot resisting the progress of the others with a long spear, and also an elephant with several riders; and beneath these is a procession of birds, probably to indicate that the whole has to do with the powers of the air. Beneath them are human-headed snakes. Above the signs of the Zodiac is another frieze, comprising forty-two human figures engaged in all sorts of occupations--playing the harp and the tambourine, fighting and drinking; and above all these, on the cover of the vessel, are eight compartments, of which one is figured above; and the rest are in like manner occupied by figures which appear to represent divinities or the heavenly bodies. Two of these comprise legends which are almost effaced; one is in a "Persian" character, the other has not been identified, and neither has been read. Still it is evident that this is of Eastern, probably "Hindu" workmanship; that the designs relate to matters connected with the heavens, and the gods; that the sun is one of these, and that the style of ornament is that which is called "Celtic." With these designs are animals which are associated with like designs on stones in Scotland; camels, elephants, lions, horses, hawks, rams, bulls, goats, snakes, fish, dragons, and monsters.

"Celtic ornament," then, is found in the far East and in the far West; and the foreign animals associated with "Celtic ornament" in Scotland are associated with a similar style of ornament on ancient Hindu vessels. The meaning of the symbols in the latter case is sufficiently plain. It seems possible that the others may have a like signification.

With this view, the horseman on the St. Andrews sarcophagus may have the same meaning as the horseman figured below.

They are dressed in some national costume; the one wears a belted plaid and has bare legs; the other appears to have a Persian dress, but both carry hawks and swords, and are fighting lions, without any apparent reference in the one case to a bronze bowl, or in the other to a sarcophagus. In both cases the figures are marching "sunwise;" in the one case the figure clearly has to do with astronomical symbols; it is possible that the St. Andrews stone and the Eastern bowl may have been sculptured with a like intention.

Another curious ancient bronze sacrificial vessel was brought from Java in 1817 by my friend, Mr. John Crawford, and proves that the signs of the Zodiac were associated with Hindu worship, in a place nearly as remote from Central Asia as Scotland is. The vessel was found amongst the ruins of Hindu temples, and bears a date equivalent to A.D. 1320. It is a rough casting, and the style of art is different. In the inside, at the bottom, is an eight-pointed star, with some rude figure in a circle within the star. On the outside are twelve symbols, with twelve figures above them. These are--

1. A ram, or some other horned and bearded animal of a like kind, above which is a long-armed, long-bearded, large human figure, in profile. Both are facing the same way--"sunwise," westwards.

2. A bull, or cow, with a bump; above which is a human figure with a crown, or a glory; seen full face, and therefore stationary.

3. Instead of "Gemini," something like a triple claw emerging from a sleeve, or a cloud, and pointing back at the bull; above which is a short, thick, human figure, with a helmet, or a monstrous head, with a bill like that of a goose, facing the usual way.[422]

4. A crab with his claws upwards, ready to run either way sideways; above is a man carrying something over his shoulder on a stick, and walking sunwise about the bowl.

5. Instead of "Leo," a two-legged dragon, without wings, and with a long tail, facing sunwise; above which is the stationary figure in No. 2 repeated.

6. A draped female figure, moving sunwise; above which is a stationary female figure, very like the male figure in No. 5.

7. The scales. The figure above is moving sunwise, but is not easily made out.

8. A scorpion, facing sunwise; above is a repetition of the figure in No. 2.

9. A bent bow, with an arrow on the string pointing sunwise; above is a monstrous bird, like an eagle, walking the other way.

10. Instead of "Capricornus," a creature like a lobster, crayfish, or shrimp; all of which walk forwards, and swim backwards. This symbol, therefore, corresponds to the crab, which walks sideways in either direction; and it probably indicates the Southern tropic, or Northern winter.

11. A jar, above which is a man walking sunwise, and carrying something; probably "Aquarius" in his Javanese dress.

12. A fish, with something like an elephant's trunk, the head as usual pointing sunwise, or to the right of the vessel. Above the fish is the same figure which is repeated in 2, 5, 8, 10, and 12. The human figures are dressed in some scanty costume which bears a resemblance to Javanese dresses; it is therefore probable that the vessel was made in the country where it was found.

Java is to the south of the equator, and consequently, stars which seem to move along the equator or ecliptic there appear to move about an observer or a vessel set upright, in a direction contrary to that in which they seem to move in the northern hemisphere. The sun, during the greater part of the year, is to the north of an observer whose head is towards the South Pole, and there appears to him to move East, North, West, South, from his right hand towards his left from morning to evening. But the symbols of constellations on the Java sacrificial vessel, like those on the Hindu bowl, are facing in the opposite direction; the direction in which the constellations would appear to move about the vessels if they were placed on their bases north of the tropic of Cancer.

When the sun in our spring seems to move northwards, up, and back, from "Aries" to "Taurus," the ram and the bull seem to move from East to West, and from left to right, and down, and to the south of the sun, on the ecliptic, because the earth is moving. But to an observer in the southern hemisphere who has put his head the other way through the hoop, towards the South Pole, the constellations seem to pass the sun, and rise and set, still moving from East to West, but from *right* to *left*, not from left to right. On the Java bronze they are facing to the right, consequently it is probable that the symbols were not invented in Java or south of the line, but somewhere in the northern hemisphere, and the agricultural operations represented in the signs of the Zodiac agree with northern seasons.[423] But if these symbols were invented in Central Asia, or in Babylon, 3000 years ago, or in Egypt or Greece, it is just

[422] The sun in Gemini is north of an observer about the latitude of Bombay.
[423] On the Farnese globe the signs, except Taurus, face westwards.

as likely that they should have arrived in Scotland, as it is that they should have got to Java 540 years ago. It is thus proved that certain symbolic creatures have been associated with astronomy; that in Java, India, Greece, and Rome, they have been associated with worship; and in India with a particular style of ornament. That style of ornament is found in Scotland, on sculptured stones of unknown date, and associated with the figures of the animals, which in Rome, Greece, India, and Java, have represented constellations. The meaning of these, and of certain Scotch symbols, is unexplained, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that they once had a similar meaning in India and in Scotland, when there are so many hands pointing towards Central Asia as the common starting place of so many human races.

It would be going too far to call the ram on the St. Andrews stone "Aries," and the lion "Leo;" but till something has been found out concerning the stone-falconer of the long locks, and the naked legs, and the flowing dress, he may perhaps pass for a relative of the Eastern bronze falconer who is fighting a lion, between "Cancer" and "Leo," amongst twisted snakes, and branches and buds, under the sway of the sun and moon, and of diverse many-armed graven images, whose meaning is not so clear.

Perhaps the oldest bit of Celtic ornamental art known is to be found in Gavr Innis, in Brittany. A large sepulchral mound was opened some years ago, and was found to cover a passage formed of large boulders, one of which is figured above, p. 349. The cut is taken from a very hasty sketch, made in August, 1855, in a very bad light. The design appears to be a rude attempt to represent the inside of a house, like the tomb itself, or such as a Lapp hut, or an Icelandic house, or a Highland cottage, now is. A sketch of part of the interior of a Lapp hut will be found in vol. iii., frontispiece. Such dwellings are thus made--a number of rough sticks or trunks of small trees, or big stones, are set in the ground about the plan or floor of the house, which in Gaelic is called "làrach," and in Scotch "stance." If the house is to be of sticks and round, the sticks slope over towards the centre, and form a cone. If it is to have a passage, like Icelandic houses, stakes or large stones are set in two rows, and planted nearly upright. If it is to be square, the passage walls are separated and repeated, and the roof is a pyramid.

This, so far, is an imitation of, and only an improvement on the frame-work of a round or square tent.

The next step is to place sticks across the others to keep them steady, and in the Gavr Innis design, as in the sketch of the Lapp hut, this appears to be indicated. In Highland stone and turf cottages, the partitions are still made of hurdles plastered with clay.

In the Morea, the shepherds still make temporary conical wattled huts in which they live, but as the climate is warm, a thatch of branches is sufficient.

The frame-work being made, the hut is covered outside with birch bark, turf, or some contrivance to "stop up the sieve," or "line the basket;" and then big stones, and earth, and rubbish, and turf, and other available materials, are heaped up and stamped down to keep out the wind and cold, till there remains a hollow, conical, or pyramidal mound, on which, after a time, the grass grows. To extend this principle, it is only necessary to place the cone or pyramid of earth upon the upright passage walls. To make this a really comfortable dwelling, it is only necessary to line the sides with planks; and many comfortable hospitable dwellings, in which well-educated, polite ladies and gentlemen now reside in Iceland, are mainly built of boulders and turf, lined with planks, and look like a nest of green hillocks at a distance. The long passages in tombs at Gavr Innis, and in Greece, are very like those in old Icelandic houses which I have seen. No material, it is said, resists cold so well as earth; and as fuel and timber are scarce in the north, so Highland cottages are like Icelandic houses.

The architectural design on the passage wall of the tomb in Gavr Innis appears to represent the inside view of such a building, with its stakes, stones, and turf, but the waving lines cannot be so explained. They look like serpents, and there are similar designs, like a serpent pierced by a zig-zag line, on stones in Scotland. (See vol. iii., 309.) In the immediate neighbourhood of Gavr Innis, there are great numbers of "standing stones," like those which exist in England, etc. Some of enormous size have fallen and are broken, but others remain erect. At Carnac there is an array of smaller stones which extends for about three miles. There must have been many thousands of them arranged in rows at some period, and many hundreds still remain erect. It is hard to believe that this enormous work had not a religious meaning. If so, then, similar monuments on a smaller scale, such as "Stonehenge" in England, and "Calenish" in Lewes, and standing stones and barrows all over the world, even to the obelisks, and pyramids, and temples of Egypt, may be but various growths of the primitive ideas of dwellings, tombs, and temples. From a tree came a post, a gnomon, and a pillar; from a tent came a hut, and thence a house; from a sepulchral mound came a cairn, and thence a pyramid; from stakes and poles grew columns; from sloping tent-sticks came rafters and a roof, and thence a covered temple, with rows of pillars; and so architectural ornaments might take their origin from wattled branches, leaves, basketwork, hurdles, and mats; plaited straw, rushes, and hair, honeysuckle, and birch roots.

Specimens of the style of design, which is called Celtic, will be found at pp. 137, 303, vol. iii., and on the cover of this book; and the nearest good hairdresser or maker of straw mats will imitate the design on page 137.

Thus sacred ivy, matted about a sacred oak, may have suggested the interlaced ornaments on stone pillars and Christian crosses; and basket-work may have suggested the patterns on gold and silver filigree, on stone and clay vessels and pottery, on carved powder-horns and dirks, and generally the designs attributed to Celtic art. Honeysuckle is the object of superstitious observances at this day. It winds sunwise about trees, and its long stem would be a good material for making these basketwork designs.

But the fact that such designs are found upon works of art manufactured in the far East, seems to prove that "Celtic art" was not invented in the British Isles, but imported at some early date.

It was not brought by the Northmen, for there is nothing like it in Scandinavia. For a similar reason it was not brought by the Normans, Anglo-Saxons, or Romans; stones and manuscripts on which it occurs are older than the Saracenic period; and unless the Celts brought the germ of it from the far East, with their religion and language, and their popular tales, it is hard to explain the occurrence of similar eastern animals, monsters, and "runic knots" on the sculptured stones of Scotland, and on "Hindu" bronzes.

There are plenty of cases in which Greek or Italian art can be traced in the Hebrides. The ornament figured below is from a stone which was found in the ancient stronghold of the MacDonalds in Islay.

It is rude enough, much broken, and the stone is worn away, seemingly by the hands of those who used it. It is very old, but the style of ornament is not "Celtic."

It is the style which is to be found in wooden Norwegian churches, said to be as old as A.D. 1100, and which is characteristic of more modern Norwegian carving, on knife-handles, powder-horns, wooden chests, and such like articles. A glance at the following woodcut will show what is meant.

Celtic art, then, appears to be of Eastern origin, like "Celtic nations" and "languages," and like Gaelic popular tales.

The well-known superstitions observances connected with Halloween have been referred to Eastern solar worship. The Reverend James Robertson, minister of Callander, described them in 1791, and alluded to the stone circles of Scotland as to Druidical temples. He tells that in his day, in hamlets, a fire was lighted at sundown, made entirely of ferns gathered on Halloween. The neighbours assembled, and each, according to seniority, placed a marked stone at the edge of the ashes till a circle was made about the site of the fire, which was then abandoned.

Next morning the place was visited, and if any of the party found his foot-print in the ashes, and his stone removed from its place, he was doomed to die before the twelve months expired.

I have often seen the site of fires surrounded by stones placed there by children; and once, on a beautiful Easter Thursday evening (April 5), just at sundown, many fires suddenly appeared blazing and smoking on the hill-tops in the Isle of Man. In about ten minutes they all vanished as suddenly as they had appeared, and a Manksman, who was asked to explain the cause, looked much disturbed, and went his way in haste without answering.

“Bealtainn,” yellow May day, is in spring; and All Saints, All Hallows or Halloween, “Samhuinn,” 1st of November, is late in autumn--so there are Pagan as well as Christian observances connected with these two seasons.

The following passage from Mr. Robertson’s letter adds to the list of things which were done sunwise in his day in the Highlands:--

“To this day, when the Highlanders go round anything with a degree of religious veneration, they go round in the same direction as the sun goes round the world on this side the equator, *i.e.*, from east to west, by the south side. This is the direction in which a bride is placed by her bridegroom when they stand up to be married; the direction in which the bridegroom turns round the bride to give the first kiss after the nuptial ceremony; the direction in which they go at least half round a grave before the coffin is deposited; the direction in which they go round any consecrated fountain, whose waters are supposed to have some medicinal virtues which they expect to receive by immersion or drinking.

“I have heard it said, that in certain places of the Highlands the people sometimes took off their bonnets to the sun when he appeared first in the morning.”

It seems, then, that the ancient eastern veneration for the sun and for fire, which is recorded in the Vedas, still survives in the West Highlands in popular superstitious observances which resemble Indian religious ceremonies. Perhaps “Bodach,” the bogle, may once have been “Buddha,” the sage; “Bramman,” the fiend, “Brahme,” the air; “Puath,” the spectre; “ Fohi,” the god; “Cailleach,” the night bag, “Cale”; and “Aigne,” thought “Agni,” divine fire.

Note.--”King Arthur’s table” is still preserved at Winchester. It is hard to believe that it is the real table, but it is what people thought it was like a long time ago, about the time of Henry the VIII.

It is round. In the centre are two five-leaved roses, which are surrounded by an inscription, which declares that “This is the round table of King Arthur and his twenty-four knights.” Outside the circle in which the inscription is, the table is divided into twenty-four radiating stripes of alternate black and white; and at the end of each, at the edge of the table, is the name of a knight. All the names read from the centre, consequently they read “sunwise.”

King Arthur, crowned and throned with globe and sceptre, sits as though he had sat in the midst, facing outwards, and behind his head is a kind of glory of light, in which is his name.

It has been suspected that a real King Arthur has acquired the attributes of a Pagan sun-god; and this looks very like it, when brought to bear upon other Celtic traditions.

CXIX. Music

A work on Gaelic music is in course of preparation, when that appears there will be another element of comparison. Meantime those who are curious in such matters may hear *bagpipes* in nearly all the European countries where Celts have been. I have heard the pipes in Ireland, Scotland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, I believe they are in Albania, and I have heard tell of something of the kind in the Himalayan mountains. They are to be seen in old English prints, and old German pictures; and the other ancient Gaelic musical instrument, the harp, is to be found all over the world. Who first invented these is a question yet to be solved, but both are sufficiently old.

In 1627 a certain Alexander MacNaughton, of that ilk, was commissioned to raise a body of Highland bowmen, and on January 15, 1628, he wrote to the Earl of Morton, from Falmouth, where he had been driven with his men by stress of weather. He says--

. . . . ”(and withal) that your L. will haue clothis for them quhen it sall pleise god that they come to the Ile of Wicht, for your L, knowis althow they be men of personagis, they cannot muster befoir your L. with thair Trewis and blew cappis.”

Whether this means that they wore trewis, or had none to wear, does not clearly appear, but the postscript seems to imply the latter. He says--

“My L. as for newis frome our selfis our bagg pypperis and Marlit Plaidis serwitt us to guid wise in the persuit of ane man of warr that hetlie followit us.”

These men, therefore, wore tartans, and followed the pipes, and as they were bound to join the forces of King Charles I. they were a Highland regiment *in embryo*. It appears that the piper, Allester Caddell, was followed by a boy, and pipers still claim to be exempt from menial service. There was also “Harrie M’Gra, harper, fra Larg,” and another piper; and as they were one hundred on the roll, they had a tolerable band of national music. At the end of the roll is the remark--

“To be disposed of be the Erle of Morton. They haue bene deir guests.”

They were shipped at “Lochkilcherane,” 11th of December, 1627, and it is surmised that they must have joined their countrymen and Gustavus Adolphus.

CXX. Conclusions

And now, in conclusion, let me recommend the study of Gaelic to Scotch antiquaries. Their worthy president lately expressed a wish to be able to knock up the dead, by the help of a table, to answer some vexed questions:--he could get nothing even from them without knowing the language of his departed countrymen.

In the preceding pages, strange Gaelic witnesses dressed in vellum and parchment and tattered brown paper, and some few in gay attire of green and gold--queer characters, who live far up the stream of time--have appeared to answer questions, and have told a great deal about the Ossianic controversy. A good number of Lowlanders have been summoned from the past, and have deponed, sometimes in very bad language, that they knew of the Feinne, and thought them bad company, but Celtic gods.

A good number of Welsh and Breton witnesses have been called, and have confirmed what the rest bad asserted. A few Icelanders, Norwegians, Germans, and Frenchmen, a Carthaginian, and some Egyptians, Arabs, Persians, Indians, and Aryans, have said a few words. A good many Highland hills, and a few Edinburgh porters, have said their say; and the best sort of clairvoyance, as it seems to me, for my lowland countrymen to aim at, is to clear their eyes from lowland prejudice, and take a look at Gaelic, when they want to find out something which happened before that language was driven into corners. A large proportion of the names about Edinburgh are Gaelic; but no one there will look so near home as the first Highland porter for an explanation of their meaning. Men would rather go to Wales or Brittany than look at home for anything British," and even Sir Walter Scott, who wrote amongst a Gaelic population, made the strangest of mistakes when he used Gaelic words.

As I have done my best to make peace between Celt and Celt, and Celt and Saxon, I wished to end with a peaceful Gaelic quotation; but having searched right through divers song books, I have utterly failed to discover one that will suit. Bards are a pugnacious race. I can only say with Motherwell and the Gaelic proverb--

"Gree, bairnies, gree."

"'S e deireadh gach cogaidh sith."
The end of each strife is peace.

Even the strife and confusion of tails, which some ancient Gaelic artist imagined and depicted centuries ago; even the "Ossianic controversy," and its confusion of tongues and arguments; "Mythology;" "West Highland Tales;" even this lengthy postscript and its tail-piece--all have a beginning, a middle, and The END.

THE END