also to give all the money that they can afford to give. Unfortunately there is neither a Carnegie nor a Strathcona to take an interest in Gaelic literature.

7th DECEMBER, 1905.

On this evening the following paper from the pen of the Rev. C. M. Robertson, Strontian, was read:—

FOLK-LORE FROM THE WEST OF ROSS-SHIRE.

The following examples of the folk-lore of the West of the County of Ross and Cromarty have been collected during the years 1900 to 1904. Many, perhaps most, of them can lay little claim to novelty, but they supply evidence of the inclusion of this district in their area of distribution. They have been gathered almost wholly in Lochcarron, Kenlochewe, and, more especially, Torridon and Little Lochbroom. The two latter places are among the less frequented and less known parts of the district. In "Gairloch: Its Records, Traditions, Inhabitants, and Natural History," by Mr J. H. Dixon, a book whose high merits are well known, the folk-lore of that parish is well represented, and much of what comes under one or other of the sub-divisions of Folk-lore has found a place in various volumes of our Society's Transactions. Most of what is contained in the following pages belongs to the special division of Superstition. Of folk-lore matter noted, topographical sayings, communal nicknames and proverbs are not given. The last named, for the most part, are already known. Rhymes and sayings about places are plentiful. One that is said to have been uttered by Kenneth Odhar on first seeing the mountains named, is—

Beinn Eighe 's Beinn an Eòin,
Beinn mhór a' Chearcaill duibh;
Liathach 's a mac air a muin,
'S mairg air an tuiteadh an sac
    Ann am bac mòine.

"Ben Eay and Ben of the Bird, the great Ben of the black Hoop; Liathach and her son on her back [in allusion to a boulder, it is said, on the eastern shoulder, or possibly to the humped appearance of that shoulder], pity him on whom the load should fall in a peat-bank." Kenneth, by the way, is credited also with a prediction that the Rathan of Liathach

will fall and overwhelm Fasag, and that the only one of the inhabitants of the hamlet to escape will be an old woman wearing a red flannel petticoat. Nowhere do nicknames for the inhabitants of districts and of hamlets seem to be so prevalent as here. In parts of the district not a single hamlet has escaped. The inhabitants of Lochcarron and those of Lochbroom are characterised respectively as Fithich dhubha Loch Carthann agus Clamhanan Loch Bhraoin—Black Ravens of Loch Carron and Buzzards of Loch Broom. The people of Gairloch are nicknamed Na Truisg, the Cods, but have amends made to them in Tuath-cheathairne [al. Ceatharnaich] Cheann-loch-iù agus daoine-uaisle Ghearrloch—the yeomanry [yeomen] of Kenlochewe and the gentlemen of Gairloch.*

The sentiment "De mortuis nil nisi bonum" is inculcated in—

"Tha boineid beag biorach
Air Alastair Garbh..'.' . . .
"Ged a bhiodh e cho biorach
Ri snàthad no mionaidh,
Cha chòir bhi bruidhinn
Air fear tha marbh."

"There is a pointed little bonnet on Alastair Garbh." "Though it were as pointed as a needle or an awl, one ought not to talk about a man who is dead." The same is inculcated more tersely in "Leig leis na mairbh," "Let the dead be."

According to a very reliable informant, a woman who died near Torridon, thirty or forty years ago, left it as a last request that "Deoch-slainte seann fhear Thoirbheartain," "The health of the old laird of Torridon," should be drunk, and that "Oran Srath a' Bhathaich" should be sung by the company at her funeral. Attempts to find confirmation of this report, and information about the song, were not successful. The old laird of Torridon, of course, had been in his grave for years. Whether any use other than the repetition of it as a curiosity is ever made of the following sentiment, or not, we are unable to say:—

"Deoch-slainte an fheadhainn leis an caomh sinn,
'S cha'n e an fheadhainn is caomh leinn,
Gun fhios an fheadhainn is caomh leinn,
An caomh leo sinn."

* A collection of topographical and communal sayings from this and other districts, by Mr William Mackenzie, has appeared in "The Old Highlands."

"Here is the health of them who like us, and not of them whom we like, in case that they whom we like do not like us."

The use of "Mac an Tòisich" (Mackintosh) as a name for whisky has doubtless been influenced by "Ferintosh." The following is possibly part of some song about whisky:—

"'S e 'n t-eorna buidh is athair dhomh,
'S e 'n t-atharnach mo sheanmhathair;
Mise mac na poite duibhe
Bhios 'n a suidhe air a ghealbhan."

"The yellow barley is sire to me, the 'red-land' is my grandam, son am I of the black still that sits on the ingle fire." In this district, 'atharnach' is explained popularly as 'ath-eorn-ach,' and means land which has just borne 'green-crop' (potatoes and turnips), and which would next bear barley when that crop was grown.

As elsewhere, an itch in the nose is called 'meanmhainn,' and betokens the coming of a friend, a letter, or news.

The sunwise-turn—car-deiseil—in leaving the shore with a boat, in at least some parts of the district, is still punctiliously observed.

The dark spots on either side of the haddock's neck, according to some, are marks left by the thumb and forefinger of the Apostle Peter when he took the coin out of the mouth of the fish, and, according to others, show where the piece of money was found. A familiar saying is, "Tha da bhall dubh air an adaig is earball fad air a' chuidhteig," "The haddock has two black spots, and the whiting a long tail." (Dative cases, however, are more disregarded than observed in the district, and the saying would be heard with 'adag' and 'cuidhteag').

The efficacy for warding off evil attributed in other districts to rowan, elder, and honeysuckle, is here associated in a special degree with the bird-cherry. The 'lunnaid' or pin of a 'buarach' or cow's fetter must not be made of any wood but the bird-cherry; a walking-stick cut from this wood, as recorded in Mr Dixon's "Gairloch," prevents the bearer from being lost in mist; and the call of the fairies for the materials for Macrae's house at Clunes was—

Gach sgolb 's gach sgrath
Gu tigh Mhic-ratha;
Gach fiodh 's a' choill
Gu tigh Mhic-ratha,
Ach eidhinn mu chrann is fiodhag dhubh.

"Every pin and every turf for Macrae's house; every timber in the wood for Macrae's house, excepting honeysuckle and black bird-cherry." The rhyme of the builder of the house for Kennedy, Lianachan, also rejects the bird-cherry.

Any implement or tool made of iron, such as a coulter, a knife, or a needle, deprived witches and fairies of all power to harm. On the other hand, that metal was tabooed in gathering shell-fish and in lighting need-fire. If any iron implement were used on a beach producing shell-fish, the beach would be rendered utterly sterile for all time. In the feuds and animosities of the past, beaches that were famed for the abundance of their shell-fish are said to have been ploughed in order to render them worthless to the dwellers around. According to local traditions, the beach of Laig, in the island of Eigg, was thus treated by a hostile clan, and the great yellow beach of Barrisdale—Tràigh mhór bhuidhe Bhàrasdail—by the Tutor of Kintail. Need-fire to ward off a malady called 'An Tinneas Dubh,' the black sickness, from cattle, was lighted by spinning an oaken auger in a holly beam—tora daraich ann am maide cuilinn. Allt Eiginn, at Little Lochbroom, in local belief, was the place at which need-fire—teine-éiginn—was lighted for that district, and was chosen for the purpose as being out of sight of the sea. It is possible, of course, that Allt Eiginn has been associated with need-fire—teine-éiginn—in consequence of the term 'éiginn' being common to both, and that the belief that the need-fire must be lighted out of sight of the sea has arisen from the fact of the burn in question being out of sight of the sea. In other districts conspicuous situations, and even mountain tops, were selected for the lighting of need-fire.

At Little Lochbroom, when a cat washes its face, it is a sign that the animal is to get either fish or flesh shortly. Where the omen is held to point only to fish, "Tha an cat a' nigheadh éisg," "The cat is washing fish," is said. Where the omen is held to point to either fish or flesh, there is the danger that its fulfilment may be brought about by the death through mishap of one of the cattle or of the sheep, and to avert the evil a cuff is given to the cat to put a stop to its face-washing.

Tomas Ceann-ordaig.

Once upon a time there was a couple who had been married for years and who had no children. The goodman said many a time that he wished he had a son. One day he

said ,"I wish I had a son though he were not bigger than the head of my thumb." As he said so it happened. A son was born to him, and never grew bigger than the head of a man's thumb. Tómas—Thomas—was the name the boy got from his father, but because he was so little and because of what his father said before he was born, he was commonly called Tómas Ceann-òrdaig—Thomas Thumb-head, or just Ceann-ordaig alone without Tómas. Owing to being so little, he often met with mishaps. One time he would fall into a great deep rat's hole, and would have to stay there till some one came and hoisted him up. Another time he would lose his way among the tall thick grass, and would have to call for some one to show him the way out. The great mishap of his life befell him one day when he was herding the cattle, and a heavy shower of rain came. When the great drops began to come splash upon the top of his head he did not like it. When they came bigger and faster and thicker he could stand it no longer, and took to his heels and hid himself under a dock leaf. Here he watched the raindrops falling and heard them splashing on every side, and he thought how safe he had made himself from them. But danger was nigh. The old brindled bull was feeding around, and what did he do but whip up the dock leaf and Thomas Thumb-head along with it, and bolt them both together into his stomach. Thomas was now in a woful plight, and could find no way of escape.

When the old folks saw that Thomas was long of coming home with the cattle, they went to see what was hindering him. They found the cattle, but him they could see nowhere. When he heard them searching for him, he sang out with all his might—

" A bheanagain 's a dhuineagain
 Na bithibh-se gha m' iarraidh.
Tha mise na mo ghurraban
 Am muin an tairbh riabhaich."

" O wifikie and manikin
 From your quest of me withdraw,
For I am low a squatting here
 In the brindled bull's great maw."

He was so smothered that he could not cry loud enough for them to hear, and so he had to remain where he was until the time came for the brindled bull to be killed. When the bull was killed, and its carcase divided, the woman who got its stomach put it into a creel to carry home on her back.

She came to a wide burn and leaped over it. No sooner had she done so than a voice came, as she thought, out of the creel on her back, and said, "You are not without marrow in you when you can leap the burn." The woman got such a fright that she let the creel fall to the ground and took to her heels. Before she dared come back for the creel a fox found it. He helped himself to as much as he could of what was in it and went off with Thomas Thumb-head among the rest. Two hunters saw the fox and chased him. To escape from them he took to a path that he had across the face of a high rock, but he was not able to pass that way that time. He had eaten so much that he could not keep his footing, and he fell over the rock. The hunters came and found him dead. When they were skinning the carcase, Thomas was terrified lest the knife might reach him, and he cried out, "Do not stick your little sharp knife into me, do not stick your little sharp knife into me." The hunters were not so easily frightened as the woman had been, and they searched till they found Thomas, and they took him home to the old folks. Ever after he was afraid to hide under dock leaves, and if rain began to fall while he was herding he thought it safer to creep under a peat or under a stone.

The narrator of the story said "gulluban" in the third line of the rhyme, and explained that it was for gurraban, squatting. The last line he gave as

"Am bun an tairbh riabhaich,"

and remarked, "It was bun we always said, but the word ought to be brù." The original word was no doubt that written variously muin, muine, and muinne, in dictionaries, and meaning stomach, etc,

Thumb-head is mentioned by Rob Donn in Cumha nan Inghean as déidh an Leannan:—

"Faodaidh Niall a' chuid is bòidhche
Thoirt an tòs na culaidh dhiubh,
'S a' chuid nach fhiach leis thoirt gu bord dhiubh
Ni Ceann-ordaig gurraidh riu."

The occasion of the "Lament," as explained in a prefixed note, was the absence on military service of all the eligible young men of the district, with the exception of Neil Mackay, a sailor from Argyllshire and a silly trifling fellow nicknamed Ceann-òrdaig. Against that may be set the explanation of the Rev. Adam Gunn:—"Ceann-òrdaig, a diminutive

person—the Gaelic Tom Thumb who did wonderful feats, usually Iainidh Ceann-òrdaig—Johnnie head of thumb." So far as appears from the "Lament" itself, the poet may well have meant the legendary character:—Neil might carry away the fairest of the maidens in his boat, and those whom he rejected would have "Thumb-head" [that is, "no one."] to nestle by them.

The Hunters and the Maidens.

Four men from Strathmore, who were hunting among the hills, sought shelter one night in the shieling at Airigh nan Guthach, between Loch Droma and Braemore. To while away the time, one of them supplied vocal music—puirt-a-beul—while the others danced. One of the dancers ere long gave utterance to a wish that they had partners. Presently four young women came into the hut. After some introductory conversation, partners were appropriated, one of the women seated herself by the musician, and dancing was resumed, and was now carried on with much more vigour and enjoyment. After some time spent thus, one of the men observed drops of blood falling from one of his companions. Concealing the alarm that the sight caused him, he told his partner that he wished to go outside for a little. She did her utmost to induce him not to go, and only when he proposed to let her hold an end of his plaid while he was without did she give a reluctant consent. Outside he pinned the free end of his plaid to the turf wall of the hut, and fled for his life. When his flight was discovered, his partner started in pursuit. Her companions spurred her on, calling—"Cha bu tu do mhàthair air t' aois. A Stiana chaoil, nach beir thu air!"—"You are not your mother at your age. Slender Christina, can't you catch him!" Christina wailed back—"Chaill mise mo dhubhach, 's dh' ith thusa do dhubhach"—"I have lost my *dubhach*, and you have eaten your *dubhach*." Before she could overtake the fugitive, he found refuge in a horse fold at Fasagrianach. Once he got in alongside of the horses she was powerless to harm him. When daylight came he gave the alarm, and a party of friends and neighbours went to the shieling, and found only the lifeless remains of the other hunters. The creatures with whom they had associated had sucked the blood from their bodies.

The story is told with some or other of the following differences. The number of the men was three. They were on their

way home over the Dirrie Mór to Lochbroom. They sought shelter in the hut from a storm. One of the dancers or the musician chanced to lower his glance, and saw that the women had hoofs. The musician stopped the music in his alarm, and his companions thereupon fell lifeless corpses. He started up to flee for his life. The woman at his side laid hold of his plaid to detain him. He threw off the plaid and fled. Her response to the incitement of her companions is—" Mise 's mo dhubhach, mise 's mo dhubhach "—" I and my *dubhach*, I and my *dubhach!*" In a " Guide to Ullapool and Lochcarron," published a few years ago, the name of the shieling is given as Airigh mo Dhubhach, and is derived from the wail of the mothers of the dead men—" àirigh mo dhubhach "—shieling of my sorrow—but the name, as we have heard it, is Airigh nan Guthach. The word *dubhach*, so far as could be ascertained, is obsolete, and its meaning unknown. The reference, however, is evidently to the blood sucked from the victims by the hags, and the term is doubtless to be compared with *dùbhaith*, a pudding, and *duthaich*, great gut, anus, sausage.

Fairy Seats.

The word *cathair*, a city, not *cathair*, a chair, be it observed, has the special meaning in the West of Ross-shire of ' fairy hill,' or ' fairy knoll.' The Welsh form of *cathair* is *caer*, and means ' wall, fort, city,' and it is a singular coincidence that Taliesin, to quote from Dr Macbain's " Celtic Mythology and Religion," " speaks of his place in Caer *Sidi*, doubtless the Irish *Side*, thus—

' Complete is my chair in Caer Sidi,
No one will be afflicted with disease or old age that may be in it.' "

' Sìthean ' occurs a few times in the district in the names of rounded hills of a much larger size than fairy knolls, and does not appear to be associated locally with the fairies. *Cathair* here, like *sìthean* elsewhere, is extended to knolls of like description and dimensions with fairy knolls, whether expressly associated with the fairies or not. It enters into a number of names in the parish of Gairloch and the adjoining districts of Torridon on the south and Little Lochbroom on the north. The native name for Kerrysdale House at Gairloch is A' Chathair Bheag. The word is especially applicable to those hillocks or mounds composed of sand, gravel, and stones that are a feature in many Highland landscapes, and that are in

evidence in many places in the West of Ross-shire. Examples may be seen close to the railway line east of Strathcarron Station. The assemblage of such hillocks in Coire Ceud Chnoc, Corrie of a hundred knolls, is probably unique as regards both their number and their symmetry. As viewed from the public road between Kenlochewe and Torridon, every one of the knolls looks a perfect cone. The bottom of the corry, or small glen, is literally packed with them, and so far is the number mentioned in the Gaelic name from being exaggerated, that the English rendering of the name often is Corrie of the thousand knolls. Another assemblage a few miles away, in the upper end of Srath a' Bhàthaich, in Ben Damph forest, is less accessible, and, though less striking, is sufficiently remarkable, or would be, were it not so completely eclipsed by its rival. The knolls are not much, if at all, less symmetrical, but are smaller, more flattened in form, less numerous, and stand apart from one another. The Gaelic name for them is Na Mulcanan, the little heaps or lumps. A cluster of larger knolls of a similar kind, but of very irregular form, at the bridge at Annat, Torridon, is named Na Cathraichean, the plural of *cathair*. About two and a half miles from there, up Glen Torridon, is a long hillock, at right angles to the road, with a gravel pit in the nearer end, and a name that sounds Cathair Dhubh Dhoirbhe Laghaich, or Cathair Dhubh Dhoir' Mhaol Laghaich, and that is said popularly to be for Cathair Dhubh Dhoire Bheul Bhaothaich, whatever that may mean. A' Chathair Dhonn is the knoll in the scree on the little burn above Fasag. The great abode of the fairies in the district of Torridon, however, was at Camustrole, in the hillock called A' Chathair, between the stables of Ben Damph House and Allt Coire Rol. Another of their notable seats used to be Cathair Chruchoille, near Bruachaig, at Kenlochewe. An old man told an informant that of old one could seldom go near this knoll after nightfall without seeing the little folks, or hearing their music. Another no less notable seat was A' Chathair Bhàn, near Loch an Tiompain, on the way from Dundonnell to Clachan, Lochbroom. Three men going homewards one evening with their creels of peats chanced to pass A' Chathair Bhàn when the knoll was open, and they saw the little folks and heard their music. One of the men lingered to look and listen, and when his companions looked around for him, he was nowhere to be seen. They concluded that he had become immured in the fairy hill, and gave up their search for him. If he was indeed with the fairies, it was vain, they knew, to seek for him until

the return of the mystic hour when the fairy seats are open to the gaze of men. When that hour, which is between the old year and the new, came round once again, they found their lost companion standing at the entrance to the fairy seat with the creel on his back, and his eyes fixed on the little folks at their diversions. He thought he had stood there but a few minutes, and with the utmost reluctance he tore himself away from the entrancing scene.

A midwife (Mor Bhàn, Fair Sarah), residing at Kildonan, left home on Christmas day to attend a case, and returned home, as though nothing unusual had occurred, on Christmas day twelve months after. She thought she had been away only for a few hours. The account she gave of herself was that she had gone to A' Chathair Bhàn with people who met her after she left home, and who insisted upon her joining their company, and that she had spent the night feasting and dancing with them. Beginning at length to feel wearied, she exclaimed " Beannaich mise, nach mi a tha a' fàs sgìth '— " Bless me, how tired I am growing." On the instant the place was overwhelmed with confusion and darkness, and she felt herself bundled out without ceremony into the cold open air.

Another story, of a less familiar type, is connected with this hill. A woman, who was also in the habit of acting as a midwife, if she was not, indeed, the same practitioner, was shearing corn one day with a hook on one of the fields of Auchtascailt, in the Little Strath at the head of Little Loch Broom. Coming into unpleasant proximity to a toad, and observing that its appearance was suggestive of a condition that is of professional interest to the sisterhood of midwives, she exclaimed, " Is math leam nach mi is bean-ghlùin duit "— " I am glad that I am not your midwife." That night a messenger on horseback came in hot haste from the direction of the Big Strath to summon her to exercise her professional functions. Before she set out with the messenger, she was advised by some prudent friend neither to taste food nor to utter speech where she should be taken. Where did the messenger take her but to A' Chathair Bhàn, the seat of the fairies, to assist at the birth of a fairy child. Her situation was strange and disturbing enough, but she set herself to bear in mind her friend's advice, and to attend to her duties. But if her mouth was shut, her eyes were open, and what did she see during the night but the best cow in Dundonnell fold brought into the fairy hall and slaughtered. When the

carcase had been flayed, the hide was wrapped about the body of an old man who had died in the knoll that night, and was fastened at the forehead with a darning needle. Her duties having been brought to a successful issue, the midwife found her way home in the morning without misadventure. The first news she heard after reaching her home was that the laird of Dundonnell's best cow had been found dead in the fold, and that a stocking needle that was sticking in its forehead was supposed to have been the cause of the animal's death. Well did she know, however, that there was nothing in Dundonnell of the cow but the hide, and that the fairies had the carcase, and that what the hide covered was the dead body of the old fairy from the knoll.

In the tradition of the district, the Fingalians and the fairies are represented, owing to the malevolent disposition of the latter, as having been continually at variance.

Meur Coill-a-chaolais.

A common saying, when people are short-handed at urgent work, is, "Is truagh nach robh mèur Coill-a-chaolais againn," or "Is truagh nach robh sguad Coill-a-chaolais againn"—Pity but we had the Coill-a-chaolais host (?) or squad. Coill-a-chaolais—Wood of the strait—was a small hamlet near Achnashellach, by the shore of Loch Dughaill. One of the tenants, whose Christian name was Duncan, was once tilling a tough piece of lea-land with his cas-chrom or bent spade, and gave audible expression to a wish that the weary job were finished. Immediately a dapper little mannikin, with what looked like a toy cas-chrom over his shoulder, presented himself, and said briskly, "I have come to help you, Duncan." "That is kind of you, and I am glad to see you," replied Duncan.

When two men are working together with the cas-chrom the custom is that the one whose land they are tilling, as it is he who is responsible for observing the marches, should begin each furrow, and that his assistant should finish it. To Duncan, therefore, fell the task of turning the first sod of each furrow, termed "am put fuaraidh," the outer spadeful,* or sometimes "an ceap fuaraidh," the outer sod. Leaving the furrow at which he had been working, therefore, to the stranger to finish, he turned to begin the next. Before he

* Literally, the weather spadeful.

had the first sod cut, his assistant was beside him calling out, "Am put fuaraidh, a Dhonnachaidh"—"The outer sod, Duncan." Duncan, looking round, saw the furrow finished and well finished. Wondering greatly, he gave up the new furrow, but contrived to have a sly look at his companion's way of working. He saw the little cas-chrom being plied with extraordinary speed, and the spadefuls of earth turning over, as it seemed, at a touch. Evidently there was no time to lose, and he found it so. Before he got the first sod cut his assistant was back again at his heels bawling impatiently, "Am put fuaraidh, a Dhonnachaidh!" So it continued all the time. Before Duncan could ever turn the outer spadeful, his impatient assistant would finish the furrow and come back bawling, "Am put fuaraidh, a Dhonnachaidh!" When the last furrow was turned, Duncan got time to breathe. Looking at the amount of work done, he could not but feel very grateful to his nimble assistant, and before parting with him he asked him what recompense he would like to receive:—

"Aon ghad guailne dhe 'n arbhar"—"As much of the corn as I can carry on my back" (lit. one shoulder-rope of the corn) was the reply.

"Cha mhór ghabhas sin"—"That will not take much," said Duncan.

"Bithidh sinn ag cur ann"—"We shall be putting into it," replied the stranger.

When autumn came, Duncan, coming from the hill one fine afternoon, sat on a height to view the valley spread out beneath him. Looking at his corn, ripe and ready for cutting, he said, "Is truagh nach robh i am màireach 'n a h-adagan maola buidhe"—"Pity but to-morrow it were in bare yellow stooks."

When he looked out next morning the whole of Coill-a-chaolais was in bare yellow stooks. The work had been done by the fairies who had assembled to the number of—

"Ceithir sèathan, ceithir seachd,
  Ceithir fir reathain* agus a h-ochd,
Ceithir fichead agus cóig ceud,
  Sud a bhéur a bhuain an gart."

"Four sixes, four sevens,
  Four *reathain* men and an eight,
Four score and five hundred,
  That's the host that cut the corn."

* Fir eathain?

When Duncan began to carry in his corn a few days later, his assistant at the springwork appeared with a shoulder rope of about a fathom in length to claim his wages.

"Cha mhór an gad guailne"—"The shoulder-rope is not big," said Duncan.

"Bithidh sinn ag cur ann"—"We shall be putting into it," was the reply.

"C' àit an dèan mi m' eallach"—"Where shall I make my burden," then asked the little man.

"Dèan t' eallach an sin"—"Make your burden there," replied Duncan.

The little man laid out his rope and began to collect and pack the sheaves of corn upon it. He continued to gather and pack until it appeared that he would not leave a sheaf behind him. Duncan, in dismay at the prospect of losing the whole of his crop cried out—

"Di-haoine a threabh mi,
Di-haoine a chuir mi,
Di-haoine a chliath mi;
A Righ nan tri aoineachan,
Na leig mo chuids' uile
Ann an aon ghad guailne!"

"On Friday * I ploughed,
On Friday I sowed,
On Friday I harrowed;
O King of the three Fridays,†
Let not all that I own
Go into one shoulder rope."

The little man, swinging his load upon his shoulder, exclaimed—

"'Nuair is teinne an gad guailne, is ann is dualaiche dha bristeadh"—"When the shoulder rope is tightest, it is most likely to break."

Whereupon the rope broke, the sheaves were restored to their places in the field, and the little man was seen no more.

The story as given above is pieced together from a Lochcarron version and a Torridon version. In the Lochcarron version the spring part was wanting, and the little man was introduced as coming, when the crop was being harvested, to

* Etymologically, "Fast-day." † Literally, "Fasts."

beg a burden of corn—dh' iarraidh faoighe. The Torridon version had " Bu mhath e a nis an adagan maola buidhe "— " How well it would be now in bare yellow stooks," did not say who cut the corn, wanted the numbering rhyme, and gave Duncan's exclamation at the loss of his crop as—

" Is saor a threabh mi,
Is daor a chuir mi,
Agus 's saor a rinn mi buain,
Agus a Thighearna na deònaich
Gu 'm bitheadh mo chuids' uile
'San aon ghad guailne."

" Cheaply I tilled,
Dearly I sowed,
Cheaply I reaped,
And Lord do not grant
That all that I own
Should be in the one shoulder rope."

The Torridon version also put " Nuair is teinne an gad guailne is ann is dualaiche dha bristeadh" into Duncan's lips as the stranger was making off with the burden.

Meur in the proverbial saying and béur (" bhéur ") in the numerical rhyme are both from the Lochcarron narrator. He always made ' e' nasal in the former and not nasal in the latter. When the difference was pointed out to him he said that was how he had always heard the words pronounced, but he understood both forms to be the same word. The section dealing with the cutting of the corn is locally associated, like the rest of the tale, with Coill-a-chaolais, and is alluded to in the words " Cheaply (or easily?) I reaped," but does not seem to form an organic part of the story. Beur, host (?), recalls the legendary " Cailleach Bheur," but, further than the bare sound of the word, does not present any point of connection.

The Three Cats from Lewis.

The Corry where the first part of the tale that follows is said to have been enacted was inhabited by several tenants, and is now occupied by Torridon House and its policies. It is a sunny sheltered delta hemmed in by abrupt and lofty mountains at the mouth of the Corry River, and about three miles from the old house of Torridon, now called the Mains, at the head of the loch. One of the houses of Corry, whose foundations are to be seen amongst the trees on the left hand about

half-way from the entrance gate to Torridon House, was occupied at the time of our tale by a brother and a sister. The mistress of the house one day before going to drive the cows to the hill put a salmon on the fire to cook for dinner, and left her brother in charge. When he judged the fish to be ready, he took it off the fire, and attended to the boiling of the potatoes. While he was thus busied, three strange cats looking wet and cold, one of them being red in colour and having but one eye, made their appearance one after the other at the door. Moved to pity by their miserable bedraggled plight he bade them come in and warm themselves—"Thigibh a steach agus deanaibh bhur garadh." By and bye he threw a morsel of the salmon to each of them in turn, and, whatever possessed him, he continued to feed them so until nothing was left of the salmon but bare bones. Having sat about the fire a little longer the cats got up one by one, went straight to the beach, and disappeared into the loch.

Some time after this Loch Roag in Lewis was the scene of a phenomenally successful herring fishing, remembered by the name "Sgadan Mór Ròthag." The fishing was remarkable, not only for the abundance of the herring, but also for their size. The barrel, instead of holding about seven hundred, would hold little more than four hundred herring. One man, who had not a single net, had as good a fishing as anyone. He went out with a coil of rope covered by his jacket in his boat, and when night fell shot his rope as if it were a train of nets. If he saw anyone coming nearer than he liked, he would call out to keep clear of his nets. Before daybreak he would lift some of his neighbours' nets, take out the fish, and then take in his rope and go away with his catch. Numerous quarrels arose, and blood was shed. Murders even, it is said, were committed, and as herring will not enter a loch in whose waters the blood of a murdered person has been spilt, there was no fishing in Loch Roag after that season.

Among the crowds that repaired to Loch Roag to this fishing were many from the lochs on the west of Ross-shire—there are no sea-lochs on the east of Ross-shire or of Scotland, only firths—and among them the entertainer of the three cats. Having found the fishing-ground, and shot his nets, he went ashore to look for lodgings. From the door of the first house at which he called he could see a clever handsome woman at the fireside. When she saw him she called out "Come away in, honest man. It is you that is welcome, and

it is glad I am to see you here." The man thought the welcome a trifle warm from a stranger, but went in and stated his errand:—"I have come for the fishing, and am seeking a place to stay in. Perhaps you can tell me of some place." "There are places you could get," she replied, "and this house is full, but you will just stay here and we will try to make room for you. Ill would it become me to turn you away from my door." "But why should you put yourself about to take me in," he asked, "when I can get room elsewhere?" "Because you are the one man that is kindest that ever I met," she answered. "Where did I ever meet you?" he asked. "Do you not remember," she asked, "when you fed the three cats and warmed them at your fire in Torridon?" "Is it remember that day?" he replied, "It will be very long till I forget it; but what do you know of it?" "I know this," she said, "that those three cats were my two companions and myself."

Before he left the place he made the acquaintance of the woman's two companions also, and found that one of them wanted an eye and had red hair. The errand that had taken them to Loch Torridon on that occasion was to chase the herring into the nets of their friends who were fishing there. To accomplish their purpose they assumed the form of whales, but when they wished to land at Corry that day they had of course to abandon that form, and they chose to assume that of cats.

Another version of the story represents the woman as meeting the man on the street in Stornoway, and proffering him hospitality, while yet another version makes Skye the scene of the sequel.

Whether the story of what became of the salmon, even with the sequel to confirm it, obtained credence or not from the man's sister, it has not been without its measure of credence and of popularity in the district.

Dubh-Ghiuthais.

The fir woods wherewith Scotland was covered of old, yielded timber in such abundance and of such excellence as to rival the best woods of Norway, and injure the trade of that country. The King of Norway was filled with resentment in consequence, and determined to put an end to the competition and the loss to his country by burning the rival forest to white

ashes. To make the work of destruction sure, the whole Scottish forest from sea to sea must be set in one continuous blaze, which it would be impossible to cope with or extinguish. Ordinary means were not sufficient to light such a fire, but there were other means. There was at that time a famous school called the Black School—*an Sgoil Dhubh*—where the Black Art and witchcraft and magic, and all manner of sorcery, were taught. The King did not go to the school himself, but he sent his daughter. When she had finished her education, and was skilled in all the learning of the Black School, he sailed to Scotland with her, and set her ashore with a firebrand. She went floating over the woods, and rained down fire upon them. She was called Dubh-Ghiuthais by the Scots, because she was blackened, every time they caught a glimpse of her, with the smoke of the burning fir, or because she was obliterating or blackening out the fir—a dubhadh as a' ghiuthais. If the Scots approached when she rested on the ground, she would rise from the earth and hide herself in a magic cloud. By this means she evaded many attempts to put a stop to her work of devastation. Her career, however, was at last cut short, though too late to save the forests, and her work of destruction avenged at Little Loch Broom. A wise man who lived at Kildonan, on the north side of the Little Loch, thought that Dubh-Ghiuthais would probably have been familiar with flocks and herds in her youth, and so he caused all the horses, cattle, sheep, and goats, with their young, for miles around, to be assembled at Achadh Bad a' Chruiteir, above Kildonan, before her approach. When she was seen passing overhead in her magic cloud between A' Bheinn Ghobhlach and Beinn nam Ban, he caused every mare to be separated from her foal, every cow from her calf, every ewe from her lamb, and every she-goat from her kid. Thereupon there ensued such a babel of bleating, lowing, and neighing, every dam and her young calling for one another, that the sound of the hubbub rose to heaven, and caused Dubh-Ghiuthais to sink to the earth in a frenzy. The moment her feet touched the ground, she was shot with an arrow and fell wounded to the death. Her body lay where it fell, until some Norsemen who were at Camus nan Gall, on the other side of the Little Loch, carried it on board one of their ships, with the intention of taking it home to Norway. Every time they set sail, however, they encountered such violent contrary tempests that at last they desisted from the attempt, and interred her

remains at Kildonan. Then they sailed to Norway with the news, and never on any voyage had they more favourable winds. The King was grieved that his daughter's body could not be brought home, but determined that in any case it should not lie in foreign soil. He therefore ordered that a shipload of earth be taken from Norway to Scotland and put ashore at Kildonan, and that his daughter's remains be happed in the friendly mould. His orders were faithfully performed, and thus it came to pass that his daughter, Dubh-Ghiuthais, reposes in her native Norwegian soil in the graveyard of Kildonan, on Little Loch Broom.

There is another account of the death of Dubh-Ghiuthais. A woman at a shieling above Kildonan saw her passing overhead between the two Bens, and blessed her in the name of the Trinity. At the sacred words, Dubh-Ghiuthais reeled and fell, and was found on the earth a crushed and lifeless mass.

A version in Gaelic, from which the name Achadh Bad a' Chruiteir has been taken, was published in *An Gaidheal*, and a briefer version from Sutherlandshire has been given by Dr Macbain in his paper on the Place-Names of Badenoch (Transactions, Vol. XVI.). It is worthy of note, as having a possible ethnological significance, that the Sutherlandshire version makes Badenoch the scene of the discomfiture of Dubh-Ghiuthais. The circumstance, at all events, goes with other evidence to show that the inland and mountainous (and Pictish ?) Badenoch was regarded by the Norse or semi-Norse population of Sutherland as the place where every witch might meet her match, and where the devil was to be found when missed from former haunts.

A Gairloch legend is that a witch called A' Chuilisg was destroying the woods of Scotland, and that she was surrounded and done to death by the natives in Fèith Chuilisg, near Melvaig. A different account, obtained by Mr W. J. Watson (Place-Names of Ross-shire), of the origin of this name has it that Fèith Chuilisg was produced by the spilling of the kettle or cauldron—*coire*— of the Féinne in a struggle between the witch Cuilisg, who had stolen the kettle, and Caoilte, who had pursued the thief.

Casan Buidhe.

Casan Buidhe, Yellow Legs, the famous wizard of Garvé, is also called sometimes Breabadair nan casa buidhe—Weaver with the yellow legs. In his time the Black Water had the

reputation of drowning more men than all the other rivers in the country, and showed a marked preference for men likely to have well filled purses, such as drovers and pedlars. Not only did Casan Buidhe lie under suspicion, but the very means he employed to compass people's death without laying his hands upon them were whispered. He decked himself out in the hide and horns of a buck, and when people were in the middle of the ford he presented himself in this guise, ramping and threatening them on the bank. They, seeing Satan, as they supposed, awaiting them, were panic-stricken, lost their heads, and were carried away by the river and drowned. The last person he tried to frighten was the smith, Mackay. Instead of taking fright at sight of the apparition, the valorous and mighty smith stormed the bank, laid violent hands on the wizard, and gave him such a mauling as incapacitated him from ever again repeating the same villainy.

In a Lochbroom version of the story, the weaver is represented as making murderous attacks in mid-stream on people fording the Black Water, and meeting his fate by being dirked by Uisdean Mac Ille Phadruig, an intended victim, and the strongest man ever reared in Lochbroom.

The story of the yellow-shanked weaver, with local adaptations and variations in detail, is told in many places. A version, of which the scene is laid in the Urquhart district, appears in Mr William Mackay's "Urquhart and Glenmoriston"; others lay the scene in Badenoch, Skye, etc.

Practisers of Witchcraft.

A woman who lived at Little Gruinard River at the time of the wars, and was skilled in spells and charms, is remembered by the name of Bantrach an Armuinn, the Warrior's Widow. She cast a charm—chuir i sian orra—about her son and another man who went abroad to the wars, to protect them from all weapons of war. How it fared with the other man is not related—presumably he lived to come home and tell the tale; but the widow's son, as if he indeed bore a charmed life, came scatheless out of every engagement with the foe. No weapon of war seemed to have power to hurt him, and no foeman was able to prevail against him. Yet death came to him in the end. Whether his mother had neglected, or was unable, to defend him from other weapons, or whether his immunity in the hazards of war left him the more exposed

to unwarlike dangers, or not, he was at last ignobly killed with a scythe by the hands of a woman.

A woman called Lilidheis Mhór, or Big Lily, who lived at Badcaul on Little Lochbroom during the first half of the nineteenth century, had a considerable local reputation as a practiser of witchcraft. She seems to have understood at all events, the arts of making use of everything, and of producing great effects by simple means. Her mechanical apparatus consisted of an old gold ring, a perforated pebble, and a plant called 'lus an toraidh,' or the produce plant. She wanted part of the little finger of her left hand, a defect of which she made effective use. It was, she said, the only part of her body that the devil was able to claim in return for the powers he had given her; and her clients, to whom this tale was told, would doubtless have been duly impressed with the ability of one who could drive so good a bargain with his satanic majesty. A gold ring at the period in question would symbolise the command of untold wealth. Even at the present day the gold wedding ring is not universally worn in parts of the district. The ring of which Lily made use was probably a wedding ring inherited by her. Tradition says she was a great-grand-daughter of the Rev. Angus Morrison, the last Episcopal minister of Contin, who, when about to officiate at a marriage ceremony, said to the bridegroom, in allusion to the bride,—

> "Ge salach i 's ge rapach i,
> 'S ge dubh, lachduun, riabhach i,
> 'S e do chuids' an dràsda i."

"Filthy and untidy as she is, and black, tawny, and brindled as she is, she is now your lot." The description, if intended as a pleasantry, would seem to have had enough of truth to give it a sting. At all events, the intending bridegroom replying, "Ma 's e sin mar a tha i, tha gu leòir agam dhi," "If that is how she is, I have enough of her," refused to go further with the ceremony, and took himself off in high dudgeon.

Two reputed witches lived in Strathmore of Lochbroom, and met violent deaths sometime about the middle of the nineteenth century. One was shot in the semblance of a hare with a silver sixpence. The man who did the deed fled the country from fear of the consequences, and went to Australia. A more circumstantial account is given of the fate of the other

witch. On a Sunday morning several persons, among whom were a gamekeeper and one or more of the maid-servants from Lochbroom Manse, were walking about the glebe, and saw a hare amongst the minister's cows. The gamekeeper, without thought, took up a stone and hit the hare in the forehead. His victim gave him a vindictive look that strangely discomposed him, and then disappeared. Before the day was ended, the gamekeeper received news that his mother-in-law had got her bones broken in some mysterious way, and was dying or already dead. The date of this occurrence, according to data mentioned by the narrator, could not have been earlier than the seventies of last century.

Allt nan Corp.

Behind Annat, running athwart the slope of Beinn na h-Eaglaise, there is a deep narrow glen, traversed by a small tributary of Abhainn Thraill, named Allt nan Corp. The burn, which is the only one in the district that is very easy of access, and at the same time almost completely screened from observation, may have been, especially in view of the plural form in the name, the chosen place for depositing clay effigies, but is popularly said to have received its name in connection with the following occurrences.

One of the Mackenzies of Torridon brought a man from the Lowlands of Ross—bho 'n Mhachair—to catch salmon for him at the croy or cruive above Newton—where Annat Bridge is now—on the Torridon River. Mackenzie, finding that hardly any salmon were forthcoming, asked his man for an explanation. The man replied that he was at a loss to understand it; the salmon were plentiful in the river up and down, and unless some one was removing the fish he did not know what to make of it. Mackenzie, in consequence of this conversation, caused a search to be made, and found the houses of certain families to be plentifully supplied with salmon. Whether those families had any punishment inflicted upon them at this stage or not is not said, but their resentment being aroused against the salmon fisher, they wished, when he left for home at the close of the season, that he might never return—" Ghuidh iad nach cuireadh e clàr 'aodainn an rathad a chuir e cùl a chinn." Before a week had passed, the unfortunate salmon-fisher sank in the mud while crossing Munlochy Bay, and was overtaken by the tide and drowned.

Mackenzie himself was now assailed. A lingering and mysterious malady, that baffled the skill of the medical men, attacked him. A skilful person being consulted, a *corp creadha*, or clay effigy, was solemnly declared to be the cause of the malady, and if the sufferer's life was to be saved, and his health restored, the clay effigy must be found, and preserved with the utmost care. In order to track out the place in which the effigy had been hidden, it was necessary to get some one who had *an cruimh-luirg* *—the art of tracking or finding anything hidden or lost. Fortunately, no further away than at Kinlochewe, was that famous professor of this art, Tormoid Mór Mac Iain Léith, and he was summoned with all possible urgency. The effigy, being speedily discovered by his art in Allt nan Corp, was taken out and most carefully preserved. To prove the correctness of the diagnosis, Mackenzie at once began to mend, and speedily recovered his wonted health and energy. The families who had practised against his life had now to remove in hot haste, and went down the Applecross coast and settled at the Fearns, and have descendants there to this day.

Cures.

A potent specific for toothache was to hold a bone taken from a grave between the teeth. Any bone picked out of the mould of an opened grave would serve the purpose, but generally, no doubt as being of a convenient size, the finger bone of a child was used.

Black Cock, Black Cat, or Male Munro.—A boy who was helping his mother to carry peats from the moss to the road at Little Lochbroom complained of an itch in his back. His mother, by your leave, having made him strip off his shirt, found an inflamed swelling under his shoulder blade. She went home with him, and summoned the old women of the neighbourhood to a consultation. They declared that the disease was the ' teine-dé,' and that to prevent it spreading so as to encircle his body like a belt, in which case he would infallibly die, the blood of a black cock must be applied in the proper manner. She obtained a black rooster, killed it and cut off its comb, and with the bleeding comb drew a circle

* ' An cnàimh-luirg,' ' The tracking-bone.' Cnàimh, when in an unaccented position, and consequently shortened in sound, differs but slightly from cruimh, a worm.

carefully round the inflamed spot. By next morning the disease had quite disappeared. If that remedy had not been applied now, the swelling and inflammation might have spread until they completely encircled the boy's body, and when that happened he would die.

'Teine-dé' usually means St Anthony's fire, but at Little Lochbroom it seems to be applied to shingles. Other specifics for its cure, besides the blood of a black cock, are the blood of a black cat, and the blood of a male Munro. The Munros do not care to be tapped for the supply of the remedy, except perhaps for the benefit of their dearest friends. Usually any cat that has the misfortune to be spotlessly black is the sufferer, and when the remedy is required a bit is cropped off one of its ears. That is the reason why black cats in the district are so often seen with irregularly cropped ears.

A spotless black cock was also of use to cure epilepsy, or the falling sickness. The cock was buried alive at the spot on which the sufferer fell at the first seizure. This was done on behalf of a person who fell on the kitchen floor of a house in the West of Ross-shire, and who is not now more than forty years of age, and there has been no recurrence of the malady. At Torridon it was considered necessary to bury a handful of corn with the cock. According to some, a white cock without spot would serve the purpose equally well. Possibly this substitution of spotlessness in place of colour as the qualification has arisen from familiarity with the Mosaic laws of sacrifice.

Suicide's Skull.—Another cure for epilepsy is to give the sufferer three drinks, one in name of each Person of the Trinity, from a running stream, with the skull of a suicide. The cure, however, depends upon the faith of the patient. He is told before he drinks that if he believes he will be cured, he will be cured. The thinner portions of the skull now in use have crumbled away. It is kept in a hollow under a flat stone over the head of the grave to which it belongs, and to which the name "Uaigh Bean a' Ghranndaich"—"Grave of Grant's Wife"—is given. It is said that Mrs Grant's maiden name was Mary Macleod, and that she came with her parents from Lochbroom to Torridon. She was married to one Donald Grant towards the end of the eighteenth century. Grant was also an incomer to Torridon. He is said to have been a son of Casan Buidhe, the notorious wizard of Garve, and may have come from Garve, or further. The mere cur-

rency of a report that he was the son of such a character throws light upon the estimation in which he was held by the community. It is said that he could charm the deer from the hill and make them follow him where he would, and that he was given to the practice of witchcraft. His wife's mind became unhinged, and she required to be watched continually. One day when they were both working at peats near Badanvugie, not far from the river Balgy, she succeeded in slipping away from him, and, ere he could prevent her, she threw herself over a rock into the sea, on the west side of Ob Gorm Beag, and was drowned. A cave or recess at the rock is called "Cós dubh Bean a' Ghranndaich," "Black cave of Grant's wife." The friends intended to inter the remains in the burying-ground at Annat, but were turned away at the gate. Not only must the body of a suicide be shut out of the regular burying-ground, but it must be buried out of sight of the waters of the loch, else the fish will forsake the loch. The body was therefore buried in a hollow a little to the east of Annat burying-ground.

There is another suicide's grave, similarly out of sight of the loch, though quite near to its edge, at "Torr Fhionnlaigh"—Finlay's knoll—a small rocky eminence at the southwest angle of Ob Gorm Mór. This is the grave of one Finlay Macrae from Kintail. His mind having become unhinged, he wandered to Ardmore, as the peninsula between Ob Gorm Mór and Ob Gorm Beag, on Loch Torridon, is called. There he hanged himself from a tree, and his remains were buried at the knoll called after him Torr Fhionnlaigh. His skull was in use before the one now used for the same pupose, and formed a link in the succession by which the practice must have been carried down from remote antiquity to the present day. It was doubtless when Finlay's skull became useless from decay that the grave at Annat was desecrated, and the skull from it first brought into use. Enough is known of this Finlay Macrae to suggest his identification with one named in the "History of the Clan Macrae."

A burial of a suicide out of sight of the sea has taken place at a much more recent date than either of the above, in the parish of Lochbroom. In this case, owing to the steepness and ruggedness of the ground, the difficulty of access to the place where the grave lies is so great as to throw into strong relief the importance attached to the selection of a spot out of sight of the sea.

An Casgadh-fola, The Blood-staunching.—A man who was still living at the Heights of Kenlochewe towards the middle of the nineteenth century, once cut his finger severely. All ordinary means of stopping the bleeding having been tried in vain, a man at Turnaig who had the power of staunching the flow of blood was sent for. He came and bound up the finger three times, but each time, after a brief stoppage, the blood began to flow again. When he saw that his third attempt had failed, he told the patient's friends that the only hope was to send to Kenlochewe for "Macrath caol," slender Macrae, and to do so without delay. He enjoined them also on no account to tell Macrae that he had been first summoned and was on the ground, and he concealed himself in a closet before Macrae's arrival. Macrae's binding of the finger was not successful at first, but appeared to be effective the second time, and he took his departure. Before he reached home, however, he was overtaken by a messenger sent to tell him that the blood had again begun to flow. He expressed surprise and returned. He tied up the finger for the third time, and then, to the alarm of those around him, he fell in a dead faint. After some time he recovered consciousness, and in reply to enquiries as to the cause of his fainting, he said that he had had to put forth his whole power the third time to stop the bleeding, and that the exertion had caused him to faint. He was then asked if he had not exerted the whole of his power the first or the second time, and he replied that he had not. Why Macrath Caol, who was at Kenlochewe, near at hand, was passed by at the first, and the man at distant Turnaig, beyond Poolewe, sent for, the story does not say.

Remedies for Cattle.

Na Marcaich.—An ailment to which cattle were subject was known by the name of 'Na Marcaich,' the riders. This name was given to the ailment because animals suffering from it were believed to be ridden by invisible beings. The remedy was to fire a shot from the tip of the animal's tail along the back bone, and to repeat an *orra*, or incantation.

Galar na Geumraich.—When cattle lowed excessively, they were held to be suffering from 'galar na geumraich,' the lowing malady. The cattle owned by a man in the Kenlochewe district long ago suffered from this ailment. He tried every available remedy without effect. There was one unfailing

remedy for the malady, but there seemed to be no possibility of obtaining it. This was water in which the heart of a man who did not know his parents had been dipped. The water needed only to be sprinkled upon the animals in order to effect their cure. At last an opportunity occurred of procuring the remedy. A pedlar called at the house one evening, and got permission to remain over night. In the course of conversation, he was asked what his name was. He gave the name by which he was known, but did not know whether it was his right name or not. He explained that he did not remember his parents, and did not know who they were or what their names were. Next morning the pedlar set out in the direction of Torridon. He was followed, and, well beyond the last house where the isolated stable now stands by the roadside at Allt a' Ghille, beside Loch Clair, he was overtaken and killed. The remedy was prepared and applied, and the cattle were cured. The malady that was removed from the cattle, however, only settled upon the family of their owner. For generations, descendants of his were afflicted with a form of insanity characterised during its periodical attacks by the emission of cries resembling the lowing or bellowing of cattle.

Burials.

The bodies of suicides, as already said, were excluded from churchyards, and were buried out of sight of the sea. The bodies of persons drowned accidentally, and those of unbaptised children, here as in other places, were not interred in the general burying-grounds. The remains of such persons, of course, were excluded of old from consecrated ground. The body of a drowned person also was not admitted even into a dwelling-house pending interment, but was housed in a barn. The propriety of admitting the remains of a young man who had been drowned accidentally into his father's house was questioned in a case within our knowledge.

About Loch Torridon there are at least three burying-grounds for unbaptised infants, one at Riverside House, at the head of the loch, one named Torran an Tiodhlacaidh, little mound of interment, both marked in the six-inch Ordnance Survey maps, and one at Allt a' Chladha, burn of the burying-ground, at Diabaig.

The remains of still-born infants must be buried before sunrise or after sunset. This practice was in force up to, if it

has not continued into, the present century, and prevailed also in the east of the county, or at all events in the Black Isle. If the practice did not originate in a perversion and misapplication of such words as are in the 58th Psalm—"As a snail that melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun," the words are quoted in support of the practice.

The Prince and the Black Flag.

Donnan, from which the name Kildonan comes, was, according to some, the name, or one of the names, of the witch who burned the fir woods. According to others, it was the name of the son of the King of Norway. The Dundonnell estate consisted of old of four divisions. The Kildonan division belonged to the lady of Kildonan. Donnan, the son of the King of Norway, saw the lady of Kildonan, and loved, wooed, and married her. He wished to erect a chapel at Kildonan for himself and his wife, and he brought a shipload of earth from Norway for the purpose. The earth was landed in a heap at Kildonan, but the chapel was not erected. Consequently there has never been a chapel, but only a burying-ground—*cill*—at Kildonan. The prince, on entering the Little Loch on his return from a voyage to Norway, hoisted a black flag, which was understood to mean that he was dead, in order to see how great his wife's grief for him would be. The shock of seeing the black flag was so great that she fell down in a swoon, her heart burst, and she died. When the prince arrived at his home and heard the result of his ruse, he too, was so stricken with grief that he died. The bodies were taken to Norway after three days for burial.

This, of course, is the story that is associated with the island of Loch Maree, but it is also associated with Dun Canna in Coigach.

Probably, when the chapel was to be erected at Kildonan, a load of earth was brought from some consecrated place, perhaps from Kildonan in the Island of Eigg, the scene of St Donnan's martyrdom. There are legends of such a practice in connection with the building of certain churches, such as that of Logie-Easter. The legend of the death of the Norwegian prince and his wife on the one hand, and that of Dubh-Ghiuthais, also from Norway, on the other, have been mixed up with some such legend, perhaps now beyond recovery, of the foundation of the Chapel of Kildonan.

Uamh an Oir.

The legend of an attempt by a piper and twelve followers to reach the gold in the devious ramifications of an underground cavern has been connected with several caves in the West of Ross-shire. At Torridon a small opening amongst great blocks of the ruddy Torridon rock, near the parting of the ways to Annat and to Fasag, claims to be the scene of the legend. The name Uamh an Oir, Cave of Gold, is given to the opening, and its other end, to which the same name is given, is said to be at Camus an Oir, to the south of Sron a' Charra, near Gairloch, a distance of fifteen miles in a direct line. The last that was ever seen or heard of the explorers was the sound of the pipes heard from under the ground at An Ruadh-mheallan, six miles, or according to other narrators, at An Tom Buidhe, eight miles from the starting point. The words of the air that was heard on the pipes are:—

> Bios na minn bheaga
> 'N an gobhair chreagach,
> Mas tig mise 's mas ruig thusa
> Uaimh 'n Oir.
>
> Bios na searraich òga
> 'Cur a mach an òcraich,
> Mas tig mise 's mas ruig thusa
> Uaimh 'n Oir.

" The little kids will be rocky goats ere I come, and ere you reach the Cave of Gold. The young foals will be putting out the manure heap ere I come," etc. The third line is heard sometimes with *till*, return, in place of *ruig*, and also as " Mur a tig thusa cha ruig mise," " Unless you come I shall not reach," and the fourth line, always in the former case (after *till*), and sometimes also in the other cases, runs—" A Uaimh 'n Oir," " Out of the Cave of Gold." A dog that accompanied the party found its way out at the other end of the cave, and, according to some accounts, had not a hair left on its body.

Another attempt to explore the cave is said to have been made by one of the Mackenzies of Torridon, accompanied by a piper and twelve men, and provided with candles and ropes. They soon had to turn, owing to the candles not burning, and they thrust a stick up through the ground to mark the distance

gone. On emerging from the cave, they found the stick a few score yards away, near "An Stair Shalach," the dirty stepping stones over the little stream to the west.

The former story, in substance, is told in Mr Dixon's "Gairloch," in connection with Uamh an Oir at North Earradale, and we have heard it connected with a cave at Melvaig.

A cave in the red rock inside Stattic Point, on Little Loch Broom, is called An Uamh Dhearg, the Red Cave, and sometimes Uamh an Oir. An attempt by the young men of the district, provided with ropes and candles, to explore this cave was also defeated by the failure of their lights. At a little distance from the entrance there is a pool, and beyond the pool there are seven ways. Anyone who enters on those ways will never find the way back, and must wander about until overcome by exhaustion. The cave extends to Sail Mhór, about six miles. The legend here is a somewhat curious jumble. The party consisted of a piper and three companions. The pipes were heard underground at Buillean Osgair, Oscar's Strokes. These are two gashes cut in Druim nam Fuath, the ridge between Durnamuck and Mungasdale, with his great sword by Oscar in an attempt to free the imprisoned piper and his companions. One of the gashes is about fifty yards from the public road where it crosses the summit of the ridge, and the other a little further to the west. The air that was heard on the pipes in this instance was "Cha till Mac Cruimein," "Mac Crimmon's Lament."

The Fideal.

A clear case of the growth of a myth is found, if we mistake not, in the popular explanation of the name Loch na Fideil, near Loch Maree Hotel. The 'Fideal' in popular lore of the present day is a dangerous water monster, and the appropriate legend appears in Mr W. J. Watson's "Place Names of Ross and Cromarty," p. 281, in both Gaelic and English. As a common noun, *fideal* does not seem to occur, but *fidealadh*, entangling, entwining, is familiar in the district, and the verb *fideil*, entangle, ravel, etc., occurs elsewhere. Loch na Fideil we take to mean Loch of the entanglement. The man who waded or stumbled into it would soon find himself engaged in a deadly struggle with entangling water plants. Every step he moved, they moved with him and still clung to him. They would at last kill him through exhaustion, and he would

kill many of them by uprooting them. The legend seems neither more nor less than a dramatic account of what we have described, and is to the following effect:—"There was a combat between Ewen and the Fideal. 'Step for step with you, Ewen,' said the Fideal, pressing on the man. 'Step for step with you, Fideal,' said Ewen, pressing hard in turn. Ewen killed the Fideal, and the Fideal killed Ewen."

The legend, to all appearance, owes something to the story of Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel and the witch. She, trying to pass him on the way from Inverness, said, "Step out Ewen," and he replied, "Step for step with you, old woman, and the odd step to Ewen." As the ferryman at Ballachulish would not admit her into his boat, she took leave of Sir Ewen with the words, "My heart's desire to you, dear Ewen." "Your heart's desire to that gray stone," returned Ewen. The stone immediately split through the middle, and so remains to this day.

Ghosts and Phantoms.

Cumhag a' Ghlinne, the Neck ("Narrow") of the Glen, near Kishorn, is at night a gloomy and eerie place, and has the reputation of having been haunted from time immemorial. The apparition of a man who had died suddenly when on a visit to Inverness is said to have haunted this spot until spoken to by a man still living. What transpired at the interview between the dead and the living we do not know, but the conjecture is that the purpose in view was to impart information necessary to avert some wrong.

An older story of the same kind relates to an estate official who died suddenly from home, and walked about Kishorn. In this case the widow went out with a Bible under her arm to accost the ghost of her husband, and ascertain what it wanted. In both cases the ghosts, after being interviewed, were no more seen.

The mails between Lochcarron and Applecross were carried at one time bv a man of the name of Murchison, called, like all the Murchisons in that country, MacCalmain in Gaelic. This man, whose home was at Slumbay, was commonly known as "Am post mór," "The big postman." Coming from Applecross early one morning, after he had passed the summit of the road and was descending on the Kishorn side, he saw the figure of a woman walking on in front. As he could not

recognise her and had not heard that anyone was coming over the hill that day, he wondered greatly who she could be, but felt sure that he would soon overtake her. He was mistaken, however. Though he could overtake any man walking and no man could overtake him, he could not say that he gained a single step on the figure in front. Down to the side of the loch, round by Kishorn and up through Cumhag a' Ghlinne she kept the same distance in front. Where the road emerges from this glen she turned up the moor and disappeared into Eas an Fhithich, the Raven's Fall. Not until then did it occur to him, notwithstanding her pedestrian powers, that she could be other than human.

The old track between Shieldaig and Balgy, on Loch Torridon, dips down, as can still be seen, from both directions to the beach at the south-east corner of Ob a' Mheallaidh. At this point a mysterious personage, it is said, met a man going to Shieldaig on the eve of the valuation of the sheep stock when Balgy farm was to be cleared, and said to him, without another word, "I shall be at the valuation tomorrow." On the day of the valuation much drink was consumed. Towards evening a quarrel arose, a general fight broke out, and, though no fatal results ensued, a good deal of blood was spilt.

The man from whom we heard the above story had himself a strange experience at the same spot. He is one, it may be remarked, to whom the writer is under the greatest obligations for information regarding the dialect, the place-names, and old industrial practices, as well as folk-lore of Torridon and more especially of Lochcarron and Kenlochewe. As to superstition, he is one of those who take a lively interest in it without being influenced by it. At one time, when a friend of his was lying ill at Shieldaig, he went after dark to visit him. When passing the great boulder at the south-east corner of Ob a' Mheallaidh, a feeling of fearful horror suddenly and unaccountably overcame him. It was such a feeling as one might have who had perceived something dreadful or supernatural, but he was not conscious of having either seen or heard anything out of the ordinary. He put up his hand to readjust his plaid, which he thought had fallen from his shoulder, and his bonnet, which he thought had been raised by his hair standing on end, but both plaid and bonnet were in their proper places. He felt so weak that he could scarcely move, but he resolutely dragged himself away from the spot,

and somehow or other managed to cover the mile and a half to Shieldaig. His friend, seeing him look white and upset, asked what was wrong, and on hearing the story said to him that he would always be heartily welcome there at any time he could come, but charged him never again to attempt to come in the dark.

A very similar experience was described to us years ago by a fellow student from Ross-shire. After studying late one night, and before retiring, he went out for a walk by a deep sluggish stream near his home. At a certain point on the bank, without being conscious of seeing or hearing anything unusual, he was seized by a sudden feeling of horror. Wondering greatly what could have caused the feeling, or what could be the meaning of it, he, after a brief pause, returned home. In this case, however, a secret that was hid by the night came to light in the morning. A woman had drowned herself in the course of the night at the very spot at which he had been seized by the strange feeling, and the time about which the authorities concluded that the deed had been committed, was a little before he reached the spot.

The track from Shieldaig by Balgy reaches its highest elevation near Ardmore, and then descends towards Annat and Torridon. About the summit, wayfarers at night, it was said, were often met by a mysterious black dog. The narrator of the occurrences at the angle of Ob a' Mheallaidh, when on his way home from Shieldaig one winter night near this summit, saw what looked like a dark dog make a slight movement against the snow-covered ground, and wondered if the much-talked of black dog was going to prove to be a reality after all. On his nearer approach, however, the moving object turned out to be a bush of rushes swaying in the wind.

The ridge crossed by the public road between Little Loch Broom and Mungasdale, on Gruinard Bay, is named Druim nam Fuath, Ridge of the Hobgoblins, or "Bogles." The road, after crossing the watershed from the Loch Broom side close to the more easterly of Buillean Osgair, runs nearly level for a short distance. This part is called Cùl (Back of) Druim nam Fuath. The reputation of the place is that horses have often taken fright there with no apparent cause, and people have felt, until they passed a little stream crossing the road, as if some one had laid hold of their clothes, and were trying to keep them back.

Lights.

Two children of a tenant of Taagan, at the head of Loch Maree, when crossing to the harvest field were drowned in Poll-cuilinn, or the holly pool. Forty years before that time, when there were twenty-four tenants in Taagan, two corpse candles were frequently seen at that pool, and were regarded as warnings of death to take place there. The corpse candle is a light, or tongue of flame, in shape like a candle, and appears before a death. In accounts of such lights the interval between the appearance of the warning and its fulfilment does not usually exceed a few days, and rarely amounts to months. The Taagan story is remarkable for the length of the interval.

Mysterious lights, that have no apparent association with future events, are said to be seen periodically at certain places. One such light, it is said, appears on the Beacon Rock at the entrance of Loch Toscaig, in Applecross, on Hallowe'en night, and has done so from time immemorial.

Another is, or used to be, seen out on the sea from Gairloch. Sometimes it approaches the land and then retires, and varies in appearance. It has been seen with the semblance of masts and rigging wrapped in flame.

Another of those lights frequents Upper Loch Torridon. Sometimes it makes its appearance moving from the Narrows, as the entrance to the Upper Loch is called, to its station at the entrance to Ob a' Mheallaidh. The time of its appearance is sometimes dusk and sometimes later. Whether it usually or always approaches from the Narrows before taking up its regular station at Ob' a Mheallaidh does not appear. When stationary, and also on most occasions when seen moving, the light is indistinguishable from that of a ship at a little distance. Once the light was seen at dusk, larger and redder than usual, moving with a speed impossible to any vessel from the Narrows. As it reached its usual station, and for some time after, it was watched by a group of seven or eight persons, and may have been seen of course on that occasion by others unknown to us. The natural supposition that the light is that of some steamer, probably a trawler, does not meet the case. The light has been a familiar object for years to many of the inhabitants of the townships of Inver Alligin and Wester Alligin, on the opposite side of the loch, as well as to others. Outer Loch Torridon, by the shortest reckoning,

is seven miles in length to the Narrows, and its southern shore is dotted with houses or townships. That either a single vessel or a succession of vessels could resort continually for years to a particular spot on the Upper Loch, without the fact being known locally, is manifestly a supposition that does not bear serious consideration.

Graveyards.

Eilean a' Ghobhainn.—The burying-ground situated near Culinellan farm at Kenlochewe, and sometimes called after the farm, is known locally as Eilean a' Ghobhainn, the Smith's Island. A number of ash trees grow in it. Some of them measure fifteen feet or more in circumference, but are much decayed. According to Mr Dixon's "Gairloch," the course of the river lay formerly to the east of the burying-ground, but was altered by a great flood, which is said to have washed away some bodies, to its present position some distance to the west. The designation of the place as an island goes to show that the river either by a division or possibly by an alteration of its course, has at some time flowed on both sides, but as to the change of the relative positions of the river and the burying-ground, tradition has another tale to tell. The original burying-ground lay on the opposite side of the river. That is understood to mean on the west side of the present channel of the river, but might possibly mean on the east side of the old channel. The remains of a smith were buried one day in the original burying-ground, and were found next morning on the opposite side of the river. They were restored to the grave, and were found the following day at the same place beyond the river. Again and again the same thing occurred. Each time the body was returned to its first resting-place it was found next morning on the other side of the river. At last the body was buried in a grave dug for it at the place of its choice, and there it rested. The place thus singled out received in consequence the name of Eilean a' Ghobhainn, and became thenceforth the burying-ground for the district.

Creagan an Inbhir.—A disused burying-ground on Gruinard Island, is named Cladh Phris, Graveyard of the Bush or Copse. Popularly the place is said to have been so named because the first person to be interred there was a ship captain from Dumfries. This ground was used by Protestants.

There is said to be a pre-Reformation burying-ground a little to the north near the shore, and in line with the ruined wall on the slope of the island. The wolves infesting the country of old made it necessary to bury the dead on islands. The abandonment of Cladh Phris was occasioned by a storm. The funeral of a man who had died at Gruinard was delayed by a violent gale, and the coffin was deposited in the cup of a kiln—ann an crò na h-àthann. After having lain there for seven days, waiting for the weather to moderate, the body was in the end interred at Creagan an Inbhir, near Gruinard House, and was the first to be laid in that burying-ground. One of the Mackenzies had singled out this spot for his own last resting-place, but he was buried at Beauly or some other place. The grave of the bard, William Mackenzie, commonly called An Ceistear Crùbach, the Lame Catechist, is in this place.

Creagan an Inbhir, by which name this graveyard is commonly known, is, as we were informed, on the opposite side of the inbhir or estuary, and the proper name of the graveyard is Cnoc an Inbhir. A spot to which creagan, little rock, could be applied, does certainly seem a less likely place for a burying-ground than one designated by cnoc, knoll.

Bordbuie.—The Mackenzies of Ballone and the Mackenzies of Dundonnell were closely related in origin and by intermarriage, and for a time buried their dead together in the parish churchyard of Clachan, Lochbroom. The Dundonnell family, from resentment at the burial in their common ground of the remains of a man who was married to one of the Ballone family, and who committed suicide by drowning himself in the River Broom, determined to abandon that burying-ground and to choose another. The spot chosen was a pretty little plateau, nearly rectangular, and isolated on three sides, situated at the head of Little Loch Broom, and known by the name of Bordbuie, in Gaelic Am Bord Buidhe, lit., The Yellow Table. The laird of Dundonnell desired his tenantry to adopt this place as their burying-ground, and to cease to resort to Clachan. No one could be found willing, however, to be the first to break ground in the new graveyard. The reason assigned for this unwillingness is that the spirit of the first person buried in a new burying-ground would have to watch the place until the next interment. There has probably been a misapprehension of the familiar belief that the spirit of the last person buried has to watch the graveyard

until the next interment. In a local burying-ground, with comparatively few interments, the period of watching would ordinarily be longer than in the larger, older, and more frequented churchyard of the parish. In course of time, however, an interment took place. A man died at Strathbeg, and the funeral cortege set out for Clachan. At Bruthach na Gearrchoille, where the road turns up the hill towards Clachan, a contest took place between the friends of the deceased, who wished to lay the remains at Clachan, and some who to please Mackenzie wished to go to Bordbuie with the funeral. In the struggle the coffin was broken, Mackenzie's supporters prevailed, and the body was buried at Bordbuie. A son of the man who was being buried that day separated himself from the cortege when it turned in the direction of Bordbuie, held on his way towards Clachan, went on to Sutherlandshire, and never returned.

Wrecks.

On the beach of one of the villages in the district, the wreck of a vessel that belonged to one of the inhabitants has lain now for a number of years. The sight of wreckage, whether afloat on the waves or stranded on the shore, brings very near the presence of death at sea with no hand to help and no tongue to tell, and such symbols of unknown death very readily become invested with superstitious regard. In this district, however badly off people may be for fuel, on no consderation will they help themselves to any part of a wreck for firewood. That is a general practice, but the following seems to be rather an individual manifestation of the superstitious mind. A certain part of the wreck we have referred to was washed away in a storm within the last few years. A brother of the owner, the owner himself being dead, searched the shores unceasingly until he found the missing part, and was enabled to restore it to its place. His reason for putting himself to this trouble was that in a previous storm the corresponding piece had gone amissing, and before the year was out his brother had died, and he feared unless this piece was recovered and replaced that he might die before the end of this year. Yet before that year was ended, the remains of the man who was so careful to restore the piece that had been carried away were laid in the grave beside those of his brother.

Marriage.

Certain observances in connection with marriage at Little Lochbroom point very clearly to the primitive institution of marriage by capture for their origin. The marriage party, to take a typical instance, has to walk several miles to meet the minister who is to perform the desired ceremony, and he has to come perhaps an equal distance. The trysting-place for the performance of the ceremony may be the bank of a stream or some other well-known spot, and may be out of sight of all human habitation. All this and perhaps more of our tale is common in different parts of the west of Ross-shire. The bridegroom's house is a little further away than the bride's home from the trysting place. While the bride's party is at breakfast on the morning of the wedding day, a scout is sent out every few minutes to see what is doing at the bridegroom's house, and to guard against surprise by him and his party. The bridegroom's party, in the same way, are watching the bride's home. When the bride and her party set out, there immediately arises an appearance of great stir and bustle about the bridegroom's house. Presently he and his party are seen to come out, and, as though they were in hot haste to overtake the bride's party, they take a straight line through fields and over streams and fences. They do not overtake the party in front, however, but keep about two hundred yards behind. When the bride's party sits down to partake of a refreshment by the way, the pursuers still keep at the same respectful distance, and sit down to take their refreshments by themselves. While waiting for the minister at the trysting place, the two parties keep at a distance the one from the other, and even when they are obliged to approach for the performance of the ceremony, they still keep distinct. Immediately on the conclusion of the ceremony by which bride and bridegroom are made one, the two parties mingle together and are associated throughout the remainder of the day's proceedings.

Cliar Sheanchain.

The Cliar Sheanchain, or, as the name is pronounced here, Cléir Sheanchainn, used to pay a visit to Little Loch Broom every spring. The members of the company were five in number, and belonged to the south. According to some

accounts they were Lochaber men. When they came to the house at which they intended to stay, they asked for "smeuran dubha sna Faoilich Earraich," "ripe brambles in the beginning of spring," and they were entitled to hospitable entertainment until their demand was complied with or they chose to depart. On their making the usual demand at a house in Badcall, at Little Lochbroom, one spring day, the goodman led them to his cornyard to a bush which he had covered with his oilskin coat in autumn, and he presented them there and then with ripe brambles. Sorely put out by this untoward occurrence, they set out to cross the hill to the valley of the Gruinard River. On the ridge the snow was drifting and night was falling, and in the darkness and drift they "went out" on a small loch by the way and were drowned. The bodies, when recovered, were buried at the north end of the loch in graves still pointed out, and in consequence of the event the loch bears the name of Loch na Cléire.

Variations in the tale are that the demand was for "mucan fàileag ann am Mart an Earraich," "hips in the height of spring;" that it was complied with in Strathmore at the head of Lochbroom, or at Keppoch, at Little Loch Broom; that the man had covered the bush with his coat; that the Cliar was overtaken by darkness at Badbea, in Little Lochbroom, and that there were twenty-four members in the company. Probably twenty-four was regarded here as the full complement of members in the palmy days of the institution, and the number had dwindled down to five at the time of the story.

Another story, telling how at Culfail Hotel, Duncan Ban routed the three northern bards constituting the "Cleith Sheanachas,' was related at the Duncan Ban celebration at Oban in 1904. The origin and history of the institution has been related fully in the "Celtic Review," Vol. IV., pp. 80-88, by Mr W. J. Watson.

21st DECEMBER, 1905.

At this meeting Mr Alex. Campbell, solicitor, Fort-William, delivered a paper entitled