

GAEILIC INCANTATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.

The belief in incantations, like that in the evil eye, is world-wide and world-old. An incantation consists of a formula of words which is recited to bring about certain physical results to which the meaning of the words has some correspondence more or less direct. Thus, in Scotland, a sprain is cured in this way. A black woollen thread, with nine knots made upon it, is tied round the sprained limb, and while the thread is being put on, the operator mutters these words :—

The Lord made
And the foal shalde ;
He lighted,
And he righted,
Set joint to joint,
Bone to bone,
And sinew to sinew,
Hail in the Holy Ghost's name !

The principle underlying this spell is that of analogy—the recital of what the Lord did, with a call for, or expectation of, similar healing, is supposed to effect the healing process. But another aspect of the matter appears in the following English charm for cramp :—Stand firmly on the leg affected, and repeat with appropriate gesture :—

The devil is tying a knot in my leg,
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, unloose it, I beg ;
Crosses three we make to ease us,
Two for the thieves, and one for Jesus.

Here is an evident reference to the action of demons, who, in certain stages of culture, are supposed to cause all manner of disease. To expel this demon a more potent power had to be invoked, and this is done by a set formula, generally in metre. Here, then, the virtue of the "spoken word" or magic formula lies in the fact of its being addressed to a supposed living spirit or agent, capable of understanding and acting upon it ; and this is the case in most charms, and ultimately this animistic notion may be the foundation of them all, whether analogical and symbolical, or directly invoking demon or god powers. Among savagery the

poetic and musical arts are used almost for this purpose alone. If one asks an Indian of the West for a love-song, he will tell him that a philtre is really much more efficacious. "If you ask one of them," says Kohl, who travelled among the Red Indians, "to sing you a simple innocent hymn, in praise of Nature, a spring or joyful hunting-stare, he never gives you anything but a form of incantation, with which he says you will be able to call to you all the birds from the sky, and all the toads and walruses from their caves and burrows." The Maoris call incantations *hakaiai*, and employ them in actual life, such as for raising the wind by their means. The hero in their myths splits rocks before him with a *hakaiai*, just as the girls in the Kaffir and Bushman tales do; and by the same means he can assume any animal shape, be it bird or beast. The Finns are famed for their magic songs, but we shall quote only this blood-stopping formula:—“Listen, O blood, instead of flowing, instead of pouring forth thy warm stream. Stop, O blood, like a wall; stop, like a hedge; stop, like a reel in the sea; like a stiff hedge in the moss; like a boulder in the field; like a pine in the wood.” For the antiquity of these and like incantations we may appeal to ancient Chaldea, the land of Magic. Fortunately, a considerable body of incantations has been preserved in the cuneiform inscriptions, and of these one specimen must suffice:—

Painful fever, violent fever,
The fever which never leaves man,
Unceasing fever,
The lingering fever, malignant fever,
Spirit of the heavens, conjure it! Spirit of the Earth con-
jure it!

Among the Aryan nations, ancient and modern, the belief in incantations has been strong. Indeed, a good case has been made out that some charms can be traced to the times of primitive Aryan unity. The sprain charm with which we began to exemplify the subject of incantations is very widely spread over Aryan ground. It appears in one or two forms in Gaelic, as for instance thus:—

Chaidh Críod a mach
Se' i mbheadh aibhleib,
'S fhéair a ceann nua each,
Air aon bristeadh na seach.
Chair a maoilbh ri moilbh,
Aigus feith ri feith,

Aguis feoil ri feoil,
Aguis cracisian ri cracisian,
'S mar leighis ean sin
Gua'n leighis miss an.

This means that Christ early in the morning found the horses' legs broken, and he put "bone to bone, vein to vein, flesh to flesh, skin to skin, and as he healed that so may I heal this," at the same time tying a worsened thread on the injured limb. Similarly in Orkney, after telling that the Saviour's horse "stode," we are told that he put

Snow to sinew, joint to joint,
Blood to blood, and bone to bone,
Mend thou in Goff's name !

Norway and Denmark have almost verbatim copies, and in the heathen German times we meet in the Menseburg charm for the lame horse the same words, only it is Balder's horse that is lame, and Woden works the cure by putting

Bim si bina, blaut si blonda,
Lid si gildan, adia gallanida sin—

bone to bone, blood to blood, and joint to joint, as if they were glued together. With this the Sanskrit charm in the Atharva Veda has been very properly compared :—

Let marrow join to marrow, and let limb to limb be joined,
Grow flesh that had fallen away, and now every bone also grow,
Marrow now unite with marrow, and let hide on hide arise.

Cato, an early Latin author, has left a charm for dislocation, which, however, as often happens, is but a mere jargon without sense. In the great Greek poem of the Odyssey, the kinsfolk of Odysseus sing a song of healing over the wound which was dealt him by the boar's tusk, and Bepheades, the tragic poet, speaks of the folly of muttering incantations over wounds that need the surgeon's knife. Theocritus of Syracuse, a Greek poet of the third century before Christ, devotes his second Idyll to the incantations of the love-lorn Simaetha, who tries to bring back her lover by symbolic charms and incantations, whose burden Mr Symonds turns neatly by the line—

Wheel of my magic spell, draw thou that man to my dwelling.

We get a glimpse of the dire incantations resorted to by the superstitious women of Rome in the terrible rites practised by Horace's *Cnidia*, whose charms could draw down the moon, a phrase he often repeats, as does also Virgil. Pliny, who doubtfully discusses the question of the use of charms, records that even the great Caesar, after a carriage accident which held him, used to repeat a charm three times for safety whenever he rode thereafter.

Enough has been said by way of proving the universality and antiquity of charms as a method of healing, harming, and protecting. The English word "charm" is derived through old French from the Latin *carmen*, a song, incantation; and it covers nearly the whole extent of this class of superstition, though "spell" is used for the idea of fascination or bewitching. A person is "laid under spells" but cured or protected by charms. There are several words in Gaelic for these ideas. The spell is in Irish called *geas*, which also means a prohibition or taboo. The word *geas* is also known in Gaelic, but the idea of bespelling a person is represented really by two modern words—*charm* and *rosc*, the former being used for placing on one a protective spell, and the latter for a mischievous spell. The charm, pure and simple is now called *áras*, literally "knowledge," and also *or* or *orto* (prayer!), but the older name *shandh*, *olay*, or *way*, which appears in old Irish as *wpsh*, and in Manx as *olay*, still survives in the words of the charms, and has caused some ludicrous mistakes to translators. In fact, this is not the only old word or idea that has survived in these curious rhymes. The *Fear Fisfa* of early Irish, and the *Fear Fithe* of more modern Irish, appears on Gaelic ground as *Fis-fille* or *Fa fithe*, and is explained by a Gaileach man as "the power of screening oneself from every person one wishes." For instance, a smuggler possessed of this charm has only to touch his bewing utensil, and no gauger can see them or him. Poochers similarly can lay a spell on their game so as to make it wholly invisible, or, if not so, as some hold, to make only the heart of the dead animal be seen. This power is conferred by a rhyme which fortunately now is in public possession, for it has been more than once published. The Fa Fithe is therefore a spell. In the Irish tales, the Tuatha De Danann make use of it, and it seems to cause a magic mist which they can cast over themselves, though once at least it is represented as a magic cloak. Its ultimate meaning is doubtful, so far as present knowledge goes. St. Patrick's famous Gaelic hymn is known by the same title—a title

which in the early Irish appears as *Faoi Fionna*, which Dr Whitley Stokes interprets as the Deer's Cry, for Patrick and his companions escaped by the recital of this hymn, appearing to their enemies in passing as but so many deer! O'Beirne Crowe gives the translation as Guardsman's Cry, but these translations carry little or no elucidation of the later ideas connected with the expression.

When the art of writing was introduced, it was at once made use of in charms. Amulets had inscriptions cut on them, and slips of paper or parchment with incantations written on them were worn about the person. Toothache charms, for instance, have so been used, and cases have been known where the paper, with the charm thereon written, has been lost for some time unwittingly, and as soon as ever the loss has become known, the toothache has come back, to employ the graphic expression actually made use of, "like a shot." The "runes" letters of the Teutons, just like the Ogams of the Celts, were used for purposes of sorcery. Indeed the word "rune," which is also the Gaelic *rís*, seems properly to mean sorcery, and it was long considered a wonderful secret how one man could by such simple strokes communicate his thoughts to another. From this it was a natural step to attribute to runes a secret magic power, and accordingly we have accounts of their use as charms. The Fathers runic alphabet is found inscribed on various things used or worn, especially on swords. Beynhild, as the Edda tells us, taught Sigurd the virtue of runes thus:—

Victory-runes must thou know
If thou wilt victory gain.
Cut them on thy sword-hilt,
Others cut on the blade,
And twist name Tyr.
Storm-runes must thou cut,
If thou wilt guarded have
Thy ship in the breakers' roar.
Thought-runes must thou know,
Wilt thou than others wiser be.
Woden hath these runes
Himself devised.

The Gaelic Celts attributed virtues in a somewhat similar way to their Ogams. Dalan, the druid of Eoghanid Airens, took four rods of yew and wrote Ogams on them, and by their means, and his key

of seership, discovered that Kochaid's Queen was in Fairyland. The King of Alban's son inscribes an Ogam on Cuchulain's spear, and that hero is enabled thereby to take a sea voyage unerringly in search of some friends. The secret virtue of Ogam is also recognised in their use by Cuchulain on the Tain Bo Cuailgne, a use which is of the nature of a taboo rather than mere warning off to his foes. The disease of Ogam in medieval times renders it difficult to discover many examples of its employment in charms, but it is clear that in Druidic and early Christian times it was in great vogue for purposes of magic.

The virtue of the spoken word was pushed to an extreme among the Gaed in their belief that poets, especially satirists, could give physical effect to their sentiments as expressed in verse. The satirists were believed to have the power, by means of their verse, to cause not an injury of reputation merely, but a physical injury as well. Deformities, such as blisters on the face and body, were expected to result from a satire, and the legends record that they did result. Hence no refusal was given to a bard, whatever he asked—at least in the heroic age, for their arrogance brought災 to a head in the 7th century, and they lost much of their pristine power. On a refusal, the bard promptly said, "I will satirise you," and then he gained his point. The death scene of Cuchulain illustrates this well. He can fall only by his own spear, which the enemy must get. So a satirist comes to him and says—

" That spear to me."

" I swear my people's oath," said Cuchulain, " that thou dost not want it more than I do. The men of Erin are on me here and I on them."

" I will enrage thee, if thou givest it not," says the satirist.

" I have never been reviled yet because of my niggardliness."

With that Cuchulain flung the spear at him, with its handle foremost, and it passed through his head and killed nine on the other side of him.

That satirist received his deserts! The belief represented here has not yet died out, for a peasant lately deceased has more than once told the writer how she was feared by certain superstitious people on this very score—that not merely a moral but a physical injury should be done them by a satiric rhyme or poem. The Gaelic for satire is *seoir*, and there are several such in the language. Some last century MSS. represent a poetical duel as once taking place between Lord Macdonald of the Isles and Macmillan More of Argyll, which ran thus:—

Mac Cenlinn:

Tha mi seach anns gach ceannid ;
 Le h-aire mi 'n ghabhailte mo cholg.
 Ga b' a bhairbreath a mach ar' fhionn,
 Bhiodh e doiry mar dhirl nan ord.

Mac Domhnaill:

Ni 'm b' osa buairtann ri co' shamhail-e',
 Ni mi mar cheann nathraich 'n teang air eirith ;
 Ni mi mar eisg an daibh a' bhearraidh,
 Ni feist air bain a h-earrs dhi.

Translated :—

Argyle:

I am learned in every art ;
 With entire my rage could not be overcome.
 Whosoever would draw forth my wrath
 Would be red (blistered) like sparks from the hammer.

The Lord of the Isles:

No easier were it to deal with my like ;
 I am like the adder's head, and its tongue vibrating ;
 Like an eel after its being docked,
 And a beast that has its tail cut off.

The name of the sixteenth century Irish and Scottish bard, Angus O'Daly, called Aonghus Nan Aoir, or Angus the Satirist, is still remembered in the Highlands with dread, and many of his satire are handed down. In Scotland only Chisholm of Strathglass pleased him—and he did not ! But there are several oaths or satires on vermin, like rats and mice, which are really intended to banish these animals out of the locality. The following spell against mice is attributed to Aonghus Nan Aoir. It appears in the *Duanair:*—

A h-eile ioch fhriomh is bhoilidhnu,
 Radar Cneamh Daill-na-carr.
 Agus loubhar Alld a' mhullidh,
 Bithidh ullamh gu dol thairis.
 Gabhaidh seachd air an daibh,
 Beagan am brigh a' mhullidh,
 Cinnseadh sios rothad-ainm an Dico,
 Seachd oil Tionn na h-eire.

Raignibh an sin Duschaid-Niobha,
Tha i thuraun, 's bithidh chairis.
Gobbaidh aig obh tan gireadh,
Sneachdaibh an t-Srid, tha i scilleir,
Me'm micheil iad sibh fo 'n casan,
Si m'ru'n saltair iad nur geille.
Tha fighdeasair an ceann shios a' bhailie,
Agus ciste mhine air a chilasadh.
Fausaibh an sin gas an abhach storn Shilans;
Agus achoe coart 's gu'm bell boinn' ring' an Lochalsh,
Cruimhreachibh an t-ordagh 'chluachadh.

This is merely an elaborate order for the mice to go over from one place, directions being minutely given, to another, where more food awaits them; and let them do it evermore! An even better "mouse" charm is published in the 12th volume of the *Celtic Magazine* (p. 267), and a particularly excellent "rat" spell is published in "Nether-Lochaber's" *Ben Nevis and Glencoe*, at page 4, with a translation.

Another belief in connection with these charms is remarkable as finding its proper parallel only in present savage or barbarous life, though prevalent in old Egypt. This consists in a magic value being attached to a person's name. Among the Egyptians, to know the name of a god or spirit gave the person knowing it the power over him *nomen omnia*. Pliny relates how the Romans used to find out the name of the gods of any city they besieged, and called upon him to come over to them as able to give higher sacrifices. The Jews never named the name of their God, so that it has been a matter of doubt how exactly the name "Jehovah" was pronounced. A man and his name are therefore, in certain stages of culture, regarded as convertible terms: to injure the one is to injure the other. If a Lapp child falls ill, its name must be changed. In Bonny the same is done to cheat the demons that plague it. Among the Fins, to know the name and origin of any being—man or demon, human or demoniac disease-bringer—gives power over him. It is so in certain Gaelic charms. The name of the person has carefully to be repeated, and it must be the person's real name; a wrong paternity attributed to any person entails a wrong name, and a consequent failure in the efficacy of the charm. The blood of an unbaptised person cannot of course be stopped by a charm, for he has no name recognised by the supernatural powers. It is equally important in the cure of cattle to know the name of the animal upon which the charm

is worked ; and it is asserted that witches and other "bewellers" require the name of a cow, or a hair from its hide, to work their wicked will.

The taking the name of the Deity in vain breaks one of the ten commandments, as everyone knows ; but it is highly improper—nay very dangerous—to rashly invoke any supernatural power. The invoking of the devil by rashly calling on his name might bring him before the notary ; and adjuration or oath might do the same. Of course witches could call him up on set purpose by their incantations. It is not, perhaps, so well known that fairies and other powers could also so appear if their name was rashly invoked ; for only witches purposely invoked supernatural beings like the devil and the fairies. A story may illustrate this. On a hot, broiling day, a woman was toiling on alone, when feeling very thirsty she said, " Nach truagh nach roth mo phathadh-sa air Bean a' Ghleugain ! " (Pity my thirst was not on the Goodwife of Gleugan). Suddenly a woman dressed in green appeared with a quinch of milk. The other was taken aback. "Take this ; it will do you no harm." But she refused, saying she did not need it. The fairy replied, "Gus roth galar na te a chair a' cheud chir a' cheud soine na ceann orm ma ni a grua ort ! " (May the disease that came on the first woman that put the first comb in her hair on the first Friday (or fast) be on to me, if it will hurt you). " De an galar bha 'n sin ! " (What disease was that ?) " I bhressachadh gun mhas, gun nighean ! " (That she died without son or daughter).

The exact line of demarcation on the one hand between what is an incantation and what is a prayer or hymn, and on the other hand between an incantation and an ordinary secular song, is often difficult to draw. It is not merely incantations and charms that trench closely on the religious. What is religious passes insensibly into what is purely superstition, especially if the culture of the people is not high. Superstition is nearly all a survival of Paganism into Christian times ; and in the incantations the names of Christ, his apostles, and the Virgin Mary took those of the old heathen gods. We have already quoted the "aspirin" charm, and in its heathen German form we saw that it was Balder's horse that was lame, but in the modern charms it is the horse of the Lord :—

"The Lord rule
And the fiel shade."

Or

"Chaidh Criod a mesch
Air madainn nisach."

Many medieval hymns and prayers were used as mere incantations. After all, heathen prayers were and are often incantations or magic formulae, compelling the attention of the divine being by mere ritual. As Roman points out, the Roman prayer was a magic formula effecting its object without reference to the moral disposition of the worshipper. If the rites and words were gone through duly—rite, as they said, that is according to ribs, then the desired effect took place independent altogether of the character of the person worshipping : there was no idea of sin or reparation; it was all a give and take ; " I offer a kid—rite, you give me so and so," or " If you save me in the danger I am to pass through, I will kill so many victims at your altar, or I will erect a temple for you." Similarly the Khassia of North-East India, who worship dead ancestors, offer to put up an extra pillar stone to a dead relative if help is given. If the help comes not, often some of the pillar stones already erected are knocked down ! Some early Christian Celtic hymns are mere charms. We may instance the Latin hymn known as the Lorica or " Mailcoat " of Gildas, which probably goes back to the 7th century. The author of it prays that death come not that year, that he be defended from his foes by angels and saints, and that God defend him in all his limbs and members, which are daily named. He says :—

" Domine, esto locica tutissima.
Erga membra, erga manus viscera, &c."

Any one that sang this hymn frequently had seven years' additional life and a third of his sins wiped out, and any day he sang it, demons and foes and death could not touch him. The elaborate hymn of St Columbus, called the Altus, was good as a charm for the sick, and his " Noli, pater, indulges " was potent against fire, thunder, and lightning. St Patrick's hymn, the Fieth Fiada, has been a famous charm. Here the devotee binds himself to the Trinity, to the power of Christ's life, to the power of the heavenly hierarchy, to the powers of nature, and to God's power to direct and defend him against demons, vices, &c., and finally, he invokes all these powers against tyranny, incantations, idolatry, black gentile laws, " against spells of women, and smiths, and druids," and against poison, wounds and drowning ; let Christ be all round him ; and so he binds himself to these powers. The prologue to this hymn tell us that Patrick made it to protect himself and his monks against the ambush of his foes, so that they escaped in the guise of deer. This hymn " is a corslet of faith for the protection of body and soul against demons, and men, and vices. Every one who shall

sing it every day, with pious meditation on God, demons shall not stand before his face ; it will be a defence against every poison and envy ; it will be a safeguard against sudden death, and a consolation to his soul after death."

In this connection, the beautiful hymns collected by Mr. Carnichael in Ulster occur to me. Some of them are just on the indefinable borderland that separates Christianity and Paganism, and others again incline to a doubtful position between a literary census and an incantation. We may quote one or two. This one refers to smothering or "smooring" the fire at night before retiring to rest :—

MAITHU SMALATHA AN TEINE.

(*Prayer on Smooring the Fire*).

Tha mi 'smaladh an teine,
Mar a smaileas Mac Mhoire ;
Gu' ma slán dha'n taigh 's dha'n teine,
Gu' ma slán dha'n chuidheachd nile.
Co' siod air an lá ? Peadar agus Paol.
Co' air a bhíos an fhairs an nochd ?
Beal De a thidhneadh, singeal De a labhradh.
Aingeal an domhna gach taigh,
Gu'r obairneadh 's gu'r gheidheadh,
Gu'n tig is geal am mairreach.

Translation—

I smoore the fire,
As it is smoored by the Son of Mary.
Blast be the house, blast be the fire,
And blessed be the people all.
Who are those on the floor ! Peter and Paul.
Upon whom devolves the watching this night ?
Upon fair gentle Mary and her Son.
The mouth of God said, the angel of God tells.
An angel in the door of every house,
To shield and to protect us all,
Till bright daylight comes in the morning.

There is similarly a longer one for going to bed, called the "Bed Blessing;" also hymns for blessing in going with cattle to the sheallings, the "Herdling Blessing," and the following one is intended to consecrate the seed before putting it in the soil. The person reciting the Consecration Hymn went sun-wise (*désireáil*), and chanted.

"Thoid mise nach a chear an t-sil,
An aonan an Tha bheir air fha,
Cuiridh mi m' sasan an' ghasadh,
Is tiligidh mi basach an dird."

Translation—

I go forth to sow the seed
In the name of Him who makes it grow,
I will set my face to the wind,
And throw a handful upwards.

The following milking song is secular-expiatory, a rite or a charm combined, intended to soothe the restlessness of a cow that has lost her calf; and the reference in the first verse is to the *Lamias* or "Tulchan" substituted for the real calf:—

MILKING SONG NO. 30.

(*The milk-maid of the cows*).

O, m' agħan ! hō m'leġħ min !
M' agħan eridha, eor gridluu,
An asem an Ard Ħiġi,
Għid ri d'laugħ !

An qiddeha lha am Baċċaillie māliegħ,
Cha deshaidh bissaq air-bejn,
Cha deshaidh għixx a-hnej jaiegħ,
A minku Baċċaillie 'ċċaridha !

Thig, a M'hare, 's kħiex a-kkob,
Thig, a Blerida, 's komiex i ;
Thig, a Ċalum Ċille qiegħi,
Is jaġħi do dha lajebha m' m'hawn !

Mo kkob bissaq, dħarru, ho na b-żejt
Is a' bħiżżejjha i matħair isogħi !
L-ibex siġġien air-ewslha na tiegħi,
Bissaq idher air m' agħan gaoli !

'S a kkob dħarru sin, 's a kkob dħarru,
'S jaġġu galu d'ix-xandu is-dharru,
Thura caoħid de-ċeħud jaiegħi mien—
Mise 's u' aġġu minn għad fu'n reħbar !

Translation—

O, my heifer, ho! my gentle heifer,
My heifer so full of heart, generous and kind,
In the name of the High King
Take to thy calf.

That night the Herdsman was out,
No shackle went on a cow
Nor caused a low from a calf
Wailing the Herdsman of the flock.

Come, Mary (Virgin), and milk the cow ;
Come, Bridget, and encompass her,
Come, Caim Cille, the beneficent,
And wind thine arms around my cow.

My lovely black cow, the pride of the shilling !
First cow of the byre, choicest mother of calves !
Wiaps of straw round other cows of the town land,
But a shackle of silk on my heifer so loved.

Thou black cow ! mine own gentle black cow !
The same disease afflicts thee and me ;
Thou art grieving for thy beautiful first calf,
And I for mine only beloved son under the sea.

Similarly several operative songs breath closely on being incantations for success in the work on hand. The weird queen and walking songs do not appear to be altogether free from the taint of incantation.

I. SPELLS AND PROTECTIVE CHARMES.

We shall begin first with the spells, or bespelling charms, known in Gaelic as *gesse* or *siose* (signum, blessing). Thereafter we shall consider the healing charms for man and beast. The *gesse* or spell is generally wicked ; it is the work of an adverse power, and, as a consequence, we cannot get any specimens of this form of incantation with ease. For instance, a spell could be laid on a man going out to shoot, unknown to him, and he would be unsuccessful that day. Such a spell is a *roadd*, and, though the "roadd" still exists among us, we have failed in persuading anybody to reveal it. Of course, the folktales contain bespelling formulas, for in them the hero or heroine do many wonders by means of spoken words. The favourite form for the folksale spell

is this—" Tha mise 'ear art mar gheasadh 's mar shroisibh, 's mar
màidh beannachas motha sithi a' thòibh, seachairia, laochan beag
a' mèistiriche 's a' mì-threuiriche na tha fein a theirl a chinn, 'n
man chua, 'n man cornada beatha diot, mar faigh thu màch, do."
" I lay on you as spells and crosses, and as nine fetters of a fairy,
travelling, wandering woman, that a little fellow more timid and
more feeble than yourself deprive you of your head, your ears,
and your powers of life, unless you discover" or " do," do."

The *Faith Fada* spell, which, as already stated, poachers once
made use of, and smugglers lately, and now even, find means of
escape by, is as follows:—

Fa sithé cuireann ort
Bho chò, bho chat
Bho bò, bho eabh,
Bho dhama, bho bhean,
Bho ghilla, bho nighean,
N bho leamhach beag,
Gus an tig mise rithead,

An aon an Athar, n' Mhic, 'n an Spioraid Nasadh.

" A magic cloud I put on thee from dog, cat, cow, horse, man,
woman, lad, lass, and little child, till I come again, in name of the
Trinity."

The first two words are the old *Faith Fiada*, as now pronounced.
This spell rendered the person invisible.

The preventive charm or *sian* is represented by a very famous
formula intended to preserve a man from wounding or harm from
the time when he left the presence of the charmer till he came
back, and it was usually put on those going to battle. Men so
protected, for instance, at Culloden, had only to take their plaids
off their shoulders and shake out of them the bullets that hit
them! It was the *Sian*, *gar coilleor*, and is as follows:—The
charmer and his protégé go to a retired spot. Here the recipient
of the charm goes on his knees; the charmer lays his hand on
his head, and, with eyes shut, he utters the following rhyme,
going round him sunwise twice. And he goes round him once
anti-sunwise, saying a different rhyme. Both these rhymes, which
after much trouble we have been fortunate enough to get, run
thus:—Going sunwise, he says—

¹ See Folk and Hero Tales of Anglesey, page 265.

² Society Transactions VIII., p. 127, and XIV., p. 264.

Sian a chair Moire air Mac ort,
Sian ro' marbhadh, sian ro' lot ort,
Sian eadar a' chloch 'n a ghlion,
Sian eadar a' ghlion 'n a' lheasit ort,
Sian nan Tri ann an son ort,
O mhullach do eil inn gu boun de chois ort :
Sian seachd paidir² a h-aon ort,
Sian seachd paidir a dha ort,
Sian seachd paidir a tri ort,
Sian seachd paidir a eithir ort,
Sian seachd paidir a oig ort,
Sian seachd paidir a sia ort,
Sian seachd paidir nan seachd paidir dol doisil ri
dough uarnach ort, ga do ghleidhneadh bho bheadh 'n
bho rabi-thapsadh.

Going anti-clockwise, he says—

Clegaid na slainte mu d' cheann,
Gearcall a' charbhasair mu d' anrbhas,
Uchd-eididh an t-eugair mu d' bheoilteach.
Ma's reisig bho 'n taobh-eail,
Brogan na h-Oigh gs d' ghlion gu luath.
Sian nan Tri ann an son ort,
Bho mhullach do chinne gu boun do shail,
Agu sian paidir nan seachd paidir
Dol tuathail is doisil, doisil is tuathail,
Gu d' ghleidhneadh bho d'chol
Bho luaidh 'n bho charbhas,
Bho lot 'n bho charbhas,
Gu nair is am do bhais.

The person on whom the charm is placed then rises and departs, but the charmist remains standing with eyes shut, and he does not open them till the other is out of sight. The charmed one is safe from death or wounds till the charmist sees him again. The translation is as follows :—

The charm that Mary placed on her son be on you,
Charm from slaying, charm from wounding,
Charm between pap and knee,
Charm between knee and breast on you,

²As our informant had it, the word was eadar, which, following the analogy of other charms, we have corrected into paidir.

Charm of the Three in One on you,
From top of head to sole of foot.
Charm of seven pates once on you,
Charm of seven pates twice on you,
Charm of seven pates thrice on you,
Charm of seven pates four times on you,
Charm of seven pates five times on you,
Charm of seven pates six times on you,
Charm of the seven pates of the seven pates going sunwise
In lucky hour on you, a-keeping you from harm and
accident.

Anti-sunwise.—

The helmet of Salvation about your head,
The ring of the Covenant about your neck,
The priest's breast-plate about your breast ;
If it be retreat on the rear,
The shoes of the Virgin to take you swiftly away,
Charm of the Three in One on you,
From crown of head to sole of foot,
And the charm of the pater of the seven pates
A-going anti-sunwise and sunwise, sunwise and anti-sunwise,
To protect you from behind
From lead and from sword,
From wound and from slaying,
Till the hour and time of your death.

The following is a charm to help in the correct interpretation
of dreams. The charmer repeats the following, and then the
dream is unravelled :—

Chomail an ailing an mair
'S mi 'nam shuidh air aileadh roth ;
Dh' iosa Peadar e do Phol
'S thuirt Pol gu'm bu mhath ;
Ach beith-thuradhain Christod ro' Phol
Gu thuss chomail eort.

I saw a vision last night
And me sitting on a mount of grass ;
Peter told it to Paul
And Paul said it was well ;
But the judgment of Christ before Paul's
To keep you right.

The following is a charm given by "Nether-Lochaber" as good against the demon of the dust-cloud. "As it swirls along," he says, "as it approaches, you are instantly to close your eyes and mouth as tightly as possible, at the same time turning your back upon it until it has swept by, mentally repeating—for you are not to open your mouth, nor as much as breathe, as long as you can help it—this rhyme:—

Gach cumain is misin is meadar,
Gn' Pól, gn' Peoldair 's gn' Bríde;
Dinn, is seann, is ghearrd mi a alk 's o chumart,
Air a bhealach, 's air a mbhealach,
'S air an tráich ag thailf;
Pól is Peoldair is Bríde eomh!

Which he translates—

Be the ears of milk pail, and bowl, and cog
Given to Peter and Paul and Saint Bríde;
Wherever I wander protect me, ye Saints!
Let not evil nor harm me betide;
Hear me, Peter and Paul, and gentle Saint Bríde!¹

We now come to the spell for prevention of the results arising from the "Evil Eye." The following is a preventive charm to keep the evil eye off one's cows. It is called "Eolas an Torrainsin," and was got by Mr Carmichael, when he was in Uist. The torrainsin, he explains, was described to him as a flowering plant, growing in rocky hill places, the bloom of which is large and pap-like. The tide is said to affect it, for while the tide flows, it is filled with the "dew of bliss," and dries up again with the ebb. It has to be called during the flow of the tide, placed under one of the milk-pails, and in placing it this charm is repeated three times, making at each time a circle sunwise, with the plant over the vessel:—

Dhainnsean' thu, thorrainsin,
Le 'd uille bhoarmachd 's le 'd uille bláithidh;
Thainig an nasc sonain
Leis na nasc sonain
Le bláithidh an torrainsin;
Lamh Bharide leam!
 Tha mi mis agad bláinsin.

¹ *Tales, Fays, Myths and Glories*, p. 212.

Buanas' thu, thorrasan,
Le 'd tharadh moen 's tig,
Bi bheadh gan traoighadh,
Le 'd lamha, Ebride mhin,
Céimn naomh gan sheoileadh,
Oidhran eacan gan dhise,
Is Micheil nan stéadnaithe
Cúr buaidh aon an xl.

The nine bus-lurach a ní air a bhunin.

Which translates—

Let me pluck thee, Tomasán !
With all thy blessedness and all thy virtue,
The nine blessings came with the nine parts,
By the virtue of the Tomasán ;
The hand of St. Brigid with me,
I am now to pluck thee.
Let me pluck thee, Tomasán !
With three increases as to sea and land ;
With the flowing tide that shall know no ebbing,
By the assistance of chaste St. Brigid,
The holy St. Columba directing me,
Gentle St. Odhran protecting me,
And St. Michael of high-crested steeds,
Imparting virtue to the matter the while,
My beautious plant is now plucked !¹

III. FOR THE EVIL EYE.

When the "evil eye" has "lain" on any one, there are various means of cure. The most usual is the cure by water off silver; and this cure was effected with or without a rhyme charm. The modus operandi with the incantation was as follows:—Coins of gold, silver, and copper are put in a basin full of water. The charmer repeats the *sular* or incantation, and in doing so blows on the water with his breath. The water is then sprinkled on the sufferer. The charm is as follows:—

Se a 'n t-eail a chi
Se a 'n cridhe a smainicheas,
Se a 'n tseanga 'labhra,
Se misin 'n triair go tilleadh an críos, A.B.,
An ainnm an Athar, a' Mhio, 's an Spioraid Naomh.

¹ *Twist Eyes and Glasses*, p. 132.

Translated—

"Tis the eye that sees, the heart that thinks, and the tongue that speaks. I am the three to turn this off you, A.B., in the name of the Father, etc.

The charm, apart from the "silver" water, is known as "*Eolas a' Chroinseachaidh*," or "Charm for the Reproof," or it may be called "*Caoig Beann-suil*," "Stoppage Injury by Eye." John MacKenzie, in his *Review of Gaelic Poetry*, p. 268, gives the following Gaelic charm for it, saying that during its repetition "the singular operation of filling a bottle with water is carried on, and the incantation was so sung as to chime with the gurgling of the liquid as it was poured into the vessel."

Dosnam-an dhu-thu-eas eolais air suil,
A uisde 'Ile Phadraig naomh,
Air an amhuich is stail curraill,
Air maoi conair 's air uisde conachair,
'S air uisde beann-maing sith,
Air uisde tions-ghille, 's air scalladh seana-ghrua ;
Maoi a suil fir i, i bheadh mar bhígh,
Maoi a suil urbharr i, i bhí dh' amhuinchidh a cich.
Pácaidair fuar agus fuarsachd do Tuil,
Air a mi, 's air a dhasa,
Air a croch 's air a cuansach fein.

Let me perform for you a charm for the evil-eye,
From the breast of holy St-Patrick,
Against swelling of neck and stoppage of bowels,
Against nine "Conair" and nine "Conachair,"
And nine slender fairies,
Against an old bachelor's eye, and an old wife's eye,
If a man's eye may it flame like resin,
If a woman's eye may she want her breast ;
A cold plague and coldness to her blood,
And to her gear, to her men,
To her cattle and sheep.

Here is another rhyme given as an *Eolas a' Chroinseachaidh* :—

Paidir a h' son,
Paidir a dha,
Paidir a tri,
Paidir a ceitlair,

Paidir a odig,
Paidir a sea,
Paidir a maochd
'S neart man maochd paidirnan a'
agus leabhair do phobair air na
clachan glass ud thall.

Which means—

Payers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
And may the strength of the sevenayers
Cast out your disease amidst the gray-stones over by.

In the MacLagan MSS. the following charms are given for the "evil eye":—

Eolas Rheimh shal,
Is Nic Aoidh

Paidir Mhuire b-aon, do. Aon uill a thug an airidh dhuibh, A.R. (person named who is yourself), mar thionndadhas a' ghaoth air a' chosa, go tiomadadh an ole arsa fein. Mar thionndadhas, do., ri radh tri uaire b-airde.

[Charm for evil eyes, by Miss (?) Mackay. Payer of Mary one, do. Whatever eye took notice of you, A.R., as the wind turns on the hillock, may their evil turn on themselves. As the wind, do. (to be repeated three times).]

Eolas a Bhain shrail
Is Ann Chalmbeill

Saltraigheadh mis air an t-eoil mar saltraigheadh Eala ar Tigh nocth. Ta neart gaoithe agam air, ta neart graine agam air, ta neart mhic Ri neamh agam talimhain agam air. Trian air na clacha glass—a trian air a chuirn choir as i fein seofion as fleann ga ghrianan. Ann sinum, do.

[Ann Campbell's charm for evil eye. I will stamp on the eye as the swan on her house to-night. I have power of wind over it, I have power of sun over it, I have power of the Son of the King of heaven and earth over it. One-third on the grey stones—one-third on the great sun, as being more able to bear it. In the name of, do.]

This last charm is somewhat obscure, and one of the "thirds" is evidently lost.

Charms were, like the mountebank's medicine, capable of curing all diseases incident to humanity, but each disease required its own special charm. A vast body of such medical literature must have existed, but only a very fragmentary portion can now be recovered. The leading diseases for which we have invocations are the following—we give them in alphabetical order and in non-medical language—Bleeding, Colic, Sore Eyes, Sprain, Strangury, Swelling of the Breast, Toothache, "Fallen" Uvula, Warts and Worms. We shall consider the charms for each of these in the above order, reserving the numerous charms for toothache for a separate section.

Blood-Stanching.

Some people were believed to have a gift or power of stopping bleeding, or indeed flowing of any kind. They could do it by the word of their power, it seems, if we may judge from the stories told. One of the charms made use of, known as *Eanach Ceapadh Pala*, or Power of Stanching Blood, is as follows:—

The noise díomadh an lot so mar dín Dia Flaitheas air bush-díomadh failt agus fhuailig air lethu na Sibaid.

Translated: "I am closing this wound as God closed heaven against those who cut hair and beard on the Sabbath day."

In English and other charms, the Biblical character introduced is Christ, and reference is made to his stopping Jordan flood at his baptism, or to the bleeding from his side by Longinus' spear at the crucifixion.

Colic.

This ailment is known either as *Croim Miannach* (Bowel Seizure), or *Susim Miannach* (Knottting of the Bowels); and the colic, or chorn for it, required a preliminary story to make its meaning and the cause of its efficiency clear. The story is briefly this: Christ, in escaping once from the Jews, sought refuge in a house, whose goodwife was a believer in him, but the goodman was not. The latter met him outside, and received him grimly, but he entered the house and was hospitably entertained by the wife, who hid him under a covering of noly an fin, or board of flax, in a corner, so that he escaped the search of his foes. In leaving he gave the woman the following salve, both to commemorate her kindness and relieve suffering humanity.

The person suffering from colic has to rub the afflicted part, and as he does so, to repeat the words of the charm, which are:—

An ailm an Athair, a' Mhile, 'n an Spioraid Easainh !
Dhuine fhat a mraigh,
Bhean fhrial a mraigh,
Oideas 'na laighean air ealg an Iog.—
"S math an laighean air an t-ealig sin."

Which means—

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit !
A fierce charlisch man without,
A hospitable wife in the house,
Christ a-lying on the board of fax—
That is a good cure for the spleen.

A less complete form of the charm was got by "Nether-Lochaber,"¹ which after the invocation to the Trinity runs the second and third lines together thus—

Bhean fhrial, duine dian.

But the last two lines are the same as the above.

Sore Eyes.

We have no fewer than three rhyme charms for ophthalmia. The first one which we give was published in *Casairtear nan Gleann* for July, 1842, and is, with directions for use, as follows:—Take a vessel full of water from a spring, and place therein a silver coin. Repeat the rhyme here given over the water, and thereafter anoint with it the sore eye or eyes repeatedly. The rhyme is entitled "Eolas nam Sul," and is—

Oibhlid nan gearr shild,
An oibhlid 'n fheile fionn ghearr ;
Oibhlid Dhu, an uisneachair.
Féile Mhícheáil, Féile Dhu,
Féile guth agairt 'n guth oírr ;
Féile Michael nam buart,²
"Chuirich anna a' ghleann a neart.

¹ Gaelic Soc. Trans., VIII., p. 124.

² *Journal of the Antiquarian Society of Ireland*, 29th June, 1872.

* For oibhlid, see *Casairtear* has the absurd note, which shows that the contributor did not understand the word. Equally funny is the comparison of it by one writer of authority to OBH, a supernatural power claimed by wizards and witches of the West Indies.

Which may be rendered—

A charm for sore smarting eyes,
The best charm under the sun ;
The charm of God, the all great.
Beneficence of Mary, beneficence of God,
Beneficence of each priest and each cleric ;
Beneficence of Michael, the strenuous,
Who bestowed on the sun its strength.

The following is a cure for the *larmhaid*, or stye in the eye, as sent us by a young man from Sutherlandshire. Repeat the following without once drawing breath :—

Thainig callionach a Loch-Alair
Shiureadh agaidh a Loch-Bhrisdein.
Cha d' iarr i air peighinn
Ach na chunntach i gcau anail—
Sgidean agadan b-ean, sgidean agadan dia, sgidean agadan
tri. sgidean agadan cead !

Which means—

A carlin came from Lochaber
To seek herring from Lochbeosom.
She did not ask for the penny
But what she could count without drawing breath,
Scatter "agadan" (herring) one ; scatter agadan, two ;
scatter agadan, one hundred !

A simple form of the above *larmhaid* charm is as follows :—
Go on repeating the following words as long as you can without
drawing breath :—

Larmhaid b-ean,
Larmhaid dia,
Larmhaid tri,
do., do.

which means—

Stye one,
Stye two,
Stye three,
do., do.

For fear that any one may think that there really must be
some virtue in repeating the numerals as far as one can do it

without drawing breath, that, possibly, the medical principle of "counter-irritation" is here invoked, we hasten to give the following form of the incantation, where the charmer, not the patient, repeats the words. The charmer, pointing at the eye and punctuating his variations with the forefingers, says, without drawing breath, if possible, this:—

Ma. thig a h-aon ort,
Gu m' sun nach tigseadh dha ort ; .
Ma. thig a dha ort,
Gu m' sun nach tigseadh tri ort ;
Ma. do. (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9),
Ma. thig naoi ort,
Gu m' sun nach tigseadh deich ort,
Ma. thig deich ort,
Gu m' sun nach tig leannanad sun ad shcoil air
tuilleadh. (A breath allowed).
Ma. thig deich ort,
Gu m' sun nach tigseadh naoi ort,
Ma. thig naoi, &c. (8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, as long as
breath holds).

The translation is:—

If one (stye) come on you,
May it be that two don't come ;
If two come, may there not come three
(So on till ten, where one breath may be
taken, then back again till breath fails).
If ten come on you,
May it be that nine won't come, &c.

The following is a charm given by "Nether Lochaber" in his first book, for sore eyes, which he heads as "Leighnas Bul":—

Laitbh Challum Chille agus spirí,
Measort agus trá-bhlíead earr,
Bainne athair nach do rug faogh ;
Bruach leid is eáirich air breid,
"S quir sid rid" shill alg tra-nón,
Air an Athair, sun Mac agus Spiorad man grá,
"S air Gusal na scíre ; bith do shíleasan éan
Mu'n eáirich a' gheallach 'n mu'n till an lín.

In English, it runs—

(Take of) St Columba's wort and dandelion,
(Or) mint and a perfect plant of marsh trefoil,
(Take of) milk from the udder of a goat
(That is heavy with calf, but that has not actually
calved).

Boil, and spread the mixture on a cloth;

Put it to your eyes at noon-tide,

In the name of Father, Son, and Spirit of Grace,
And in the name of (John) the Apostle of Love, and
your eyes shall be well.

Before the next rising of the moon, before the turning
of next flood-tide.

Sprains.

In the introductory section, it was pointed out that charms for sprains are very widespread, and very old among Aryan nations, probably going back so far as the period of the original Aryan race. They exist in much the same form in the ancient Sanskrit, the old German, and the modern Gaelic and Teutonic dialects. The Gaelic incantation for sprain is called "Eolais Sgoichadh Phaithe," Charm for Sprain of Vein, or "Eolais an t-eolach," Charm for Twist or Dislocation. There are many editions of it, but all refer to one original form. The best form is as follows:—The charmer puts a thread into his mouth, repeats the rhyme here given, and then ties the thread round the injured part, where it is left till it falls off itself. The rhyme is—

Chaidh Criosda nach
Se' mbadaidh mholch,
'S feudair a ceann nan each,
Air an bristeadh mu seach,
Chuir a gnáth ri gnáth,
Agus fáith ri fáith,
Agus feoil ri feoil,
Agus cráistean ri cráistean,
'S mar leigheas oise aibh,
Géin leigheas níos eo.

Translated—

Christ went forth
In the early morn,
And found the horses' legs broken across.
He put bone to bone,

Sinew to sinew,
Flesh to flesh,
And skin to skin ;
And as He healed that
May I heal this.

The following is a good version of the same charm :—The charmer takes a white (preferably) hair, threaded between his teeth while repeating the following rhyme ; three knots are to be put on the thread, and then it is wound round the sprained part :—

Dh' eirich Críodh madraim náibh,
Is fhrair a cuain nua each briste ;
Chair a maoisín ri maoisín,
Chair a cráimh ri cráimh,
Chair a fith ri fith,
Águs mar leigheas a sín
Gní leigheas a ná dhuata'—A.B.¹

The following version first appeared in *Cuarán na Gleanne*, on the page already cited :—

Chaidh Bríde nach
Air madraim náibh
Le oibráid each.
Bhírin fear ag' a chas.
Chair a glin ri glin,
Is cráimh ri cráimh,
Is fith ri fith.
Mar leigheas ean sín,
Gní leigheas tráis an.

St. Bríde went out at early morn with a pair of hones. One broke its leg. He (sic !) put knee to knee, bone to bone, and vein to vein ; and as he healed that, may I heal this.

A degraded form appears in this one :—

Chaidh Críodh a maoch,
Is bhírin a chas,
Is full r'a full,
Feoil r'a feoil,
Cráimh r'a cráimh,
Alt r'a alt,

¹ The last line means " May he heal this for you—A. B., the preceding part being practically as the first form.

² In the *Cuarán* the *gní* of the last line is misprinted *che*.

Baile r'a anior
Agus cum d' rainig e an lár
Bha e slan.
Mar sin b'g an math, A.R.

Another degraded form is this :—

Paidir Mhoire b-aon,
Paidir Mhoire dha,
Paidir Mhoire tri.—
Chaidh Criod air main as,
'S thug e an tsoch dha chas,
'S mo'n d' rainig e an lar
Bha e slan air as.

This contains the curious expression, "Paidir of Mary"—once, twice, thrice ; and the animal mounted is the ass.

It is to some form of this sprain charm that Colonel John Roy Stewart refers in the poem known as his "Prayer." The particular verse occurs thus :—

Mi mi 'n abaidh rinne Peadar do Phal
Is a hrioghan air fia leum bruidib,
Seoibh paidir, 'n aion agairt is pap,
Gin chuir rin 'na phlaed me 'n cuairt.

Here he offers to perform the charm which Peter did for Paul when he sprained his ankle, viz., seven patens to priest and pope put as plaster around it.

Strangury.

This trouble is known in Gaelic as "Crao-Ulaga," or Retention of Water. Charms for its cure are among the oldest Gaelic documents that we have, for magic rhymes calculated to cure it appear in the old Irish MSS., both in Britain and on the Continent. Unfortunately, the only charm that has been preserved in these later days is incomplete. It runs thus :—

"Trind a thachair orm a tighinn as an Roimh,
Peadar agus Fel. 'S e bu doagadh dhoibh 's iad man oideil gusin.
Dh' iarr Moire nahin as an Iosa Criodla staid a chur
le fhail 'n ruith cheir le fhail ; 's e 'thighinn go min gen tricbhaid
gen strith, mar ulaga le gheann.

Three met me coming from Rome
Peter and Paul
What awakened them as they slept soundly
Mark Mary for the sake of Jesus Christ.
Desired that a stop should be put to his blood,
And that his urine should run ;
So that it would pass smoothly
Without trouble or distress,
As water down a glen.

Swelling of Breast.

The following is a charm for At Cile, Swelling of the Breast, whether in human females or in animals. The directions are as follows :—Find a stone about the size of your fist ; it must be almost buried in the ground in its natural state. Take it out about sunrise, and rub it to the pap or udder ; replace it carefully, and do the same at sunset. In the act of rubbing, repeat the following words :—

An aim an Ailtair, a Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naomh !
Seachadh laimh Chriost air cloch Muire, an Oigh,
Ghead thimh ag t-eat,
Mar sin gur traoighthair a' chlaich so thosn !

Which means, after invoking the Trinity—

The rubbing of Christ's hand on the Virgin Mary's breast ;
Quickly allayed the swelling ;
Similarly may this stone abate the swelling for thee !

A general name for such swellings of the breast or of the udder is *Breasalba* or *Breabas*, which means a lodging of the milk therein. The following charm is good, again, to cure man or beast :—

Tu eches agam air an Breasalba,
Gur ann air bheath 's air bliochd,
A chuir Moir' a tonnabh a cinn,
'S a chuir Brigitte a roinn a failt ;
'Chlarsaibh, faicibh aithne chioch sin air at :
Gur ma sian a chloch 's ga ma crion an teid ;
Trian an dhuagh 's trian am mairreach,
'S aille gná leir an earr.

I possess a charm for the Bedlam,
It is for produce and milk,
Which Mary took from the crown of her head
And Bridget from the shedding of her hair.
Oh ! Christ, see ye (air) that breast swollen :
May the breast be healed and the swelling disappear ;
One-third to-day ; one-third to-morrow ;
And the remainder the day after.

Uvula—“Raising.”

The incantation for the “raising of the uvula” was known as *an t-saoch abhugain*, Charms for the Throat-Nipple. The little red, nipple-like sea-weed found in pools of salt water when the tide is out, and called in Gallo-Scottish *dharg*, is procured and tied to the crook while the following words are repeated :—“ Ann an aonan an Aithas, a’ Mhic agus an Spioraid Nasach, air aoch-abhugain A. B. (person’s name).” This is an appeal to the Trinity “for the uvula of A. B.”

Warts.

The incantation for warts is exceedingly simple. The person affected is directed to rub the moisture of the mouth or saliva to the wart, and keep saying—

Olls bheath gorm beannaisbeach
Air a h-nile gin do na foirmeachan.

That is to say—

Oil of food, may then bless
Each one of the warts.

Warts.

This charm, though evidently not in full, is contemporaneously given by Mackenzie in his *Breathie o’ Gaels Poetry*, and runs thus :—

Mharbhainn dubhaig, ’n mharbhainn dairbhraig,
Is nach nasinear dha an shorna ; .
’B solar crion nan eanan leomhar,
Bu nhor pianadh air fheadh feile, &c.

Translated—

I would kill a black one, and I would kill a bad one,
And nine-nine cows of their kind ;
And the little nasecock of numerous legs,
That causes great pain mid the flesh, &c.

Toothache is not, as some think, one more case of physical degeneracy entailed upon us by our modern civilisation; for the holed tooth of the British barrow suggests the dental sufferings of our primitive ancestors; nor has the modern savage any immunity from toothache, though he does live "according to nature." There is ample evidence of the prevalence of toothache among the ancient nations, and numerous are the recipes which are found in the medical literature of Greece and Rome. If Marcellus of Bordeaux (cir. 410 A.D.) represents, as the great Jacob Grimm fondly believed, the experience of the Gauls in medical lore, then we may take it that the ancient Celts were past masters in the cure of toothache, whether by drug or charm. The following is the incantation, or curse, with directions as to its use, which Marcellus gives for toothache, and which he says has proved of miraculous benefit in actual experience:—"Lana decernante, die Martis sive die Jovis: hanc verba dices septem, 'Argidam margidam sturgidam.' " This means that in the wane of the moon, on Tuesday or Thursday, you are to say seven times, "Argidam margidam sturgidam." We cannot follow Grimm into the jungle of derivation from Celtic roots, and must leave these three words as meaningless as we found them.

A common method of curing or preventing toothache, which is still in vogue, is as follows:—A skilled, or "sheeky," person writes out an incantation on a slip of paper, and gives it to the sufferer from toothache, and he or she keeps this carefully about their person, generally seen in the inside of their clothing. The following is a quaint description of the whole system, sent us by one who has had experience of it:—"Some men cure toothache in the following way.—They write out a line or two on a small slip of paper, and then fold it up, and hand it to the sufferer, who must not on any account open it. If he does, the worse for himself, for the toothache will at once come back. I know a young woman who once got this line. She placed it carefully in the lining of her coat. One day, however, she happened to be washing, and, having neglected to remove the line, she destroyed it in the process of washing this particular article of attire. She told me that the toothache came back like a shot, and she had to give up her washing that day. A second line, she said, would do her no good, and so the toothache ever since has been paying her an unwelcome visit now and then."

The words of the charm thus written on paper are not by any means always in Gælic, for too often the difficulty of writing the

native tongue prevents this. English and Latin charms are found instead, and one of each we shall now present to our readers. The following very common English charm was lately caught going its round:—

St Peter sat on a new-rolled stone
Weeping and wailing;
Jesus came by, and said—
What ails you, Peter?
Oh, Lord, my God, the toothache.
Jesus said, Be healed;
And whoever will carry
These few lines for My name's sake
Will never feel the toothache.

A Latin form of the same charm is to be found in the MacLagan MSS. The piece of paper on which it is written was in actual use, for it shows the marks and worn corners of the original folding, and makes a most folded slip of a little over an inch square. The Latin is very barbarous, and shows a royal contempt for grammar, facts which prove that the writer was entirely ignorant of the language which he was transcribing. Mr MacLagan doctests the paper sarcastically thus:—"Hoc sanus palliata quinquebdash!" (Wise, potent charms). The charm is as follows, the spaces near the end being caused by the wearng of the paper:—

"Petrus edit ex marmoreo Lapis Dominus Noster veit et
Dicit petrus quid te gravit, petrus respondit dominus Meus Caput et
Dentes meos tenant me Dominus Noster Dicit surge petrus
salva te non solum tu sed etiam omnia qui teneant hanc mea dicta
per virtutem De haec verba Dominus Noster et in ejus Nomine
Dies tuus pestis non molestus te detiri Minimus Pratrum."

There are several Gaelic incantations for toothache, and most of them imply the widespread belief that toothache is caused by a worm burrowing in, under, or above the tooth. The Gaelic for toothache is *dileid*, which is derived from *dileid*, a tooth, allied to the Latin *dent* of *dens*, but a commoner word is *cruinn* or, properly, *cruimh*, which in reality means "worm" or "maggot," and is still used in that sense.

The following Middle Irish charm from the Lebar Brece is interesting as showing the existence of the belief in the *cruinn* or worm among the Gaels of old, and, further, as explaining the

Introduction of the idea of *orlay* or thumb in a charm quoted later on. The words run thus:—

Oidh Thomais togaidh
I teach Christ our chimaid.
mu-icca mo dàta oen gaba
ar dhrama is ar idhain
et pater prius et post.

That is to say—

May the thumb of chosen Thomas
in the side of guiltless Christ
heal my teeth without lamentation
from worms and from pangs.

And a *Pater noster* before and after.¹

A short and neat charm, which introduces Peter as the sufferer from the *craic*, runs thus:—

(Bla 'n croinch air Peadar)
Leighis Iosa Peadar, Leighis Peadar Paul,
Leighis Pol an doenhan leis na tri facail
aig Iosa a' brantulain, " Bi go math."²

Which means—

(Peter had the toothache),
Jesus healed Peter, Peter healed Paul,
Paul healed the world by following the three
words of Jesus, " Be thou well."

The two charms that follow mutually throw light on one another, and they both have a more than ordinary interest attached to their origin. The first charm, which has already been published (untranslated), was taken down some two decades ago by Mr Mackay, solicitor, Inverness, from the recitation of the late Angus Macdonald, the first bard of the Inverness Gaelic Society, and he again had learned it from the Bard Connach (1780-1833).

¹ The reference to the above I owe to Dr Whitley Stokes. It is published in the *Review Critique*, v. 222, by Dr Stokes, who further quotes a Punjabi or Indian charm that implies a similar belief. The belief, however, in the latter case is the *wurri*, which is supposed to eat into decayed teeth and make them black. The charm tells the black *wurri* that it will die by the blessing of Shâikh Paul, " the Teacher Salar, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, Foh ! Foh ! Foh !"

We may hence understand the completeness of the charm, which is as follows:—

Seachd paidir a b-aon,
Seachd paidir a dha,
Seachd paidir a tri,
Seachd paidir a ceathair,
Seachd paidir a chig
Seachd paidir a six,
Seachd paidir a seacht.

An oireann Muire mhan
Do Phadraig uasal alainn,
Air cheannach, air cheann, air chinn,
Air ruaidh', air at, air arraing.
Thaist Abraham ri Iosa Crisod
"S iad a' fath air eileadh Eibhlis,
" Cha'n urrainn mise colseachd,
No misneachd leis an deidheadh."
Thaist Iosa Crisod ri Abraham:
" Cha bhi cheannach sin anns a cheann sin:—
Mach an deidheadh! mach an deidheadh!"
Da uair an deigh cheala,
Fios air tuarach is fios air talamh,
Fios aig do righ air do ghabhar;
Crotach is deidheadh choir fo'n talamh.

Seachd paidir a b-aon,
Seachd paidir a dha,
Seachd paidir a tri,
Seachd paidir a ceathair,
Seachd paidir a chig,
Seachd paidir a six,
Seachd paidir a seacht,

Nearr na seachd paidir
Rinn Muire mhor a lhean dhal,
De'n cheileach neamh, cur do dhonas is do dhòlas
Air a' chluich ghlas ud thail,
"S air buidheann na h-eucrasach!"

The translation of this is—

Seven patters one,
Seven patters two,
[So 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7].

The incantation that Mary the Maid made
For Patrick, the noble and beauteous,
Against toothache and soreness of head and bone,
Against erysipelas, swelling, and stitch.

Abraham said to Jesus Christ.
As they walked on the slope of Bethris:
"I have not the power of walking
Or of riding because of toothache."
Said Jesus Christ to Abraham :
"Toothworm will not be in that head ;
Out the toothache ! out the toothache!"
Twice repeated after other,
Known in Heaven, known on earth,
Known to thy King is thy disease,
Toothworm and toothache to be placed under earth.

Seven patens one,

[2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7].

May the strength of the seven patens
That Mary the Mighty made to the God of the Elements,
For the holy cleric, put thy evil and pain
On the grey stone over yonder
And on the workers of wrong !

Such, then, is the first of the two parallel charms. The second one comes from Kishorn, famed in the *Oriental Gazetteer* as having given a toothache charm to the Antiquarian Museum of Edinburgh. The instructions and words of our charm are as follows:—A stick of hazel wood, some five inches long and pointed at one end, is to be kept between the teeth while the following words are repeated (the charmer performing first to touch the sufferer how to act and speak)—

Rann rinn Bríd tabh
Do Phadraig nasal, an ard righ,
Air meadha, air st, air arraig.
Oidag Phreasair, agus oidag Phobl
Bgears a' chnáidh bhe 'n chnáidh ;
Oidag Mhic Dié air neamh
Leigheas gach deal-chnáidh.

Thubhairt Abraham ri Iosa Criod nach b' urrainn a colmacht
na mearraichte leis an deal-chnáidh. Thubhairt Iosa Criod ri
Abraham air an t-ailbh cheadha nach biadh da or ud san son
ceanan leis an deal-chnáidh.

Which means—

The rhyme that Bridget the Monk made
For Patrick, the noble high King,
'Gainst erysipelas, swelling and stitch.
Thumb of Peter and Thumb of Paul
That will separate the ache from the bone ; —
The thumb of the Son of God in heaven
That can cure every tooth-pain.

Abraham said to Jesus Christ that he could not walk or ride because of the tooth-pain. Jesus Christ said to Abraham on the same hill-slope (Betharais) that there would not be further pain in that head from toothache.

This second charm is manifestly incomplete in some points, but doubtless it has been equally as efficacious as the fuller one handed down from the Bard Connach !

Here is another Kishorn toothache charm, received, as so many of those have been, from my good friend Mr Don. Kennedy. The swelling of the face and the rare but possible breaking through the skin of the purulent matter, and the erysipelas and such complications consequent on toothache in the upper teeth, doubtless gave rise to the idea of a worm travelling from the tooth and coming out at any point about the head. There is a Gaelic name for this worm ; it is called "An Deedag Bleist"—the tooth beast or worm. The following is an elaborate charm calculated to kill the worm and allay all swelling of the head and toothache. The charmer lays his hand on the part where the pain is and says :—

Iarunn do chuan, ainnseanisneach,
Bior ad curball a tholdadh d' ainnsean !
Dh' ordnaigh High neimh do mharbhadh ;
Gru'n tilleadh Croid archeas
B' gach aon bleist aon an so ;
Air an fhealan ! dhulb,
Air an fhealan dhooen,
Air an an fhealan uaine ;
Fear dubh gnáinseach, fear fionn fada, doimh lóisídh ;
Ma' tha iad a roigh, gru'n dol a stigh,
Ma' tha iad a stigh, gru'n dol a mach,
Ach iad a lobhadh, 'n a bhrothadh, 'n a chinnadh
'nan fheoil 'nan bell iad.

¹ For *fhealan*, the word we get *mácaid* (μάκαι), which we have corrected according to analogy with other charms.

Aon 's a dhu air a' bheist,
Aon 's a tri air a' bheist,
Aon 's a ceithir air a' bheist,
Aon 's a còig air a' bheist,
Aon 's a sìc air a' bheist,
Aon 's a seacht air a' bheist,
Aon 's a h-ochd air a' bheist,
Aon 's a nan air a' bheist,
Nan 's a h-ochd air a' bheist,
A h-ochd 's a seacht air a' bheist,
Seacht 's a sìc air a' bheist,
Sìc 's a còig air a' bheist,
Còig 's a ceithir air a' bheist,
Ceithir 's a tri air a' bheist,
Tri 's a dhu air a' bheist,
Dhu 's a h-aon air a' bheist !

Translated.—

Iron in thy hand, ill-disposed one,
A spit in thy tail to spike thy evil work !
The King of heaven ordered thy killing !
May Christ turn back malady
And such worm that is here ;
'Gainst the black nescoc,
'Gainst the brown nescoc,
'Gainst the green nescoc,
The dark hairy one, the white long one, brown
wounding one ;
If they are outside, may they not go in ;
If they are inside, may they not go out,
But rot, slough, and decay in the flesh in which
they are.
One and two against the worm,
One and three against the worm.
[And so 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9].
Nine and eight against the worm,
Eight and seven against the worm.
[And so back again to one].

Such is the charm against *an Druilteig Bheist*, the travelling tooth-worm.

We shall end this section on toothache charms by quoting two incantations connected with two wells in the north. In North Ulster, at the foot of a rugged mountain, called Mairebhal, there is

a well that cures toothache, to which offerings of coins, rings, pins, &c., are made, these being deposited in or about the well. The sufferer from toothache drinks of the water and repeats the following formula :—

The misse a' crionadh sios an ainen, an Athar, a' Mhic agus an Spioraid Naomh, agus mi dol a dhi' flagail criath na chlara ann an toba nach traogh a chaoindh.

That is to say—

I am a-bending down in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and a-going to leave the pain of my head in the fountain that will not fail for ever.

This well, we are assured, unfailingly cures toothache ; but it is a far cry to North Ulster, and it is with some pleasure we record that Aultbea has a further claim to be the terminus of the new railway, inasmuch as it possesses a well which "cures the toothache wonderfully." The particular spot where the well is is at Slaggan, near Aultbea. One goes to the well, and selects a stone near it covered with moss (crystal). He then takes from the well a mouthful of water, which he must not swallow, but he goes to the moss-covered stone with it, removes the moss, pours the water from his mouth on the spot, and, in replacing the moss, says :—

Uisce Domhnaich 'migh,
Cruinn is daidh 'stigh.

Which means—

Out is the holy water,
In is the toothache.

That is to say, the water goes out from the mouth, and the toothache is shut up under the moss and into the stone !

V. THE ANIMALS.

Charms and magic rhymes existed in great numbers, calculated to prevent or cure the diseases incident to the animals about the farms and holdings, and more especially for the cure of the cows. One preventative charm for the "Evil Eye" was given in section one—the "Terrorist Spell." The following spell was intended to stop the barking of dogs as one approached the farm-house. It was especially important for thieves and cattle-lifters that the voice of the watch-dog should not give the alarm to the inmates that, under the safe cover of night, the thief was creeping up to the buildings.

A spell to quieten the barking dog under these circumstances, or indeed to stop dogs barking under any conditions of annoyance, occurs in the MacLagan MSS., and is here reproduced for the first time. It is written on a scrap of paper somewhat carelessly, and the meaning is a little obscure. The Gaelic is given here as it stands in the MS. The title runs thus :—

Ubag a chasgadh coin o' thathba,
No a Ghlaighairn.

(Incantation for stopping a dog from barking, or the bark-cry).
The words run thus :—

Oo e 'm Baile so cumhain i
Ta Baile nan gaibhne,
Na galraadh na coin no galraadh na galraadh,
Tui seothan & seothan urth,
Bhair air a chroibh cothartach & air an Talaich ugh phuis &
cothart coin.
Ta mi galraadh air Riagh nan Duil na ta nad shall a bhí air
me fhionna.

Which may mean this :—

What is this farm before us ?
This is the farm of the starks.
Let the dogs cry (growl) not till the starks cry.
Three mist-showers and mist-showers with tremor,
Which will make the cattle bark and the earth egg-plump
and dog-bark.
I pray the King of the Elements that what is in thine eye be
on my tongue.

The obscure words are *galraadh*, which in the modern language means " growling," *urth*, *cotter* *urth*, and *ugh phuis*, where the reading of the *u* in *ugh* is not absolutely certain, nor of the *u* in *phuis*, which could be read as a.

Passing from this difficult charm, we come to incantations for the difficulties and ailments incident to cattle. And first come the

MILKMAID'S SPELLS.

Milk-maids have been wont in many places to sing to their cows in the process of milking. These songs or lullabies are called in the Isles " *Taladh Nam Banschag*, " the Lullaby of the Milk-maids. They vary in tone and measure to suit the different actions of

milking, and the cows in some cases get so accustomed to them that they won't give their milk without them, even insisting on favourite airs. Mr Carmichael, in his *Ulster Hymns*, has brought one or two of these characteristic songs together. There is but one step between these songs and the charms which we are now to deal with. It is, for instance, troublesome to make a cow, on her first calf, to give the milk to the milk-maid without the calf. The following charm is intended to overcome this difficulty.

To make a Cow give the Milk.

Let the dairy-maid get the leg or shank bone of a swan; then let her catch, in the name of the Trinity, each bout and draw the milk finely through the bone, saying, as she does so, the following:—

Doothal na ba air an luagh,
Doothal an luagh air a bhaisne ;
Peadar ead tromha long aula,
Air a tharrning le sigh chiallach, charnach ;
Thoir-as 'm haline go riannail, tolleach ;
An ainn an Athar, &c.

That is to say—

The sucking of the cow on the calf,
The sucking of the calf on the milk ;
A tiny spoutlet through a swan's shank,
Drawn by a peasant, poverty maid ;
Give then the milk orderly and willingly ;
In the name of, &c.

The following is another spell having the same object in view—that is, to make a cow give her milk after being deprived of her calf. It has been already published by Mr W. MacKenzie, and he calls it

Bois air Saineachan.

It is as follows:—

An t-Eilean a riom Calum Cille
Dte' aona bho na caillidh
Air Thabhairt a' bhaisne
'N deigh marbhadh a luagh,
Bho fithlean a dreacha
Gn. fithlean a tarr,

'S bho fheithear a barna,
Gná fheithear a dh-tharbh,
Bho bhur a dh-chinnise
Gná annse a dh-leis ;
Air thabhairt a' bhainne
Air mharbhadh d' a leugh.

Translated :—

The charm that Columba wrought
For the only cow of the old wife,
For the giving of the milk
After the killing of her calf,
Be from the veins of her back
To the veins of her belly,
From the veins of her belly
To the veins of her side,
From the roots of her two ears
To the joints of her two thighs :
For the giving of the milk
After the killing of her calf.

CATTLE DISEASE.

From these spells we now pass to the cure of and charms for various cattle diseases. We begin with two general charms, calculated to cure any cattle disease at all. The first, with modern spelling, is as follows :—Should any more of the cattle die, open the first beast, take out the liver, lungs, and heart, and put them in a bag. Carry this across the first burn, on the neighbouring estate, and there bury it. While crossing the stream for this purpose, repeat this rhyme :—

Fhir a shild a' ghaoth o dhéas,
Tog last an t-earrachd so thar an eas ;
Tog last a mi-bhriachd
Dh' ionnsuidh 'n teach as an d'fheinighe leis.

Which means :—

Thou that makest the south winds blow,
Take this disease across the water ;
Take away with Thee this ill-wish
To the quarter whence it was brought.

The second general charm belongs to Mr Carnichae's excellent collections of Island superstitions, and is published in "Nether-Lochaber."¹ The charm can be used for disease of man or beast, and in the latter case, a worsted thread is tied round the tail, the thread having undergone much mysterious spitting, handling, and "incantating" by the woman from whom it is got. The following runa or spell is muttered over it at the time of its "conssecration":—

Runa Leigheas Galar Criseid.

Criseid" is Ostail is Eoin,

An triuir sin is biane glair,
A dh-firich a dhomadh na h-ire,

Holm dhore na Cathach,
No air ghuin dusa Duibh.

Air na roinntear mar-saileach,
"S air na saighdean aithneadhach;

Dhithis a laochadh ait agus gan adhachadh
Agus triuir a chuireas mi an t-eamainn rin sin,

An t-Athair, 'n am Mac 'n an Spiorad Naomh ;
Ceithir ghalara fichead an aircibh daibh 'n beathaisibh,

Dia 'gan agriochadh, Dia 'gan agusadh,

An t-Uайл, an t-Feoil 'n ad chinnibh 'n ad' ariail;

"S mar a thog Criseid 'meas air bharrach gach crann,

Gum b' ann a thugas E-dhrist-an.

Gach shil, gach goibh 's gach fionnadh,

O'n is an diagh gu leth daimhneach do shaughall. Amen.

In English—

A Healing Incantation for Diseases in Cattle.

Christ and his Apostles and John,

These three of most excellent glory,

That ascended to make supplication

Through the gateway of the city,

First by the right knee of God's own Son.

As regards evil-eyed [lit. wall-eyed] women;

As regards swift-spreading ulcers;

Two to strengthen and renovate the joints,

And three to back (these two) as sureties—

The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost;

To four-and-twenty diseases are the reins of man and beast
(subject);

God utterly extinguish, sweep away, and eradicate them.
From out thy blood and flesh, thy bones and marrow,
And as Christ uplifted his proper foliage
To the extremities of the branches on each tree-top,
So may He uplift from off and out of thee
Each (evil) eye, each frowning look, malice, and envy,
From this day forth to the world's last day. Amen.

The first ailment in the order of the alphabet which we shall take up is—

Failure in Chewing the Cud.

A cow may lose the power or inclination of chewing its cud, and, to cure it, we must first know the name of the cow. Let us say the name is Odhrag or the *Dun*. Then, as it lies on the ground, the "wise" person says :—

Odhrag, mo "dub" i bhithi sár náid gheann nan náid criodha,
Odhrag, éirich is eanhla do chuirne.

(This cow, if thou hast eaten the grass of the nine glens of nine bounds, Dun one, arise and chew thy cud.)

Therewith give the beast a slap, and get her on her legs, and she will be all right.

The Mump.

The mump in cattle is called in Gaelic the "Puc-dubh." The person who could work the cure by a charm went straddle-wise over the beast's back and said :—

Eolas air a' phoc,
Eolas air a' phoc,
Eolas air a' phoc,
Mar bhithinn na hao, bhithinn,
'S mar bhí, laig leat,

(Knowledge of the mump, do; if thou wilt live, thou wilt live; if not, why then go.)

The concluding ceremony is the same as in the last case.

The Brúidh or Milk-Breast.

The lodging of the milk in the breast of a woman or in the udder of a cow was cured by charms, as well as by other superstitious means. The charms have already been given, in the case of human ailments, in the third section. They are the same for cattle.

This disease in cattle appears to answer to colic in human beings. It was often brought on by eating too much grass. The charms for it are numerous, but they are clearly one version of some primitive copy. The notion underlying them is that the fairbhean is a worm, and one correspondent tells us that indeed there are two kinds of fairbhean—male and female. The one is cured by striking the animal with the right brace or shoulder strap in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the other is cured by the following charms. The following is the version of the charm given by Mr W. Mackenzie:—

An t-Eolas a rinn Colum-Cille
Dh' sona mhart na caillich;
Bha osa Chaluim Chille na' chomhachan
'S a chas all' air dh' :—
"A thairbhein, a thainig tha chumas
'S o bhan na taladhain fada thall—
Air mhiad, air bhailg,
Air ghalar dearg.
A lughdachadh do bhailge,
'S a mharbhadh do mhiad,
A mharbhadh folan fionn,
A mharbhadh folan doan,
A mharbhadh biast do leann,
A mharbhadh an tairbhein,
Gru'n faigh thu leamhachadh—
Aghusain tog do cheann."

Which means—

The charm that Columba wrought
For the old wife's only cow;
Columba's one foot was in the boatie
And the other on land:—
" Thou terror, that canst over sea
And from the foundations of the earth far beyond—
Against worm (bast), against swelling,
Against the red disease.
To reduce thy swelling,
And to kill thy worm,
To kill the white moosock,
To kill the brown moosock,

To kill the worm in thy hide,
To kill the worms,
May thou get relief—
Dear cow, raise thine head."

St Columba and his curach is introduced into the following version
of it lately picked up at Athlone :—

Paidir¹ Mhoire a h-eas,
Paidir Mhoire dha,
Paidir Mhoire tri,
Mu sheasadh paidirgean agus mu sheasadh uairman.
Ceithir Foth Fiadh¹ fheadar eadar da shilimsean na ha,
Leth dhuibh sin air 'n teir dho 'n cheirdhe
Agus an leth h-eile dha na h-airmenn.
Cua air muir 'n ean air tir
Agus ean eile as' charachan :
At eadar binn agus aithream ;
Gao'm beannachadh Dia a' bho le is na tha 'na corp,
Agus ga'n tolraodh E leigheas dhi bho 'n taibhean.

The above may be translated :—

Pater of Mary one, two, three !
The seven Paters and seven times !
Four and twenty *Foth Fiadh* (magic clouds or rhymes) between
the two shoulders of the cow ;
Half of these to be given for the heart,
And the other half for the kidneys.
One foot on sea, one foot in the mire,
Swelling between skin and flesh,
May God bless the cow and what is in her body,
And grant her cure from the worms.

The following is a Glen-Moriston version of the same charm :—

NI nd 'n obair a riom Calum-Cille
De dh' aon bho na quilligh—
Air a bhualg 'n air a bhualg,
'N air a' ghlaicid doibh 'n air an taibhean,
Briathair moine 'n baileagan,
'N marbhaidh Moire 'n bhualg

¹ As the reader had these words *Paidir Athlone* sounded *Pader Athlone*,
and *Foth Fiadh* was *Foth Fiaw*.

I shall perform the charm
Performed by St. Columba.
For the old woman's one cow
For swelling and blisters,
The erysipelas and droopy (varus).
I shall burst the swelling
And St. Mary will kill the were.

In the *Courier* of June 20th, 1872, "Nether Lochaber" gives a version of the above charm which presents nothing characteristic; but the learned author explains the *tairbhens* as an incubating skin-worm, a view which is contrary to the general conception of what the *tairbhens* is.