

## CHAP. II.

## OFF THE COAST OF ARRAN.

Nearing Arran. — Wordsworth and Scott. — The Cock of Arran. — Loch Ranza, and Opinions anent it. — A fernal Parson. — A valuable Suggestion to Tourists. — First Sight of Cantire. — Loch Fyne. — Skipness Castle. — A sturdy Covenanter. — Dr. Johnson and the Minister of Skipness. — The Legend of the Smith of Skipness. — Kilbrennan Sound. — Carradale. — Vitrified Forts. — A Legend of the Great Plague. — The Weeper. — Superstitions. — Bel Teine. — A knotty Bargain.

WE near the Isle of Arran, “the island of sharp pinnacles,” as its name signifies. And rightly is it called, for it is little else than a rocky mass, whose outline cuts the sky in ragged peaks.\* How grand it looked, with

\* The etymology of Arran is thus given by Lord Teignmouth, on the excellent authority of the Rev. Dr. Macleod of Glasgow. “Pronounced in Gaelic *Arrinn*; from *ar*, land, or country; and *rinn*, sharp points: hence *Ar-rinn* signifies island of sharp pinnacles, or the land of serrated tops or summits,—a most appropriate name for Arran.” Forsyth gives the derivation as “*Air-Inn*, or the Island of Mountains.” Martin (“Western Islands”) gives the following fanciful etymology: “The name of this isle is by some derived from *arran*, which, in the Irish language, signifies bread; others think it comes more probably from *arin* or *arsyn*, which in their language is as much as the place of the giant Fin-Mac-Coul’s slaughter or execution; for *aar* signifies

its dark mountains rising ruggedly out of the waves ! and over the nearer ridge, their monarch, Goatfell, with his conical crown, towering nearly 3000 feet towards the sky, and grandly conspicuous in the serrated mountain range. Wildness and ruggedness are the leading features of the scenery, but the herbage, and the heather, and the varied colouring of the geological formation of the hills give a softness to the stern expression of the scenery ; and, when we first saw the island, with the dark shadows drifting across it, making the sharply contrasted effects of shine and shade, I thought it one of the most picturesque “bits” of mountain scenery that I had ever beheld. We call to mind how Wordsworth sonnetised the island from his steam-boat point of view, and longed for his favourite hippogriff to bear him to the summit of Goatfell.

“Arran ! a single-crested Teneriffe,  
 A St. Helena next — in shape and hue  
 Varying her crowded peaks and ridges blue ;  
 Who but must covet a cloud-seat, or skiff  
 Built for the air, or winged Hippogriff ?

slaughter, and so they will have *arin* only the contraction of *arrin* or *fin*. The received tradition of the great giant Fin-Mac-Coul’s military valour, which he exercised upon the ancient natives here, seems to favour this conjecture.” The gentleman here referred to is the hero Fingal. Macculloch gives a somewhat similar derivation “*Ar*, a field of battle ; and *Fin*, the hero of the Gael. So say the Highlanders, Quidlibet è quolibet.”

That he might fly where no one could pursue,  
From this dull Monster, and her sooty crew ;  
And, as a god, light on thy topmost cliff.  
Impotent wish ! which reason would despise  
If the mind knew no union of extremes,  
No natural bond between the boldest schemes  
Ambition frames, and heart humilities.  
Beneath stern mountains many a soft vale lies,  
And lofty springs give birth to lowly streams."

It is so here. Many a soft vale lies beneath those stern mountains, "beautiful exceedingly," and affording the richest treat to the lover of the charms of nature, whether he woo her under the guise of poet, painter, botanist, or geologist. When we were afterwards in Edinburgh we saw a highly elaborated Pre-Raffaellitish picture, by Noel Paton, the landscape portion of which was one tangled mass of wood, and water, and rock, and ferns, and wild flowers, and was said to have been "painted on the spot in the Isle of Arran ;" and from this picture, as well as from many other evidences that reached me, I could readily imagine what a lovely field for artists is to be found in the interior of the island. But we could discern abundant beauties even from our sail round a portion of the island, and this view of the northern coast of Arran from the sea had its own peculiar charm. According to Macculloch, it is the finest of the Arran views. "The high and serrated forms are peculiarly striking, presenting a rugged

mountainous character unequalled in Scotland, except by the Cuchullin hills in Skye. These mountains are also exceedingly elegant in the outline, and though not attaining to quite 3000 feet of elevation, yet, from their independence, and from their rising immediately out of the sea, their Alpine effect is equalled by that of very few mountainous tracts in Scotland, of even much greater altitude." \* The broken masses of rocks are piled upon each other in irregular stages, making every kind of fanciful angle of which a mad mathematician might dream, and assuming every combination of shape, from the grotesque to the grand, and, in many places, presenting a massive sea-wall rising sheer out of the waves, with no white line of shore to interpose between the sea and the rocks; which rise like a rampart from the waters that dash against them as against the dark hull of a mighty vessel. In other places there is a strip of grassy bank, or shingly beach, between the rocks and the water; and, at the Fallen Rocks of Scriden, which have "the effect of a torrent of stones in the very act of motion," and at the rock, or rather large stone, known as "the Cock of Arran," the beach exhibits two well-known landmarks. The stone known as "the Cock," is supposed to present the appearance of bright chanticleer in the act of crowing; but though,

\* Highlands, vol. ii. p. 26.

evidently, this particular

“Cock was of a larger egg  
Than modern poultry drop;”

yet it requires a very powerful imagination to trace any resemblance between this solitary stone and any known specimen of the animal kingdom.

The sternness of the rugged cliffs is softened and relieved by the many accidental touches and graceful embellishments that they have received from the fairy fingers of Nature. Patches of verdure cover the rocks, ledges, and shelves; and on these spots, apparently so inaccessible, the sheep were busily browsing. Here and there pink and purple shades of heather diversified the tints of the grass and rocks. Thatched and whitewashed huts were sparsely scattered on the hill-sides or in the little valleys, high up amid the “tumultuous waste of huge hill-tops,”—

“A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high  
Among the mountains;”

and “we knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled” from their thatch chimneys that those houses on the rocks were peopled places, and that the pot was boiling against the gudeman came hame. We are nearing Loch Ranza now, and fresh beauties await us:—

“The sun, ere yet he sunk behind  
Ben-Ghoil, ‘the Mountain of the Wind,’

Gave his grim peaks a greeting kind,  
 And bade Loch Ranza smile.  
 Thither their destined course they drew :  
 It seem'd the isle her monarch knew,  
 So brilliant was the landward view,  
     The ocean so serene ;  
 Each puny wave in diamonds roll'd  
 O'er the calm deep, where hues of gold  
     With azure strove and green.  
 The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,  
 Glow'd with the tints of evening's hour,  
     The beech was silver sheen,  
 The wind breathed soft as lover's sigh,  
 And, oft renew'd, seem'd oft to die,  
     With breathless pause between.  
 Oh who, with speech of war and woes,  
 Would wish to break the soft repose  
     Of such enchanting scene !” \*

An enchanting scene in truth it was : far, very far, prettier than the prettiest scene for a theatre painted by the united talent of Stanfield and Beverley. There was the placid bay, taking a sweep of about a mile ; and there in the centre, just in the very spot where the artist would wish it, there was the old castle, perched on a tongue of rock jutting into the bay. Here are some opinions “ anent ” this scene. “ The castle of Loch Ransa,” says Macculloch, “ remains unsophisticated, but its apparent antiquity, if we may judge from the style and execution of the architecture, is not great. It

\* Lord of the Isles, cantos iv. xiii. Ben Ghoil is now commonly known by its English name of Goatfell, or Goatfield.



LOCH RANZA, ISLE OF ARRAN.

is, however, said to have been a royal castle in the early part of the fourteenth century. It is still in a tolerable state of preservation, and might, with no great labour or expense, be again rendered habitable. This building is by no means picturesque in design, although in its present situation it conduces much to the picturesque appearance of the little bay in which it is situated, giving a centre of unity to the whole, and offering to the artist a circumstance of moral and historical interest, of which, among these solitary and deserted scenes, he has often occasion to regret the absence.\* “The approach,” says Pennant, “was magnificent: a fine bay in front, about a mile deep, having a ruined castle near the lower end, on a low, far-projecting neck of land that forms another harbour, with a narrow passage, but within has three fathoms of water, even at the lowest ebb. Beyond is a little plain, watered by a stream, and inhabited by the people of a small village. The whole is environed with a theatre of mountains, and in the background the serrated crags of Grianan. Athol soars above.”† “In point of gloomy grandeur no British bay surpasses Loch Ranza, in Arran,” says Lord Teignmouth, who, however, it must be remembered, visited this spot in a snowy season, and is speaking of it

\* Description of the Western Islands of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 322. See also his “Highlands,” vol. ii. p. 38.

† Voyage to the Hebrides, p. 168.



in its wintry aspect; "dark ridges hem it in, and an ancient castle, formerly an occasional residence of the Scottish monarchs, occupies in the midst of it a central and commanding position, on a green projecting slip of land." \* But we saw Loch Ranza bay in all the beauties of its summer dress. Goatfell (from whose summit you may see at one view England, Ireland, and Scotland, together with the Isle of Man,) proudly towered above the amphitheatre of mountains. The old castle, the houses in the village, and the scattered huts of the fishermen gleamed all around, and, reflected in the still blue waters of the bay, made therein streaming lines of white. The bright beams of the afternoon sun shone full —

“ On fair Loch Ranza . . . .  
 Thin wreaths of cottage smoke are upward curl'd  
 From the lone hamlet, which her inland bay  
 And circling mountains sever from the world.  
 And there the fisherman his sail unfurl'd,  
 The goatherd drove his kids to steep Ben Ghoil,  
 Before the hut the dame her spindle twirl'd,  
 Courting the sunbeam as she plied her toil.”

Our steamer had come to a full stop just opposite the centre of the bay, and was putting down passengers

\* Lord Teignmouth's "Sketches of the Coasts and Islands of Scotland," vol. ii. p. 390. But it is not possible to please everybody; and the Messrs. Anderson, in their "Guide to the Highlands," say, "Loch Ranza is not peculiarly picturesque, but its old and royal castle bestows on it an interesting character" (p. 378).

into a shore-boat that had been waiting for us. I envied the comfortable-looking divine who was carefully let down into this boat to be rowed on shore; I envied him, for it was his third visit to the island, and he had dilated on the richness of the scenery, and had said that "he believed he had not seen a tithe of its beauties," revealing his profession even in that rectorial expression. He did not look like an artist, and decidedly not like a poet—though, after all, see the picture portraits of Tennyson and Longfellow, and then say in what respects your real poet is like your ideal in his outward semblance. Perhaps he was of a geological or a fernery turn. Indeed, I think he must have been, for I espied a candle-box-looking apparatus among his luggage, destined, doubtless, to contain lovely specimens of that true maiden-hair fern, which grows in "dark Arran's dells" in luxuriant beauty. And this suggests a hint. Gentle reader! if you wish for a summer tour, and know not whither to proceed, go to the Isle of Arran, and spend a couple of healthy hours in each day of your stay there in the agreeable occupation of digging up maiden-hair fern, and transferring the plants to pots. Then, if you have had good luck you will find that you have nearly cleared your expenses; for, if you go to a florist's to buy some specimens of *Adiantum capillus Veneris* for your greenhouse or stove, will you not be charged (at least I find it so) 1s. 6d. or 2s. for the smallest

plant? So that, if you take back with you from the Isle of Arran a couple of hampers of maiden-hair fern, and transmute them into *£. s. d.* at florists' prices (less the trade percentage) surely you will find that you have botanised to some profit. Q. E. D.

As we lay alongside Loch Ranza Bay, we had breathing time afforded us to study its beauties. There were the white houses, and the dark old castle, and the amphitheatre of mountains mirrored in the still waters of the bay; and, in the immediate foreground (to use an Irishism), was a crowd of boats, with the fishermen in their blue shirts, and here and there a red cap, hearty sun-burnt fellows, whom Hook would paint so well; and these fishermen were plying about, picking up the scarlet herring-boxes, that were being flung out in scores from our steamer, and left to float towards their owners. These red rovers upon the waves made dancing bits of bright colour in the sea-green waters; the fishermen pulled towards them, and lashed them alongside their boats; and boats and boxes alike were tossed about by the movements of our steamer getting under weigh again, and cutting up the parti-coloured reflections by arrowy lines of foam. All this made up a busy, bustling, and picturesque foreground, through the midst of which darted the boat containing the comfortable-looking divine, sitting solemnly in the stern with his eyes upon

Loch Ranza, — where, too, our eyes are fixed, until the mountains have shut in the lovely scene.

Now we get into Kilbrannan Sound, and sail southwards, having Cantire on our right, and Arran on our left. At the head of the Sound, we have already discerned Skipness Point, on the eastern coast of Cantire, with Skipness Castle, a massive square fortress, that dates back to Danish times. This strong old place, backed up by rugged hills, is our first sight of Cantire. Here is the mouth of Loch Fyne, from which we are now sailing — but which we shall sail down before many weeks are over our heads. There is a good view up the loch, with its enclosing mountains drawn out in long perspective.

In order to save time, and to spare the reader a double description, I will speak of the various noteworthy places on the eastern coast of Cantire, as we sail past them. The scene in which the massive castle of Skipness is a leading object, favourably impresses us, at first sight, with this interesting portion of the Western Highlands. Skipness is the Scandinavian for *ship-point*, and the name was given to this place from its having been a central station for the fleets of the Normen, during their struggles for conquest upon this and the neighbouring coast. Skipness and Saddell are the only two ancient castles in Cantire, that are not in a ruined state, though Skipness is somewhat

dilapidated.\* Its outer walls are seven feet in thickness; it has two projecting towers, one of which was evidently the keep of the castle, and goes by the name of *Tur in t'sagairt*, the Priest's Tower. This place, like most others in Argyleshire, belongs to the Campbells, and is now the property of Major Walter Campbell. One of the Campbells, called "the Captain of Skipness," was one of the eminent men of Cantire. He studied the art of war under Gustavus Adolphus, was a sturdy Covenanter, and fought against Charles the First and Montrose. Under the command of General Leslie, he pursued a body of the Macdonalds in their retreat to Ireland, as far as the Castle of Dunaverty, a stronghold on a promontory near the Mull of Cantire, that was possessed by the Macdonalds. The Captain of Skipness fell on the first day of the siege; enraged at his loss, his followers compelled the Macdonalds to surrender, and slew them to a man. The mother of the Captain of Skipness, who was daughter to the chief of the Macfarlanes, was hourly expecting her son's arrival. At length, as she thought, she saw him approaching at a quick pace; but it proved to be the messenger with the tidings of his death. The shock was too great for her, and she fell into a swoon,

\* See the Rev. John Macfarlane's account of "The United Parishes of Saddell and Skipness."

from which she never recovered. The body of the Captain of Skipness was interred in the old Gaelic church at Campbelton, where the following inscription formerly was to be seen on the stone that covered the remains of this brave Covenanter : —

“ A Captain much renowned,  
 Whose cause of fight was still Christ's right,  
 For which his soul is crowned.  
 So briefly, then, to know the man,  
 This stone tells all the storie ;  
 On earth his race he ran with grace,  
 In heaven he reigns with glory.”

There was a Mr. Donald Macnicol, minister of this parish in 1753, who brought himself into notice by a review on “Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides.” “Hum!” growled the Doctor, when he read the work, “these Highland savages write the English language wonderfully well!”

Mr. Campbell, in his “Popular Tales of the West Highlands,”\* has the following story connected with Skipness (or Skipnish):—“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 neigh-

\* Vol. ii. pp. 85, 86.

bours. So one little company stayed behind the great band, in CEAN LOCH GILP, Lochgilphead. The one who was hindermost 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 DHUBH, on the northern side of *Tairbairt Chean-tireadh*, 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 a 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 trade, 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."

At Skipness is the ruined church of St. Columba, which, in its entirety, was the largest church in Cantire, except that at Saddell. The greater portion of the building still remains.\*

Macculloch does not give any detailed description of the eastern coast of Cantire, from Skipness to Campbelton, but generalises it thus:— "Hence to Campbelton is a succession of sea-coast, which is almost

\* See Appendix, "Ecclesiology of Cantire."



everywhere various and amusing, and that, whether we take the high road, which follows the margin of the water, or pursue the line of shore in a boat. The coast, itself, is intricate with hill and dale, and with bays, and promontories, and rocks; sometimes woody, at others populous and cultivated, and, in a few places, bare and open, but still always entertaining. Arran, accompanying it for a long way, forms a fine object in the distance, while the ships, for ever standing up and down the Clyde, add life to the whole." \*

We sail on down Kilbrannan Sound, passing Clunaig, with its kirk, two miles north-east of which is Glenristle, and a very entire Druidical circle, of the usual formation. Then we pass Corsaig, and Cour House (where, on the Cour estate, is Loch-na-breach, containing trout of exquisite quality, from two to four pounds in weight), and Sunadale and Barmolloch. Although, by the steamer's regulations, we are requested not to speak to the man at the wheel, we transgress the rule, and find him particularly communicative, though his Gaelic pronunciation of the names of places is sufficiently puzzling to a southron's understanding; but, by the aid of a map, we in some measure surmount the difficulty. The coast-line of the beautiful Isle of Arran now presents a more cultivated appearance, low pasture lands intervening between the

\* Highlands, vol. ii. p. 63.

mountains and the sea. Our steamer is under engagement to touch at Carradale, "weather permitting;" and on a fine day like this she has not the shadow of an excuse for shirking her duty; accordingly we stand in for Cantire land, and swing round by Carradale pier, a little pier, but no little bustle upon it. The natives gaze at us, and we gaze at the natives; and we give and take in the matter of herrings, groceries, and other commodities; and we hear a great deal of Gaelic and Highland converse that is altogether unintelligible to us. All the way from Skipness, there are to be seen, on various headlands, ruins of small forts, called *Duns*, probably of Danish origin, and originally used for watch-towers or beacons. The remains of the most important of these we have just seen at Aird of Carradale, built on a high rock over the sea, and inaccessible on that side; and the foundations of a vitrified fort are now also visible, crowning a rocky islet in Carradale Bay. Lord Teignmouth speaks of this fort, and thus describes these architectural puzzles: "At Carradale Point is a circular knoll, presenting externally a regularly-formed surface, but within, a confused but well-compacted mass of artificial rock-work, one of the best specimens of the vitrified forts, illustrating the design of the rude architects, which clearly was to imitate the work of nature, as being more solid and secure than that of art, by reducing the materials which the

coast afforded to the consistency of rock-work by fusion. The whole structure then became one compact mass, and not composed of separate fragments cemented together by masonry."\* These vitrified forts have been variously ascribed to the accidental demolition of buildings by fire, to the effect of beacon lights, and to volcanoes! It was not till the year 1777 that public attention was directed to them, and ever since they have afforded matter for conjecture to the curious. So much has been written concerning them, that it is not necessary to pursue the subject here, as it could only cause a digression, which, to be of any service, would be a long one, if not tedious; nor could I hope to add anything novel or valuable to what has already been written on the subject. I may observe, however, that Macculloch, who gives a list of the chief vitrified forts, in which he mentions this one at Carradale, would refer their origin to the aboriginal Celts, or first settlers in Scotland; and he thus concludes a chapter devoted to the consideration of vitrified forts: "After all that we can do or conjecture, the date of these works, and the people by whom they are erected, must remain a problem, and it is one not very likely to be solved. Yet I should be unworthy the office of antiquarian bottle-holder, into which I have unwittingly intruded, if I also did not declare my

\* Sketches, &c., p. 385.

own hypothesis, by stating my hope, that some future traveller in the East, will find further reasons to prove that they are among the earliest military works of our oriental Celtic ancestors."\*

Our friend at the wheel tells us a legend of this locality. When the Great Plague of 1666 had swept away its thousands in the city of London, it visited Scotland, and was very fatal in Ayrshire. From thence it passed "in a great white cloud" across to Cantire. It was a fearsome time! whole households died, and there were none to bury them, neither would any go near to them; and these houses of the dead were avoided, till first the thatch fell in, and then the walls, and then a green knoll covered all, giving them a burial many, many years after it had been denied them by man. You see there Carradale Glen, where the plantings are, and where the river comes down from the mountains—a bonnie glen it is, where the Haldœans † came some fifty years ago, and preached the Gospel, and were persecuted for righteousness' sake. Well, sir, in that glen, in the time of the Great Plague, there was a man who took the sickness; and, hearing of what I've told you of the people dying in their houses, he feared he should not be buried. So, this fear took such a

\* Macculloch's "Highlands and Western Isles," pp. 287—301. See also Hugh Miller's "Rambles of a Geologist," pp. 365, 371.

† *i. e.* the Haldanites.

power over him, that he prevailed on some of his friends to dig his grave; and he went and sat by, and saw it done. And when it was dug, he laid himself in the grave, with his sword by his side; and presently he died; and his friends covered his body with the turf. Mac Caog was the man's name; and they will show you the grave to this day. "Uaigh-Mhic-Caoga" is its Gaelic name, which means "the Grave of Mac Caog."

There is a hill in Carradale (said the man at the wheel) called Sroin-na h-eanachain, in which lives an old creature, who makes a great noise before the death of individuals of a certain clan. 'Tis an awsome noise, and makes the whole glen to tremble. There is also a little fairy dwarf at Carradale, called *Caointeach*, or "the Weeper," and when any one hears him weep, they may be sure that they shall soon be told of a death. I know a woman who saw the *Caointeach*. He was no bigger than a new-born babe, and was weeping in a feeble tone, like an infant; and, next day, she got the news of the death of a near friend. You'll meet with a many legends, sir, if you'll talk to the Highland people; they're a very superstitious folk, and think much of warlocks, and second-sight, and such like. There are some as have known of a death coming on by hearing the trampling of feet outside the house, and seeing a spectral funeral going by. It isn't long since

that they used to wake the dead in Cantire; and they may do so now, for all I know, in some of the glens and out-of-the-way places. The soul was taken to Flath-innis, or "the Island of the Brave," but the friends used to watch and wake by the body, lest the evil spirits should take it away to Ifrinn, "the dark, cold island," and leave some other substance in its place. When once the body was buried, then it was safe. And it isn't long since they used to keep the Druids' May-day and first of November, in Cantire. The one they called *Bealtuinn*, or *Beil-teine*, which means "the fire of Belus," and the other they called *Samhuinn*, or "the serene time." There was a great fire lighted before sunrise on the top of the highest hill, and when the sun rose, the people came to welcome it, and to worship God; and the chief Druid blessed them, and received their offerings, and gave each of them a kindling wherewith to light their fires; and if he was displeased with any one, or they didn't bring him a sufficient offering, he refused them the kindling; and no one dare give them one under pain of being cursed; so the poor person had to go without fire till *Beil-teine* came round again.

When we were coming down the Frith of Clyde (said the man at the wheel) we passed "the Kempoch Stane," where there once lived a saint who sold winds to sailors. That was in the olden times; but there

were people in Cantire that believed in the same sort of thing till quite lately. There was an old man who died not long since — he was the owner of a fine little smack, with which he trafficked from Campbelton to Ireland, and other places. There was an old woman in Cantire, who sold winds, and he made a bargain with her to give him a fair wind to sail to Ireland. All that she gave him was two strings, with three knots on each string. When he undid the first, he got a fine fair breeze, getting into mid-channel; he untied the second, and got a strong gale; and when near the Irish coast, he wished to see the effect of the third knot, and unloosed it, a great hurricane blew, and drove him on the shore, where it destroyed many houses. With the second string he came back to Cantire, but he only untied two knots, so he had a prosperous voyage home. Oh, yes! when you get to Cantire, you'll hear some strange tales and legends, if you're that way inclined.

To which I replied, that I had an insatiable craving for storied traditions; and that if I met with any that had not been in print, they might prove useful to me. To which I may now add, that I hope they may prove interesting to my readers.