

The Norsemen in Uist Folklore.

Read at the meeting on January 26th, 1900.

By Rev. Allan Mc Donald

STORY-TELLING has not by any means died out in Uist, nor are all the story-tellers old men. Many of the younger men tell their tales with a grace and flow of language and a fulness of incident that are not surpassed by many of the older reciters. Such tales, however, as appear from their style to have been the studied composition of bards, and for the perfect recital of which one would require to know not only the incidents of the tale but the very words are now being shorn of their embellishments of literary style and given in plain, homely, colloquial language which is, however, grammatically accurate, elegant and telling. Versified tales or ballads are still chaunted, though the tendency to recite instead of chaunting is marked. The number of such antique lays is lessening fast. Probably there are not more than twenty that can be recited in any fulness at this date in South Uist. I speak of Fingalian or Ossianic ballads. I have heard fourteen recited or chaunted, and it is pleasant to note that a few at least of the reciters were young. As such pieces require a greater effort of memory than prose tales and the young generation are made to clog their memories with fragments of English poetry in which they find little interest or pleasure their abused memories become unfitted to retain the ballads of their own tongue.

Judging from my own experience there is as much matter again in the way of Gaelic tales to be had in Uist as there is in John Campbell of Islay's four printed volumes. Some men whom I have met are able to recite from twenty to fifty tales, varying in the time of telling from half an hour to two hours.

No tales are more popular in Uist than those that tell of Fionn Mac Cumhal and the warriors of the Feinn. With all their wild extravagance they are held to be truer than all other tales. One narrator says bluntly that the tales of the Feinn are as true as truth, while other tales are only the inventions of a woman who had to tell a long tale to save her life, and who scrupled not under the circumstances to string together any romantic incident that occurred to her without the least regard to historical truth. It is satisfactory to know that most references to the Norsemen occur not in the unscrupulous lady's romances, but in the more honourable oral record of the Fenian heroes.

For the appearance at least of order it may be as well to glance at the popular Fenian story first and then at other less prominent folk tales and note down what refers to the Norsemen.

The Norsemen had invaded and seized the Hebrides.

One of the kings of Ireland, for Ireland was made up of five kingdoms then, was vexed that the men of Lochlin had seized the islands which by right were his own. He sent fleet after fleet to dislodge them, but his efforts met with little success. As soon as a ship was seen to be approaching from the Sea of Ireland, (the sea between Barra and Ireland is so called), a beacon light was set up on every high point of land by the Lochlinners and the alarm was spread at once, and their galleys issuing forth from every bay gathered together and met the enemy. The Irish king was frequently worsted and was sinking into despondency. His man of counsel—there was no parliament then, adds the narrator—told him to be of good heart, and although he was unable to drive them out of the Hebrides just now that a time would yet come when they could be driven away, if the king would approve of the plan this counsellor had to suggest. The king told him to speak on. The advice he gave was that the king should have every man in Ireland who was six foot high brought together, and that when brought to-

gether that the tallest women in Ireland should be given them as wives, and that no objections to their marriages on the ground of either kinship or willingness were to be listened to. Only nine of such men were to be found, and eighty-one wives were provided for them. These men were to avoid all common work and live by the chase. In time their descendants would form a body of stalwart men fit in size and strength and numbers to contend with the men of Lochlin. The Fenians achieved the task assigned to them, but an ungrateful king, who feared that they might turn their power against himself, as there were now no enemy to fight with, banished them from Ireland to Scotland, where they led a life of hardship and hunger until the advent upon the scene of Fionn Mac Cumhal with his dog Bran and his sword Macaluin. During his time there were frequent incursions of the Norsemen and many a stiffly contested field. There is a ballad named “The wrathful battle of the Feinn” which illustrates this. The reciter preludes the ballad thus. The Feinn were very unsuccessful in the chase. The game was hidden from them by spells. When these were broken the hunt was more than ordinarily successful. Fionn, however, neglected to hold the drinking festival that was customary on such occasions, and two of his warriors resented this so much that they left the camp of Fionn for a year and a day and transferred their services to the king of Lochlin. The queen of Lochlin conceived a passion for one of them whose name was Ailltidh, and they fled together to the camp of Fionn. It was to avenge this wrong that Erragan, king of Lochlin, fought this battle with the Feinn.

Subjoined is a literal translation of the ballad—too literal for elegance ; and it is to be hoped that the length of it will not be too great a trespass on your forbearance.

A day that Patrick was in his court,
 No psalms on his mind, but a-drinking,
 He went forth to the house of Ossian, son of Fionn.
 Whose speech was music to him.

Patrick. All hail to thee, aged worthy one !
 I've come around to see thee,
 Strong warrior of fairest form
 That hast never grudged another what thou hast.

The tale I would have from thee,
 Grandson of Cumhal of the hard swords.
 The most closely-contested fight the Feinn was in
 Since first a fierce Fian was begotten.

Ossian. 'Tis I that have the proof of that for thee.
 Tall Patrick of the pretty psalms,
 The closest contest the heroes were in
 Since first a Fian was begotten.

Fionn neglected to make a feast
 In Albin in the time of the warriors ;
 While a band of the Feinn were up Drim-derg
 Their anger and fury arose.

Moróran. “And if thou hast neglected us in the matter of the
 drinking feast,”
 Said Moróran with sweet voice,
 “I and fair young Ailltidh
 Will turn our backs for a year to the hall of Fionn.”

They quickly took their departure,
And their swords and shields to the ships.
To the king of Lochlin with the glossy bridles
A year's service — to the king
Gave those two of fairest form.

The king over Lochlin in that very hour
Was one who won the victory in every field,
Erragan, son of Annir of the ships,
O king ! but his blade and his hand were good.

The queen of Lochlin of brown shields
Gave deep, full-deep love, but not aright,
To joyous Ailltidh of deep-red locks.
And she went away with him in deceit.

She went away with him from the bed of the king.
That is the deed for which blood will be shed.

Lochlin's king gathered his host,
A hard-set fleet that grew with readiness.
In the one hour there arose with him
The nine kings and other peoples.

For the realm of the Fians
They departed over the sea.
They pitched their camp thickly
Near the fort where Fionn abode.

A herald came forth with a message,
A weighty tale that tried us sorely—
To fight a close, stern battle with Fionn
On the glen to the north.

Fionn would give them a great tribute—
To the host that came to us,
To Lochlin's king with his time-honoured weapons,
Even that would he give and his own wife.

The counsel that Fionn approved
As well as all the chiefs of the Feinn
Was to give, if accepted from them, the king's daughter
To the king of Lochlin of the keen weapons.

We sent the king's daughter.
Whose skin was the whitest, whose eye the bluest.
And there went to attend her one hundred horses,
The best that ever stood on moor.

When she came down to the beach
She left the horses behind her.
She advanced a step towards them.
And two apples of gold in her right hand.

Earragan. “ Thy tidings from the camp of Fionn
Give us, fair one of the tresses ;
Lovely maiden of the musical lips.
What is the end of thy coming ?”

King's daughter. If thy wife did amiss by thee
And played a deed so wrong,
Give friendship and fellowship to Fionn
So that thou may'st have me thereby.

That thou may'st have, and 100 horses.
The best that ever stood on moor,
And 100 riders to mount them
With their raiment of gold shining prettily.

That thou may'st have, and 100 cups
That would of clear water make wine.
And whoever should drink a draught from them
His hurt would not become greater.

That thou may'st have, and 100 sons of kings
That would win tribute from savage hosts.
That thou may'st have, and 100 belts,
And whom they girdle will not die.

They will heal affliction and exhaustion.
The pretty jewels that give forth their virtues free.

That thou may'st have, and 100 ships
That would rend the waves on the wild seas ;
And thou may'st have loo good hawks
That will have luck with every kind of bird.

That thou may'st have, and loo flocks.
And a glen-full of choicest kine,
And if that sufficeih not
Take with thee thy wife and depart.

Earragan. I will make no peace with Ailltidh the fresh,
Nor with the chiefs of the Feinn ever
Until I bring Fionn himself beneath my sway.
And take the spoil with me to the beach.

King's daughter. Thou hast not brought of power with thee
Across the sea, methinks.
As will bring Fionn beneath thy sway
Or take the spoil to the beach.

Earragan. And thou wilt not go away, fair one of the tresses,
Lovely maiden of the musical lips ;
The jewels thou may'st have free,
But stay to be my bride.

King's daughter. And I will not stay, choice of warriors,

Since I can win neither your respect nor your anger,
And since I cannot earn for my king
A peace freely given to the army of Fionn.

She turned her back upon them
And rode smoothly on her course.
Many a banner was being raised up,
And the Feinn went quickly into their armour.

Seven score of the goodly men of Fionn,
And Ailltidh himself first—
These fell by the hand of Erragan in the attack
Before the Feinn were massed.

Fionn. Fionn, yon prince of virtues, spoke
While he looked at the host of Innisfail,
“ Who will join in conflict with Erragan
Lest we allow him to despise us ?”

Goll. Goll had the answering of that—
The warrior who was hard to exhaust,
“ I will join with Erragan in conflict.
Leave us to our feats of strength.”

Fionn. “ Take with thee Ossian and the brown-haired Diarmid,
The bending Fergus and the son of Leigh,
To guard thee from the blows of the warrior,
And place two on each side as a shield.

And take with thee the other manly band
That would refuse to take a step backward.
Place that at thy right shoulder
From the race of Cumhal with their feats of strength.”

’Twas eight days without rest
That we were ever forcing back the host.
The head of the king of Lochlin with its brown shields
Goll gained on the ninth day.

There escaped not from the edge of weapons
In the conflict from the multitude of tribes—
There escaped not home a man
Either of king or people of Lochlin.

In a prose story Erragan is represented as being invulnerable to every weapon but the spear of Goll. Before the battle a soothsayer reminded him of this, and told him that the Lochlinners would be victorious as long as he contrived to avoid the spear of Goll. To insure his own life and to insure victory for his people he had a large boulder hollowed out and he hid himself in the cavity. From time to time he aimed an arrow at the enemy through an aperture bored through the side of the stone. His people were driven back by the Feinn, and Erragan was left behind among the enemy in his place of concealment. At short intervals one of the Feinn was observed to fall mortally wounded by an arrow which seemed to be aimed by an invisible hand. Goll was perplexed. Passing near the boulder he observed the aperture and thrust his spear into it. When he drew it out it was red with the blood of Erragan.

Ailltídh's flight with the faithless queen of Lochlin is believed popularly to have been a historical fact. It was said that there was a great sea storm on the night of their flight, and that the waves rose so high that a great part of the northern end of South Uist was submerged, and a great many houses destroyed by the tide. The shingle on the beach at Kilbride, on the south end of Uist, was thrown up by the sea on this same night.

As it would be tedious to give any more of the ballads in full, and as the one given above affords a fair illustration of their form and language, it will suffice for the purposes of this paper to summarise a few of the others. In the "Lay of the Banners" the king of Lochlin, on invading Ireland, boasts that :

"A third of the host that I have with me h[^]re
You never had in Erin."

Fergus the herald says in reply :

"Though thou thinkest little of the scanty Feinn,
Thou wilt take thy best spring backwards
From their grey blades before evening,
Or thou wilt work thine own harm."

In this battle there fell seven battalions of choice men and nine sons of Magnus the Red.

"Mac Cumhal and his hot-blooded host—
Like the glowing fire in their fury
Was the stroke of each warrior of them in the conflict
As long as a Lochlinner faced them."

But no enemy caused so much terror to the Feinn as Gonn, son of the Red, as may be seen from the lay named after him. The argument of the poem is as follows. The king of Lochlin bore a deep grudge to the Feinn, and he resolved to destroy them root and branch. For this purpose he selected the most stalwart and dexterous youth in his kingdom and had him trained in every feat and trick of arms, so as to be more than a match for the best warrior of the Feinn in the day of trial. This chosen hero was Red, the son of Dreathon. No one in Lochlin equalled him in strength and dexterity. When all was in readiness the king attacked the Feinn. Goll, the champion of the Feinn, met the Red in combat and slew him. The Red had a young son at home in Lochlin. The king took him to himself. This was Gonn, son of the Red. When he grew to manhood he was stronger far than the Red himself. He was told how his father was slain. He vowed to avenge his father's death, and to leave not one alive of the Feinn.

The ballad says :

"He came to avenge his father's death in all fairness upon the nobles and goodly men of the Feinn. He had a blade of venom to hack bodies with, and he dealt deep wounds. He could leap to the clouds above us, and he performed wild feats in the firmament, and yet no lovelier eye ever glanced at the sun than Gonn of the keen-edged weapons. His cheek was purple red, his eye large and blue. His hair was golden yellow in pretty ringlets. He told Fergus the herald that he sought the heads of Fionn and Goll and Diarmad and the heads of Clan Morna all, or that Erin from wave to wave should bend to his yoke, or that a combat with 500 heroes should be given him on the morrow.

" ' We will quickly curb his madness,' said five hundred of the Feinn ; but it was no cause of joy for them to join in strife with him. Filled with battle madness he drew his father's

sword. He gave a wild mad swoop like a hawk in a flock of birds. Many a skull changed its look, many a head was here and there, and Gonn was trimming his shield, shouting for further combat. Seven score of the choicest Fians went to the encounter, but it fared sorely with them. The seven score fell, and the Feinn raised a bitter cry. Fionn called upon Goll for help, and in spite of a private grudge with Fionn, he went forth readily to meet Gonn. His cheek whitened and reddened as they began. There was fury and anger on the brows of the two heroes. In their ardour they made the hill quake. For eleven days sons and wives were sad till Gonn the high-spirited fell by the hand of Goll. The Feinn raised a shout of joy such as they never raised before when they saw the proud Gonn at the feet of Goll." Ossian adds at the end of the lay :

" I would pledge thee my word. Patrick,
That the Feinn were never in the like fear
From any one man."

Another lay tells how Fionn one night discovered the track of a giant in his camp and followed it in the snow. When Fionn came near the giant he asked him his name. The giant answered him with contempt, and hurled his great spear with such force at him that it went down seven feet into the ground. Fionn thrust a dagger into the giant's heart. As he was dying he told Fionn that he was Sithean, son of the king of Beirbh, and that he was the chief of the 700 hounds. (" Beirbh," which frequently occurs in Tales, is supposed to be Bergen.)

Other lays still in vogue having reference to Lochlin are the " Lay of the Smithy," the " Lay of the Muiliartach"—a hideous hag, the wife of the Song-Smith of Lochlin and the nurse of the king of Lochlin, and the " Lay of Magnus" ; but as all of them have been translated already it is needless to refer to them here. The " Lay of the Great Fool"—proverbially the best of all lays — is beginning to fall into disuse, and I have not yet met any reciter who could give it in full. The Great Fool was wedded to Gilbhin the Young, and in a prose tale I find that she was the daughter of the king of Lochlin, while he is the son of the king of Erin. The scene of the lay of the Great Fool is in Lochlin. It also has been previously translated.

Part II.

In prose recitals we find Lochlin nearly as often referred to as in the metrical tales. It is my intention to note down a few such references. The title of one of the prose tales is "The Red-lipped Maiden." She was the daughter of the Lord of the Well. (The word which I am translating Lord means " long-haired" in Gaelic.) The well from which he took his title is in Uist. He and the Lord of the Island had been at war, and Murchadh, son of Brian, sent a nobleman from Erin to arrange the terms of peace. This noble held his lands free for his services in protecting his country. The terms of peace were arranged so satisfactorily that the Lord of the Well wished to give his daughter's hand to the Irish noble. When Dìreach (the Erect or Straight-minded)—such was his name—saw the maiden he was struck by her exceeding beauty, and resolved to take her with him, but not to gaze upon her again until he should present her to Murchadh, his worldly king, for whom he thought she would make a fitting queen. He took with him from Uist to attend her four guarding maidens. Before she became the bride of Murchadh she was taken away by the three Harpers of the Red Hall in Lochlin during the night. Dìreach set out in pursuit ; but they had put off from the beach. He had to go back for his water head-gear. He then renewed the pursuit ; but the Harpers reached Lochlin before him. He went up to the Red Hall, and heard that there was going to be a great wedding feast for the Great Harper and the Red-lipped Maiden. She had asked the feast to be put off for one day more, so that plenty of fish and game might be provided for the guests. The Harpers went away to hunt and to fish. Before doing so they locked the Red-lipped Maiden in a chamber with seven locks and seven quivering locks. Dìreach failed to find out the place of her imprisonment but he discovered Sorcha (Bright), the mother of the Harpers.

He procured an intoxicating draught and gave it to Sorcha, and then found out the secret from her. The first dash that he made at the door shivered the seven locks, and the next dash that he made shivered the seven quivering locks, and the Red-lipped Maiden sprang up on the tip of his shoulder. He brought her to where the long boat of the Harpers was beached, and putting maiden Red-lips on board he pushed out from the shore. The Harpers, who were fishing with three rods, cast their lines into the departing boat and their hooks got fixed in the sheet, and they began to drag the boat back to shore. Direach always had with him the Lorg-chroiseach (cross-stick) and he smote their rods but in vain. Maiden Red-lips said, "Though they have magic power over the boat's tackle, they have none over her timbers. Let them have the sheet." He cut it off with his cross-stick, and before the Harpers could disentangle their hooks, he and Red-lips were well out to sea. The Harpers gave up their fishing and went home to the Red Hall in anger and disgust and gave three horrible screams, so horrible that every pregnant woman lost her child and every mare its foal throughout Lochlin. Direach brought Red-lips safely back to Erin, where she wedded Murchadh, son of Brian, in Cathair-nam-Manach (The Town-of-the-Monks).

In the version of the tale that relates how the Great Fool, son of the king of Erin, won the hand of Gilbhin the Young, daughter of the king of Lochlin, we find that the Irish prince was sent one night, after slaying a number of warriors, by order of the king to seek lodging in the house of the "Tamhuisg" or dwarfs. There were eighteen score and eighteen of them under the one roof. The Great Fool thinking that though their number was great their strength was little entered their abode with a light heart. When he came in they all stood up and laughed. They closed the door and put a fastening upon it that they called "*droll*." The Great Fool put two "*drolls*" upon it. The Great Fool asked why they laughed when he came in. "Not for a year and a day," said they, "have we seen a man standing before us, whose flesh could afford a morsel, and whose blood a sip to us all round till you came inside the door." "Speak of that good time when you have had it," replied he, as he seized the one with the biggest head and thinnest legs by the shanks, and he did not leave a head on a neck. He dragged them outside and he made three heaps of them upon the dunghill—a heap of heads, a heap of bodies, and a heap of clothing. Then he heard music that was a temptation and so dangerous that it would send speared men and women in travail to sleep. This was a messenger from the king with dainty food for the dwarfs, for killing the Great Fool. The king had made so sure of this. The name of the dainty food was Pronn-ceud. The Fool seized the harp and smote the Harper on the head and slew him. He then killed all the others that had come with him.

On the evening of a second day's combat a man stood on the summit and battlement of the town and told the Fool to go and find a lodging with the three Clip-Scissors. He thought since their number was small that they could not do him much harm. He went to their abode, and "blest" on entering. Those before him "blest" kindly in return, and said that if he were sent to them for harm to himself his coming would be to his good. "Our mother," they said, "is of Erin."

After various adventures that he had to go through in fulfilling a task which he had been obliged to perform before a spell put upon him by the king could be raised, he returned once more and asked for the daughter of the king or for combat. The king himself went to battle with him. They fought with such violence that they cast showers of fire from their weapons and showers of their flesh and blood into the air and firmament (a word "*bailceabh*," pronounced "*balkyu*," evidently an adaptation of "*welkin*," is here used). They threw away their swords. They took to prime wrestling. The king of Lochlin lay beneath the Great Fool's knee. "Son-in-law," said the king, "let me rise : and a worthy son-in-law you are." Gilbhin the Young was brought out of the locked chamber and she wedded the Great Fool.

Magnus in his Youth.

There is quite a different vein of romance in the two tales of Magnus which follow from that which runs in the ordinary tales. Is it possible that these tales are assimilations to Norse originals? Some member of the Viking Club may be able to throw light on the subject.

The "History of Mánus" was proverbially the standard of all histories, and at one time such a history must have been easily had. One reciter who proposed to give me the "History of Mánus," and prefaced his tale with the proverb "Gach eachdraidh gu eachdraidh Mhànuis," *ie.*, "Every history to the standard of the History of Manus," gave me instead a hash-up of a story from the "Arabian Nights," quite un-Celtic in character, where the name of the chief actor was Mánus. The reciter was illiterate, and never heard of the "Arabian Nights," but he had a mind that could appreciate a good tale wherever he might hear one. (In passing I may observe that I have met with three tales from the "Arabian Nights" in Uist, told by men who could neither read nor write, nor speak English.)

There was a king. A son was born to him. He was named Mánus. The king was for putting his son to a nurse. He found a nurse too. The first time the nurse gave breast to him he took off her breast right from the shoulder. And every nurse to whom he was sent he did likewise by her. There was a man on the king's own land called the Black Champion. The king came to him one day. He told him about the child. The Champion said that he would find him a nurse. He took the child with him and brought him to his own wife. The first time she gave him her breast he took it off right from the shoulder. The Champion was now as badly off as ever. He then got a lump of fat. He put the lump of fat into the child's mouth. He tied a cord to the piece of fat, and fastened the cord to the child's big toe. When the lump of fat would be going down the child's throat and he would be like to choke he would kick out his feet and draw up the morsel from his throat. The child was kept alive thus.

One day the slender woman of the green coat came to the house. She asked what kind of child that was that he was bringing up so. He told her that he was a king's son, but did not tell that his name was Mánus. "I will give breast to him," said she. "If you do I will be very glad," said he. She took the child and put him on her knee. She gave him her right breast. The first time he drew from her breast she went into a cloud (swooned). She wakened up and turned upon her left side and gave the child her left breast. He sucked heartily. "I will take him with me," said she, "and I will give him breast for seven years. I will then come back to you." She came. The Black Champion was in his house. He saw the slender woman of the green coat coming and a half grown boy with her. He asked "Is this the king's son?" She said he was. "I will now go to his own home with him," said she. The Black Champion went with her. When they were over near the king's house she grasped the child and sprang to the highest peak of the castle. The Black Champion hurried round to catch her. In going round he met a heap of stones. She hurled the child down. He fell right into the heap of stones. "What made you do that?" said the Black Champion to her. "There is no hardship or danger that he will not come out of as safely as from this," said she. The boy was safe and sound. She then went off, and there was no tale of her. The Black Champion took the boy. He led him in to the king by the hand. He left him with the king. The Black Champion went home.

Mánus was growing up a strong lad till he was eighteen years of age. He was going round his father's house. He saw two long-haired women coming to him. He went up to speak to them. One seized him and thrust him down into a bank of gravel up to the two shoulders. She put spells and crosses upon him that he should find out who the woman was that gave him breast for seven years.

His father could not tell him. The Black Champion could not tell him. The Champion went away with him. They sought everywhere, but nowhere found the slender woman of the green

coat. They were one day walking by the sea. They met an old man, and they saw an island out from them. The old man told them that nobody lived in it but three women, and that nobody could cross over to them as there was a monster in the Sound. The monster would leave nothing that it did not drink up, whether boat or man crossing to the island. The Black Champion sprang across the Sound. Månus did likewise. They walked up through the island. They saw a house and went into it. There were two young maidens and an old woman in it. The old woman rose up and rushed up to Månus and kissed him. She told him that she had given him breast for seven years. He and the Black Champion stayed a year and a day in the island. The Champion asked one day if they ever did any tillage. "No," said they. "Though we should do so, there is a wicked monster in the Sound that would drink up the horses and the plough." "We will try, however," said Manus. The Champion went to the wood and cut down timber. They made a plough, and it was large and strong enough. The frame was of alder and the coulter of holly. They got a pair of horses and began to plough. The monster perceived them. She came to the beach and moved up close to them. She drew in her breath and sucked the plough and horses into her mouth. As the plough was so big it stuck cross-wise in her stomach and killed her. They pulled the plough out of her gullet and began to plough again. They raised such a crop as was never raised in the island before. They made ready to go back to their own country. The old woman was not willing that they should go. Prophets and wizards had said that the monster could never be killed till one came whose name was Månus. "You are right enough on that score. This is Månus," said the Black Champion. "The monster is dead now, and we will be going home now. We are a long way from it just now." They went off. The Black Champion to his own home and Månus to his father's house.

(The abrupt style of the foregoing narrative is easily explained. The story-teller has a slight impediment in his speech, and in consequence of this defect he is given to express himself in short jerky sentences.)

Månus, the son of the king of Lochlin, is also the hero of a tale known as "The Quest of the Fleece of the Venomous Bennocht" ("Bennocht" may mean "the homed creature.")

The king of Lochlin married. A male child was born to him, but the mother died. He married again. Månus was the name of the first boy that he had; and he had but one other son and he was Eochaidh. The name of the second wife was Daughter of Ski-skiarlan. The queen disliked Månus, as he was not her own son. He must be sent away from his father's house. The king was not willing to agree to this, but he feared to go against the queen, and Månus was sent away. His father sent a ship and crew with him to the Rough End or Head of Lochlin—a district full of wild beasts. A house was built for Månus here. He improved his condition by degrees; and he destroyed as many of the wild beasts as he could. There were lions there too, and he one day caught a whelp. He trained it carefully, and wherever he went the whelp went with him and helped him greatly. There were animals there too called "The Knife-Eared Sheep." Månus made pins of wood and fixed them in the ground, and the sheep would be coming down in the night time and lying down on the pins. He caught many of them. These sheep had good wool. He kept the wool till the ships came. He then sold the wool, and was making money in this fashion. Three times he went to his father's house, but his step-mother never relented in her hatred of him, and the third time he came she bound him under spells to fetch her the Fleece of the Venomous Bennocht from Corcaidh the Red, the son of the King of the Great World. He never halted till he reached the kingdom of the Great World. He climbed up, and there met him a tall man. "Good be to you, son of the king of Lochlin! 'Tis long since you were destined to be seen here. Tell me your errand." "I have come in quest of the fleece of the venomous Bennocht," said Månus. "Many a man came in quest of that same that did not get it, and I fear it may be so with you. If ever you get it it will be thus. A company of soldiers keeps guard over it, and the Bennocht is kept in a locked-up house. If you be a good soldier you may kill the guard. Find a horse then and have it shod with playing

shoes—four stone weight in each. Mount the horse and ride on with speed to the door. If the horse smite the door with his two hooves and make a little opening thrust in that creature that you have got with you (Mànus had the lion's whelp with him) and you may get what you are seeking." Twice the horse stood still as he reached the door. But Mànus gave the horse a stoup of wine and a wheaten loaf, and combed it with the grain and against the grain. The third time the horse smote the door and made an opening in it. The whelp went in and was there for seven days and seven nights. At the end of seven days the whelp and the venomous Bennocht came out and fought with each other in the open. The whelp fell mortally wounded. The Bennocht in contempt defiled the dying whelp, but as he was passing by the head of the whelp the whelp gave a spring and seized his tail and tore it off. The Bennocht fell dead. Mànus's Counsellor stood by. "I knew this," said he. "There was no way of killing the Bennocht until the three white hairs in his tail should be plucked." The Bennocht was flayed, and Mànus took the fleece with him across to Lochlin. His step-mother, Ski-skiarlan's daughter, whom he had placed under a spell at parting, had fallen down by the side of the house a heap of bones. Mànus was telling his father the adventures he had gone through in quest of the fleece, and as he went on with his narrative word by word she was gathering herself together. When he finished his story she stood before him alive and sound. He struck her across the face with the fleece and she fell back dead. Mànus went back to the Rough End of Lochlin to fetch his wife and children. He came back to his father's house and made Eochaidh marry ; and all of them were happy together.

If you be all yawning or asleep by this time the weary reader may stop. If not he may use his own discretion as to whether he read or not the short story which concludes this paper.

The king of Lochlin's daughter was in the habit of coming to Scotland every year to set fire to it. She came in a glass apparatus. She used to send word beforehand that she was coming. Yet the people of Scotland were unable to keep her from doing harm. They were very anxious to catch her, but she was too wily for them. After every other plan had been tried in vain it was agreed upon that eighteen pipers should be got together, and that every two of them should face each other, and that the nine couples should stand around so as to form a circle. They were all to play the same tune together, and as the tune was being played each piper was to keep moving round—always facing his partner, so as to make one large circle, formed of nine smaller moving circles. The sight and sound would surely attract the king of Lochlin's daughter. The sight and sound did attract her, and she was seen in her glass gear hovering right overhead, evidently listening to the pipes and gazing at the strange sight beneath. She also began to go round and round. This made her dizzy, and she fell in her glass gear right into the middle of the pipers and was dashed to pieces. The woods of Scotland were safe ever after.

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