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Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Urgent.

From Maggie Macdonald, Coligary, Barra.

The following tale comes from the island of Barra. Bha boireannach an suid, a chaidh o a tigh fein ~~leat~~ air chon rìgin air gnòthach air chon rìgin, agus 'nair a bha i a' tighinn dachaidh, thainig sneachd agus flichneachd oirre, agus chail i 'n rathad, agus bha i air ionralladh thall 'sa bhos, cha 'n' eil fios de co fad. Nam d'heireadh, chunnaic i solus, agus shaoil i gum b' e a tigh fein bha ann, agus rinn i air a shon, ach 'nair a tuing i e, cha robh ann ach seorsa bothan, agus bha duine mòr garbh anns a' bhothan. Dh'innis i dha gum robh i air seachran, agus nach robh fios aice C'ait an robh i. Thubhairt an duine rithe gum b' fhearr dhith fuireach an sin fheim agus an rathad an oidhe seachad, agus thug e steach i, agus bha e gle chaomhneil rithe. Thug e a snipeir dhith, ach cha robh ri aige san tigh nach robh ann. Fèil ann, èir ann, agus na h-uirle sian ann. Thubhairt e rithe gum eagal bhi oirre, dh'iomn nach leigeadh ean le cron sam bith tachairt-rithe fhad sa bhiodh i 'n sin. 'Nair a thainig solus na maidne, thubhairt i ris gum feumadh ise bhi ris a' falbh, agus nam nochdadh e 'n rathad dhith gum d' thoiradh i paidhir blangait dha airson a chaomhneas dith. Threagair ean gum deanadh e sin, agus dh'fhalbh e leatha. 'Nair a rainig iad dluth dha 'n tigh aice, sheas ean air cnocan beag bha 'n sin am feadh 'sa chaidh ise steach air son nam blangait; agus 'nair a chunnaic se i a' tighinn a mach le, chaidh e pios beag air ais. Dh'fhag ise na blangait-ean air an spot-far an robh e na sheasann an toiseach, agus 'nair a chaidh i air a h-ais gus an tigh, thainig ean agus thug e leis iad. Cha 'n fhac ise 'n Corr dheth, ach air an lair na mhòireach, 'nair a dh'fhosgail i 'n doras, de fhuair i, ach trì slatan òir a dh'fhag e 'n sin air a son. Thog i leatha iad, agus i gle

feadh na
h-oidhe
^

FOLK LORE OF THE WEST-HIGHLANDS

Ursgeul.

Thoilichte gun robh i nis co beartach, agus dh'fhalbh i, agus dh'fhalamhaich i a ciste, agus chuir i na slaban òir ann an grunnnd na ciste, agus gach ri bha ann roimh¹ air ais / Chuir i₁ air am muin.

Ach cha d'thubhairt i smid r'a fear mu dheimhinn na fhuir i, ach chummaic cuid de'n chlamn i 'nnair a bha i aig a' Chiste, agus dh'innis iad da'n athair gun robh trì slaban òir aig am mathair ann an grunnnd na ciste. Cha do leig eon air rithe gun cual e rud sam bith, ach cha robh e idir toilichte nach d'innis i fein dha mu thionchioll, agus cha bhruidh-inneadh e facl rithe. Lean so treis, agus mu dheireadh, chuir eon fios air a brathairsa, agus a bhrathair fein, agus 'nnair a thairig iad, dh'innis e dhoibh mu'n òr a bha sa chiste, agus ghearain e riutha nach d'thubhairt i roimh smid risan mu dheimhinn.

Thionndaidh iad ris a' mhnaoi agus thubhairt iad rithe—

"Tha trì slaban òir agad anns a' Chiste?"

"Ma tha, cha'n aithne dhomhsa rud sam bith mu'n tìmechioll!"

"Fosgail a' chiste, ma ta, agus leig fhaicinn dhuinn de th'ann".

Ach cha deanadh i sin. Dh'fheuch iad an sin an inchair fhaostainn, ach thubhairt i nach d'thoreadh i'n inchair seachad dhoibh ged a mharbhadh iad i.

"Marbhadh mise thu", thubhairt a fear, ma nach d'thòir thu suas an inchair".

"Sean sin ma thoilicheas tu", fhreagair ise.

Chaidh an trinn agus bhris iad glas na ciste, agus 'nnair a bha iad crom os cionn na ciste, ghabh ise claidheamb, agus bhuail i na cinn dhuibh, agus thuit an cinn anns a' chiste, agus an Coluinnean air an urlar. B'e sin an deireadh acasan, ach ghleidh ise an t-òr, agus bha gu leor aice fhad sa bha i beo.

The Lore of the West-Highlands

Ursgeul.

Translation. There was yonder a woman who went from her own house on business of some kind, and when she was coming home, snow and sleet came upon her, and she lost the road, and she was wandering backwards and forwards, there is no knowledge how long. At last she saw a light, and she thought that it was her own house, and she made for it; but when she reached it, it was only a kind of hut, and there was a big coarse man in the hut. She told him that she was astray, and that she had no knowledge of where she was. The man said to her that it would be better for her to remain there itself, till the night would go past; and he took her in, and he was very kind to her. He gave her her supper, but he had nothing in the house that was not raw. Raw beef, raw birds, and every particle raw. He said to her not to be afraid, for that he would not allow any harm to happen to her as long as she would be there. When the light of the morning came, she said to him that she would need now to be going away, and if he would show the way to her, that she would give him a pair of blankets for his kindness to her. He answered that he would do that, and he went away with her. When they had reached near to her house, he stood on a little hill that was there while she went in for the blankets; and when he saw her coming out with them, he went a little bit back. She left the blankets on the spot where he at first stood, and when she had gone back to the house, he came and he took them with him. She saw no more of him, but on the following day, when she opened the door, what did she get; but three rods of gold which he had left there during the night for her. She lifted them with her, and she very pleased that she was now so rich, and she went away, and she emptied her chest;

Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

Wesgeul.

and she put the rods of gold in the bottom of the chest, and every thing that had been in it before, she put back on the top of them.

But she did not say a syllable to her husband about what she had got, but some of the children saw her when she was at the chest, and they told their father that their mother had three rods of gold in the bottom of the chest. He did not let on to her that he had heard anything, but he was not at all pleased that she had not told him herself about it, and he would not speak a word to her. This continued a while, and at last, he sent for her brother, and his own brother, and when they came, he told them about the gold that was in the chest, and he complained to them, that she had never said a syllable to him about it. They turned to the woman and they said to her,

"You have three rods of gold in the chest-?"

"If there are, I know nothing what-ever about them."

"Open the chest then, and let us see what is in it!"

But she would not do that. They then tried to get the Key, but she said that should they kill her she would not give over the Key to them.

"I will kill you, if you will not give up the Key," her husband said.

"Do that if you please," she answered.

The three went and they broke the chest-lock, and when they were bent above the chest, she took a sword, and she struck the heads off them, and the heads fell into the chest, and the bodies on the floor. That was their end, but she kept the gold, and she had plenty as long as she was alive.

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Bha boireannach uair a phos bantrach aig an robh teaghlach le a chuid bhean. Bha 'm muime fuasach dona dha na dilleadh-dain, agus 'nuair a bhiodh i a' bleogham a' chruidh, thairsadh

# Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

Ursgeul.

i 'n bainne blàth d'a clann fein, ach cha 'n fhaigheadh na dil-  
-leachdain ach bainne lom, agus bainne foirt. Dheanadh i Cabhrnich,  
agus bhricheadh i gu math i airson a clann fein, ach dheanadh  
i brochan Eorna airson Caeh. Ach an deigh na h-uile ni, bha na  
dilleachdain a' cinntinn gu rìreachdail agus reamhar, ach  
bha a clann fein caol, bàn, agus seargte 'nan coslas. 'Nuair a  
chunnaic am mathair so, Chaidh i far an robh sean boireannach  
glie gus a comhairle a ghabhail. Dh'fhoirich am boireannach so,  
am b'è an aon seorsa biadh a bha i toirt da clann fein agus do na  
dilleachdain, agus ris a' cheisid so fhreagair i, "Ma ta, a dh'innseadh  
na firinn, bha mi na's fearr do m' chlann fein. Tha mi a' toirt  
Cabhrnich dhoibh, agus leigeil le rud sam bith a thoilicheas  
iad a ghabhail, ach cha 'n 'eil caeh a' faighinn ach brochan  
Eorna." "Innsidh mise dhuit, ma ta, de ni thu", thubhairt am  
boireannach glie. "Aig am na snipearach an nochd, ni thu 'n  
da chuid Cabhrnich, agus brochan Eorna, mar a b'abhaist, ach  
cuiridh tu beagan de gach seorsa ann an searbhadair, gan cumail  
air leth. Croch an da shearbhadair air an slabhruidh, agus  
amhairc orra anns a' mhadaimn, agus thig an sin agus innsidh  
tu dhomhsa de 'n coslas a gheibh thu orra". Chaidh am boir-  
-eannach dhachaidh, agus nuair a thainig an oidheche, rinn  
i 'n Cabhrnich agus am brochan Eorna, mar a comhairlich a'  
Chailleach, agus chuir i cuid de 'n Cabhrnich ann an aon <sup>1/2</sup>  
searbhadair, agus cuid de 'n brochan Eorna ann an searbhadair  
Eile, agus dh'fhag i 'n da shearbhadair crochte air an slabh-  
-ruidh, os cionn an teine, fad na h-oidheche. 'Nuair a  
dh'èirich i 's a' mhadaimn chaidh i gan coimhead, agus fhuair  
i 'n Cabhrnich mar uisge, ach san a bha 'n brochan Eorna cus  
na b'fhearr na bha e 'nuair a chuireadh suas e. Dh'fhalbh i

## Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

Ursgeul.  
 gus so imseadh do'n chailleach glic, agus struthairt a' chailleach rithe,  
 "Seadh, sin dìreach mar tha e. Tha 'n cabhairich anns a' chlamh  
 agus fhein dìreach mar a chumraic thu i anns an searbhadair,  
 mar rìoge, gam fagail tana bòn; ach tha 'n t-eorna a' toirt an  
 fheadhainn sìle air an aghaidh, gus am bheil iad ag coimhead  
 na's fearr agus na's fearr. Ach so mo chomhairleas dhuit. Thoir  
 an aon chàramh dhòith thar a' cheile, agus chi thu gun d'fheid  
 a' chuis na's fearr leat. Threagair am boireannach gun deanadh  
 i sin, agus bho sin snas, bha i cheart co math d'a daltaichean sa  
 bha i d'a clann fein; agus bha b'fhad gus an do dh'fhas a' chlamh  
 aiceas bho reamhar air an brochan eorna sa & bha caoh.

## Translation.

There was a woman who married a widower who had a family by his first wife. The stepmother was very bad to the orphans, and when she would be milking the cows, she would give the warm milk to her own children, but the orphans would not get but skimmed milk, and sour milk. She would make sourens, and would boil it well, for her own children, but she would make barley porridge for the others. But after every thing, the orphans were thriving beautifully, and fat, but her own children were thin, pale, and withered in their appearance. When their mother saw this, she went where there was an ~~old~~ wise woman to take her advice. This woman asked, if it was the same kind of food she was giving to her own children and to the orphans, and to this question, she replied - 'Well, to tell the truth, I am better to my own children. I am giving them sourens, and allowing them to take anything they like, but the others are getting only barley porridge'. 'Well, I'll tell you what you will do', said the wise woman. At the supper time tonight, you

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The Love of the West-Highlands

Uisgeant.  
 will make both sowens and barley porridge as usual, but you will put a little of each kind in a towel—keeping them apart. Hang the two towels on the pot-hook, and examine them in the morning, and come then and you will tell me what appearance you will find on them. The woman went home, and when the night came, she made the sowens and the barley porridge, as the old woman had advised, and she put some of the sowens in one towel, and some of the barley porridge in another towel; and she left the two towels hanging on the chain (pot-hook) above the fire, all night. When she rose in the morning, she went to look at them, and she found the sowens like water, but the barley porridge was much better than it was when it had been put-up. She went away to tell this to the wise old woman, and the old woman said to her, 'Yes, that is just how it is. The sowens are in your own children just as you saw it in the towel—like water, leaving them thin (and) pale; but the barley is bringing the others forward, until they are looking better and better. But here is my advice to you. Give them the same treatment all over, and you will see that the matter will go better with you. The woman answered that she would do that, and from that forward, she was quite as good to her step-children as she was to her own children, and it was not long till her children grew as fat on the barley porridge as the others were.

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3 A Barra girl, when being told the story of Jonah, said:—

Tha sin a' toibh ann mo chuibhne sgeul a bha san aith-
 againn—ne mu dheimhinn daine bha ann an soitheach,
 uair, agus chaidh an soitheach fodha, agus bhathadh gach

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Urgent.
duine bha air bord, ach e fein. Fhuair ean gu tìr air Eilean
uaigneach, far nach robh duine bes a' deanadh comhraidh.
Chuir e seachad a' chuid oidheche mar a b'fhearr a b'urrainn
e, ach bha 'n t-acras ga bhualadh gu cruidh, agus 'nair a
thrainig an ath latha, thog e mach, agus choisich e mu'n cuairt
an eilein, dh'fheuch de gheibheadh e. Fhuair e teangadh mairt,
agus thainig e bes air sin fad seachdruin. 'Nair a theinig an
teangadh, dh'fhalbh e air an dara chnairt, agus an uair so
fhuair e botal uille. Cha robh fios aige de seorsa uille bha
ann, ach co dh'uibh, chum sin ris car seachdruin eile. Bha e
nis gun mir aig' a chuireadh e 'na bheul, agus bha e 'na rigin,
gun fhios aige de dheanadh e; ach 'nair a bha e mar so,
agus e spais-dearachd ri taobh a' chladair, chunnair iad
e o'n tìr mhòr, agus thainig duine bochd far an robh e le
bàt, agus thug e leis e. 'Nair a thainig iad gu tìr, thug an
duine bochd suas thum an tighe e, ach leis co sgith sa bha
e, agus an t-acras ag gabhail dha, bu ghann a chaidh aige
air coiseachd an t-astar. B'e na bha aca ri a thoirt dha
beagan min Eorna, ach thug iad sin fhein dha, agus rinn
e fuarag dheth ann an sàil a bhroige, agus 'nair a dh'ith
e 'm fuarag, thubhairt e, "Fuarag Eorna a sàil mo bhroige,
Biadh is fearr a fhuair mi riomh."

Translation.

That brings to my recollection a tale that was
in our place about a man that was on a time in a ship,
and the ship foundered, and every man that was on board
was drowned, except himself. He got ashore on a lovely

Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

Ursgeul.

island, where there was not a living man dwelling. He passed the first night the best way he could, but the hunger was striking him very hard, and when the next day came, he sallied forth, and he walked round the island, to see what he might find. He found a cow's tongue, and he lived on that a whole week. When the tongue was done, he went away on the second round, and this time he found a bottle of oil. He had no knowledge what kind of oil was in it, but however, that kept to him throughout another week. He was now without a morsel that he would put in his mouth, and he was in perplexity. (lit. in his necessity), not knowing what he should do; but when he was thus, and walking by the side of the shore, they saw him from the main land, and a poor man came with a boat where he was, and he took him with him. When they came to land, the poor man brought him up to the house, but with so wearied as he was, and the hunger tormenting him, it was scarcely he was able to walk the distance. All they had to give him was a little barley meal, but they gave him that same, and he made brose of it in the heel of his shoe, and when he had eaten the brose he said: Barley brose from the heel of my shoe, the best food I have ever got.

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## Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Ulaigh

From Maggie Macdonald, Eoligary, Barra.

A girl who belongs to the island of Barra said:-

Chuala mi so san aith againn-ne. San toiseach, 'nuair a bha daoine a' fastainn ulaidhean anns an talamh, bha duine 'n sùd a bha cuir a' chruidh a mach leth, agus 'nuair a bha e dol suas a' chnoc, chunnaic e rudigin ag glitheadh mar or. Chaidh e far an robh an rì agus fhuair e jar. Bha e gu toirichte, agus chuir e a bhat an sàs sa ghrunnnd mar chomhar air an aith; le suil gum fhaigheadh e 'n jar air a thilleadh. Bha 'n grunnnd comh-dairchte le sneachd, agus thubhairt e ris fein, gum deanadh e mach an t-aith air a thilleadh le cuideachadh luing a' chruidh anns an sneachd. Chaidh e air adhart-gus an do dh' - dhag e 'n crodh far am b' abhairt dha am fogail, agus thill e 'n sin gus an ulaidh thoirt-leis; ach ge be air bith ciod e b' aobhar, cha b' urrainn dha ion chuid lorg a' chruidh, neo a lorg fein a thogail, ged bha 'n sneachd fathast-air a' grunnnd; agus ged dh'itheadh e, agus ged choisicheadh e, cha 'n fhaigheadh e far an do chuir e a bhat, agus cha d'fhuair a riomh.

Translation.

I heard this in our place. In the beginning, when people were finding hidden treasure in the ground, there was a man yonder who was putting out the cattle on a day, and when he was going up the hill, he saw some-thing glittering like gold. He went where the thing was,

## Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

Uaidh.

and he found a jar. He was very pleased, and he put his stick fast in the ground as a mark on the place, with the view that he would find the jar on his coming back. The ground was covered with snow, and he said to himself that he would make out the place on his returning, with the help of the Cattle's track in the snow. He went on till he left the Cattle where he used to leave them, and he returned then to bring the treasure with him; but whatever the cause was, he was not able to pick up either the track of the cattle, or his own track, although the snow was still on the ground; and should he eat it, and should he walk it, he would not find where he had put his stick, and he never found it.

2 Tha iad ag cumail a mach gum bheil Uaidh ann am baile Eoligary, ann am Barra, agus tha iad ag radh cuideachd gur e reach a bhios 'na Choigreach anns an Eilean a gheibh e. Nrair a thainig am brachail mun dheireadh thun a' bhaile, b'e Coigreach bha ann, agus bha daoine gan deanadh fein cinnteach gur e an a bha gus fhaobainn, agus bha e fein gle thoilichte 'sa bheachd sin cuideachd. Ach Co dhin, cha d'fhair se e, agus cha'n fhaigh a nis, air dh'eng e.

Ach tha iad ag radh gum feum Co air bith a gheibh e an gealach a' leantainn; agus Co nis a b'urrainn sin a dheanadh e.

## Folk Love of the West-Highlands

Ulaidh.

Translation.

They are holding out that there is a treasure in the town of Eoligary, in Barra, and they also say that it will be a person who will be a stranger in the island that will find it. When the last herd came to the town, he was a stranger, and people were making themselves sure that it was he that was to find it, and he himself was very pleased in that opinion also. But nevertheless, he did not get it, and will not get it now, for he has died.

But they are saying that whoever will find it must follow the moon, and who now is able to do that?

~~~~~

From Mr. Colin Grant, Red Castle, Ross-shire.

The reciter is a crofter in the Black Isle, and said:

There were great reports about an Ulaidh that is said to be hid some where about this place, and likely enough it is. One time I made myself sure I had it, but it turned out I was wrong. I was ploughing, and I felt the plough catching a stone, and the stone having been disturbed, I felt the plough, as if it would sink in loose ground. Says I to myself, "I have got the Ulaidh at last," and I left the horses, and ran home for a crow bar and shovel; and my brother and brother in law came along with me to dig it up. But we had not dug far till I turned up a skull, and I said, "We have gone far enough." However, we continued to go a little deeper, and found it was a stone grave containing the bones of a man, who appeared to have been buried,

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Yolk Lore of the West-Highlands

Ulaidh.

not East and West, as we bury now, but with his head to the South, and his feet to the north, and in a half sitting posture. Whoever he was, he had never had the toothache, for his teeth were as sound in his head as any teeth ever were. But we did not get the Ulaidh.

~~~~~

Anonymous

Yolk Love of the West-Highlands

Legends.

From Mr. Macmartin, Nigg, Rossshire.

The reciter, whose name is Macmartin claims to be descended from Campbell of Glen Lyon. The relationship has been stated thus by the reciter. "Campbell of Glen Lyon, who fought at the battle of Sheriff-Muir, and again at Culloden, was my grand father's great, great, great-grand father. And the descent came about in this way. A man whose name was Macmartin, and from whom we are directly descended, served under Campbell at the battle of Sheriff-Muir, and Campbell, having called for one or two volunteers who would go to bring a supply of food, this Macmartin undertook to go for one, for which service Campbell promised to give him his daughter.

Macmartin managed to elude two of the enemy's sentinels, on his way going, and having a plaid with a poke in it, as was fashionable then, he stowed away as much food as this wallet could contain, but just when he was about to start on his return journey, one of the sentinels came upon him, and Macmartin being in a stooping position, adjusting his load, the other brought his sword down on his head, with all his strength, and the sword went in pieces. The secret of Macmartin's safety was, before setting out on the expedition he had taken the precaution to fit a Copper Kettle on his head, under his bonnet. The sword cut through the Kettle,

## Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

### Legends.

and wounded his head, but only very slightly.

The sentinel, who had given the blow, being of course a Highlander, discovering that Macmartin was a Highlander too, was glad to let him go with his life, which he could the more easily do now, seeing he had the broken sword as an evidence that he had done his best, should he be called to question, so he whispered to him.

"Bi dol. 's math a chuir thu do bhonnaid ort-an dingh,  
(Be gone. It is well you put your bonnet on you to-day).

Macmartin came back with his burden of food, and Campbell gave him his daughter, according to his promise. The reciter added. We have some of that Ancestor's weapons in our family till this day, and I remember seeing his skull in the year 1848.

Some time after the battle of Sheriff-Muir Captain Campbell of Glen Lyon (Thighearn Gleann Lìon) was serving in the West-Indies, and a soldier having done some thing worthy of death, was tried and condemned to be shot. A reprieve was however obtained on his behalf, but it was accompanied with instructions that it was to be kept a secret both from himself, and from the company of his comrades who were told off to shoot him, until it would be told him when he would be standing beside his grave. Acting on these instructions, Campbell, who was in Charge, had the condemned man brought out at the time appointed for his execution, and also the soldiers who were to shoot him were at their posts. It seems the signal for their firing was a flag, or something that Campbell was to let drop, and when he put his hand in



## Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

### Legends.

his pocket to bring out the reprieve, which he was going to read, his handkerchief came out by mistake, and fell to the ground. The soldiers, mistaking this for the signal, fired, and the unfortunate man fell dead. When Campbell saw it the massacre of Glen Coe come back to his mind, and striking the palm of his hand against his forehead, he cried out, "The Curse of Glen Coe is here."

Pitcalmie is a small estate in the parish of Nigg. Ross who owned it at the time of the rising in '45 joined the Prince, and after the battle of Cul-loden his estates were confiscated, and he fled for his life to Kincardine in Ross-shire where part of his estates were. Pursued by a party of the Red Coats, he went into concealment, and it is said that when searching for him, his pursuers fell in with a boy whom they suspected of having knowledge of Pitcalmie's hidings, and they tried him every way, but could not extract any information from him. At last they said to him that if he would not tell them, they would hang him, and bringing him to a tree that was there, they put a rope round his neck, and went as far as they could, short of actually hanging him, but still, he would tell them nothing, and when they saw in the end that they could make nothing of him, they let him go.

By and by, when the storm had gone past, and Pitcalmie had got his lands back, or at least part of them, for he ~~had~~ never got them all restored to him, he came to know of what this boy had done, and showed his gratitude by giving him and his heirs and successors for all time coming, a gift of land — a small croft — on payment of a yearly rent of two shillings and sixpence. That land is in the parish of Kincardine, and is held till this day by the descendants of that boy.

The number of old Irish forms that are prevalent in the spoken Gaelic of the inhabitants of the parish of Nigg, and neighbouring districts is very noticeable, and has been accounted for by some by the following circumstance which is related in a local legend thus:—

## Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

### Legend.

In the time of Charles I. when Episcopacy was being established in Scotland, the man who ministered to the people of Nigg, ministered also to those of Kilmuir East. On one occasion, it is said, when he was on his way from Kilmuir to conduct a service at Nigg, taking the short cut across the sands that lie between the two parishes, when he was at what is called "The Pot;" ("The Pot" is the name by which the river is locally known which falls into the Cromarty Firth at the Bay of Nigg. It is reckoned a dangerous pass for unwary travellers, and there have been many mishaps, of various kinds there). Well, when the Curate had reached the Pot, taking his sermon from his pocket, it fell accidentally into the river, and having been carried away with the stream, was lost. This put him in a stew, but he needed to go forward, and do the best he could. So when the sermon time came, after the preliminary part had been gone over, he informed his people of what had happened to his sermon, but pulling a book from his pocket, he said, "But I have a little bookie here, and I'll read you from it." This was an Irish New Testament, and he read three Chapters from it, in substitution for the sermon that had been lost. The thing pleased the people so well, that at the close of the service representatives from the congregation went to the Curate and said, "Just read that book to us always." The Curate had no objections, and so the thing was done, and the Irish Testament left its mark on the people.

5  
 Three brothers, grand uncles of ours, said the register, fought at Culloden, one on the side of the King, and two with the Prince. After the battle, one of the two went over to see whether he could find any traces of his brother, dead or alive, and having been found by some of the King's men, he was taken prisoner to Carlisle. That was in April and he was kept in prison till the end of July. Meantime, the family, who lived in Glendochart, had come to the conclusion that he had fallen in the battle, and gave him up as dead.

# Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

## Legends.

But one day about the end of July, when they were talking in the hay, a man was seen coming down the hill. This was the lost brother making his way home, having been released, and the old man - his father - who was with them on the field, said "Ma ta, nan robh Alisdair beo. Uchirinn gur e bha 'n sin" (Indeed, were Alexander alive, I would say that that were he). By and by the man came nearer, and there was no more doubt with any of them but that it was Alisdair, but they never thought that he might be alive, and under the impression that it was his ghost, they all left the field, and fled for the house.

6 There is a tradition in Perthshire which tells that when Stewart of Killin was translating the Bible into the Gaelic language, he was at a loss for a Gaelic word for the word foreigner. After fruitless attempts at home, he resolved to go to Lochaber in search of the word. With this view he got his horse saddled, and away he went the way of Ballachulish, with the intention of going on to Fort-William. When he reached Ballachulish, he found that the ferryman was not at hand, but there was another man there, and Stewart made known to him that he was wishful to get across the ferry; and this man, seeing the regular ferryman at some distance, shouted to him, "Tha eib-threach an so ag iarraidh na h-aisig." (There is a foreigner here seeking the ferry). Stewart got his word without needing to go any further, and he returned home quite satisfied with the result of his journey.

7 There are three standing stones, unusually imposing in their height and design, being elaborately carved, in Easter Ross. One is at the village of Hilltown, in the parish of Fearn. Another stands on the rising ground behind the village of Shandwick, in the parish of Nigg, and the third is in the Nigg burying ground, having, it is said, been transferred to its present situation, from where it

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## Folk Lore of the West Highlands

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### Legends.

stood originally, by the wife of a former proprietor. According to local tradition these stones are commemorative of three sons of a Danish King, who were killed in a battle that was fought between the Danes and the Celts. But some say they were drowned, having been in a Danish ship that struck, and was lost on a reef of rocks that lie off the shore of the parish of Nigg, and which are called "King's Sons rocks."

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Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Place names.

From Mr. MacMartin, Nigg, Ross-shire.

The reciter, who is a native of the parish of Forthingall, Perthshire, says there is a clump of dry stones thrown into a heap in the heart of an arable field in Glen Lyon, which is known among the inhabitants of the district by the name of Carn nam marbh (Cairn of the dead). The name is accounted for by local tradition which tells that at a time, long ago, a township stood in the immediate neighbourhood, and a plague having broken out among its people, not a single soul of them was left alive, and they were all buried where Carn nam marbh now is.

On the strength of this tradition, nobody has ever ventured to put a plough in that soil, and it lies unmolested in the heart of the field. But although it would be considered wrong, and even dangerous to one's further prosperity to plough it, it appears it has never been thought so to add stones to it, and accordingly, it has long been utilized as a convenient receptacle for such stones as were gathered off the field by the farmers who have tenanted the farm.

Ballintore is the name of a fishing village in the parish of Fearn in Ross-shire. It is said to have come from Boile 'n Torraidh (town of the burying), and the origin of the name is accounted for, according to tradition, by the fact that this was the place in which a great many who were killed in a battle that was fought between the Celts and the Danes were buried. It is said the battle was fought on the low grounds where the parishes of Fearn and Nigg meet, and in confirmation of the tradition, the reciter says that a considerable number of human bones have been found from time to time in the sandy ground behind the village of Ballintore.

Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Place names.

From Mrs Noble, Redcastle, Blackisle.

3
There is a tradition among the natives of the Blackisle ^{accounting} accounting for the name Red Castle in the following manner. When they were going to build the Castle at first—some say, going to build an addition to it—the workmen were sent off with instructions to seize the first person they would meet on their way, no matter who he or she might be, and bind him, and place him as a live sacrifice under the foundation stone, for that was the custom of those times. With these instructions the men went off to their work, and the first person they met was a lad, and they seized him. When the lad's mother came to know of it, she did what she could to save her son, but it was of no use. The workmen's orders were imperative, and must be obeyed, and so the poor fellow was laid alive under the foundation stone of the Castle. His mother, who could do no more, pronounced a curse on the Castle in these words, "Ma bhiss e geal an diugh, bi e dearg an mairnach" (If it will be white today, it will be red tomorrow), and the tradition says that her curse took effect, and since the day the Castle was put up till this, there is the appearance of a blood stain on a certain part of it, and no matter what has been tried to remove it, every thing has failed, and the stain is still there.

4
From Mr. Colin Grant, Kilcoy, Ross-shire.

There is a ridge of land in the parish of Knockbain, Blackisle called Drum Derfed. Tradition says the old name was Druim dubh (black ridge), and accounts for the change in this way. It was the scene of a bloody battle in which nearly all on one side were killed, and referring to the loss, a woman—some say her own son was among the slain—said of the hill, "Druim a dubh an de, Druim nan deirg an diugh." (Black hill yesterday, Hill of tears today).

Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Place names.

From Mr. Donald Mackenzie, Bonar.

5 There is a little hill above the established Church, in the parish of Kincardine, Ross-shire, which is called Cnoc nan Cuach, and local tradition accounts for the name in this way. One time a company of freebooters had their quarters there, and when they were taking their food one time, they were all sitting, each with his cogue (Cuach), and having quarrelled about some thing, they fought, using their cogues for fighting weapons.

From Maggie Macdonald, Eoligary, Barra.

6 Tha cnoc uaine boidheach ann am Baile na Horradh ann am Barraadh, agus tha tigh beag ann an aodann a' cnoic so ris an abradh iad Airidh na h-aon oidheche. Tha e air a radh gun d'fhuir e 'n t-ainm so chionn nach b'urrainn do dhuine sam bith fuireach anns an tigh os cionn aon oidheche leis mar bha e air a thathach. Bhiodh iad ag radh gun e sathrichean bha ann, agus gun biodh an solus aca ri fhaicinn san oidheche, agus an ceol air a chluinntinn.

'S ionadh uair a chaidh sinn-ne a bh'fhaicinn a' chnoic so, agus bhithreamaid air chrith leis an eagal 'nair a thigeamaid dluth air.

Translation.

There is a pretty green hill on the farm of The Horradh in Barra, and there was a little house in the face of this hill to which they said (called) Shealing of the One night. It is said that it got this name because no person was able to remain in the house above one night, owing to how it was haunted. They would be saying that it was fairies that were in it, and that their light was to be seen in the night, and their singing to be heard.

Many a time we went to see this hill, and we would be trembling with the fright when we would come near to it.

Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

Place names.

Tha sroin ard creagach ann an Eoligary ris an abair iad Sroin Ailein. So mar thugadh an t-ainm sin dha. Bha Carbadair uair aig Fear Bharraidh do'm b'ainm Ailean, agus tha Ailean so latha bha'n srid a' driveadh aon de na ladies a bhuineadh do'n Chaisteal sios rathad na sroine so, agus ge bi air bith de thainig air, Chuir e'n carbaid thar a' chreig, agus mharbhadh an trinnir, Ailean, agus an lady, agus an t-each.

Translation.

There is a high rocky point in Eoligary which they call Allan's promontory. Here is how the name was given to it. The laird of Barra had, at one time, a coachman whose name was Allan; and this Allan was on a certain day driving one of the ladies that belonged to the Castle down the way of this promontory, and what ever came on him, he sent the carriage over the rock, and the three were killed, Allan, and the lady, and the horse.

Yolk Lore of the West Highlands

Clan names. From Mr. Macmartin, Nigg, Ross-shire.

1 The reciter says that those who now bear the name of Armstrong, were originally Fairburns, and belonged to the border countries. The change came about in this way. One of the James's had his horse shot under him one time, and a man, whose name was Fairburn, who happened to be near by, seeing the King's horse fall, leaped off his own horse, and seizing the King by the collar of his coat, and thigh, threw him up into the saddle which he had himself vacated, and then jumped on the horse's back behind the King. The King said to him, "You have a strong arm, and the man took Strongarm from the King as his name, instead of Fairburn, but he transposed it into Armstrong. In proof of this tradition the reciter says that the Armstrong Crest bears an arm and thigh.

2 The Gurns of Caithness-shire were originally Campbells, and belonged to Argyleshire. What led them to Caithness-shire at first was, they went with Argyle to fight against the Sinclairs of the northern County, and were either retained there as prisoners, or chose to remain - in either case, they never returned to Argyleshire, but for politic ends they changed their name to Gunn, and were known among the Sinclairs as *Ma Gunnan* (The Gurns).

From Mrs. Leitch, Ardbrishair.

3 A woman who belongs to Ardbrishair, where the Sire name Leitch is common, says that it was not an original name, but only a kind of nick name, given at first to a family whose name was Macdonald. And the explanation of the name as given to that family was; One of them, being a doctor, was, of course, termed *ligheche*, and his children were called *Clann an ligheche*, and the shorter form was continued to more remote descendants, *Clann ligheche*, shortened again to Leitch.

Yolk Lore of the West Highlands

Clan Crests.

From Maggie Macdonald, Soligary, Barra.

A Barra girl accounts for the existence of Crests, and their differences from one another in the following way. She says:—

Tha swaicheantas air leth air gach cinnidh, Eador-dheal aichte
 bho'n swaicheantas a tha air gach cinnidh eile, agus so mar a
 chuala mise d'aine a' t'adha a thainig sin mu'n cuairt ann toiseach.
 O shean, thubhairt iad, gun do thachair e gun bidheanta gun roth
 an ceann cinnidh air a chuir fo gheasan nam biodh e e falbh thun
 a' chogaidh. Bha cailleachan ann o shean a bha comasach a leithid
 sin a deanadh. B'e an doigh bha aca air, thionndadh iad a neach
 a tha gu bhi air a chuir fo gheasan gun cumadh beathaich air chor
 eigin. Bha na Donnallaich air an cuir ann an cumadh Coim,
 agus Clann Ie Leoid ann an cumadh roin, agus mar sin air adhart.
 Agus bho so thainig e gun bheil an dealbh fein air leth air gach
 cinnidh air an swaicheantas. aca fein.

Translation.

Each clan has its own separate crest, distinguished from the crest which every other clan has, and this is how I heard people saying that that came about at first: In older times, they said, that it frequently happened that the chief of a clan was put under a charm, if he were going away to the war. There were old women of old who were able to do the like of that. The way they had of it was, they would turn the person that was to be put under the charm into the form of some kind of beast. The Macdonalds were put in the form of a dog, and the McLeods in the form of a seal, and in that way forward. And from this it came that every clan has its own distinctive figure on its own crest.

Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Folk Cures.

From Mr. Macmartin, Nigg, Perthshire.

1 A native of the parish of Fortingall, Perthshire, says that he saw, and frequently heard of, butter which was manufactured under certain conditions being used as a cure in cases of protracted sickness in his native place. This butter, which was called Im Eigin - i. e. butter got up in a case of emergency - was the product of milk collected over a considerable area of Country. This was the way of it: when it was decided to try the im eigin cure, a pitcherful of milk was asked, and obtained from as many of the neighbours as might be convenient. The efficacy of the butter was supposed to be more probable when there was a large number of milk contributions. When the milk was collected, it was all put together, and put under cream, after which ~~straw~~ the cream was churned, and the butter obtained from it was the Im Eigin, which was given to the patient.

The reciter added as his own comment, that while this was largely a superstition among his Countrymen in former times, there might be a scientific basis to some extent for it, from the fact that different kinds of pasture produce milk and butter having different properties, which, when combined, might have some effect on health in the case of the consumer.

2 The reciter says he has often heard of jaundice being treated by making the patient drink an infusion of dried Whin bark.

3 He has also heard it asserted that an infusion from the dried bark of broom is beneficial in cases of gravel.

Folk Love of the West Highlands

Witches.

From Maggie Macdonald, Eoligary, Barra.

Chuala mi mo mhathair iomadh uair ag innseadh mu
 thimshioll 'nuair a bhiodh iad aig an airidh o stream. Bha
 Cailleach aon oidhche san airidh gun duine sam bith leatha,
 agus bha Coslas garbh air an oidhche, le uisge agus tairneach.
 'Nuair a fhuair i 'n bainne seachad aig beul na h-oidhche,
 Chuir i teine mòr ann ordugh, agus bha i 'na suidhe 'ga garadh
 fein ris an teine. Cha robh i fad an sin gus an d'fhainig Cat-
 mòr a steach aig an doras. Ghabh e suas gus an teine, agus 'nuair a
 thug e crathadh dha fein, suidh e air leac an teinntein, agus
 thoisich e air e fein imlich. An ceann mionaid neo dha, thainig
 Cat-eile a steach, agus lean h-aon eile, agus h-aon eile, gus an robh
 an airidh làn d'hiubh, ach b'e 'n cend fear a thainig a steach
 a bu mhòta d'hiubh uile. B'fhreundar do'n chailleach suidhe
 mach o'n teine gus rium thoir d'hoibh, agus cha robh fios aice
 de dheanadh i, leis mar bha iad a' lionadh suas an airidh,
 agus bha Eagal oinne gun itheadh iad i fein. Chaidh i far an
 robh am bainne aic', agus thug i rios mias mhòr, a bha Co
 làn sa chumadh i, agus chuir i sin air an urlar d'hoibh.
 Chruinnich na Càit mu'n mhias, agus dhi'imlich iad suas
 na h-uile boinne de'n bhainne. Thug a' chailleach mias eile,
 agus mias eile, gus an d'fhug i seachad d'hoibh na h-uile deua
 bainne bha aic', agus 'nuair a dhi'ol iad sin, thoisich iad air
 dol a mach ann an sreath-aon mun seach. Bha 'm fear mòr
 air dheireadh ann a dhol a mach, agus 'nuair a bha e aig
 an doras, thionndaidh e aig a' chailleach, agus thubhairt
 e rithe, "Is math dhuitse gun d'fhug thu 'n bainne dh'inn,
 Oir mur b'e gun d'riinn thu sin, bhiodh thu fein ann t-itheadh
 suas. Bha daoine deanadh a mach gur e bha s'na Càit-

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Witches.

buidhsichean a thainig as na h-airidhean eile mu'n cuairt, gus bairne a' thailleadh so a thoir-bhuairpe.

Translation.

I heard my mother many a time telling about when she would be at the shealing in olden times. An old woman was in the shealing one night, without any person along with her, and there was a coarse appearance on the night, with rain and thunder. When she got the milk past in the twilight, she put a large fire in order, and she was sitting warming herself to the fire. She was not long there until a large cat came in at the door. It went up to the fire, and when it had given itself a shake, it sat on the hearth stone, and it began to lick itself. In course of a minute or two, another cat came in, and another, and another followed, till the shealing was full of them, but the one that had come in first was the biggest of them all. The old woman was compelled to sit away from the fire, to give them room, and she did not know what she should do, with how they were filling up the shealing, and she was afraid that they would eat herself. She went where she had her milk, and she brought up a large basin, that was as full as it would hold, and she put that on the floor for them. The cats gathered about the basin, and they licked up every drop of the milk. The old woman brought another basin, and another basin, till she had given away to them every drop milk she had, and when they had drunk that, they began to go out in a line - one by one. The big one was last in his going out, and when he was at the door, he turned to the old woman, and it said to her, "It is good to you that you gave us the milk, for were it not that you did that, you would have been eaten up yourself."

People were making out that the cats were witches

Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Witches.

That had come from the other shealings round about, to take this old woman's milk from her.

From John Ross, Bayfield, Rosshire.

2
The reciter, who is now an old man is a native of the parish of Kilmuir, in Easter Ross. Talking of Witches, he said. There were plenty Witches in olden times, and some of them could do very strange things. The last one that was in Easter Ross was living at Hilltown. They called her Call. At that time there was a big farmer above Hilltown, and always when the people of the village would have any disputes, they went to this farmer, and he would settle them for them, and they would just by whatever he would say, and would not go any further. One time Call had a quarrel with some body, and she reached the farmer to seek his aid. When stating her case, she said some thing that did not please him, and in return, he said some thing that offended her. But when she was going away she asked him if he would give her a stock of Thrill out of his garden, and this offended him still more, and he said he would not, and scolded her away. Perhaps it was for no good purpose she wanted the Thrill: But at any rate she went away without it. Next morning when the farmer's servants got up, they found the Cattle fold gates all open, and not a beast was to be seen all round. The griobh (foreman) sent the men away in different directions to look for them, and in a while, when they had not yet come back, and no word of the Cattle, he went up on the wall of the old Castle to see if he would see the men coming back, and what did he see but every beast about the farm in the garden, and not a thing left that had not been eaten up. The garden had a high wall about it, and how the Cattle ever got in to it, nobody could be sure, but it was generally believed that it was Call that had let them in by her witchcraft, to be avenged on the farmer for what he had said to her.

Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Witchcraft.

From John Ross, Bayfield, Rosshire.

I heard my father telling of a wedding that was east in the parish of Tarbat when he was a young lad. The mother of the girl that was getting married was supposed to be a witch, and what strengthened the suspicion, although she had no cow, or any beast of her own, it was well enough known that she always had plenty of milk, and butter, and Crowsdy. On the night of the contracting, the griobh of the farm on which the girl's father was employed, as a worker, was one of the company, and at the feast, the griobh, who had become pretty hearty, cried to the Company, "So, gabhairbh, ithibh, 'se ar cuid fein tha sinn a' gabhair." (Come, lads, eat, it is our own gear we are taking).

On the following day the girl's father was at his work as usual, and when he got an opportunity he asked the griobh what did he when he said the night before that it was their own gear they were eating, and the griobh said, "Do you not know what your wife has got in the big chest?" The man said he did not know that there was anything particular in it. "Well," said the griobh, "lift you the lid, and look in to it when you get a chance." The man did that, and what lumps of butter and dishes of milk were there! The chest was full. But what but his wife came on him before he got the lid down, and she was so angry with him for what he had done, that she put a bad wish on him there and then. "Dalladh ort gu brath," (blindness on you for ever) she said, and so it was for the man did lose his sight.

I often heard my father tell the story, and he said that he himself knew the griobh, not at that time, but some time after, and he also saw the man that was made blind, when he was an old man, and he was blind then at any rate.

Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Witchcraft.

From Maggie Macdonald, Soligary, Barra.

Referring to a certain woman who lives on the Long island, the reister said:—
 Tha cuid ag cumail a mach gu bheil buidseachas aig Ceit. Bu bhuideach a bha 'na mathair, agus tha gu leor a' creidsinn gum b'an leis a' bhuideachas a fhuair Ceit. R— sin ainm an duine aice. Bha i fein agus nighean eile fàst-
 -taichte anns an aon tigh, agus bha n' dithist an deigh R— Bu nighean boidheach a bha 'san te eile, agus b'fhearr le R— i na Ceit, ach cha robh suil sam bith aig a h-aon diubh a phosadh. Ach coma co dhuibh, thachair do Cheit gum robh i ag itheadh gros-aidean an-abruich lath, agus nan deigh, bhris a h-aodann a mach le quireanan beaga, agus fhad sa bha i anns an staid sin, cha b'wraim dith R— fhoicinn, agus thug so na h-uile cothrom bha ann do'n nighean eile. Ach bha 'n da nighean lath' ag grianan ballan mór Estorra, agus stubhairt Ceit ris an te eile, "B'fhearr leam gun tuitheadh so ort, 's gum cumadh e thu O R— gum am bitheinn sa gu mach. 'S gann a bha na briatharan as a beul 'mair a thuit am ballan air Cas na te eile, agus bhrisheadh a coise, agus mus robh i air Chomas eiridh a ritthist, bha R— aig Ceit mar a fear. Nis, bha e gle chosmhruil gum robh buidseachas air Choir Eigin aice 'n sin.

Translation.

Some maintain that Catherine has witchcraft. Her mother was a witch, and there are many who believe that it was with the witchcraft that Catherine got R— that is her husband's name. She and another girl were engaged in the one house, and the two were after R— The other one was a beautiful girl, and R— would rather her than Catherine, but he had no

Folk Love of the West-Highlands

Witchcraft.
intention to marry either of them. But however, it happened to Catherine that she was eating unripe gooseberries on a day, and after them, her face broke out with little pimples, and while she was in that condition, she could not see R—, and this gave all the opportunity that was in it to the other. But the two girls were on a day carrying a large tub between them, and Catherine said to the other one, "I wish that this would fall on you, and that it would keep you from R— till I might be well. Scarcely were the words out of her mouth, when the tub fell on the other girl's foot, and her foot was broken, and before she was able to rise again, Catherine had R— as her husband.

Now, it was very like, that there was some kind or other of witchcraft there, that she had.

From Mrs Noble, Red Castle, Rosshire.

3
Speaking of Witchcraft, a woman who belongs to The Black Isle, in Rosshire, said. Many people in our place believed that to wear one's stockings, one with the right-side, and the other with the wrong side out, was a good protection to the wearer against being bewitched. There was an old woman living a little above us, it is not long since she died. She was full of that belief, and I never, in all my life saw her stockings, when on her feet, otherwise than, the right-side of one, and the wrong side of the other turned out.

There were also two other women who lived quite near to that old woman, and they too were strong believers in witches and in witchcraft. They were hardly ever free ~~free~~ from suspicions regarding witchcraft being practised upon themselves, or their cattle, or at least some thing belonging to them, and they would not conceal their suspicions.

Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

Superstition.

From John Ross, Bayfield, Ross-shire.

A Ross-shire man tells the following story, which he says he often heard in his young days. There were two girls living at one time on the west end of the hill of Nigg. They were close companions, and they agreed that whosoever of them should survive the other, should dress the corpse of the one that would be taken away. By and by they both got married, and one of them went to live east in the parish of Fearn, and the other continued to live where she had been brought up. The one at Fearn was the first who died, and when her death took place, intimation was sent to her former companion at Nigg, and along with it, a request that she would come to dress the corpse. When the word reached her she was greatly put about, and did not know what to do, for it happened that it was on the Milltown Market-day, and her husband and every body in the house, except herself and her baby, were away at the market: so she could not go to Fearn till they would return.

But as the day was wearing on, and still, none of the market people had come home, who should she see coming in but the woman who had died. She, the woman of the house was sitting at the side of the fire, and the cradle, in which her baby was, was beside her, and the dead woman came forward and sat at the opposite side of the fire. They both sat facing each other for a while, but neither of them spoke a word. The fire was going out, but the woman was so terribly afraid, she could not rise from her seat to go for fuel to mend the fire, but was keeping it alive by putting, now and again, a few straws which she was taking from under the baby in the cradle on it. She knew quite well it was the ghost of her friend, and she also knew that it was the agreement about dressing the corpse that had brought it there.

At last the ghost rose to go away. At that time the catte were in the other end of the house, and when the ghost was passing down the passage between two rows of catte, a cow lifted her foot and gave her a kick on the side.

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As soon as those who had been to the market had come home, the woman went off to Fearn as fast as she could, and when she proceeded to dress the corpse, she saw the mark of the cow's foot in the side of the body.

From Maggie Macdonald, Coligary, Barra.

2 A girl from the island of Barra says that she has often heard, and has also seen that when the driving band of a spinning wheel got worn out, it should never again be used for any thing else, nor should it be destroyed, but rather rolled up tightly, and put in a bunchrag (chintz) in the wall, where it will be out of the way of every body. Inattention to this exposes the owner of the band to be bewitched, (air a crossadh), either in her person or estate. The idea is that the wheel band is a suitable medium for the practice of witchcraft.

3 When one who may happen to have come into a house in Barra, reports any bad story, no matter who it may concern, the house, and its inmates are supposed to be disassociated from the report, and protected from being in any way involved in the evil to which it refers, by the following process. The chief person in the house, in whose presence the story has been told, will instantly throw anything she may happen to have in her hand at the moment, no matter what it is, out by the door. And if she had nothing in her hand at the particular moment, she will pick some thing up for the purpose, and together with the act of throwing it out the door, she will say - "Mach a so, an droch sgeul." (Out of this, the bad news). The belief is that this act and formula drive the evil referred to away from that house.

4 There is a belief in existence among people in the island of Barra, that if a piece of what one is eating happens to fall out of

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Superstition.

his, or her mouth, it is a sign that some lies are being concocted by some body against such a one, and the remedy in such a case is for the person from whose mouth the piece has fallen, to lift that which fell, and eat it. The reciter's comment is "The lies that are in course of being told are the cause of the piece falling, and unless you lift the piece, and eat it, you cannot clear yourself from the lies."

It is believed in Barra that the spirit of the last person who has been buried is bound to keep watch until the next interment has taken place. The name given to this spectral sentinel is Fair Claidh.

A girl from Barra, whose parents lived near one of the burying places said, "Many a time we would be afraid to pass the burying ground after a strong man, or a bad person had been buried: but we would not be much afraid after a child's burial. I remember there was one woman, and when she was Fair Claidh (Spirit watch of the church yard) we were terribly afraid to pass. When this woman was living, she went through the island begging, and people were the fright of their life to refuse her anything she would ask in case she would make a gaidhe (curse) on them. Many a gaidhe she made, and she was so bold, if she thought anything people were offering her was not good enough, she would refuse it, and make a gaidhe on them at once.

I would rather give her my head than be put under her gaidhe. And that was not the worst of it, for people believed that she would be getting the Evil Spirit to do things for her, and many a bad thing was said to follow her. Well people were not sorry when she died, but they were afraid that after her death, as well as before it, she might be getting from the evil one to do mischief.

Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Cup reading.

From Mrs McDonald, Applecross.

Talking of superstition in the Highlands, and old minister said: I remember when I was a student, there was a fellow student with whom I was intimate. He was a native of Harris, and often when a few of us would happen to be together at tea, this fellow, for fun, would take to reading our cups. He had a knack for it, and could give us a good deal of amusement, but, of course, he did not believe a thing of what he said. Well, one time he told me about an experience he had. He said that he had been in a certain house in the Outer Hebrides, where there happened to be a few guests besides himself. Having been there often before, he was quite familiar with the family, and after tea, he took up Mrs McLeod's cup and proceeded to read it as follows:—"I see there a vessel with two masts. It is coming in here; and there you are sending something out to it; and you are getting a present of something from them in return."

That very evening the "Breadalbane" — the "Breadalbane" was a yacht that was well known in those days on the West Coast — came in, and Mrs McLeod, as she had often done before, sent a present of fowls and eggs and butter, and a case of wine came from the yacht to her as a return present. My friend said that when they saw how true his cup reading had turned out to be, they indicated very considerable suspicion regarding him, and he thought very little would have persuaded them to believe that he possessed a knowledge of the Black Art. He confessed that he felt himself placed under a disadvantage for some time after, by the circumstance, so much so that he decided that he should never again read cups.

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# Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

## Charms.

From Mr. Noble, Red Castle, Blackisle.

1 A woman who belongs to the Blackisle says that an old man still lives there who makes strings to people for curing sprains, and she adds that many people have a good deal of faith in his strings.

From Mr. Macmartin, Tigg.

2 Mr. M.M. is a native of the parish of Fortingall, in Perthshire. Talking of the Clay figure (Corp Chreadha) as a charm for killing, he said — I have never heard of the Corp Chreadha being used in Perthshire, but it is believed in till this day by some people in the Blackisle. It is not long since one was found in working order in a little stream there. It is usually in a running stream they are placed by those who make them.

3 There was a curious Charm form which was well known among Perthshire boys, and was also thought by them to be of some practical value in certain doubtful emergencies. The charm was expressed in the words, "Touch Cold Iron". When a boy found himself liable to be blamed for an accident that had just taken place — the breaking of a window by a ball or stone, or some such accident — he betook himself with all possible haste to the nearest iron he could find — an iron trailing, a door scraper, or it might even be the heel of his own boot, if he had no-thing better, and if his boots had iron heels, and with the confidence of security under cover of the act he touched the cold iron, which was held, not only to clear him of all culpability as regarding the blame from which he was fleeing, but was also supposed to protect him from ill luck in the future.

## Folk Lore of the West-Highlands

Luck.

From Mr. Macmartin, Nigg.

1 It is believed by many in Easter Ross that bad luck will follow the first marriage ceremony performed by a minister after his ordination. It is said the couple will not be happy in their married life.

From Mr. Macdonald, Applecross.

2 Referring to the common notion that it is unlucky for one to see the first lamb or foal of the season, which he has seen, with its tail to him, a native of Ross-shire says that in his part of the country that is held to be quite true, but only with regard to those engaged in farming. The idea is that if, when a farmer sees his first lamb, or first foal of the season, its tail should be towards him, it indicates that either, he will have no more, or at any rate, a shortage of that kind during that season. It is said in such a case, if it be a lamb, "The lambs are going from him". And if a foal, "The foals are going from him".

From Maggie Macdonald, Coligny, Barra.

3 A girl from the island of Barra says. It is considered in our place a very unlucky, and unsafe thing, if one were looking from the land at a boat sailing on the sea, to say to another person anything in praise of the boat. For instance, it would be dangerous to say "See how fast that boat is going". The reason is, that the eye of the one that would say that might fall on the boat, and cause it to be lost. (Th' fheadadh a shuidh triteam air an sgoth, agus a chroon a dheanadh.).

4 One should never go alone to make bairnick (limpets). It is not lucky. There is a story in our place about a woman who went to the shore alone one time, and seeing a fine large limpet, she put down her hand to take it, but just when her hand was almost on it, she noticed the tongue of a rat under the shell. She got a fright, and went home as fast as she could, but people were saying it was not a rat at all, but just some bad thing that had come there to cheat her, as she was alone.

# Yolk Love of the West-Highlands

## Customs.

From Mr Macmartin. Nigg.

1 According to a minister in Easter Ross-shire, it used to be a custom that when a young minister ~~married~~ performed his first marriage service after his ordination, he was presented with a gold coin by the newly married couple.

And there was at least one parish in Sutherlandshire, in which it was a custom of many years standing, as soon as a marriage ceremony was performed, the "Hat" was passed round the company, and a collection taken there and then on behalf of the minister who had officiated.

2 Talking of Hallow-e'en Customs, a native of the parish of Fortingall, Perthshire, who is almost seventy years of age, says that the Bonfire was a prominent part of the Hallow-e'en amusements in his young days; and that part of the performance consisted in rushing through the ashes, as soon as that became possible, by the subsidence of the flames. He says he has done it himself often, and that it is just a relic of the human sacrifice that was part of the festive rites in pagan days.

3 Referring to the custom of unmarried women seeking to obtain an interview with their future husbands, by means of the clew in the Kilm, the reciter says, One time a young woman ~~she~~ went to a Kilm at Kilmloch-Bannoch, to try her fortune, on a Hallow-e'en night. A lad who had suspected what might happen, in anticipation of her coming, got there before her, and concealed himself in the lower part. On her arrival she threw down the end of her worsted, which the lad caught, and held firmly, and when she called "Co tha air ceann mo chearbla?" (Who is at the end of my clew) the lad replied from below, "Tha Iain Mac Gibbon" (It is John Mac Gibbon) the girl got an awful start, and fainted.

From Maggie Macdonald, Coligary, Barra.

4 It is a family custom in Barra, as soon as the one who is first out of bed on New Year's day morning, gets up, he, or she gives a dram to all the



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### Customs.

others, still in bed, and they drink to the family health all round. The honour of being first up on that morning is matter of Competition, not only within the family circles, but near neighbours also strive for the credit of being first afoot to welcome the new year.

5 Among the new year Customs that are still kept up among the native population of the island of Barra, there is one which, though, fortunately less common now than it once was, is, according to a young woman from that island, too common still. She said, "Chunnair mi fheim e barrachd na aon uair". (I saw it myself more than once).

The custom seems to be based upon an impression that New years day is a suitable occasion for getting rid of old dogs and cats that have out-lived their usefulness, and so, to make room for their successors: and the objectionable thing is in reference to the mode of putting the dogs to death, which is intended to contribute to the amusements of the day. (airson spors dhoilbh fein). Having tied a bunch of straw firmly to the dogs tail, they set fire to it, and let the dog go. Terrified, and howling with pain the brute rushes from house to house, as long as it is able to crawl, trying to find a refuge, and the people whose house it attempts invading become frantic in their efforts to drive it away, in case of their ~~own~~ house being set on fire.

6 It is common in Barra, when a baby has been born, all the friends and well wishers of the parents come as early as they can to see the child, and congratulate the parents, and in accordance with the Customs, and beliefs of the place, all who come must eat something before they depart: for it is a common saying that if one who had come to see a baby in this way would go away empty - that is without taking food - the baby would be in poverty when it would grow up.

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Saws.

"Cha'n 'eil thu glan, agus cha bhi thu glan, mar thubhairt a' chailleach nuair a thuit am pòc salainn." (You are not clean, and you will not be clean, as the old woman said when the salt-bag fell).

This is a Barra saying, usually applied to one who is conspicuous for being uncleanly, or to a thing that is found to be very difficult of being cleaned. There is a circumstance which explains the origin of the saying.

We give it in the reciter's own words:—

Tha cailleach agus cha'n t-im aice

daonann salach a dh'aindeoin na dheanadh i. Latha bha'n sùd, bha maistreadh aice ri a dheanadh, agus rinn i suas na h-ìmritinn gum biodh e glan aic' an latha sin co dh'èirigh. Ghlan i'n cuinneag, agus a lamhan, agus thuir i sìre apran glan, agus thoisich i air maistreadh. Chaidh gaeh ri leathra ga toil, gus an robh 'n t-im aic' togta ann am mias, agus e co boidheach glàn 's a dh'iarradh dìvine, ach nuair a skin i suas a lann gus salann a thuit as a' phòc bha crochta bho mhullach an tìghe, bhris an t-sreang, agus thuit am pòc, agus bha'm pòc, 's an salann, 's an stùr am measg an ime, agus ghlaodh a' chailleach thòchud, "Cha'n 'eil thu glan, agus cha bhi thu glàn."

Translation.

There was an old woman, and her butter was always dirty in spite of what she would do. On a day that was there, she had an churning to make, and she made up in her mind that she would have it clean that day any how. She washed the churn, and her hands, and she put on her a clean apron, and she commenced churning. Every thing went with her to her mind, till she had the butter lifted in a basin, and it as beautifully clean as a person would ask: but when she stretched up her hand to take salt from the bag that was hung from the roof of the house, the string broke, and the bag fell; and the bag, and the salt, and the dust were among the butter, and the poor old woman shouted, "you are not clean, and you will not be clean."

"Tha e co réidh 's a bha bean Rob." (It is as well done as Robert's wife was)

# Yolk Love of the West-Highlands

Saws.

This is a common saying Barra, referring to any thing that is overdone.

"Ge be air ann bi lusk an òl, tachraidh e ris, ged a b'an ann an Soay".  
(On whomsoever the luck of drink will be, it will meet him, should it be in Soay). This is a saying among Barra folk. It means that people will find means of obtaining what they have a strong desire for. The origin of the Saw, according to the reciter was as follows:

Bha duine bha fuasach trom air an òl, agus le suil e bhi air a chomadh bhunaithe, chuireadh air Eilean Shòaidh e, far nach robh duine beo ach e fein. Aon latha 'nnsir a bha e ri sraideireachd ri taobh a' chladaich, chummaic e barail a snamh beagan a mach o'n fhearann. 'S mior na rinn e gus a' ri bha ann a thoirt gu tìr, agus 'nnsir a fhuair e gu tìr e, agus a dh'fhosgail se e, de bha ann ach uisge-beatha, agus 'nnsir a chummaic e sin, thubhairt e, "Ge be air ann bi lusk an òl, tachraidh e ris, ged a b'an ann an Soay".

Translation.

There was a man who was very heavy on the drink, and with the view of his being won from it, he was put on the island of Soay, where there was not a living person but himself. One day when he was walking beside the shore, he saw a barrel floating a little out from the land. It was ~~much~~ he did to bring the thing that was in it to land, and when he got it to land, and he had opened it, what was in it but whisky, and when he saw that, he said, "On whomsoever the luck of drink will be, it will meet him, should it be in Soay".

"Thainig thu le meur goirt." (You have come with a sore finger)  
This is said of one who has been disappointed in respect of any thing he, or she expected. The idea is of a person coming home after having been on a mission which has turned out to be unnecessary, and disappointing.

"Sin cnaimh dhuit." (There's a lone for you) This is a common expression with which a Barra person would finish when telling to one some evil which another may have said, or done against him or her.

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6 A native of the district of Caigash gives the following saying, which he says is of frequent use in his part of the Country, where it is applied derisively to one who professes to perform some thing virtuous, where it costs him nothing. "Tha gnathach again gas an t-srath mhoir, Uicid mi dhian searman". (I have a message to the big valley, I will go to the preaching). The church services were conducted at the big valley, and the saying arose from a confession that some careless people made, who lived in a district a good distance off, that they took advantage of going to church because they had other business to the district where the preachings were held.

7 There is a saying in Barra, applicable to a person from whom a piece of buttered bread happens to fall. "Breug ort." (a lie on you). The inference is that some person, unknown, is belying the person whose piece has fallen. And there is another saying relative to this one. "Ma thuiteas im, ged a b'an air clairn, bu choir itheadh." (If butter falls, should it be on wool, it ought to be eaten) The meaning of this is, that one should not concern himself much about anonymous falsifiers. Indifference on the part of the belied will frustrate the intention of the liar.

Crac, dideag is an expression used in Barra, accompanied with Ma tha do chasan glan. It seems to mean, "Be off at once, I see you", and the following story illustrates the use of it.

There was an old woman, her name was Mary, and one day she was sitting at the fire, and the ground officer (Baillidh) was going about, looking after things. He came to Mary's door, and made a gentle knock (grog beag). Mary, who had not been accustomed to have people knocking at her door, and thinking it was somebody else, perhaps for a trick, or some thing, without leaving her seat at the fire side, she replied to the knock by saying, "Ma tha do chasan glan, Crac, dideag". But there was a little girl in the house, and she having looked out saw who was there, and she whispered to Mary that it was the Baillidh.

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Cookery.

Mary, of course, was neither good tempered nor kindly, but she could not wish the officer to know that, and hoping he had not heard her first remark, she now shouted, but still pretending that she did not know who was there, and that this was her usual kindly way of welcoming people, "O mo ghraidh, 's mo ghasail, stighibh a steach." (Oh my dear and my love come in).

From Mrs Greenlees, Campbeltown.

An old woman who is a native of Kintyre, speaking of the articles of food, and methods of cooking of olden times, said, I remember quite well, when I was a girl, seeing my grand-mother, who knew the uses of herbs very well, going to gather ramps, that is wild leeks, and using them as a vegetable. Some times she boiled or stewed them, and served them the same way that they do Lang Kail; and some times she would boil them along with potatoes, and beat them both together.

From Maggie Macdonald, Eoligary, Barra.

Sanathan Whicheil is the name of a specially prepared, which Barra house wives bake in honour of Saint Michailmas day - Latha Feill Whicheil - It is made in the following manner: -

A bannock of barley meal, of about an inch thick, is baked in the usual way, both sides of which are toasted in front of a fire until they are gently browned. While this is being toasted, a mixture of flour, cream, Eggs and sugar is well beat in a separate basin. This mixture is of the consistency of a firm dough. The bannock being sufficiently toasted, a coating of the mixture is laid upon one side of it, about the thickness of a quarter of an inch, and the bannock is placed again in front of the fire the side on which the mixture has been spread being towards the fire. When the layer of the dough has become slightly brown, a second layer is laid on, and toasted as before, and then a third, which finishes the treatment of that side of the bannock. The other side is next dealt with in the

/ cake

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### Cookery.

same way. The cake, when finished is much prized, and forms a chief part of the treat a Barra house wife gives to her visitors on Michaelmas day.

Brisgean (Wild Skerret) is a favourite article of food among the inhabitants of the Outer Hebrides. In olden times it took the place of a staple article among the poorer of the people, especially in the spring seasons, when the products of the preceding year had become exhausted, or nearly so. An old woman who belongs to the island of Eriskey, talking of the use of the Brisgean, as an article of food, and the value that was set upon it as such when she was young, called it An seachdambh aran, a name, she said that was in general use, and well enough known, but she could not tell what was the origin of it, or its meaning.

The roots were gathered from the furrows, after the plough, and having been separated from the foliage, and washed, were boiled and eaten as a substitute for potatoes or bread.

With the advent of better times, the brisgean is not now dealt with as a staple article in the food of the people, but it still holds a place among their dainties. The juveniles devour it in its raw condition, but when it is cooked, it is not often boiled in the old way, hardly ever, but rather stewed in a little water, with a little sugar added; and is eaten either hot or cold.

Curran geal (White Carrot) is a plant resembling the parsnip. It grows on the sandy soils of the Outer Hebrides, and is used by the Barra folks as a vegetable in broths, and soups; and is also eaten raw.

## Folk Lore of the West Highlands

Bean nigheadh.

From Mr. Macdonald, Applecross.

The reciter who is a native of the parish of Applecross, speaking of the Bean nigheadh, says that in his young days, the belief in this creature's existence was very common in his native place. The prevailing idea regarding her was that she was some kind of spirit that appeared in the likeness of a little woman. She was invariably seen beside water, a loch, or stream, and washing clothes. Her appearance was associated with the death of some one, and what she is washing is supposed to be the shroud, usually called aodach mairbh, or ais-leine.

As might be supposed, the Bean-nigheadh is an object of general dislike, and although she is shy naturally, and rather disposed to avoid coming into close quarters with human beings, still she is believed to be ill disposed to people of this world, and would injure them rather than the reverse. In event of a collision however, it is believed the issue will depend a good deal on which of the two sees the other first—the human, or the Bean nigheadh. If the eye of the human catches her, before her eye has caught him, he has on that account a decided advantage, and if she stands her ground, he is pretty sure to get the better of her; but if, on the other hand, she sees him before his eye has caught her, she will get the better of him. This led people whose way brought them near to fresh water lochs, or burns, after dark, to be very carefully on the watch in case the Bean nigheadh might turn up.

Illustrative of these ideas and beliefs, the reciter tells the following:—

A man in our place whom I knew very well was on his way home one night when it was a little late, and when he came near to a stream that he had to cross he noticed a woman stooped, and washing something, as he thought in the water. At once he concluded that it was the Bean-nigheadh, and his first thought was a fight. He had a heavy stick in his hand, and raising it over his head, he went cautiously forward intending that he should have the first blow. His own idea was to brain her right away. She did not notice him till he was just almost on the point of striking her, and when she notice him, she got such a start, and cried out Criosdag — an expression which the reciter explains to mean an oath

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which he says was not uncommon in his native Country when he was young, and which was regarded as a kind of appeal to the higher power for protection. The man recognized her. She was a neighbour who had gone out to look for her son, and had taken to washing some thing in the burn while she was waiting for his coming. But it was good for her the time she cried, for a minute later, she might have been killed.

From John Ross, Bayfield, Nigg.

An old man, a native of the parish of Kilomuir Easter, and who, although intelligent, possesses evidently a strong vein of superstition, talking of the stories that one hears of Mermaids, said, Oh there is no ~~not~~ doubt at all that there was some thing of the kind in it, for how could we have heard so much about her, if she was not in it. Some body must have seen her, or she could not have been described to us as she is. It was said that there was a man at one time living at the Cromarty ferry—he was on the Nigg side—and he fell in with a mermaid, they were saying, about the shore somewhere, and brought her home, and he married her, and had a family by her. It was said too that she had a kind of shell with which to cover her head and shoulders, when she would be in the sea, and that he had kept this hid from her for a long time, but at last some of her children found out where it was, and told their mother about it, and when she got a right chance she took it, and went off to the sea, and the man never saw her again. It was said she could not leave so long as she had not this shell.

And there was another story about a mermaid that made a stir in Easter Ross, some time, I think before I was born. I used to hear the story when I was a boy. It was about a man that was going from Tarbat to Tain. He was on horse back and he took a short way across the sands. It was a short-cut that people used to take when they would be going to the sacraments. Well this man was killed when on his way, and his body was found, but nobody could tell how it had happened; only, as it was known that a mermaid had been seen about that place, people came to the conclusion that it had been she that had got a hold of this man, and had killed him.



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Superstition.

From Mrs Macintyre, Millar's Cr., Edinburgh.

The reciter is an old woman who was born in the island of Eigg. Talking of the supernatural, she said, "There are many who have the second sight. I heard my mother, who was a native of the parish of Ardnamurchan, telling about a man who was there that had it. She said that one time there was a funeral there, and this man was at it, and when they were gathered round about the grave, this man saw all the people who belonged to the one they were burying, who had predeceased him, and had been buried before him, as if they were in their bodies. But he knew they were dead.

The reciter added for herself, "That is reasonable enough, for does not the bible say" - Psalm XXXIV. 7.

And there was at one time a minister in the island of Bute, who had the second sight. He was a very good man they said, and would see things some times even when he would be in the pulpit. I heard this about him. One time he was preaching, and in the middle of his sermon he saw a woman who was being tempted, going away to drown herself. All at once he stopped, and called upon a man who was in the congregation to go at once and get a horse, and ride as fast as the horse could go to such and such a place - the place where the woman had it in her mind to commit suicide. The man went off, as the minister had ordered him, and he was just in time to save the woman's life.

From Mrs Sim, Millar's Cr., Edinburgh.

Mrs S. was brought up in Oban. Talking of old things, and beliefs, she said: "There was an old man who used to come in often to talk with my grand-mother, and the stories these two used to tell about witches, ghosts, fairies, and every kind of thing of that kind! I believed them all, and so too did they; and certainly there were some very strange things among the things they talked of. Here is one of my grandmother's stories.

One time my grandfather had a strange dream in which he saw that some thing was going to happen in his own house on a certain night. He was so much

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impressed with it. That he sent word to a good man that was there, and requested him to come on the night in question, and keep him company. The man came and had his bible along with him, and they both sat up, waiting to see what would happen. Some time in course of the night a dog that was in the house with them became very restless, and frightened like, and in a minute or two, it rushed out the door. They saw nothing, but heard a strange noise: but they were quite sure the dog had seen something, for dogs can see things of that kind when people cannot. They never found out what it was, but it must have been some thing terrible, for in a little while the dog returned without its skin, looking like as if it had been flayed alive.

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I never heeded so much what I heard about these things from my mother, but I always listened to what my father said, for he was a good man, and a reader, and intelligent. I often heard him telling of a time he was coming along the shore, and he saw what he took to be a very big man rising suddenly into his view and walking on before him. He went on before him for a good bit, but appeared to be getting smaller and smaller, until he came to a certain spot, and there he vanished in fire and smoke. And not long after that an accident happened at that place.

From Mrs Joss. Bruntspield Ler. Edinburgh.

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Mrs J. was born and brought up in Islay, and she says that she remembers when she was a girl she often visited at the home of an Aunt who was in Islay at that time, and her Cousins were terribly afraid of the ghosts of living people. Her mother had a servant who was also very full of Superstition, and many a ghost story that servant told her (the reciter) as paymsent for going with her when she would be going out, after darkness had come on, to milk. The servant was afraid to go alone.

Speaking for herself, the reciter disclaims belief in things that are

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of the nature of superstition, but she admits having heard the death watch, and feels strongly inclined to believe in it as a real warning of approaching death. The circumstance, as she described it was as follows:

A sister of hers was not very well, but at the time referred to, nothing of a serious nature was apprehended. One evening she - Mrs. J. and another sister were in the room with the sister that was unwell. They were sitting quiet, and it was a calm evening, and all at once they heard several ticks, quite distinctly, and the one said to the other, "did you hear that?" That same night the one that was unwell became suddenly unconscious, and died in a few days after, without having ever recovered.

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The reciter says that when she used to visit at her brother in law's in the parish of Eddleston in Ross-shire, she heard that a superstitious prejudice existed against allowing unbaptized children to have the privilege of burial in the ordinary places within the church yard, and they were buried under the eaves of the church.

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From Mr. Arch<sup>d</sup>. Denchard, 33 Woodburn Ter. Edinburgh.

A gentleman who was born and brought up near Dunkeld, says that when he was young there were a considerable number of people, chiefly women some what advanced in life, round about where he was brought up, who were supposed to have some thing to do with witchcraft. He says there was one woman in particular, she lived quite beside his mother's house, who was very much dreaded by the people about, because she was given to wish ill to such as would offend her in any way, and people believed that she possessed some secret power by which she could obtain her wish.