

## VII.

SCOTTISH CHARMS AND AMULETS. BY GEO. F. BLACK,  
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The subject of Scottish charms and amulets, although one of great interest, has scarcely as yet been touched upon by antiquaries. With the exception of two or three brief notices of individual charms, the only special article of any importance is the paper of the late Sir James Young Simpson, published in the fourth volume of our *Proceedings*.<sup>1</sup> In the present paper it is purposed to describe in detail all the known specimens of Scottish amulets and charms, accompanied by such extracts from various sources as are calculated to shed light on their uses and on the motives which induced the people to believe that such objects possessed the power to protect them from innumerable dangers, avert evil from themselves, or cause evil in others.

Although the words *amulet* and *charm*, as now used, are synonymous, yet each has its own clearly defined and distinct meaning.

The earliest known writer who uses the word *amulet* is Pliny, and it is employed by him with the same meaning that we attach to it, namely, as a preservative against poison, witchcraft, and sorcery ("veneficiorum amuleta,"<sup>2</sup> *Historia Naturalis*, lib. xxix. cap. xix). The derivation

<sup>1</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. iv. pp. 211-224; the paper was also reprinted in Simpson's *Archæological Essays*, edited by the late Dr John Stuart, vol. i. pp. 199-217. To Edward Lhwyd, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, at the end of the seventeenth century, we are indebted for an interesting letter on Scottish charm-stones, which is published in the *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. xxviii. pp. 97-101. In the letter, which is dated "Linlithgow in Scotland, Decemb. 17, 1699," Lhwyd enumerates the charms he observed in use in Scotland as follows: "1. Snake-button. 2. Cock-knee Stone. 3. Toad-stone. 4. Snail-stone. 5. Mole-stone. 6. Shower-stone; and 7. Elf-arrow." His remarks are quoted in the course of the following paper, in the sections descriptive of the charms here mentioned. In the Appendix will be found a number of extracts from the Lives of the Saints, illustrative of the belief formerly reposed in the curative and miraculous powers of their relics and remains.

<sup>2</sup> Among the Greeks such a protective charm was known as a *φυλακτήριον* or Phylactery, which is a strip of parchment or vellum bearing either of the following

of the word is not known, but by some a Latin origin is assigned to it as being that "quod malum amolitur." By others the word is derived from *amula*, "vas lustrale." The etymology from the Arabic *himālah* (= "that which is carried") usually assigned to the word in modern dictionaries is wrong, the resemblance between the two words being purely fortuitous.

The word *charm*, from the Latin *carmen*, a song, was in later times understood to mean a form of words possessing some occult power for good or evil, more often the former. Charms were of two kinds, written and recited. Of the former, the toothache charms described below are typical examples, and of the latter the Shetlandic incantation for the cure of a sprained joint or sinew is an instance:—

"The Lord rade, and the foal slade ;  
He lighted, and he righted,  
Set joint to joint, bone to bone,  
And sinew to sinew, heal in the Holy Ghost's name."<sup>1</sup>

#### BALLS OF ROCK-CRYSTAL USED AS CHARMS.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Rev. C. W. King<sup>3</sup> crystal was extensively used among the Romans for the manufacture of drinking-cups and similar vessels, and for personal ornaments. Mr King also quotes two passages texts of Scripture—Exodus xiii. 2-10, 11-17, or Deuteronomy vi. 4-9, 13-22. See Matthew xxiii. 5, and Exodus xiii. 9, 16. A phylactery from Jerusalem exhibited to the meeting by the Rev. Dr Joass, of Golspie, has the text from Deut. vi. 4-9. Among the Jews *φουλακτήρια* were worn on the left arm, and on the forehead while praying.

<sup>1</sup> *New Statistical Account*, Shetland, p. 141. For other variants of this charm, which is one of great antiquity, see Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. pp. 1231-1233, vol. iv. p. 1695; Schrader, *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, p. 29; Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, vol. i. pp. 23, 24; Dalryell, *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, pp. 27, 118.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the authors quoted in the text, the following have also written on the origin and virtues of crystal: Bartholomew, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Trevisa's trans., 1526, lib. xvi. cap. 31; Boetius de Boot, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, 1647, lib. ii. capp. 73-75; Nicols, *Arcula Gemmea; or a Cabinet of Jewels*, 1653, pp. 117-120; Rulandus, *Lexicon Alchemiæ*, 1612, pp. 177, 178; Baccius, *De Gemmis et Lapidibus Pretiosis*, 1643, cap. xiii.; Kopp, *Palæographica Critica*, vol. iii. p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> *Natural History of Gems or Decorative Stones*, pp. 104-108.

from Propertius as evidence that balls of rock-crystal were carried by Roman ladies to keep the hands cool during the summer heat, a fashion, he adds, which is "kept up by the Japanese to the present day." In neither instance, however, can the passage quoted be understood to bear out his statement.<sup>1</sup>

Orpheus<sup>2</sup> appears to be the only writer of antiquity who ascribes any medicinal virtue to crystal, and he only recommends it as a cure for kidney disease by external application of the stone, and as a burning lens for sacrificial purposes. Pliny<sup>3</sup> recommends a ball of rock-crystal as a cautery for the human body if held up in the rays of the sun. Marbodus<sup>4</sup> recommends crystal powdered in honey for mothers nursing, to increase their supply of milk :—

"Hunc etiam quidam tritum cum melle propinant  
Matribus infantes quibus assignantur alendi,  
Quo potu credunt repletier ubera lacte."

In various parts of Europe, and especially in England, balls of rock-crystal have been found, mostly in connection with interments of the Iron Age.<sup>5</sup> Many of these balls when found were enclosed within narrow bands of metal, chiefly of silver, but sometimes of gold or bronze. Formerly these balls were considered by archæologists to

<sup>1</sup> The passages quoted from Propertius are :

"Nam mihi quo Pœnis tibi purpura fulgeat ostris  
Crystallusque meas ornet aquosa manus?"—lib. v. cap. iii. 51, 52.

and,

"Et modo pavonis caudæ flabella superbæ  
Et manibus dura frigus habere pila."—lib. iii. cap. xv. 11, 12.

Paley, in his edition of Propertius, in a note (p. 234) to the first passage says, "whether the pila or handball of rock-crystal is meant, or a crystal ring, or even a diamond, is very uncertain. *Aquosa* may mean 'with water in it' (the pila) or 'clear as water,' or lastly 'congealed from water,' according to the ideas prevalent about the origin of rock-crystal." What the pila of the second passage was appears to be unknown. Kuinoel, in his edition of Propertius (Lips. 1805), quoted by Paley (p. 106), says "Pila ex crystallo, quam matronæ delicatiores æstivo tempore ad calorem frigore ejus mitigandum manibus tenere solebant."

<sup>2</sup> Περὶ Αἰθωρ, 170-188.

<sup>3</sup> *Historia Naturalis*, lib. xxxvii. cap. 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Liber de Gemmis*, sect. xli. apud Hildebert, *Opera tam edita quam inedita. Accesserunt Marbodi . . . opuscula*, Paris, 1708.

<sup>5</sup> See references in Appendix II., pp. 522-526.

have been used for magical purposes, but the general opinion now is that they were worn on the person as ornaments. At a much later period, however, the use of crystal balls for magical purposes appears to have been common in England.<sup>1</sup> In Scotland rock-crystal has been used in the ornamentation of a number of objects of early date,<sup>2</sup> but, with the exception of the superstitious practices associated with the balls described below, I have not been able to find any references to the

<sup>1</sup> See a paper entitled "Observations on some Documents relating to Magic in the reign of Queen Elizabeth," printed in the *Archæologia*, vol. xl. pp. 389-397. Mention is made in one of the documents of "a certen cristall stone" which was employed to discover the whereabouts of a sum of money, and "the spryte Oryauce" was summoned to "appere in the sayd cristall" to divulge its hiding-place. In another document mention is made of "v s. to by a great christall;" and in a third document, which gives an account of a number of articles of witchcraft found in a field near London, there is included "a fayre cristall stone with this word (Sathan) written on yt." One of the characters in Chettle's *Kinde-Heart's Dream* (1592) says, "I trust yee remember your jugling at Newington with a christall stone," &c. (quoted in *Proverbs of John Heywood*, ed. 1874, p. 163). Aubrey devoted a chapter of his *Miscellanies*, 1696, pp. 128-131, to divination with a Beryl or Crystal. See also the lengthy note on the same subject in Douglas (*Nenia Britannica*, pp. 14-19). A modern instance of the use of a crystal ball was brought to light in 1863 in the notable trial of "Morrison v. Belcher," when the proprietor of Zadkiel's Almanack avowed himself as the "possessor and the champion of the mystic globe, which could disclose secrets so awful that one of the witnesses who vouched for the truth of its revelations refused to look on the crystal in court, because she considered it too solemn a thing to be laughed at" (*Archæologia*, vol. xl. p. 390). In Grimm's *Household Tales* (vol. ii. p. 347, ed. M. Hunt) is a story of a crystal ball by means of which a youth liberates a princess from the power of an enchanter.

<sup>2</sup> The sceptre of the Scottish Regalia is surmounted by a globe of rock-crystal  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches in diameter; and the mace of the Lord High Treasurer is similarly surmounted by a ball  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, the surface of which is cut into facets (*Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxiv. pp. 98, 116). The pendent portion of the crosier of St Fillan, now in the National Museum, is surmounted on the front by an oval-shaped pebble of rock-crystal  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in length by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in breadth and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in height. A cone-shaped piece of rock-crystal  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in height was found among the remains in the lake-dwelling at Lochspouts (Munro, *Ancient Scottish Lake-Dwellings*, p. 311). The reliquary brooches (see note on p. 482) of Lorn (Wilson, *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, vol. i. pl. ii.), Lochbuy (Pennant, *Tour in Scotland*, vol. iii. pl. ii.; *Sale Catalogue of the Bernal Collection*, pl. at p. 272), and Ugadale (fac-simile in the National Museum), have each a large rock-crystal setting on the top. See Martin's *Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, p. 209, for a note on brooches like these here mentioned.

use of crystal for magical purposes. Lhwyd mentions the use of the crystal balls among the Highlanders, and says they were held "in great esteem for curing of Cattle; and some on May Day put them into a Tub of Water, and besprinkle all their Cattle with the Water to prevent being Elf-struck, bewitch'd, &c."<sup>1</sup>

Dr Anderson has suggested to me that previous to their use as curing-stones, the crystal balls, found in Scotland may have been used as *vexilla*, and, like the Baul Muluy of St Molio described below, have been borne into battle for the purpose of securing victory. This seems a not unlikely theory, and I think it is supported by the traditional account of the Clach-na-Bratach, and by the name given to the Glenlyon ball of rock-crystal. The account of the former was probably reduced to writing long after the actual facts had become confused by tradition, and perhaps it is not going too far to read in it a record of the discovery of the ball in a grave, and its subsequent use as a vexillum or standard carried by the clan to battle for the purpose of securing victory.<sup>2</sup> According to Pennant, the Glenlyon ball was known as the "Clach Bhuai, or the Powerful Stone,"<sup>3</sup> but it is just as probable that the name was *Clach Buaidh*, or "Victory Stone." There is probably an allusion to the use of victory stones by the Highlanders in a letter to Wodrow the historian from the Rev. John Fraser, Episcopalian minister in the Highlands. The letter is dated 1702, and in it he says: "Ther was a great many

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. xxviii. p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Relics of the saints were also used as vexilla, and were borne into battle for the purpose of securing victory. Three of these vexilla have been described by Dr Anderson, who says: "The Christians of the early Celtic Church were accustomed to carry with them in their conflicts certain relics of their saints, which on that account received the suggestive title of Cathachs or Battlers. Chief among these was the psalter of St Columba, which was borne in battle so lately as 1497. . . . The crosier of St Columba was likewise borne in battle by the men of Alba, that is, of Scotland in the tenth century, and it also received the special title of the Cath Bhuaidh, or battle-victory, in consequence of its use as a vexillum or ensign of war. . . . The sacred cross of St Margaret, known as the Black Rood of Scotland, was borne with the Scottish Army when King David II. invaded England in 1346, and was taken by the English at the battle of Neville's Cross" (*Scotland in Early Christian Times*, 1st series, pp. 240, 241).

<sup>3</sup> *Tour in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 116.

fine and pretious stons amongst the Highlanders, many of which they hung about their necks of old, and keepd in their standards, and attributed more vertue to them [than] Albertus Magnus did, and that was too much."<sup>1</sup>

A common name in the Highlands for these rock-crystal balls, which are apparently not common in Scotland, was Leug or Leigheagan.<sup>2</sup>

*The Clach-Dearg, or Stone of Ardvoirlich*, is a ball of rock-crystal, smaller than the *Clach-na-bratach*, mounted in a setting of four silver bands, with a ring at the top for suspension (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> It is supposed to have been brought from the East, and the workmanship of the silver mounting is also said to be Eastern. It was formerly held in great repute, particularly in diseases of cattle, parties coming from a distance of forty miles to obtain some of the water in which it had been dipped. The belief in the virtue of this charm continued till within thirty years ago. Various ceremonies had to be observed by those who wished to benefit by its healing powers. "The person who came for it to Ardvoirlich was obliged to draw the water himself, and bring it into the house

<sup>1</sup> *Analecta Scotica*, 1st series, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> LEICC, LEUG, is defined by Shaw as "A precious stone, diamond. In the Highlands a large crystal, of a figure somewhat oval, which priests keep to work charms by. Water poured upon it, at this day [1780], is given to cattle against diseases. These stones are now preserved for the same purposes by the oldest and most superstitious in the country" (*Gaelic Dictionary*, 1780, vol. i. s.v.). In a letter addressed to the Rev. Robert Wodrow (quoted by Dalryell, *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, pp. 679, 680), is the following passage:—"Leig. Being a great pice of the clearest of cristall, in fornie ane halfe oval, near to the bigness of a littel hen eage: but I find it being of great use for peple that hes coues, being good for many diseases, they sik great monies for it, as forty pund Scots. But if ye please, I can procure ye a sight of one for eight dayes, and it will cost you naught." LEICHEAGAN is defined by Macleod and Dewar as "a stone superstitiously supposed to possess medical virtue" (*Gaelic Dictionary*, s.v.). A writer in the *Literary and Statistical Magazine for Scotland* (1819, vol. iii. p. 364) mentions "a *Leugan* elegantly mounted in silver" as being in the possession of a family in Cowal, Argyllshire. It is probably a ball of rock-crystal, as it is compared by the writer to a transparent globular stone resembling the eye of an ox.

<sup>3</sup> The Clach-Dearg is also figured in the *Proceedings*, vol. iv. p. 221, and vol. xxi. p. 231; *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 198; Simpson, *Archæological Essays*, vol. i. p. 212; *Scottish National Memorials*, p. 338; Drummond, *Ancient Scottish Weapons*, pl. 46.

in some vessel, into which this stone was to be dipped. A bottle was filled and carried away; and in its conveyance home, if carried into any house by the way, the virtue was supposed to leave the water; it was therefore necessary, if a visit had to be paid, that the bottle should be left outside."<sup>1</sup>

The *Clach-na-Bratach*, or *Stone of the Standard*,<sup>2</sup> is an unmounted ball of rock-crystal  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches in diameter, and is stated to have been

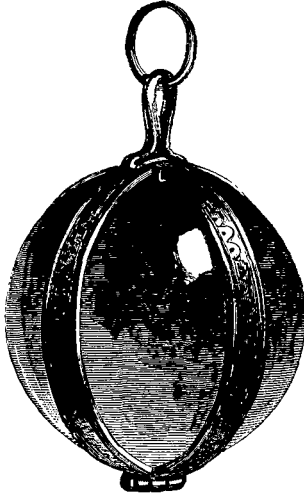


Fig. 1. Clach Dearg or Stone of Ardvoirlich. (†.)



Fig. 2. Clach-na-Bratach, or "Stone of the Standard." (†.)

in the possession of the Clan Donnachaidh since the year 1315. It has already been twice described in the *Proceedings*,<sup>3</sup> and is shown the full size in fig. 2.

The commonly accepted account of this ball is as follows:—The chief of that time (1315), on his way with his clan to join Bruce's army before

<sup>1</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. iv. p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> A cupped stone near Loch Ashie is also known as the Stone of the Standard, *Clach-na-brataich* or *Clach-na-bratich*. It is figured and described in the *Proceedings*, vol. xvi. pp. 384, 385.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. iv. pp. 219, 220; vol. xxi. pp. 226–236; also in Simpson's *Archaeological Essays*, vol. i. p. 211.

the battle of Bannockburn, observed, on his standard being pulled up one morning, the ball glittering in a clod of earth hanging to the flag-staff. The chief showed the ball to his followers, and told them he felt sure its brilliant lights were a good omen, and foretold their victory in the forthcoming battle. Ever after the stone accompanied the clan whenever it was "out," and was always consulted as to the fate of the battle. Its last outing was at Sheriffmuir in 1715, when a large internal flaw was first observed.<sup>1</sup> In a manuscript account of the ball, written between 1749 and 1780, and communicated to the Society by Sir Noel Paton, a slightly different account is given as follows:<sup>2</sup>—

"There is a kind of stone in the family of Strowan which has been carry'd in their pockets by all their representatives time out of mind. Tradition says that this stone was found by Duncan Ard of Atholl, the founder of that family in Perthshire, in the following manner: as Duncan was in pursuit of M'Dougal of Lorn, who had made his escape from him out of the island of Lochranoch, night came upon him towards the end of Locherichk, and he and his men laid them down to rest, the Standard Bearer fixing the Staff of his Standard in the ground; next morning, when the man took hold of his Standard (as it happen'd to be in loose Spouty Ground near a fountain), the Staff, which probably was not very small or well polished in those Days, brought up a good deal of Gravel and Small Stones, and amongst the rest came up this Stone, which, being of a brightness almost equal to Crystal, Duncan thought fit to keep it. They ascribe to this Stone the Virtue of curing Diseases in Men and Beasts, especially Diseases whose causes and symptoms are not easily discover'd; and many of the present Generation in Perthshire would think it very strange to hear the thing disputed."

In another manuscript, written about 1777, it is further stated of the Clach-na-Bratach that "it is still looked upon" in the Highlands "as very Precious on account of the Virtues they ascribe to it, for the cure of diseases in Men and Beasts, particularly for stoping the progress of an unaccountable mortality amongst cattle. Duncan (*i.e.*, *Donacha Reamhar*) and all the representatives of the Family from Generation to Generation have carried this stone about their persons; and while it remained in Scotland, People came frequently from places at a great distance to get water in which it had been dipt for various purposes."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. iv. p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xxi. p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.



The last occasion on which this ball was used appears to have been somewhere between 1822 and 1830, when it was dipped with much gravity, by the chief, in a great china bowl filled with water from a "fairy" spring, after which the water was "distributed to a number of people who had come great distances to obtain it for medicinal purposes."

*Clach Bhuai, or the Powerful Stone.*—Pennant<sup>1</sup> mentions having seen a ball of rock-crystal, or a "crystal gem" as he prefers to call it, mounted in silver, in the possession of Captain Archibald Campbell of Glenlyon, which he says was known as the *Clach Bhuai*, or the "Powerful Stone," and that good fortune was supposed to attend the owner of it. It appears to have been efficacious in diseases of mankind as well as animal, and Pennant adds that for the use of it "people came above 100 miles, and brought the water it was to be dipt in with them; for without that, in human cases, it was believed to have no effect." The ball is about 1½ inch in diameter; and, according to the late Sir James Simpson, "to make the water in which it was dipped sufficiently medicinal and effective, the stone, during the process, required to be held in the hand of the Laird."<sup>2</sup>

In the Fingask Collection, at present exhibited in the Museum of Science and Art, there is another of these balls of rock-crystal, about 1¼ inch in diameter, mounted in silver bands, the workmanship of which is probably of the end of the last or beginning of the present century. Unfortunately it has no history.

A fourth ball, also mounted in silver, for use as a charm, was exhibited to the Society on the 14th December 1891, by Mrs Gibson, Bankhead House, Forfar. It measures about 1½ inch in diameter. Unfortunately nothing is known of its history beyond the fact that it has been in the possession of the family of the present owner since the middle of last century at least. The ball may have been found in England, as the first member of the family in whose possession it is known to have been was a schoolmaster in Great Yarmouth.

<sup>1</sup> *Tour in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. iv. p. 221. See also Dalryell, *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 155.

The National Museum possesses a ball of rock-crystal,  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inch in diameter, said to have been found somewhere in Fife many years ago. It is unmounted, and may have been found in a grave, like the balls mentioned in Appendix II.

In addition to the balls already described, there are also a number of other charms of rock-crystal, formerly held in high repute for the cure of various diseases.

*Keppoch Charm-Stone.*—This charm has already been described in the *Proceedings*<sup>1</sup> by the Rev. Dr Stewart, of Nether Lochaber. He makes no mention, however, of what disease or diseases the stone was intended to cure, nor how the water in which it was dipped was administered to the patient. The charm is “an oval of rock-crystal, about the size of a small egg, fixed in a bird’s claw of silver, and with a silver chain attached, by which it was suspended when about to be dipped.” The charm was in the possession of the late Angus MacDonell of Insh, a cadet of the MacDonells of Keppoch and the Braes, who emigrated to Australia shortly after 1854, and is believed to have taken the charm with him. The following form of words was repeated as the charm was being dipped in the water :—

<i>Gaelic.</i>	<i>Translation.</i>
Bogam thu 'sa bhùrn, A lèug bhuidhe, bhoidheach, bhua- dhar.	Let me dip thee in the water, Thou yellow, beautiful gem of Power!
Ann am bùrn an fhior-uig; Nach d' leig Bhrìde a thruailleadh,	In water of purest wave, Which (Saint) Bridget didn't permit to be contaminated.
'An ainm nan Abstol naomh, 'S Muire Oigh nam beùsan,	In the name of the Apostles twelve, In the name of Mary, Virgin of virtues,
'N ainm na Trianaid ard, 'S nan aingeal dealrach uile; Beannachd air an lèug; 'S beannachd air an uisge, Leigheas tinneas cléibh do gach crentair cuirte.	And in the name of the High Trinity And all the shining angels, A blessing on the gem, A blessing on the water, and A healing of bodily ailments to each suffering creature.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxiv. pp. 157, 158.

“To understand the reference to St Bridget<sup>1</sup> in the incantation, it is necessary to mention that there is a well near Keppoch, called *Tobar-Bhrìde* (Bridget’s Well), from which a small streamlet issues. It was from this stream that the water was taken into which the charm-stone was to be dipped.”

The Marquess of Breadalbane possesses a charm of rock-crystal set in silver, which was exhibited in the Glasgow Exhibition, and has been figured.<sup>2</sup> The setting is an octagonal disc of silver, with the crystal secured to one face, and with eight pearls set round it at regular intervals. The crystal is probably the one referred to in the “Inventar of geir left by Sir Coline not to be dispoit upon,” as follows:—“Ane stone of the quantitie of half a hen’s eg sett in silver, being flatt at the ane end and round at the other end lyke a peir, quhilk Sir Coline Campbell, first Laird of Glenvrquhy, woir quhen he faught in battell at the Rhodes agaynst the Turks, he being one of the knychtis of the Rhodes.”<sup>3</sup> In noticing this entry Cosmo Innes says:<sup>4</sup>—“The jewel so particularly described as the amulet worn in battle by the Knight of the Cross, would seem to have been used as a charm for more homely purposes afterwards.” He does not tell us, however, what these “homely purposes” were.

Among the objects in the Sim Collection, presented to the Museum in 1882, is an oblong piece of rock-crystal,  $1\frac{5}{8}$  inch in length,  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch in breadth, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in height, in a setting of brass, with a loop at one end for suspension. “A memorandum accompanying it, in Mr Sim’s hand, states that it was purchased at Oban on 6th June 1851, from Duncan White, jeweller there, and that it was believed to be an amulet or charm-stone. The memorandum also states that it had been twenty years in Mr White’s possession, and during that time he had met with nothing similar, except a very fine one, set in silver and encased with other red stones, for which he wanted a large sum.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For some remarks on the Irish St Bridget and the Brigantia of Roman Altars, see Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 75, 77. For the cultus of St Bridget in Scotland, see Forbes, *Kalendars of Scottish Saints*, pp. 290, 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Scottish National Memorials*, p. 337. <sup>3</sup> *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. 346, 347.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, p. iii., and *Sketches of Early Scottish History*, pp. 343, 344.

<sup>5</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xvi. p. 149.

An oval polished crystal of a yellowish colour,  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch in length by  $\frac{11}{16}$  inch in diameter, exhibited by Dr R. de Brus Trotter, of Perth, is said to have been found at Leac-a-Geelie, Carrochtrie, and to have been used like the clear stone of the diviners in Yucatan, mentioned in the Appendix (p. 526), "for seeing things in."

#### CURING-STONES.<sup>1</sup>

That certain stones possessed curative properties of an occult nature was formerly the common belief of the people throughout Scotland, and

<sup>1</sup>The following notes descriptive of a few typical Irish curing-stones are added here for comparison with the Scottish examples: (1) In "the Relig" near Bruckless, County Donegal, is preserved a naturally formed stone known as the "Healing Stone of St Conall." "This is a dark-brown-coloured stone, measuring 5 inches long and 3 inches thick, in shape and size somewhat like an ordinary dumb-bell. . . . This stone is regarded in the neighbourhood with the highest reverence, and is considered to have a most powerful effect in curing all kinds of diseases. The sick person desiring to make use of the stone has it brought to his house, where it is retained till it is no longer required, in which case it is returned to the Relig, or till a more urgent case arises in the neighbourhood, when the stone is transferred from one patient to the other. When not in use this stone is kept in a hollow of the broken cross on the top of the cairn at the Relig, exposed to all weathers: it has no custodian, but any person on going to borrow it gives notice to some of the families living near, so that it is always known where the stone is; and to return it is a matter of duty." The stone was in use in 1870 (*Journal Royal Hist. and Arch. Assoc. of Ireland*, 4th series, vol. i. p. 469). (2) At Ballyvourney, Cork, a spherical stone, about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, "of hard brown stone, like basalt," was used for the cure of murrain in cattle (*ibid.*, 4th series, vol. iii. p. 444). (3) An amulet of banded agate, in the form of a perforated ball,  $1\frac{1}{4}$ th inch in diameter, known as the Imokilly Amulet (*Cloch Omra Ua Maccaille*), was held in great repute as a cure for murrain and hydrophobia. For the cure of the former disease it was dipped in water, which was then given to the suffering cattle. No particulars are given of its use in hydrophobia (*ibid.*, 4th series, vol. iii. pp. 440-444 and plate). Windele has erroneously described the Imokilly Stone as "of crystal, oval in form, and set in silver" (*Journal Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, new series, vol. v. p. 324). (4) In the beginning of the present century there was found in the supposed grave of St Declan at Ardmore a small stone, sculptured with the figure of a cross on one side, which is presumed to be the stone mentioned in the Life of the saint. It is stated in the Life that when the saint was saying mass in a church in Italy, a small stone sent to him from heaven came through the window, and rested on the altar before him. It was called Duihin Deaglin (or more correctly *Duibh-mhoín Deaglain*, i.e., Declan's Black Relic). It performed many miracles during the life of the saint, such as curing sore eyes, headaches, &c., and was itself the subject of a miracle the account of which is quoted on p. 521. Judging

even at this day is not quite extinct among us. With the exception of the crystal balls already described, the greater number of these curing-stones are merely naturally-formed pebbles, such as may be found in the bed of any stream, or picked up on the sea-shore. Some of these curing-stones are known by name, and have acquired a more than local celebrity from their association with particular individuals. Of these the chief is the Curing-Stone of St Columba, the virtues of which have been recorded by Adamnan as follows :—

*Curing-Stone of St Columba.*—"About the same time the venerable man, from motives of humanity, besought Broichan the Druid to liberate a certain Scotie female slave, and when he very cruelly and obstinately refused to part with her, the saint then spoke to him to the following effect :—' Know, O Broichan, and be assured, that if thou refuse to set this captive free, as I desire thee, that thou shalt die suddenly before I take my departure again from this province.' Having said this in presence of Brude, the king, he departed from the royal palace and proceeded to the river Nesa (the Ness) ; from this stream he took a white pebble,<sup>1</sup> and showing it to his companions said to them :—

from the illustration, I believe the charm to be nothing more than the moiety of a stone mould for casting fibulæ of cruciform type (*ibid.*, new series, vol. iii. pp. 51, 52 ; and *Catalogue, Museum Royal Irish Academy*, p. 131). (5) For a "doctor-stone" used in the neighbourhood of Oughterard, County Galway, see *Jour. Roy. Hist. and Arch. Assoc.*, 4th series, vol. ix. p. 72. Several small stones bearing short Runic inscriptions, and which have probably been used as amulets, are figured, and described by Prof. Stephens in his *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, vol. ii. pp. 858-862. See also Wilde, *Catalogue, Museum R.I.A.*, pp. 131, 132. Curing-stones were also known to the Icelanders. They are mentioned as being attached to the hilts of ancient swords to rub and heal the wounds with,—for example, the sword Sköfnung: wounds made by this sword could only be healed by the stone grooved in its hilt—Laxdæla Saga, 250, 252, and Kormaks Saga, 80 (Cleasby-Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, s.v. LYFSTEINN). In Gaungu-Hrólf's Saga mention is made of one such : "i aptra hjalti sverðsins vóru leystir lifsteinar þeir, er eitr ok sviða drógu ur sárum, ef í vóru skafnir" (*Fornaldar Sögur Norðrlanda*, vol. iii. p. 244 ; see also p. 307). In *Kormaks Saga* (ed. Möbius, capp. 12, 13) Bersi also wears a lyfstein hung on his neck to preserve him from drowning.

<sup>1</sup> In connection with this it may be of interest to draw attention to the discovery of white pebbles in association with burials of the Bronze Age, for which see *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. vi. pp. 343, 345, 349, 355 ; *ibid.*, vol. xviii. pp. 286-291 ; *Collections of Ayrshire and Galloway Archeological Association*, vol. vi. pp. 92, 94 ; Greenwell, *British Barrows*, pp. 140, 165, 206 ; *Loch Etive and the Sons of Uisnach*, pp. 221, 223, 225. Invalids who visited St Fillan's Well at Comrie threw a white stone on the saint's cairn (*Old Statistical Account*, vol. xi. p. 181).

“Behold this white pebble, by which God will effect the cure of many diseases among this heathen nation.”<sup>1</sup>

“Having thus spoken, he instantly added, ‘Broichan is chastised grievously at this moment, for an angel being sent from heaven, and striking him severely, hath broken into many pieces the glass cup in his hand from which he was drinking, and hath left him gasping deeply for breath, and half dead. Let us await here a short time, for two of the king’s messengers, who have been sent after us in haste, to request us to return quickly and help the dying Broichan, who, now that he is thus terribly punished, consenteth to set the girl free.’

“Whilst the saint was yet speaking, behold there arrived, as he had predicted, two horsemen, who were sent by the king, and who related all that had occurred to Broichan in the royal fortress, according to the prediction of the saint—both the breaking of the drinking goblet, the punishment of the Druid, and his willingness to set his captive at liberty; they then added,

<sup>1</sup> Another stone traditionally assigned to St Columba is the *Cloch Ruadh* or “Red Stone,” about which O’Donnell records the strange legend in his life of the saint:—“Simul etiam cum partu enixa est mater [Columbiæ] quasi lapillum quendam rubrum, vulgo *Cloch Ruadh* dictum, teteremque mali aurei magnitudine, qui in eodem prædio religiose asservatur.” The family of O’Nahan, who were the hereditary herenachs and corbes of Gartan, the parish in which St Columba was born, had also the privilege of carrying “Collumkillie’s read stoane.” The Donegal Inquisition of 1609 finds that two gorts in Garten were held by O’Nahan. In the Laud MS. (p. 95) there is a poem ascribed to St Columba on the virtues of the Red Stone wherewith he banished the demons from Sengleann (now Glencolumbkille, a parish in the extreme south-west of Donegal). O’Donnell calls the latter a *blue* stone, and speaks of it as preserved in Glencolumbkille (Reeves, *Adannan, Vita Sancti Columbæ*, pp. 330 and 281).

A blue stone preserved in the chapel dedicated to St Columbus on Fladda-Chuin is mentioned by Martin, who ascribes extraordinary virtues to it. His words are: “There is a Chappel in the Isle dedicated to St Columbus; it has an Altar in the East-end, and there is a blue Stone of a round Form on it, which is always moist. It is an ordinary Custom, when any of the Fishermen are detain’d in the Isle, by contrary Winds, to wash the blue Stone with Water all round, expecting thereby to procure a favourable Wind, which the credulous Tenant living in the Isle says never fails, especially if a Stranger wash the Stone: The Stone is likewise applied to the sides of People troubled with Stitches, and they say it is effectual for that purpose. And so great is the regard they have for this Stone, that they swear decisive Oaths on it” (*Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, pp. 166, 167). Martin further mentions that in the Church “built by the famous St Columbus” in Colonsay, there was in his time an Altar, “and there has been a modern Crucifix on it, in which several precious Stones were fix’d; the most valuable of these is now in the Custody of Mack Duffie, in black Raimused [*sic*] Village, and it is us’d as a Catholicon for Diseases” (*ibid.*, p. 246).

'The king and his friends have sent us to thee to request that thou wouldst cure his foster-father Broichan, who lieth in a dying state.'

"Having heard these words of the messengers, St Columba sent two of his companions to the king with the pebble which he had blessed, and said to them, 'If Broichan shall first promise to set the maiden free, then at once immerse this little stone in water, and let him drink from it, and he shall be instantly cured; but if he break his vow, and refuse to liberate her, he shall die that instant.'

"The two persons, in obedience to the saint's instructions, proceeded to the palace, and announced to the king the words of the venerable man. When they were made known to the king and his tutor Broichan, they were so dismayed that they immediately liberated the captive, and delivered her to the saint's messengers. The pebble was then immersed in water, and in a wonderful manner, contrary to the laws of nature, the stone floated on the water, like a nut or an apple, nor, as it had been blessed by the holy man, could it be submerged. Broichan drank from the stone as it floated on the water, and instantly returning from the verge of death, recovered his perfect health and soundness of body.

"This remarkable pebble, which was afterwards preserved among the treasures of the king, through the mercy of God effected the cure of sundry diseases among the people, while it in the same manner floated when dipped in water. And what is very wonderful, when this same stone was sought for by those sick persons whose term of life had arrived, it could not be found. Thus on the very day on which King Brude died, though it was sought for, yet it could not be found in the place where it had been previously laid."<sup>1</sup>

*Curing-Stones of St Fillan.*—In a niche in the wall of the mill at Killin, Perthshire, there are preserved a number of stones, which are locally known as the healing or curing stones of St Fillan, and considered to be efficacious in cases of insanity and rheumatism. The stones are merely small boulders of quartzite taken from the bed of the river, but are marked by small, shallow, rounded cavities on their faces. They are now known to be nothing more than the "socket stones in which the spindle of the upper millstone used to work before the introduction of the improved machinery."<sup>2</sup> It is stated<sup>3</sup> that a niche has

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan, *Life of St Columba*, lib. ii. cap. xxxiv. Edinr. ed. The curing-stone is also referred to in chapter i. of the *Life*, which is "A brief narrative of his great miracles."

<sup>2</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xiii. p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, from communications of Charles Stewart of Killin, F.S.A. Scot.

always been made in the wall of the new mill which succeeded the old one down to the present day, as a resting-place for the stones; and that on the saint's day in 1879, the villagers assembled and put clean straw under them. The precise manner in which the stones were used in effecting a cure is not clear, but it is stated that water poured over them was used by the patient—whether outwardly or inwardly is not known. A correspondent of the late Dr John Stuart, in a letter dated March 1865, also refers to the stones, and adds that each one “was supposed to have the power of healing a particular disease . . . . The tradition of the country points them out as the identical stones blessed by the saint, and used for healing disease through so many centuries, almost to our own time. One was called the ‘heart stone,’ another the ‘thumb stone.’”<sup>1</sup>

In a paper communicated to the Society some years ago<sup>2</sup> by the Rev. Dr Hugh Macmillan, the writer describes two curing-stones of white quartz which lie on a tombstone in an old burying-ground known as *Cladh Davi*, on the shore of Loch Tay. These curing-stones, like those at Killin already described, were also originally socket stones. Dr Macmillan says:—“These stones are said to cure pectoral inflammation when the water is applied to the nipples; and not long since a woman, who was thus afflicted, came a considerable distance, from the head of Glen Lochay, to make use of this remedy . . . . In all likelihood the stones belong to the series which is carefully preserved in the modern mill at Killin, as relics of St Fillan . . . . It is said that some of the stones in the collection at the mill were lost. In all likelihood the stones in *Cladh Davi* are the missing ones, though how or why or when they were brought to the latter spot there is no record to tell.”

*Curing-Stone of St Molio.*—Martin is the only writer who describes this stone, which appears to have been held in great repute in Arran in his day for removing stitches from the sides of sick people, and for securing victory in battle to Macdonald of the Isles. The stone has now disappeared.<sup>3</sup> Martin's description is as follows: <sup>4</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> MS. letter now in possession of the Society of Antiquaries. See also Shearer's *Antiquities of Strathearn*, reprint 1881, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xviii. pp. 375, 376.

<sup>3</sup> *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, pt. ii. p. 245.

<sup>4</sup> *Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, pp. 225, 226.



"I had like to have forgot a valuable Curiosity in this Isle, which they call *Baul Muluy*,<sup>1</sup> i.e. Molvingus his Stone Globe: this Saint was Chaplain to Mack-Donald of the Isles; his Name is celebrated here on the account of this Globe, so much esteem'd by the Inhabitants. This Stone for its intrinsic value has been carefully transmitted to Posterity for several Ages. It is a green Stone much like a Globe in Figure, about the bigness of a Goose-Egg. The Vertue of it is to remove Stitches from the sides of sick Persons, by laying it close to the Place affected; and if the Patient does not out-live the Distemper, they say the Stone removes out of the Bed of its own accord, and *è contra*. The Natives use this Stone for swearing decisive Oaths upon it.<sup>2</sup> They ascribe another extraordinary Vertue to it, and 'tis this: The credulous Vulgar firmly believe that if this Stone is cast among the Front of an Enemy, they will all run away; and that as often as the Enemy rallies, if this Stone is cast among them, they still lose Courage, and retire. They say that Mack-Donald of the Isles carried this Stone about him, and that Victory was always on his side when he threw it among the Enemy.<sup>3</sup> The Custody of this Globe

<sup>1</sup> In the graveyard beside the ruined church of Kilmacida, near Killeany, Kerry, "is a small pillar-stone, cupped at top, and having on its eastern side an incised cross, coloured red by the people. A magic stone ball or pebble used to lie in this cup, but it is now carefully put away in the house of a man who acts as its guardian, and allows it to be used for the healing of sick human beings, as well as cattle, in the district. The people call it the *bauilly*, and when it is brought into use it is dipped into water, in which the sick man, woman, or child bathes his or her hands. The water is poured on ailing cattle, and the people have a profound faith in the healing powers of the *bauilly* and water thus combined" (*Journal Royal Hist. and Archæol. Assoc. of Ireland*, 4th series, vol. vii. p. 500).

<sup>2</sup> Other oath-stones in Iona are mentioned by Martin, who says that a little to the west of "the Monk's Fort" in Iona "lie the black Stones, which are so call'd not from their Colour, for that is grey, but from the effects that Tradition say ensued upon Perjury if any one became guilty of it after swearing on these Stones in the usual manner, for an Oath made on them was decisive in all Controversies. Mack-Donald, King of the Isles, deliver'd the Rights of the Lands to his Vassals in the Isles and Continent, with up-lifted Hands, and bended Knees on the black Stones; and in this Posture, before many Witnesses, he solemnly swore that he would never recall those Rights which he then granted: and this was instead of his Great Seal. Hence it is that when one was certain of what he affirm'd, he said positively, I have freedom to swear this Matter upon the black Stones" (*Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, pp. 259, 260; see also Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands*, Glasgow ed., 1817, p. 232. See also the footnote quoted on p. 446).

<sup>3</sup> In 1232 Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, was accused, among other crimes, of abstracting from the royal treasury, to send to Llewellyn of Wales, a precious stone which possessed the virtue of rendering its owner invincible in war: "dixit etiam rex, quod lapidem quendam pretiosum nimis, qui talem habuit virtutem, quod in-

is the peculiar Privilege of a little Family called Clan-Chattons, alias Mack-Intosh; they were antient Followers of Mack-Donald of the Isles. This Stone is now in the Custody of Margaret Miller, alias Mack-Intosh: she lives in Baellmianich, and preserves the Globe with abundance of care; it is wrapped up in fair Linen Cloth, and about that there is a piece of Woollen Cloth, and she keeps it still lock'd up in her Chest, when it is not given out to exert its qualities."

#### MISCELLANEOUS CURING-STONES.

Three curing-stones from Ledaig, near Loch Etive, have been described in the *Proceedings*<sup>1</sup> by Prof. Duns. One known as the *Clach Leigh*, or Stone of Medicine, is a piece of clay ironstone tinged with green, "was kept in the best chest or press in the house, carefully rolled up in the best piece of dress, and when taken to the sick, it was wrapt in the best plaid belonging to the family. It was believed to be efficacious in all sorts of human ailments, and was in use over a very wide district. The stone was put into the hand of the patient, and 'the amount of clammy sweat which gathered round the stone indicated the extent of the cure.'" The second, or the "Red Stone" (*Clach Ruaidhe*),

vincibilem reddidit in bello, de thesauro suo furtive sustulit, et eam Leolino inimico suo, regi Walliæ, proditiose transmissit" (Matt. Paris, *Chronica Majora*, Rolls edition, vol. iii. p. 222). Victory-stones were also known to the Icelanders, but unfortunately the texts in which they are mentioned give no particulars as to their nature. In the Saga of Didrik of Bern (cap. xxv.) mention is made of King Nidung's victory-stone (*sigr-steinn*), which was an heirloom, having passed from father to son in his family, and which possessed the power of ensuring victory to him who bore it in the fight. So highly did the King value the stone, that when he found he had left it at home, he offered his daughter and the third part of his kingdom to any one who should bring it to him before the commencement of the battle on the following day. In the same saga a second victory-stone is mentioned, which belonged to an old warrior named Sigurd, and which he appears to have worn hung round his neck. His daughter stole it one night when he was sleeping after drinking wine, and gave it to a young warrior named Dietleib with whom she was in love (*Nordiske Kæmpe-Historier*, andet bind: *Sagaen om Kong Didrik af Bern og hans Kæmper*, Copenhagen, 1822, pp. 74-76, 188, 190). In the Museum of Science and Art, Edinburgh, is a small oblong pebble (*natap*) of greenstone,  $\frac{7}{8}$ th inch in length by  $\frac{3}{8}$ th inch in diameter, from Emai, New Hebrides. It was formerly carried in war by the foremost man to guide the company in order to strengthen them and give them success in the battle.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xiii. pp. 284, 285.

was in common use towards the close of the first half of last century "for rubbing the udders of cows when hardened and inflamed by disease." The third specimen is known as the Spotted Stone (*Clach Spotaiche*), and is merely a piece of coarse black basalt, which had previously been used as a hammer. It is stated to have been in one family "for generations," and to have been used "over the whole district for rubbing horses suffering from stoppage of the urine."

In a note to his paper, Prof. Duns added the following record of the use of a curing-stone in Clackmannanshire, which he had received from Peter Miller, Esq., a Fellow of the Society :—

"I remember when a boy, say about 1820, that one of our family suffered much pain from a 'whitlow' in the thumb, which was tedious and long in healing, all the more so that there was a large piece of proud flesh on the sore. Several local applications had been used, but the healing process went on very slowly. The old matrons coming about strongly advised that Mrs Ferguson's 'adder stanes' should be applied to hasten the cure. The owner of them was an old and infirm person, but her daughter came and performed the operation. It was made by herself by gently stroking the diseased thumb with the stone in a slow measured manner towards its extremity. Then the stone was applied all round the thumb in the same way. These operations were gone over several times by the operator. . . . Some days after, the operation was repeated in the same formal way. The 'stones' were carefully wrapped up in some soft sort of cloth and kept in a silk bag, which was tied in a napkin. They were reported to be an heirloom in the family who owned them, and had been handed down from one generation to another. The belief was that their efficacy in promoting a cure depended in a great measure on their application being made, on the diseased member or body, by the owner of them. They were considered very precious, and we were scarcely allowed to touch them, as the handling and touching took away their healing virtues. The stones were round, about an inch in length, and the thickness of a sparrow's egg at the broad end, of a dark grey colour, and having a very smooth polished surface, just like a very choice pebble that one often meets with on the sea-shore, which I have no doubt they were."

To the Rev. Dr J. M. Joass, of Golspie, I am indebted for the following notice of five curing-stones, formerly used in the parish of Criech, Sutherlandshire. The stones are now in his possession. Dr Joass writes :—"The stones referred to were used for the cure of sick cattle within the memory of the sender, who desired to have his name sup-

pressed lest he should incur blame, or worse, for putting them into the hands of probable unbelievers. He is still alive. They are smooth, beach-rolled pebbles of clay-slate, dark and unctuous with long handling.

"The following was the [Gaelic] formula used within forty years in Strathspey when such charm-stones were employed. 'Patsher' is 'Pater' and means 'Pater-noster,' or the efficacy of the same transferred to a rub with the stone over the afflicted part: '*Aon patsher, dha patsher, tri patsher,*' &c. (one Pater, two Paters, three Paters, &c.), according to virulence of the disease and relative needful number of rubs. At the close the performer repeated the following, also in Gaelic:

*'Gu maith an diugh, 's fhearr' am maireach;  
An deigh sin gun dad ach 'n larach.'*

*i.e.,*

'This day well, next better (far);  
After that nought but the scar.'

*Stone for Cure of Sterility.*—Through the kindness of Mr James Shand of the Union Bank of Scotland, Edinburgh, I am enabled to exhibit an egg-shaped pebble of quartz, 2 inches in length by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in greatest diameter, which was formerly used in Shetland as a cure for sterility. In a letter to me, Mr Shand gives the following account of the method of using the stone:

"The charm-stone which I handed to you was for many years used in the west division of Sandsting parish, Shetland, as a cure for sterility in women. It was given to the lady from whom I received it by an old woman who had actually known it in use. The *modus operandi* was for the would-be mother to wash her feet in burn (*i.e.*, 'running') water, in which the stone was laid.<sup>1</sup> I

<sup>1</sup> Although not mentioned, the water was probably "south running," as water which flowed in that direction was believed to be endowed with extraordinary properties (See Dalrymple, *Darker Superstitions*, pp. 84-87; Henderson, *Folk-lore of Northern Counties of England*, pp. 106, 107, 141). In other instances ordinary rain-water which had accumulated in the hollows of cup-marked stones was believed to be equally efficacious for the cure of barrenness in women. Thus a cupped stone containing "cloud-drawn" water, at Arpafelie, near Inverness, was until lately visited by childless women, who bathed in its water before sunrise (*Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xvi. p. 387). Similarly, the rain-water contained in "St Columba's Font," near Abriachan, Inverness, is also "said to have salutary effects in connection with child-

rather think there were some other formalities, but these I have unhappily forgotten. The stone was said to have been brought from Italy originally—this, no doubt, being calculated to make it seem more valuable. Unlike most charms, it was not preserved in one family, but passed from the hands of one wise woman to another, the trust being only relinquished when the holder was on her death-bed.”

bearing, and women are said to have frequented it in this belief till recently” (*ibid.*, pp. 377, 378). Numerous other virtues were ascribed to the rain-water accumulated in the artificial or natural hollows on earth-fast boulders, such as curing the whooping-cough in children, removing warts from the hands, and curing diseased eyes. Many of these cavities are dignified by the name of “well,” though holding only at most about a couple of quarts. The rain-water in a large cup-hollow on a boulder at Arisaig imparted peculiar cunning to the hand and strength to the arm of any apprentice smith who washed his hands in it “at sunrise on the first day of May” (*ibid.*, p. 397). At Fernan, Loch Tay, is a cup-marked boulder, known as the *Clach-na-Cruich* (“Stone of the Measles”), the rain-water contained in one of the cavities of which “when drunk by the patient was supposed to be a sovereign remedy for that disease” (*ibid.*, vol. xviii. p. 370). The Well of the Whooping-Cough (*Fuaran na Druibh Chasad*) at Auchmore, Killin, is simply a hollow in a boulder containing rain-water (*ibid.*, pp. 372, 373; see also p. 375 for a “dripping-well” near Mornish, formerly resorted to in cases of whooping-cough). A stone known as the *Clach'n dru' chasad* (=whooping-cough stone) on the farm of Easter Kindrochit, Athole, has a cavity on the top in which rain-water gathers. From time immemorial the water has been famed for curing whooping-cough, “children from all parts being brought there by their parents to drink the water, which was given to them in a spoon made from the horn of a living cow” (*ibid.*, vol. xxiv. p. 382). The water contained in the cavity of another stone near the old castle of Garth, formerly frequented for the whooping-cough, was also given to the patients in a spoon made from a living horn (*beadharc*), that is, a horn taken from a living cow. The use of the quick-horn spoon appears to have been essential in this latter case at least (*ibid.*, vol. xx. p. 46). At another whooping-cough well at Edinchip, Balquhiddy, the water was also administered to the patient in a spoon made from the horn of a living cow (*ibid.*, vol. xxi. p. 85, *note*). A boulder known as *Clach nan sul* (Stone of the Eyes), with a natural cavity containing rain-water, at Wester Auchleskine, Balquhiddy, was famous as a curing-well for sore eyes (*ibid.*). The rain-water which accumulated in a cavity of one of the copestones of the wall surrounding the old burial-ground of Inverallan, Strathspey, was formerly used by boys troubled with warts to bathe their hands, in the belief that so doing would cause the warts to disappear (*ibid.*, vol. xxiii. p. 88). At the foot of Dun-Fhaolain, Comrie, Perthshire, there is a basin, made by Saint Fillan, “on the top of a large stone, which seldom wants water, even in the greatest drought: and all who are distressed with sore eyes must wash them three times with this water” (*Old Statistical Account*, vol. xi. p. 181).

Notwithstanding the statement that the stone was brought from Italy, there is nothing in its appearance or form to confirm such a belief. In all probability it is nothing more than an ordinary water-rolled pebble, picked up on the beach.

A ring of jet, found in a cairn in the parish of Inchinnan about 1753, was preserved in the parish of East Kilbride as an inestimable specific in diseases, and imagined to be "more valuable than many tons weight of medicine."<sup>1</sup>

An oval water-worn pebble of quartz, now in the Museum, was formerly kept over the lintel of the byre-door at Cachladhu, a croft about a mile from St Fillans, Perthshire, and used to protect the cattle from all kinds of disease. In addition to using the stone, the animal, when ill, "had to be supplied with water from a stream that was commonly crossed by the living and the dead, and two or three pieces of silver money were put in the coggie, and the water was taken from the burn or river, usually under a bridge, 'in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' repeated in Gaelic, and then given to the animal."<sup>2</sup>

A small perforated ball or bead of Scotch pebble,  $\frac{1}{6}$  of an inch in diameter, exhibited by Mrs Duncan, Roseheart, through Dr Gregor, of Pitsligo, has already been described by him. It "has been in the possession of the present family for at least six generations, [and] has the virtue of curing diseases of the eye. It goes by the name of the

<sup>1</sup> Ure, *Rutherglen and East Kilbride*, 1793, p. 220. Jet was held in high repute among the Romans. Pliny says of it: "Fugat serpentes ita, recreatque vulvæ strangulationes. Deprehendit santicum morbum, et virginitatem sufficit. Idem ex vino decoctus dentibus medetur, strumisque ceræ permixtus. Hoc dicuntur uti Magi in ea, quam vocant axinomantiam: et peruri negant, si eventurum sit, quod aliquis optet" (*Hist. Nat.*, lib. xxxvi. cap. 34). See also Dioscorides, *De Medica Materia*, lib. v. cap. 146; Orpheus, *Περὶ Λίθων*, 468-487; Marbodius, *Liber de Gemmis*, cap. xviii.; Boetius, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, lib. ii. capp. 163-165; Camillus Leonardus, *Speculum Lapidum*, p. 83; Bartholomew, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Trevisa's trans., lib. xvi. cap. xlix.; Rulandus, *Lexicon Alchemiæ*, pp. 237-240; Nicols, *Arcula Gemmea*, pp. 171, 172, "It is reported of it [Jet], that the wearing of this stone doth secure men from nocturnall fears, from Incubus or Succubus, or the nightmare, and from evil spirits; and that it being drunk, will show whether a maid have her virginite or no."

<sup>2</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxii. p. 25; *Archæological Review*, vol. ii. p. 104.

'ee-stehn,' and is thought to contain all the colours of the eye. . . . When put into a mixture of milk and water, a lotion is formed capable of curing every kind of disease of the eye."<sup>1</sup> Should this charm fall to the ground, the virtue is immediately gone from it.<sup>2</sup>

In Kirkcudbrightshire, according to the late Mr Joseph Train, perforated discs of shale or cannel coal were believed to be capable of preserving horses and cattle from the effects of witchcraft. There have been found at different times near Hallferne, he says, "several round flat stones, each 5 or 6 inches diameter, perforated artificially in the centre. Even within the memory of some persons yet alive, these perforated stones were used in Galloway to counteract the supposed effects of witchcraft, particularly in horses and black cattle. 'The canie wife o' Glengappock put a boirt [bored] stane into ane tub filled withe water, and causit syne the hail cattell to pass by, and when passing springled ilk ane o' them with a besome dipped in it.' One of these perforated stones, as black and glossy as polished ebony, is also in my possession. It was recently found in the ruins of an old byre, where it had evidently been placed for the protection of the cattle."<sup>3</sup>

*Clach-Chrùbain*.—Pennant mentions a curing-stone known in Islay as "*Clach Crubain*," and used "to cure all pains in the joints," which he describes as a "species of fossil shell called Gryphites."<sup>4</sup> Armstrong calls it "an Hebridean amulet for curing rheumatism and all diseases of the joints."<sup>5</sup>

A rough nodule of chalk flint, naturally perforated, formerly used in Aberdeenshire for the cure of diseases of the body generally, is exhibited by Dr R. de Brus Trotter, of Perth, who has also kindly communicated the following account of its use:—"The rough piece of flint, with a

<sup>1</sup> *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> A bluish green stone, preserved at Thrustleton, North Devon, is known as the "kenning-stone," and is, or was, much resorted to by people troubled with sore eyes. "If the eye be rubbed with the stone, the sufferer is cured."—Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties*, p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Communication by Joseph Train, quoted in the *New Statistical Account*, 1845, Kirkcudbrightshire, p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> *Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii., 2nd ed., p. 265.

<sup>5</sup> *Gaelic-English Dictionary*, 1825, s.v.

natural hole in it, I got from a lady now in Perth. It was left with other things to her mother, by an old woman, a reputed witch, named Christian Smith, who had a croft a few miles north of Ellon in Aberdeenshire. She had three perforated stones, which she kept hanging from the backs of chairs in her parlour. One was for curing diseases of the head, one for diseases of the heart, and the one I have for diseases of the body generally. The sick person was brought to her, the stone was placed on a peat in the middle of the fire, some words being said, and when the stone was heated sufficiently to cause a slight fizz it was dipped with some words in some water in a bowl. The patient then drank the water, and, paying a fee, went off rejoicing. Obstinate cases required sometimes the patient to come three times."

"A perforated stone, having the appearance of amber, semi-transparent, weathered on the surface, and waterworn," was described in 1874 as being at that time believed in the Lewis to possess extraordinary curative virtue, "both with regard to man and beast, when they happen to be serpent-bitten." It is further stated "that its loss would be regarded as a great calamity by the whole district," and that "it has been sent to all the villages for many miles round about, and was in special request when the ordinary serpent-stones failed in effecting a cure."<sup>1</sup>

#### "MARE-STANES."

The belief that the nightmare was caused by a wicked hag or ogress named "*Mara*" crushing or trampling on a person during sleep<sup>2</sup> was common among the Teutonic races, and is only recently extinct in Scotland,—if indeed it really be so. The *Mara* was also in the habit of taking horses out of their stables during the night and riding them about; and horses so ridden were found in the morning with tangled manes and bodies dripping with sweat. A "self-holed" stone, or

<sup>1</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. x. pp. 742, 743.

<sup>2</sup> The belief that nightmare was caused by an evil spirit was common in other countries besides Europe. See instances in Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation*, 4th ed., pp. 217, 218; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., vol. ii. p. 189; Dorman, *Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, p. 61; *Anglo-Saxon Leechdoms*, vol. i., introduction, pp. xxxiii.—xxxvi. where several classical instances are quoted.



naturally perforated pebble, known as a "hag-stone"<sup>1</sup> in England and as a "mare-stane"<sup>2</sup> in Scotland, hung about the bed or in the stable was sufficient to keep the Mara at a distance. Butler<sup>3</sup> refers to these perforated stones in *Hudibras* in speaking of Lilly the astrologer who could—

"Chase evil spirits away by dint  
Of sickle, horse-shoe, hollow flint."

Pennant mentions<sup>4</sup> his having been told by a farmer at Pentonlins, Dumfriesshire, "that a pebble naturally perforated was an infallible cure, hung over a horse that was *hag-ridden*, or troubled with nocturnal sweats." The same custom was followed in Nithsdale in 1766.<sup>5</sup> In Angus the stone was one such as is "often found by the sea-side or on the banks of a river, with one or more natural holes in it."<sup>6</sup> There is no specimen of a mare-stane, so called, in the National Museum, such as has been used to protect horses from being mare-ridden, but there is a naturally perforated pebble of greenstone which was hung up in a byre at Cumbernauld, Dumbartonshire, to protect the cattle from witchcraft.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "HAG-STONE, a stone with a hole in it, hung at the bed's head, and supposed to have the power of preventing the nightmare; so called because the disorder was imagined to be occasioned by a witch sitting on the stomach."—Wright, *Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English*, vol. ii. p. 544.

<sup>2</sup> "MARE-STANE. A rough stone, resembling the stone hatchet in shape; often one that has been taken out of the bed of a river, and worn down by collision or friction, so as to admit of a cord being fixed round it.—Angus.

"This is hung up in a stable; being viewed by the superstitious as a certain antidote to their horses being rode by the hag called *the Mare*."—Jamieson, *Scottish Dictionary*, s.v.

<sup>3</sup> *Hudibras*, part ii. canto iii. ll. 291-92.

<sup>4</sup> *Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii., 2nd ed., p. 86.

<sup>5</sup> *Scots Magazine*, 1766, p. 229; in Teviotdale a stone with a natural hole in it was suspended by a string over the weaver's web to protect it from witchcraft.—*Edinburgh Magazine*, 1820, part i. p. 345.

<sup>6</sup> *Literary and Statistical Magazine for Scotland*, 1819, vol. iii. p. 246.

<sup>7</sup> Aubrey, writing in 1686-7, says, "In the West of England (and I believe, almost everywhere in this nation) the carters, and groomes, and hostlers doe hang a flint (that has a hole in it) over horses that are hagge-ridden for a preservative against it" (*Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme*, p. 28; also *Miscellanies*, 1686, pp. 111, 112). In *Notes and Queries* (1st ser., vol. iv. p. 54) mention is made of a large stone hung in a Suffolk farmer's cow-house, "as a preventative of nightmare in the

A small pebble of greenish sandstone, with two perforations, and with the name *William H Scott* scratched on one face, found in the ruins of an old cow-byre in Dumfriesshire, is also in the National Museum.

In the *Ynglinga Saga* is an account of King Vanland, who was bewitched by a Finnish sorceress (*seiðkonu*) named Hulda, who caused him to be trampled to death by a "mara."<sup>1</sup>

Three "mare-stanes" formerly used at Marykirk, near Montrose, were exhibited at a meeting of the Anthropological Institute, in June 1877, and described as follows:<sup>2</sup>—

"One of the stones has two human teeth inserted and fixed in the natural holes in the stone. It was known to have been seventy years in one house, and was given to Mr A——, of Marykirk, by an old lady. She had used it to ward off bad dreams.

"The other two are thus described by the person who procured them:— 'Mare-Stanes were very common in this district (Marykirk), and many are used yet, but those who are in possession of them do not like to own it. They are still common in the fishing villages along our coast.

"The old grandfather of Mrs N. sometimes comes to Marykirk on a visit, brings his mare-stane in his pouch, and hangs it in his bed. He comes from Stonehaven, and is an old fisherman.

"Sandy M.'s wife, while she stayed at B., always kept the mare-stane in the bed; and a Mrs G., of Edinburgh, a lady who came to B., many years, always liked that stone in her bed.

"Old Susan S. assures me that when the females of a house had all the work, and were 'stinted' to do a given amount of work at the spinning-wheel before they got any supper, and so much before they went to bed, they were

cattle;" see also Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England*, p. 166, note.

<sup>1</sup> *Ynglinga Saga*, cap. xvi. in *Heimskringla*, ed. Unger, p. 13: "En er hann hafði lítt sofnað, kallaði hann ok sagði, at mara trað hann. Menn hann fóru til, ok vildu hjálpa honum; en er þeir tóku uppi til höfuðsins, þá trað hon fótleggina, svá at nær brotnuðu; þá tóku þeir til fótanna, þa kaffi hon höfuðit, svá at þar dó hann." In the *Læce Boc* two recipes are given to rid people of the nightmare (*Anglo-Saxon Leechdoms*, vol. ii. pp. 141, 307; see also the nightmare spells in Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. iii. pp. 1246–1247. For additional notes on the mara see Ihre, *Glossarium Suiogothicum*, tom. ii. s.v. MARA; Keyser, *Antiquitates Septentrionales et Celtice*, 1720, pp. 497–504; Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, vol. ii. pp. 18, 19, 169, 170; vol. iii. pp. 29, 154, 202–205, 330; Rulandus, *Lexicon Alchemie*, 1612, p. 451, s.v. SUCCUBUS.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vol. xvii. pp. 135, 136.

very liable to take the 'mare' (*i.e.*, nightmare) owing to anxiety connected with their stints, and the 'stane' was a regular preventative. Married ladies, she says, when in an interesting condition, were very particular in having the mare-stane in the proper place, and she has known 'stanes' hung in byres, behind cows expected to calve, to ensure safety."

A "mare-stane" now in the Museum was obtained a few years ago by Sergeant M'Millan of the Wigtownshire Constabulary, who found it in actual use at Gordieston Mill, Dalry, Galloway. It is a small naturally-perforated concretion of flint, and was kept hung within the bed for the purpose of keeping away the nightmare and evil dreams. A second "mare-stane" found in use in Penninghame Parish was, after a good deal of persuasion, secured by Sergeant M'Millan for a number of jubilee coins. In a letter to me Sergeant M'Millan says, the old woman in whose possession it then was, stated that her mother, her grandmother, and herself kept it hanging at the bed head "for luck." The day after the stone was sold, its late owner walked a distance of six miles to the sergeant's house to get it back again, stating that "she had not got one single wink of sleep the previous night, and that she could account for it in no other way than by the fact of her having parted with the charm. Being assured that she should have it returned to her, she set off on her six mile journey home, and no doubt she has the charm doing duty in her bed at the present day."<sup>1</sup>

#### THUNDERBOLTS.

The belief that the imperforate axes of the Stone Age are thunderbolts which have fallen from the clouds during thunderstorms, is spread throughout almost the whole world.<sup>2</sup> Marbodus, Bishop of Rennes,

<sup>1</sup> In Suffolk a perforated stone hung in the bedroom, "or a knife or steel laid under the foot of the bed, was of equal service to the sleeper" as a preventative of nightmare (*Notes and Queries*, 1st series, vol. iv. p. 54).

<sup>2</sup> See the numerous examples quoted in Evans, *Ancient Stone Implements*, pp. 51-58; Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, 3rd edition, pp. 209, 223-228; and in Cartailhac, *L'Age de Pierre dans les Souvenirs et Superstitions populaires*, pp. 7-38.

In Burma stone and also bronze implements are believed to be thunderbolts (*miogyos*), which, after they fall and penetrate the earth, take nine years again to find or work their way up to the surface (Anderson, *Expedition to Western Yuman via Bhamo*, p. 410); see also *Proceed. Soc. Ant. London*, 2nd series, vol. iii. pp. 96, 97; and *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxvi. p. 408.

in the eleventh century, ascribes the following origin and virtues to the stone axe or *ceraunius* :<sup>1</sup>

“ Ventorum rabie cum turbidus æstuat aër,  
 Cum tonat horrendum, cum fulgurat igneus æther,  
 Nubibus illis, cœlo cadit iste lapillus,  
 Cujus apud Græcos extat de fulmine nomen.  
 Illis quippe locis quos constat fulmine tactos,  
 Iste lapis tantum repiriri posse putatur ;  
 Unde Ceraunius est Græco sermone vocatus :  
 Nam quod nos fulmen, Græci dixere κεραυνον.  
 Qui caste gerit hunc, à fulmine non ferietur ;  
 Nec domus, aut villæ, quibus assuerit lapis ille.  
 Sed neque navigio per flumen vel mare vectus,  
 Turbine mergetur, vel fulmine percutietur.  
 Ad causas etiam vincendaque prælia prodest,  
 Et dulces somnos, et dulcia somnia præstat.”

In Sweden stone axes were believed to be a protection against lightning, and “in some districts they were formerly placed in the bed beside women near their confinement, in order to lighten the pains of labour. They are still occasionally used by the peasantry against a cutaneous disease in children called the ‘white fire.’ With the aid of a piece of steel, sparks are emitted from them which are made to fall upon the head of the child.”<sup>2</sup> In Germany during a thunderstorm a black wedge is believed to dart out of the clouds and to bury “itself in the earth as deep as the highest church-tower is high. But every time it thunders again; it begins to rise nearer to the surface, and after *seven years* you may find it above ground. Any house in which it is preserved is proof against damage by lightning; when a thunderstorm is coming on, it begins to sweat.”<sup>3</sup> Sir John Evans mentions an instance which came

<sup>1</sup> *Liber de Gemmis*, sect. xxviii. apud Hildebert, *Opera tam edita quam inedita. Accesserunt Marbodi . . . opuscula*. Paris, 1708. See also Glanvil Bartholomew, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Trevisa's trans., 1526, lib. xvi. cap. xxxii.; Boetius de Boot, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, 1647, lib. ii. capp. 261, 262; de Laet, *De Gemmis et Lapidibus*, 1647, lib. ii. cap. xxiv.; Nicols, *Arcula Gemmea*, 1658, pp. 203, 204; Rulandus, *Lexicon Alchemiæ*, 1612, pp. 136, 137.

<sup>2</sup> Nilsson, *Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia*, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, Eng. tr., vol. i. p. 179; see also Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, vol. iii. p. 57.

under his own observation in Ireland, "where a stone celt was lent among neighbours to place in the troughs from which cattle drank, on account of its healing powers."<sup>1</sup> In Cornwall water in which stone axes were boiled for some hours was given to people suffering from rheumatism.<sup>2</sup>

The name "Thunderbolt" was also given in Scotland to stone axes until within recent years.<sup>3</sup> A finely formed axe of aphanite found in Berwickshire, and presented to the Museum in 1876, was obtained about twenty years before from a blacksmith in whose smithy it had long lain. It was known in the district as "the thunderbolt," and had probably been preserved in the belief that it had fallen from the sky.<sup>4</sup> In Shetland stone axes were said to protect from thunder the houses in which they were preserved.<sup>5</sup> One found at Tingwall was acquired from an old woman in Scalloway, who believed it to be a "thunderbolt,"<sup>6</sup> and "of efficacy in averting evil from the dwelling in which it was kept;"<sup>7</sup> while another, believed to have "fallen from the skies during a thunderstorm," was preserved in the belief that "it brought good luck to the house."<sup>8</sup> In the North-East of Scotland they "were coveted as the sure bringers of success, provided they were not allowed to fall to the ground."<sup>9</sup> In the British Museum there is a very fine axe of polished green quartz, mounted in silver, which is stated to have been sewed to a belt which was worn round the waist by a Scottish officer as a cure for kidney disease (see *ante*, p. 348). The late Sir Daniel Wilson mentions an interesting tradition regarding the large perforated stone hammers, which he says were popularly known in Scotland almost till

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient Stone Implements*, p. 51; see also the letter of Mr W. J. Knowles quoted in the footnote below, p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> Halliwell, *Rambles in Western Cornwall*, p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> See Mitchell, *Past in the Present*, pp. 156, 157.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceedings, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. xi. p. 515.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs of the Anthropological Society*, vol. ii. p. 317.

<sup>6</sup> Stone axes were known as "thunderbolts" in Shetland when Low made his tour through the Islands in 1774 (*Tour through Orkney and Shetland*, pp. 82, 83).

<sup>7</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xii. p. 599.

<sup>8</sup> Cowie, *Shetland*, 1879, pp. 296, 297.

<sup>9</sup> *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, p. 184.

the close of last century as "Purgatory Hammers," for the dead to knock with at the gates of Purgatory.<sup>1</sup>

#### ELF-ARROWS.

The prehistoric flint arrowheads so numerous in Scotland were long considered by the peasantry to have fallen from the clouds, and to have been used as weapons by the fairies to shoot at human beings, and especially at cattle.<sup>2</sup> A peculiarity of these elf-arrows or elf-bolts is

<sup>1</sup> *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 191. Sir Robert Sibbald (*Portus Coloniae et Castella Romana ad Bodotriam et ad Tuam*, 1711, pl. ii.) figures five flint arrowheads as "thunderbolts."

<sup>2</sup> This belief is not confined to Scotland, but is more or less common throughout the world. A few instances are here given. In Derbyshire the flint arrowheads were commonly believed to be fairy darts, and to have been used by the fairies in injuring and wounding cattle. When found they were generally destroyed by the country people (*Reliquary*, vol. viii. p. 207, note). In the North of Ireland, says Sir William Wilde, when cattle are sick, the cattle doctor is sent for, who "says the beast has been 'elf-shot,' or stricken by fairy or elfin darts (just as in Connaught and Munster they say it has been 'overlooked'); and forthwith he proceeds to feel the animal all over, and by some legerdemain contrives to find in its skin one or more poisonous weapons, which, with some coins, are then placed in the water which it is given to drink, and a cure is said to be effected" (*Catalogue, Museum, Royal Irish Academy*, p. 19, note). Vallancey figures a flint arrowhead mounted in silver, and states that "the peasants call them elf-arrows, and frequently set them in silver, and wear them about the neck as an amulet against being *aithadh* or elf-shot" (*Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, vol. iv., pl. xi., p. 61; his engraving is reproduced by Douglas (*Nenia Britannica*, pl. xxxiii. fig. 6) and by M. Cartailhac, *L'Age de Pierre dans les Souvenirs et Superstitions Populaires*, p. 43). In a report on the "Antiquities of Whitepark Bay, County Antrim," Mr W. J. Knowles says: "I have known cases where the possessors of a few flint antiquities refused to sell them, as it was found more profitable to lend them out to neighbours for the purpose of curing cattle than sell them at once for a small sum" (*Journal, Royal Hist. and Arch. Assoc. of Ireland*, vol. vii., 4th series, p. 104). In a letter to me dated April 11th, 1893, Mr Knowles adds: "Arrowheads of flint are most commonly used as charms in the North of Ireland, but one of the persons I refer to at p. 104 of the *Journal* had his small collection in a little box, which contained three or four arrowheads and one of those tanged objects which we in the North of Ireland call flint knives, and he stated that all of them were regularly given on loan for the purpose of curing cattle which were elf-shot or 'dinted.' I have also heard of stone axes being used. A man near Armoy in this county [Antrim] described to me the way in which a cow-doctor in his neighbourhood performed his cure [with a stone

that they were never to be found when looked for, but turned up in the most unexpected localities and circumstances. Thus Sir Robert Gordon of Straloch, the Scottish geographer, who wrote over two centuries ago, describes these elf-arrows, and states that a man, while riding, found one in his boot, and that a woman found one in the breast of her dress, both in an unexpected way.<sup>1</sup> In 1590 occurred the

axe]. In addition to boiling the implement in the food that was to be given to the cow, the medicine man required a loaf of bread at 6d. and half a pint of whiskey for himself. After administering the prepared food, or drink rather it was, to the cow, he marched round and round the diseased animal, eating the bread and drinking the whiskey, and repeating aloud 'A'll hae mi bite an' a'll hae me sup, an' a'll cure the coo wi' the rotten grup.' " Some curious particulars relating to the magical use of stone arrows in the North are given by Nilsson (*Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia*, pp. 197-199), quoting from the Saga of Orvar Odd. In Italy flint arrowheads are kept by the peasantry to preserve their houses from lightning, believing that the lightning comes down to strike with a similar stone; and in some instances they are worn on the person for the same purpose. In certain parts of the Abruzzi they are known as *lingue di S. Paolo*, and when a peasant finds one he devoutly kneels down and picks it up with his own tongue and preserves it as a most potent amulet. Six specimens mounted for wearing on the person are figured by M. Cartailhac (see Gastaldi, *Lake Habitations, &c. of Northern and Central Italy*, p. 6; Evans, *Ancient Stone Implements*, p. 327; Cartailhac, *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 40). In the Campana Collection now in the Louvre is an Etruscan "collier d'or formé d'une série de onze demi-boules alternant avec dix demi-cylindres, le tout orné de cordelé et de granulé d'un travail fort délicat. La demi-boule de milieu supporte un pendant en forme d'ancre renversée et terminé par une pointe de flèche en silex" (Cartailhac, p. 41, where the pendant with the arrow-point is figured; see also the same author's *La France Préhistorique*, p. 6). The British Museum also possesses two Etruscan necklaces of gold, each of which has an arrowhead of flint pendent from it. They are figured by M. Cartailhac (*op. cit.*, p. 42). Necklaces of beads of carnelian in the form of small arrowheads are worn by the Arabs of Northern Africa at the present day, being regarded as good for the blood (Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 327, 328). (A necklace of twelve such beads, with a centre pendant of heart shape ornamented on the face with incised lines, was exhibited to the meeting.) A similar necklace worn by a Touareg in Egypt is figured by M. Cartailhac (*op. cit.*, p. 49). In Japan arrowheads are believed to fall from the air or to be shot by armies of spirits which pass over the district every year (*Transactions International Congress Prehistoric Archaeology*, 1868, p. 260; *Matériaux pour l'Histoire de l'Homme*, vol. viii. p. 92).

<sup>1</sup> Gordon's words, as quoted by Sibbald, are:—"Nequeo mihi temperare, quin describam Lapilli genus, his locis quasi peculiare, nulli Scriptori hactenus agnitum aut memoratum. Lapillus hic neque pretiosus, neque pellucidus. Materia huic

remarkable trial of Katherine Ross, Lady Fowlis, who was accused of witchcraft and sorcery in attempting the destruction of some of her husband's relatives by causing clay images of them to be made, and shooting at these with elf-arrowheads. No mention is made of the manner of discharging the arrowheads, but probably they were shot in the manner described by Isobel Gowdie in her confession, quoted further on. In the "Dittay against the Pannell," Lady Fowlis is accused—

"In the fyrst, Thow art accusit for the making of twa pictouris<sup>1</sup> of clay, in cumpany with the said Cristiane Roiss and Mariorie Neyne M'Allester, alias Laskie Loncart, in the said Cristian Roisis westir chalmer in Canorth; the ane, maid for the distructioun and consumptioun of the young Laird of Fowlis, and the vthir for the young Ladie Balnagoune; to the effect that the ane thairof sould be putt att the Brig-end of Fowles, and the vther att Ardmuir, for distructioun of the saidis young Laird and Lady: And this sould haif bene performit at Alhallowmes, in the year of God I<sup>m</sup>. Vc. lxxvij zeiris: Quhilkis twa pictouris, being sett on the north syd of the chalmer, the said Loskie Loncart tuik twa elf arrow heides and delyuerit ane to ye (you) Katherine, and the vther, the said Cristian Rois Malcumsone held in her awin hand; and thow schott twa schottis with the said arrow heid, att the said Lady Balnagoune, and Loskie Loncart schott thrie schottis at the said young

durissima atque fragillima Silex, cujus hic plus satis est. Lapilli hi Artem referunt, sed qualem ex tam fragili materiâ nemo Artifex assequatur. Duabus formis reperiuntur: una hamato telo persimilis, in tria distincta capita desinens, trigona figura; altera species Venabuli ferrum planè refert, omnes magnitudine, sicut & colore, variæ Silicem, unde sunt, imitantes. Longitudo duâm, aut unius, aut dimidiati pollicis; crassities ad duorum, aut unius, frumenti granorum accedit. Totus asper, impolitus. Manent tanquam Ferromentorum vestigia, quæ lævigari desiderent; at latere omnia acuta. Solo hoc Lapilli hi mirandi, quod casu aliquando in agris, in publicis tritisque viis reperiantur, nunquam autem vestigando inveniantur. Hodie fortasse reperies, ubi heri nihil; item à meridie, ubi horis antemeridianis omnia vacua: & hæc, ut plurimum, sudo cœlo, æstivis diebus. Retulit mihi vir probus & fide dignus, Sibi equo iter agenti in summa Ocrea unum repertum. Idem contigisse scio fœminæ equo vectæ, quæ unum e sinu vestis deprompsit. Hos Vulgus patrio sermone *Elf-Arrowheads* vocant, Si Latinè interpreteris, ferreas Sagittarum cuspides, quibus Lamie sagittant, sonat: Faunos enim Lamiasque, & id genus spirituum *Elfs* vocant. De his harumque apud hos sagittandi usu ea fabulantur; multique credunt, quæ chartis dare ineptum esset" (Sibbald, *Scotia Illustrata sive Prodromus Historiæ Naturalis*, 1684, Part ii., lib. iv. cap. vii. p. 49).

<sup>1</sup> "Pictures" is here used as equivalent to "images."



Laird of Fowlis. In the meane tyme, baith the pictouris brak, and thow commandit Loskie Loncart to mak of new vthir twa pictouris thaireftir, for the saidis persounes ; quhilk the said Loskie Loncart tuik vpoun hand to do."<sup>1</sup>

In the remarkable confession of Isobel Gowdie, one of the Auldearn witches, in 1662, there is the following curious account of the manufacture and use of elf-arrows :—

“As for Elf-arrow-heidis, the Divell shapes them with his awin hand, [and syne delivers thame] to Elf-boyes, who whyttis and dightis them with a sharp thing lyk a paking neidle ; bot [quhen I wes in Elf-land ?] I saw them whytting and dighting them. Quhen I wes in the Elfes howssis, they will haw werie . . . . them whytting and dighting ; and the divell gives them to ws, each of ws so many, quhen . . . . Thes that dightis thaim ar litle ones, hollow, and boss-baked. They speak gowstie lyk. Quhen the divell gives them to ws, he sayes,

‘Shoot thes in my name  
And they sall not goe heall hame!’

and quhan ve shoot these arrowes (we say)—

‘I shoot yon man in the Divellis name,  
He sall nott win heall hame !  
And this salbe alswa trw ;  
Thair sall not be an bitt of him on lieiw !’

We haw no how to shoot with, but spang them from of the naillis of our thowmbes. Som tymes we will misse : bot if they twitch, be it beast, or man or woman, it will kill, tho’ they haid an jack wpon them.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials*, vol. i. part ii. p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 607. The original MS. is unfortunately imperfect at this part, causing frequent gaps in the text. The words within square brackets are conjectural restorations by Pitcairn. In his letter dated “Linlithgow in Scotland, Decemb. 17. 1699,” Lhwyd records an exactly opposite belief from that described in the text regarding the manner of shooting the elf-arrows. He says, “As to this Elf-stricking, their Opinion is, that the Fairies (having not much Power themselves to hurt Animal Bodies) do sometimes carry away Men in the Air, and furnishing them with Bows and Arrows, employ them to shoot Men, Cattle, &c.” (*Philosophical Transactions*, vol. xxviii. p. 99). Lhwyd appears to have been one of the first to recognise that these “elf-arrows” were really the weapons of the prehistoric inhabitants of this country, as he adds: “I doubt not but you have often seen [some] of these Arrow-Heads they ascribe to Elfs or Fairies: They are just the same chip’d Flints the Natives of New England head their Arrows with at this Day.” . . . And he continues, “These Elf Arrow-heads

When a cow has been elf-shot it "refuses its food, looks languid, and breathes hard. The old knowing women rub and search the hide of the beast, where they pretend to find holes, not in the hide, but in the membrane under it. These they rub well with their fingers, and bathe them with salt and water. When all the holes are thus found out and rubbed, two table-spoonfuls of salt are dissolved in half a Scotch pint of cold water, a little of it poured in the ears, and the remainder poured down its throat; and after some time is thus spent in going through this process, the animal generally recovers. Some silver is put in the water when the salt is dissolving in it." And the writer adds, "I do not pretend to account for this distemper or cure, but I have felt what they termed holes, and have seen all the ceremonies performed."<sup>1</sup> Another cure recorded by Pennant<sup>2</sup> is to touch the cow with an elf-arrow, or make it drink the water in which one has been dipped. In the united parishes of Sandsting and Aithsting the cure was effected by folding a sewing-needle in a leaf taken from a particular part of a psalm-book and securing it in the hair of the cow. This was considered not only an infallible cure, but served also as a charm against future attacks.<sup>3</sup>

According to the late Dr John Hill Burton, cited by Sir John Evans,<sup>4</sup>

have not been used as Amulets above thirty or forty years . . . Whence I gather they were not invented for Charms, but were once used in shooting here as they are still in America. The most Curious as well as the Vulgar throughout this Country are satisfied they often drop out of the Air, being shot by Fairies, and relate many Instances of it; but for my part I must crave leave to suspend my Faith, until I see one of them descend" (*ibid.*, pp. 99, 100). The Rev. John Fraser, in a letter to Wodrow, dated 1702, describing several charms common in the Highlands, appears to have believed in the supernatural origin of the arrowheads, as he says: "for the elf-arrows, it is known they fall from the air. I have discovered no remarkable vertue of them, only the people superstitiously imagine that they preserve them from evill spirits," . . . and that "It is strange that these elf stones, whether litle or mikle, hes still the same figure, though certainly knowen to fall from the aire" (*Analecta Scotica*, 1st series, p. 119).

<sup>1</sup> Henderson, *General View of the Agriculture of Caithness*, 1812, p. 204. A somewhat similar practice was followed in Orkney in Low's time (*Tour through Orkney and Schetland in 1774*, pp. 7, 8).

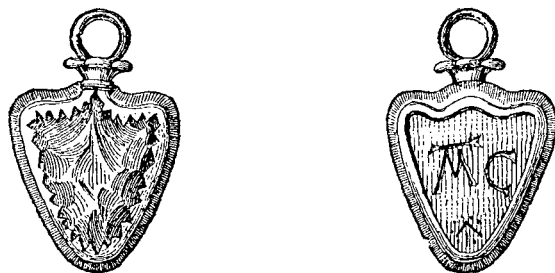
<sup>2</sup> *Tour in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> *New Statistical Account*, Shetland, p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> *Ancient Stone Implements*, p. 326.

it was an article of faith in Scotland, so late as 1872, "that elf-bolts, after finding, should not be exposed to the sun, or they are liable to be recovered by the fairies, who then work mischief with them." In Sutherlandshire, it is stated by Mr Hew Morrison, a Fellow of the Society, that in his younger days "arrowheads of flint were religiously consigned to the nearest loch, or buried out of sight, as instruments of evil;" and he adds, "Even so late as 1866 or 1867 I saw a cow which was said to have been killed by the fairies with these weapons; and when I pointed out to the owner of the animal that her death had been caused by rolling over, and her long horns penetrating the ground and keeping her in a position from which she could not rise, I was told that that was the common way in which the cows fall when struck by the arrows of the *shithich* or elf-bolts."<sup>1</sup>

Of Scottish flint arrowheads which have been mounted in silver for use as amulets, the following specimens are either in existence or on record. Figs. 3, 4 represent the full size, the obverse and reverse, of a



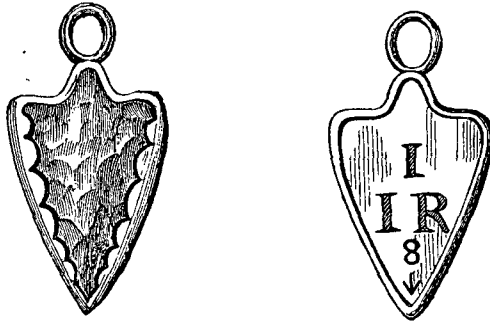
Figs. 3, 4. Obverse and reverse of a Flint Arrowhead mounted in silver as a Charm, in the Museum of Lausanne. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

specimen now in the Museum at Lausanne, Switzerland, but brought from Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup> The arrowhead is enclosed in a mounting of silver, which is engraved on the back with the initials A. C. separated by a

<sup>1</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xvi. pp. 177, 178; see also *Old Statistical Account*, vol. x. p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Cartailhac, *L'Age de Pierre dans les Souvenirs et Superstitions Populaires*, p. 43, from whom the illustration in the text is borrowed; see also *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxiv. p. 495.

star. The silver mounting is probably early 17th century work. Another which was worn suspended from the neck by an old Scottish lady for half a century is shown in figs. 5, 6.<sup>1</sup> The reverse of the silver



Figs. 5, 6. Obverse and reverse of a Flint Arrowhead mounted in silver as a Charm. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

mounting is engraved with the initials  $\begin{matrix} I \\ I R \end{matrix}$ , below which is the figure 8 and a "broad-arrow"  $\nabla$ . A third specimen, which is exhibited by Mr James Cruikshank, of Elgin, is of lozenge form, mounted in pewter, and with a loop for suspension like the two already described. The reverse bears the engraved initials E R separated by a "broad-arrow." Two specimens mounted in silver, each with a loop for suspension, were exhibited in the temporary Museum of the Archæological Institute in Edinburgh in 1856.<sup>2</sup>

#### ADDER BEADS AND STONES.

The ornamented beads of vitreous paste found throughout Britain, and commonly known as "adder-beads," were formerly believed by the

<sup>1</sup> *The Reliquary*, edited by Llewellynn Jewitt, vol. viii. pl. xx. and p. 207. This elf-arrow is also figured in Evans, *Ancient Stone Implements*, p. 325, and in Cartailhac, *op. cit.* The engraving is here reproduced with the permission of Messrs Bemrose & Sons, the publishers of the *Reliquary*.

<sup>2</sup> *Catalogue, Archæological Institute Museum*, pp. 8, 127. These elf-arrows are now believed to be lost.

peasantry to have been made by adders,<sup>1</sup> and to be of the greatest efficacy in the cure of numerous diseases. It was believed "that about Midsummer Eve (tho' in the time they do not all agree) 'tis usual for snakes to meet in Companies, and that by joyning heads together, and hissing, a kind of Bubble is form'd like a ring about the head of one of them, which the rest by continual hissing blow on till it comes off at the tail, and then it immediately hardens and resembles a glass ring; which whoever finds (as some old women and children are perswaded) shall prosper in all his undertakings."<sup>2</sup> It is remark-

<sup>1</sup> This belief is not confined to Britain. According to Emily Beaufort, an old woman at Tadmor related the following story: While sitting among the ruins of the Zenobia Palace one day, "she heard the hissing of serpents close to her, and turning her head to look over the wall, she saw, at a few yards off, two serpents fighting; their heads were curved far back, as their bodies glided and wriggled about, facing each other; and every now and then they would dart like lightning one at the other, each trying to seize his enemy's head. At last one gave the other a mortal bite, and he fell prostrate and bleeding on the sand. Then she made a noise, and the victor glided frightened away, while she went to look at the dead snake, curious to see for what they had been fighting. And lo! out of his mouth came the apple of discord—this little white stone! and she opened her hand, and showed us a large round pearl" (*Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines*, vol. i. pp. 390, 391).

<sup>2</sup> Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gibson, 1695, p. 683. Camden (*ibid.*, pl. at p. 697) figures three different beads as adder-beads, one of which is of plain green glass  $\frac{3}{4}$ ths inch in diameter, the second is a ribbed melon bead of blue paste, and the third a polychrome bead similar to one found at Mouswald, Dumfriesshire, and now in the National Collection. Gibson, in his additions to Denbighshire, says he had seen about twenty or thirty of these beads, or *Gleineu Nadroedh*, as he calls them. "They are small glass annulets, commonly about half as wide as our finger-rings, but much thicker; of a green colour usually, tho' some of them are blue, and others curiously wav'd with blue, red, and white. I have also seen two or three earthen rings [beads] of this kind, but glaz'd with blue, and adorn'd with transverse streaks or furrows on the outside" (*ibid.*, p. 633). Lhwyd figures (pl. i., opp. p. 95, vol. xxviii. of *Philosophical Transactions*) three so-called adder-beads, but they are so rudely drawn that it is difficult to determine their nature and form. He describes them as follows: "Tab. i. fig. 7. A green adder's bead, adorn'd with snakes' skeletons of a citrine colour. Fig. 8. A black adder's bead, adorn'd with nine small snakes or *Cornua Ammonis* of a whitish blew. Fig. 9. An adder's bead, resembling cherry-tree gum, adorn'd with a snake chequer'd of blew and white" (*ibid.*, p. 97). An adder-bead figured by Pennant (*Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii. pl. vii.) is an early Iron Age bead of vitreous paste, with inlaid enamelled spirals. Four specimens are rudely figured by Sir Robert Sibbald (*Portus Coloniae, &c.*, 1711, pl. i. figs. 5, 13, 17, 18).

able that this account of the origin of these beads is identical with Pliny's description of the origin of the *ovum anguinum*, or serpent's egg, which was also believed to possess numerous virtues.<sup>1</sup> At the time of Lhwyd's visit to Scotland in 1699, these beads appear to have been in common use as charms, as he mentions having "seen at least fifty differences of them betwixt Wales and the High-lands;" and he adds, "not only the Vulgar, but even Gentlemen of good Education throughout all Scotland are fully perswaded the Snakes make them, though they are as plain Glass as any in a Bottle."<sup>2</sup> Ure says: "The adder-stone, or the beads and rings substituted in its place, is thought by superstitious people to possess many wonderful properties. It is used as a charm to insure prosperity, and to prevent the malicious attacks of evil spirits. In this case it must be closely kept in an iron box to secure it from the Fairies, who are supposed to have an utter abhorrence at iron. It is also worn as an amulet about the necks of children to cure sore eyes, the chincough, and some other diseases; and to assist them in cutting their teeth. It is sometimes boiled in water as a specific for diseases in cattle; but frequently the cure is supposed to be performed by only rubbing with the stone the part affected."<sup>3</sup> Pennant adds that "the vulgar of the present age attribute to it other virtues; such as its curing the bite of an adder, and giving ease to women in childbirth, if tied about the knee."<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Pliny's account of the *ovum anguinum* is as follows:—"Præterea est ovorum genus in magna Galliarum fama, omissum Græcis. Angues innumeri aestate convoluti salivæ faucium corporumque spumis artificii complexu glomerantur, anguinum appellatur. Druidæ sibilis id dicunt in sublime jactari, sagoque oportere intercipi, ne tellurem attingat. Profugere raptorem equo: serpentes enim insequi, donec arceantur annis alicujus interventu. Experimentum ejus esse, si contra aquas fluitet vel auro vinctum. Atque, ut est magorum solertia occultandis fraudibus sagax, certa Luna capiendum censent, tanquam congruere operationem eam serpentium, humani sit arbitrii. Vidi equidem id ovum mali orbiculati modici magnitudine, crusta cartilaginæ, velut acetabulis brachiorum polypi crebris, insigni Druidis. Ad victorias litium, ac regum aditus mire laudatur: tantæ vanitatis, ut habentem id in lite in sinu equitem Romanum, e Vocontiiis, a Divo Claudio principe interemtum non ob aliud sciam" (*Hist. Nat.*, lib. xxix. cap. xii.)

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. xxviii. p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *Rutherglen and East Kilbride*, 1793, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> *Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 343.

Rev. Dr Joass, of Golspie, in recording the discovery of a bead of dark blue vitreous paste, ornamented with inlaid spirals of yellow enamel, in a cist at Eddertoun, Ross-shire, says another bead of exactly the same size and pattern "was for many generations in possession of a family in Skye, from whom it was occasionally borrowed by people from a great distance on account of its supposed efficacy in the treatment of diseased cattle, which were said to be cured by drinking of water into which the charm-bead had been dropped." And he adds: "Such beads were known among the Highlanders as CLACHAN NATHAIREACH, serpent-stones, from their peculiar markings, as some of them suppose, while others assert that their name and virtue are derived from their connection with a very venomous serpent, which carries a set of such beads on his body or tail."<sup>1</sup> Another bead of the same type, exhibited by Mr James Cruikshank, Lhanbryde, Elgin, was formerly used in the parish of Dallas, Elginshire, for the cure of adder-bites. Unfortunately no particulars have been preserved as to the manner in which it was used.

A ribbed melon-shaped bead of greenish vitreous paste is exhibited by Dr R. de Brus Trotter, who states that "it belonged to a famous witch of Drooth, Gordieston, Galloway. It was acquired by the late William Bennett, of Burntisland, formerly editor of the *Glasgow Examiner*, and I think *Morning Chronicle*, and author of several books, from an old woman in New Galloway or Minnihive (Moniaive), I forget which. He wore it by a ribbon round his neck for many years to bring good fortune, and he gave it to my father about 1847, who also wore it for many years. It was supposed to have various curative powers by being placed in water." A similar bead now in the National Museum was kept by an old woman in the neighbourhood of Glenluce as an "Ethir-bore stane."

Three small beads of vitreous paste and a small naturally perforated concretion of flint, formerly used collectively for the cure of adder-bites in the parish of Lochwinnoch, Ayrshire, have been presented to the National Museum by Mr R. W. Cochran-Patrick, LL.D. Of the beads, the first is of yellow paste,  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch in diameter, and irregularly globular in form; the second is  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch in diameter, of clear blue glass, with an

<sup>1</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. v. p. 313.

irregular band of white enamel round the circumference ; and the third is  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch diameter, of dark coloured paste, marked with small dots of white and red. The naturally perforated concretion is whorl-shaped,  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inch in diameter and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in thickness. The manner in which these beads were used in the cure of adder-bitten persons is described in the following quotation<sup>1</sup> :—

“ It may be twenty-five or thirty years ago that a child of a farmer in the parish of L——h was bit or stung by an adder on the back of the foot, which, as well as the leg and thigh, in consequence became very much inflamed and swollen. The child’s life was considered in danger ; and various means of cure were resorted to by the parents, on the advice of their friends and neighbours. Among others, a pigeon was procured, killed, cut open, and immediately, while warm, applied to the wounded foot. The flesh of the pigeon, it is said, became very dark or black ; but yet having, as it was believed, no good, or at least very immediate effect, this other cure was had resource to. In the same parish a family of the name of C——g resided. They had been proprietors of the land they occupied for several generations, and in possession of a so-called adder-stone and four Druidical beads, some of which, or all conjunctively, had been efficacious in curing various complaints, but more particularly those in cattle. At the solicitation of an intimate friend, these were obtained (although never before allowed to go out of the custody of some of the family), and used according to instructions received, of this import :—that a small quantity of milk, some two or three gills, should be taken from a cow, and that while warm the stone and beads, which were arranged on a string, should be put into it, and then thoroughly washed with the milk. A slough, or some slimy matter, it was said, would be developed on the stone, which behoved to be cleaned off by and mixed with the milk, and that the latter then should be applied in bathing the wounded part and all the limb, which was afterwards to be swathed. This was done accordingly, yet after an interval of two or three days from the time the sting was received ; and it is reported by those alive and witnessing the application that, even by the following morning, there was a visibly favourable change, and one which resulted in a complete cure. The child arrived at manhood, got married, and is yet alive. As the parents of the child were afterwards advised, the same good result would have ensued if only the head of the adder (which was found and killed) had been cut off, and the wound well rubbed with it.”

Allied to and of the same origin as the adder-bead, and in popular

<sup>1</sup> *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, vol. ix. 1872, p. 155. The communication is titled “Renfrewshire Folk-lore: An Adder Stone.” Four beads are mentioned in the communication, but only three are now known.



superstition reckoned equally potent for the cure of diseases in cattle, is the adder-stone or snake-stone, which is merely the ordinary stone whorl formerly used in spinning with the distaff and spindle. Four of these so called adder-stones in the National Museum were obtained in Lewis, where they had been used as charms for the cure of snake-bitten cattle. Formerly it was the current belief in the Lewis, when cattle became sick, that they had been bitten by snakes; and in order to effect a cure the adder-stone was dipped in water, with which the affected part was washed, or the animal was given the water to drink. Commenting on this superstition, the late Capt. F. W. L. Thomas says :<sup>1</sup>—“ Not the least curious circumstance connected with this superstition is the fact that there are no venomous snakes in Lewis. The blind-worm is not uncommon, but it is quite innocuous. However, there is a full belief that if a sheep, for instance, were to lie down upon one of them, the wool and skin would both peel off; and the man is probably alive who trod upon a *rihbhann* [*rihbhann*]*]*—the local name for the blind-worm (from a tradition that it is a princess metamorphosed)—and in consequence the skin came off the sole of his foot.” Another adder-stone found about fifteen years previous was said to have cured a girl at Back, Lewis, of a supposed snake-bite in 1872.<sup>2</sup>

Four spindle-whorls now in the collection of Dr R. de Brus Trotter, of Perth, were formerly used for the cure of various ailments. They are described by Dr Trotter as follows :—

“(1) A flat whorl of hard sandstone, which belonged to the famous witch called Meg Elson, who lived in the Fingaul district of Kirkmaiden, Wigtownshire, about the beginning of this century. It was used for curing elf-shot kye. A red woollen thread was put through the hole, and it was dipped three times in water taken from a well on which the sun did not shine, by a young girl with red or yellow hair. A rhyme, in what was supposed to be Gaelic, was said over the water, which was then given to the cow to drink. I never could get any words of the rhyme. (2) Is of steatite, about the same size and thickness as number one, and was used in the same manner and for the same purpose. It was got by my brother about 1860 from Alexander M'Leod, Kin-

<sup>1</sup> *Procced. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. iv. p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. x. p. 742. Mention is also made here of “a perforated stone found on the Hill of Monad,” Lewis, about 1834, which was frequently used for curing cattle supposed to have been “serpent-bitten.”

loch-Follart, Skye, by whose people it had been used for generations to cure elf-shot cows. (3) Was given to one of my brothers about 1858-9 by Hugh M'Caskill (chief of the clan Caskill), Dunanellerich, Bracadale, Skye, in whose family it had been for a long time. It was used for curing elf-shot cows by dipping it in water, which was afterwards given to the cattle to drink. I mind my father telling me that some time before then [1858], the Free Kirk minister of Bracadale ordered the people to deliver up all the elf-shot, adder-beads, and charms they had in their possession, as he was determined to root out the devil and all his superstitious rites from among them. It was said that he got two creels full of them (another account said half a boat-load), which he took into the middle of Dunvegan Loch (Loch Follart) and threw overboard. (4) Is a flat piece of greenish glass, made into an imperfect whorl, which I got about 1855 from an old man at a clachan in Kirkmichael, on the Water of Ae, Dumfriesshire, in whose family it had been for many generations, and was used for the cure of the kiukhost, by dipping it in water, which was given the child to drink."

Henderson gives an account of a labourer at Pitlochrie, Perthshire, who was bitten by an adder. "Severe pain came on, and a terrible swelling, which grew worse and worse, till a wise woman was summoned with her adder's stone. On her rubbing the place with the stone, the swelling began to subside."<sup>1</sup>

#### AMBER BEADS USED AS CHARMS.<sup>2</sup>

Among the Romans amber was worn as an amulet by children against secret poison, and as a counter-charm against sorcery. Pliny records the

<sup>1</sup> *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England*, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> The word amber is derived from the Arabic *ambar*, "ambergris," from its supposed resemblance to that substance. The Arabic name has established itself in the different Romance languages as well as in English (Ital. *ambra*, Fr. *ambre*, Port. *ambar*, Span. *ambar*, from which it was introduced into the English language). The Germanic languages, on the other hand, possess a common name of their own (Ger. *bernstein* [= *brennstein*, "combustible stone,"—KLUGE, *Etymological Dictionary of the German Language*, Eng. tr. 1891, s.v.], Dutch *barnsteen*, Dan. and Swed. *bernsten*). Danish and Swedish have also another name for amber (Dan. *raf*, Sw. *raf*) from the Old Norse name of the substance, *rafr*, a word which stands alone among the older Teutonic languages. The Old Dutch name for Amber, *lamertijn-steen* (KILIAN, *Etymologicvm Teutonice Lingvæ*, Antwerp, 1598, s.v.), is probably derived from the French *l'ambre*, whence also the Scotch *lammer*. The old German name for amber, *glesum*, recorded by Tacitus (*Germania*, cap. 45), has been transferred to glass. The Finns and Esthonians call amber "sea-stone"

opinion of Callistratus, that the substance was also of service at all periods of life against insanity and stranguaries, either taken inwardly in powder or worn round the neck. A particular kind of amber, called by Callistratus chrys-electrum, worn round the neck, cured fevers, and diseases of the mouth, throat, and jaws. When powdered and mixed with honey and oil of roses it was a specific for deafness, and mixed with Attic honey it was good for dimness of sight.<sup>1</sup> In Scotland necklaces of

(Finn. *meri-kivi*, Esth. *merre-kivvi*). To the Greeks amber was known by the name *ἤλεκτρον*, and it is thrice mentioned in the *Odyssey* (iv. 73, xv. 460, xviii. 296). The original Latin name, *succinum* (from *succus*), was afterwards superseded by the Greek. It is interesting to note that the principal reference to amber in the *Odyssey* mentions it as an article of commerce in the hands of the Phoenicians. Thus Eumæus, in narrating to Odysseus how he came to be carried off from his own home and sold as a slave, says :—

Ἔνθα δὲ Φοίνικες ναυσίκλυτοι ἤλυθον ἄνδρες,  
τρώεται, μυρὶ ἄγοντες ἀθύρματα νηὶ μελαίνῃ—*Od.* xv. 415–16.

\* \* \* \* \*

ἤλυθ' ἀνὴρ πολὺίδρις ἐμοῦ πρὸς δώματα πατρὸς  
χρῦσεον ὕμνον ἔχων, μετὰ δ' ἤλεκτροισιν ἔεργε—*Od.* xv. 459–60.

Amber in the form of beads is common in burials of the Bronze Age in Britain and on the Continent. Specimens may be found described in any standard work on archæology. Attention, however, may here be drawn to three small beads of amber and six small beads of jet, varying from  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch to one inch in length, perforated at right angles to their length, and exactly resembling stone hammers in miniature. These beads are stated to have been found in a tumulus in Lanarkshire, and are now in the National Museum. Similar specimens of amber have been found in Denmark (Worsaae, *Industrial Arts of Denmark*, pp. 31, 32, figs. 25–28; also Cartailhac, *L'Age de Pierre*, &c., p. 50; *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed*, 1888, pp. 281–298) and in Sweden (*Journal, Anthropological Institute*, vol. xxii. pp. 299, 300). For analyses of amber from the Baltic and from the “royal tombs at Mycenæ” see Schliemann (*Tiryns*, pp. 369–372); and for notices of the sources and distribution of amber in prehistoric times see the memoir by Dr Hjalmar Stolpe (*Congrès Inter. d'Anthrop. et d'Archéol. Préhist.*, Stockholm, vol. ii. pp. 777–817), and Boyd-Dawkins (*Early Man in Britain*, pp. 417–420).

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Naturalis*, lib. xxxvii. cap. xii. For the virtues of amber in later times see Boetius, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, 1647, lib. ii. capp. 158–162; Mizauld, *Memorabilium, Utilium, ac Jucundorum*, 1567, cent. ii. 26, v. 100; Baccius, *De Gemmis et Lapidibus Pretiosis*, 1643, cap. ix. pp. 76–87; Rueus, *De Gemmis Aliquot*, 1608, lib. ii. cap. xxvi.; Nicols, *Arcula Gemmea*, 1653, pp. 165–170. For chrys-electrum see Marbodius, *Liber de Gemmis*, cap. lix.

amber beads are said<sup>1</sup> to have been particularly prized among the fishing population of the East Coast on account of the talismanic virtues of the substance. Leslie says<sup>2</sup> that the women on the East Coast in his time used amber hung round their necks to decorate themselves,<sup>3</sup> and also hung it on their infants<sup>4</sup> to protect them from evil: "necnon et infantes suos adversus nescio quæ mala munire solent." According to an old rhyme, amber beads possessed the power of driving away witches.<sup>5</sup> Four small amber beads, presented to the Museum in 1849, were stated by the donor to have been formerly regarded by the Macdonalds of Glencoe as a charm for the cure of blindness. In the North-East of Scotland an amber bead was commonly used to remove a chaff from the eye of man and beast; and a necklace of the same material was worn as a cure for disease of the eyes.<sup>6</sup> On Tweedside an amber bead was also used for the cure of sore eyes and sprained limbs.<sup>7</sup>

To Dr R. de Brus Trotter of Perth, I am indebted for the following account of an amber bead in his possession, which was formerly used as a charm. The bead is  $\frac{7}{8}$ ths inch in diameter and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick, and has a silver ring through the perforation:—

<sup>1</sup> *Scottish National Memorials*, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> *De Origine, Moribus, et Rebus gestis Scotorum*, 1578, p. 29. Leslie adds that a piece of amber as big as a horse was cast ashore on the coast of Buchan: "Ingens quedam succini massa, equi magnitudinem superans in littore Boquhanico nostro seculo fuit reperta." Leslie is here merely quoting the words of Boeæ, who in Bellenden's translation says, "Twa yeir afore the cumin of this buke to licht, arrivit ane gret lomp of this goum in Buchquhane, als mekle as ane hors" (*Bellenden's Boeæ*, ed. 1821, vol. i., *Cosmographie*, cap. xv. p. liii.). See also Camden's *Britannia*, ed. 1695, p. 942.

<sup>3</sup> Jamieson mentions a curious custom connected with the wearing of amber as follows: "As amber, when heated, emits an agreeable odour, the custom of wearing a necklace of amber, which was formerly so common, and is not yet extinct among old women, in our country, is attributed to this circumstance. In olden time the present made by a mother to her daughter on the night of her marriage was a set of *lammer beads*, to be worn about her neck, that, from the influence of the bed-heat on the amber, she might smell sweet to her husband."—*Scottish Dictionary*, s.v. LAMMER.

<sup>4</sup> Pliny, speaking of amber, says: "Infantibus adalligari amuleti ratione prodest" (*Hist. Nat.*, lib. xxxvii. cap. xii.).

<sup>5</sup> Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, ed. 1892, p. 328.

<sup>6</sup> Gregor, *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Henderson, *Folk-lore of Northern Counties of England*, p. 145.

"I got the bead when a boy (about 1845) from Mrs Shaw, near Auchencairn, Rerwick, Galloway. It originally belonged to her father, a man of the name of Carnochan, a celebrated smuggler of the end of last century. The history of it, which of course is entirely fabulous, was that he took it from a "bing o' eththers" which were busy making it, at the fort of Knocktintal; that he galloped with it in his hand, and the adders in pursuit, across the sands of Auchencairn Bay at half tide, and swam his horse through the tide to the island of Hestan, the adders being drowned when they got among the broken water. He wore it on a ribbon round his neck as a talisman for luck, and used it for curing "backgaun weans," "elfshot kye," and "sick beass" generally, and for averting the effects of the evil eye. It had to be dipped three times in water, which was given to the sick child or animal to drink. I don't remember if any words were said. Old Carnochan lost it one Sunday when digging for worms in his garden, and his luck left him, his cargoes were captured, his hiding-place betrayed, and he died in poverty. One of his grandchildren many years after found it in the garden, but the luck didn't return with it. It was tried to cure Jean Craig's cat, but the cat died, and so it was thought of no more use."

#### CROSSES OF ROWAN-TREE USED AS CHARMS.

The Rev. Dr Gregor of Pitsligo has presented to the Museum a facsimile of a cross of the rowan-tree or mountain-ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*). Such crosses were formerly held in high repute in Scotland as powerful preservatives against witches, ghosts, and kindred evils. Among the Icelanders the rowan (Icel. *reynir*) was a sacred tree consecrated to Thor.<sup>1</sup> In Sweden a staff of the rowan (Sw. *rönn*) protected one from sorcery, "and on board a ship the common man likes to have something made of rönn-wood, as a protection against storms and watersprites."<sup>2</sup> In Scotland the virtues of the rowan-tree are embodied in the following rhyme :<sup>3</sup>—

"Rowan-tree and red thread,  
Puts the witches to their speed."

According to Stewart<sup>4</sup> a safeguard against ghosts consisted in forming

<sup>1</sup> Cleasby-Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, s.v. REYNIR.

<sup>2</sup> Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, Eng. tr., vol. iii. p. 1215; see also vol. iv. p. 1682.

<sup>3</sup> Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, new edit., p. 328. Other versions are given in Gregor, *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> *Superstitions of the Highlanders*, 1823, p. 54; see also pp. 114, 157, 210.

a cross of the wood with a red thread,<sup>1</sup> which was to be inserted between the lining and cloth of a person's garment, and so long as it lasted no ghost or witch would ever have the power to interfere with the wearer.<sup>2</sup> In the last century it was customary among the Highlanders to carry branches of mountain-ash decked with wreaths of flowers, with "shouts and gestures of joy, in procession three times round the fire" of Beltane. "These branches they afterwards deposite above the doors of their respective dwellings, where they remain till they give place to others in the succeeding year."<sup>3</sup> In Banffshire boughs of the mountain-ash were placed over byre-doors on the 2nd of May, in Pennant's<sup>4</sup> time; and in the district of St Fillans, Perthshire, so late as 1887, to keep the cattle free from disease.<sup>5</sup> In Angus, on the evening preceding Rood-day (May 3rd), a piece of a branch cut and peeled and bound round with red thread was placed over the byre-door, to avert the evil eye;<sup>6</sup> and in Aberdeenshire, in 1862, crosses of rowan-tree were similarly placed on the same evening as a protection against evil spirits and witches.<sup>7</sup> In Kirkeudbrightshire and on Speyside, it was common to bind into a cow's tail a small piece of mountain-ash, to protect the animal against witchcraft.<sup>8</sup> In Jura, a stick of the tree was kept as a protection against elves,<sup>9</sup> and a rowan-tree growing in a field protected the cattle from being struck by lightning.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr Gregor informs me that upon no account must there be a knot on the thread, or the charm will be of no use.

<sup>2</sup> In Sandsting and Aithsting a rowan-cross so worn guarded the wearer from the effects of the "evil eye," or witchcraft.—*New Statistical Account*, Shetland, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Macpherson, *Introduction to History of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2nd ed., 1772, p. 166; see also *Archæologia Scotica*, vol. iii. p. 301; Pennant, *Tour in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 205.

<sup>4</sup> *Tour in Scotland*, vol. i., 4th ed., p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> *Proceedings Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxii. p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Jamieson, *Scottish Dictionary*, s.v. ROUN-TREE; *Literary and Statistical Magazine for Scotland*, 1819, vol. iii. p. 245.

<sup>7</sup> *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, vol. ii. p. 483.

<sup>8</sup> Heron, *Journey in the Western Counties of Scotland*, 1793, vol. ii. p. 228; Hall, *Travels in Scotland*, 1807, vol. ii. p. 415.

<sup>9</sup> Pennant, *Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii., 2nd ed., p. 245.

<sup>10</sup> Napier, *Folk Lore of the West of Scotland*, p. 80. David Ritchie, the "Black Dwarf," planted rowans around his hut as a defence against necromancy, and also

## SEEDS USED AS CHARMS.

Throughout the West Highlands and Islands, for the last two hundred years at least, various seeds have been held in high repute as amulets, principally in alleviating the pains of childbirth. These seeds, like numerous other articles, have been carried across the Atlantic Ocean by the Gulf Stream, and cast ashore on the islands of the West Coast of Scotland.<sup>1</sup> The commonest specimens found are *Dolichos vulgaris*, *Guilandina Bonduc*,<sup>2</sup> *Entada gigantea*, and *Ipomeæ tuberosa*. A specimen of the last-mentioned seed was exhibited at the meeting of the Society held in January last by the Rev. Dr Stewart,<sup>3</sup> of Nether Lochaber, a Fellow of the Society. According to Dr Stewart, the seed in North and South Uist and in Benbecula is considered more valuable

“desired to have rowan trees set about his grave” (Sir Walter Scott, Introduction to *The Black Dwarf*). In Argyllshire “the mountain-ash is considered . . . as the most propitious of trees; and in such fishing-boats as are rigged with sails, a pin of this wood for fastening the haul-yard to, has been held of indispensable necessity. Sprigs of the mountain-ash, in diseases of cattle, and when malt yields not a due proportion of spirits, are considered a sovereign remedy. An old medical man who lived at Lochawe-side turned this superstition to account. During the course of a long practice he sold mountain-ash sprigs, accompanied with proper prescriptions, that his son was reputed rich, and his grandson is now a landed proprietor” (*Literary and Statistical Magazine for Scotland*, 1819, vol. iii. p. 365). In Thuringia, a string of rowan-berries “touched by a sick person and then hung on a bush beside some forest path, imparts the malady to any person who may touch this article in passing, and frees the sick person from the disease” (Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., vol. ii. p. 150). For additional instances of the use of the mountain-ash or rowan-tree as a charm against witchcraft, &c., see *Scots Magazine*, 1802, p. 817; *Edinburgh Magazine*, 1820, pt. i. p. 536; Henderson, *Folk-lore of Northern Counties of England*, pp. 225, 226; *Yn Lioar Manninagh*, 1891, vol. i. p. 292; *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. vi. p. 266; *ibid.*, vol. vii. pp. 41, 277, 281; *Folk-lore Record*, vol. iv. p. 117; Dalryell, *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, pp. 401, 402.

<sup>1</sup> Pennant, who mentions these seeds being washed ashore on Islay and the Hebrides, states that part of the mast of the *Tilbury* man-of-war, burnt at Jamaica, was taken up on the West Coast of Scotland (*Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii., 2nd ed., p. 266).

<sup>2</sup> The seeds of *Guilandina Bonduc* and *Guilandina Bonducella* are hung round the necks of children in Egypt to guard them from evil influences and sorcery (*Chambers' Encyclopædia*, new edition, s.v. *Guilandina*).

<sup>3</sup> Through the kindness of Mrs Sprague, 29 Buckingham Terrace, its present owner, the seed is again exhibited.

and sacred if there are lines arranged in the form of a cross on one side of it. The seed is used by midwives in alleviating the labours of parturition; and it is also used in infantile disorders, such as teething. When used in infantile troubles, a small hole is drilled through either end, and the seed suspended round the child's neck by a cord. The seed is mostly in request among Catholics, as its local name "*Airne Moire* = (Virgin) Mary's Kidney," indeed implies; but Protestants also sometimes use it. The use of the seed is now oftenest met with only in South Uist and Barra. Dr Stewart adds that canary-coloured specimens and specimens of an almost white colour are sometimes found, and these are the most highly prized.

At the same meeting in January last a second specimen of *Ipomeea tuberosa*, mounted in silver, evidently for use as an amulet, formerly preserved in the Lyon Office, was exhibited and deposited in the Museum (fig. 7). The silver mounting is probably of the last

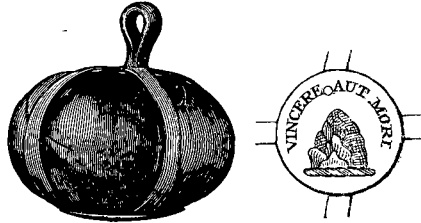


Fig. 7. Seed mounted in silver for use as a Charm; from Barra. (†.)

century, and has engraved on it a Rock in the Sea, the cognisance of the family of Macneil of Barra, and the motto *Vincere aut mori*.

The earliest reference I have been able to find of the use of these seeds as amulets in the West Highlands is in Johne Morisone's "Description of Lewis," supposed to have been written between 1678 and 1688.<sup>1</sup> His words are:—

"The sea casteth on shore sometimes a sort of nutts growing upon tangles, round and flat, sad broun or black coullered, of the breadth of a doller, some more, some less; the kernal of it being taken out of the shell is an excellent

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. xii. p. 504. The "Description" is printed in the *Spottiswoode Miscellany*, vol. ii. pp. 337-342.



remedie for the bloodie flux. They ordinarlie make use of the shell for keeping their snuff.<sup>1</sup> Ane other sort of nutt is found in the same maner, of less syze, of a broun colour, flat and round, with a black circle, quhilk in old times women wore about their necks both for ornament and holding that it had the virtue to make fortunate in cattle, and upon this account they were at the pains to bind them in silver, brass, or tinn, according to their abilities. There are other lesser yet, of a whitish coulour and round, which they call *Sant Marie's Nutt*, quhilk they did wear in the same maner, holding it to have the virtue to preserve women in childbearing."<sup>2</sup>

Martin also refers to these seeds, and gives some additional particulars of their use as follows :<sup>3</sup>—

“There is variety of Nuts, call'd Molluka Beans, some of which are used as Amulets against Witchcraft, or an Evil Eye, particularly the white one : and upon this account they are wore about Childrens Necks, and if any Evil is intended to them, they say the Nut changes into a black colour. That they did change colour, I found true by my own observation, but cannot be positive as to the cause of it.

“Malcolm Campbell, Steward of Harries, told me that some Weeks before my arrival there, all his Cows gave Blood instead of Milk, for several days together ; one of his Neighbours told his Wife that this must be Witchcraft, and it would be easy to remove it, if she would but take the white Nut, call'd the Virgin Mary's Nut, and lay it in the Pail into which she was to milk the Cows. This Advice she presently follow'd, and having milk'd one Cow into the Pale [*sic*] with the Nut in it, the Milk was all Blood, and the Nut chang'd its colour into dark brown : she used the Nut again, and all the Cows gave pure good Milk, which they ascribe to the Virtue of the Nut.”

Campbell,<sup>4</sup> also refers to these seeds, and says : “In 1825 these nuts

<sup>1</sup> Wallace (*Description of Orkney*, reprint, 1888, pp. 17 and 183) mentions four kinds of seeds (“Molocca Beans” he calls them), found on the rocks of Orkney, “these pretty Nuts, of which they use to make Snuff Boxes ; there are four sorts of them, the figures of which are set down” (pl. ii., and pl. at p. 192). Some additional notes on these seeds will be found in Hibbert's *Description of the Shetland Islands*, 1822, p. 391 ; Neill's *Tour through Orkney and Shetland*, 1806, pp. 60, 213 ; and in a paper by Sir Hans Sloane, “An Account of Four sorts of strange Beans, frequently cast on Shoar on the Orkney Isles,” &c. (*Philosophical Transactions*, 1696, vol. xix. pp. 398–400). Mr Steele, of the Museum of Science and Art, informs me that the larger seeds are still made into snuff-boxes in the West Highlands.

<sup>2</sup> *Spottiswoode Miscellany*, vol. ii. p. 341.

<sup>3</sup> *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 2nd edition, 1716, pp. 38, 39.

<sup>4</sup> *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, vol. iv. p. 464. Campbell says, “seven different kinds are thrown up on the Scotch coasts.”

were mentioned in letters from the Irish Highlands. 'The Irish then laid them under their pillows to keep away the fairies.' A Highland woman has twice refused to part with a grey one, which she 'had from her mother,' and which is 'good against fire.' I have seen one which was left to a girl by her nurse, and had been silver-mounted. A minister told me that they were blessed by the priests, and worn by Roman Catholics *only*, but I think this was a mistake. Protestants keep them, I know."

In the Life of Sir Robert Christison there is an extract from his Journal of May 30th, 1866, in which Sir Robert records that Dr Macdonald of Lochmaddy had not been able to get him a specimen of *Guilandina Bonduc*, because it is "so rare and is so prized as a charm during childbirth that the midwives wear the seeds set in silver for the women to hold in their hands while in labour; and a husband, who had two, refused twenty shillings for one of them, saying he would not part with it for love or money till his spouse be past childbearing."<sup>1</sup>

#### TALISMANIC BROOCHES AND RINGS.<sup>2</sup>

In the Middle Ages the "wise men from the east" (Matt. ii. 1-12), who were guided by the star to worship Christ in Bethlehem, were changed into three kings of Arabia. "According to a variation of the legend, they ruled over Tharsus or Thrace, Sheba, and Nubia, thus representing the three continents or quarters of the earth."<sup>3</sup> So early as the time of Beda<sup>4</sup> they were distinguished by the names they still bear:

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Sir Robert Christison, Bart.*, vol. ii. pp. 256, 257.

<sup>2</sup> The reliquary Brooches of Lorn, Lochbuy, and Ugadale may be included here under the head of amulets. They were designed to hold a small piece of some sacred relic, doubtless for the purpose of protecting the wearer from harm. See the note on p. 436. †

<sup>3</sup> Lord Lindsay, *History of Christian Art*, 2nd ed., vol. i. p. 29. There is no authority in the Gospel of St Matthew for fixing the number of wise men at three, but the early framers of the legend probably had in their minds the words of Psalm lxx. 10:

"The Kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents;  
The Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts."

<sup>4</sup> *De Collectaneis* (if the work be really Beda's), quoted in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Magi":—"Primus dicitur fuisse Melchior, qui senex et canus, barbâ prolîxâ et capillis, aurum obtulit Regi Domino. Secundus nomine Gaspar, juvenis

Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, the first of whom was sixty, the second forty, and the third twenty years of age. The name Gaspar (Kaspar, Jaspas, &c.) sometimes appears as Gathaspar, and in Syriac the name is changed to Gúdophorhûm, under which guise may be discerned the name of the powerful Indo-Parthian king, Gondophares, who is said to have been baptized by St Thomas.<sup>1</sup> Melchior is said to mean "King of Light." Balthazar or Belteshazzar was the Chaldee name given to Daniel (Dan. i. 7, ii. 26, iv. 8, etc.); and as King of Nubia, he is frequently, especially in German art, represented as a negro. Thus the principal composition of the altar-piece of Cologne Cathedral, painted in 1410, "represents the Adoration of the Kings, who kneel to the right and left of the Virgin and the Child, while their attendants stand behind them with their banners, emblazoned with the armorial bearings assigned to them by the heralds of the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> The heads, with the exception of the negro king, are German in type, and full of character."<sup>3</sup> The bodies of the three kings after death were translated to Constantinople, and afterwards to Milan, from which place they were removed in 1162 to Cologne by Frederick Barbarossa.<sup>4</sup>

imberbis, rubicundus, thure quasi Deo oblatione digna, Deum honoravit. Tertius fuscus, integre barbatus, Baltassar nomine, per myrrham Filium hominis moriturum professus." The kings were also known by the names Appellius, Amerus, Damascus; Megalath, Galgalath, Sarasin; Ator, Sator, Peratoras (Hone, *Every Day Book*, vol. i., pp. 45, 46).

<sup>1</sup> See the valuable paper of A. von Gutschmid, "Die Königsnamen in den apokryphen Apostel-geschichten. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntniss des geschichtlichen Romans," in *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, 1864, vol. xix., pp. 161-183. On the coins his name is spelled in the Indian characters *Gudapharasa* (Gardner, *Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India*, p. 103). He appears to have reigned towards the end of the first century A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Sir David Lindsay, in his *Heraldry* (plates 4-6), gives "The arms off the thre kyngis off the Orient, quhilkis maid the first offerent till our saluatour Crist Jesu, callit the thre kyngis off Collene—Balthasar, kyng off Saba, Gaspar kyng off Tharse, Melchior kyng off Araby."

<sup>3</sup> *History of Christian Art*, 2nd ed., vol. i. p. 29, vol. ii. p. 305. In the painting of the Adoration by Jacopo da Ponte (Ponte Bassano, born 1510, died 1592), now in the Scottish National Gallery, the third king is also represented as a negro. The costumes are those of Venetian nobles of the painter's own time!

<sup>4</sup> A version of the Legend of the Three Kings of Cologne, from the Harleian MSS., is printed by Wright, *Chester Plays*, 1843, vol. i., pp. 266-304; see also Sandys,

Latterly the names of the three kings "were used in various ways to impose upon popular credulity the belief of their possessing the power, when duly consecrated, of acting as charms to cure the bites of serpents and other venomous reptiles, as well as particular diseases."<sup>1</sup> The

*Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern*, London, 1833, pp. lxxx. - xc. In Aberdeen dramatic pageants were common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and were regulated by acts and ordinances of the magistrates and council. The earliest recorded pageant in Aberdeen was in 1442, and in a list drawn up in that year, specifying the dramatis personæ to be supplied by each trade, is the following entry: "Ye Smythes and Hammen sal fynd ye three kings of Culane, and alsmony honeste squaires as yai may" (Kennedy, *Annals of Aberdeen*, vol. i. p. 95. See also *The Book of Bon-Accord*, Aberdeen, 1839, pp. 235, 236). Dunbar in his "Blyth Aberdein" (*Poems*, Scottish Text Society edit., pt. ii., p. 252), descriptive of the reception accorded Margaret, Queen of James IV., on her visit to Aberdeen in 1511, says the streets were thronged with pageants, one of which represented the adoration of the three kings:—

" And syne thow gart the orient kingis thrie  
Offer to Chryst, with benyng reuerence,  
Gold, sence, and mir, with all humilitie,  
Schawand him king, with most magnificence."

<sup>1</sup> *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. i. p. 120. An interesting instance of the late survival of the belief in the power of the three holy kings is also given by Mr Roach Smith. (*ibid.*, p. 122), as follows. In January 1748-9 a man was convicted of murder at Chichester and sentenced to death. He died a few hours after sentence was passed, and on him there was found a small slip of paper  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length by  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches broad. One third of the slip was occupied by a view of the city of Cologne, above which were the three holy kings and the Virgin and Child. The remainder of the ticket bore the following:—

Virgin and Child and the three holy kings.	F Sancti Tres Reges. GASPAR, MELCHIOR, BALTHASAR, Orate pro nobis nunc et in hora mortis nostræ.
View of the city.	Ces Billets ont touché aux trois testes des Saints Roys, à Cologne: ils sont pour les voyageurs, contre les malheurs des chemins, maux de teste; mal caduque fièvres, sorcellerie, toute sorte de male- fice, et mort subite.

The shrine of the three holy kings, which is "formed like a church, with low side

natural result of the spread of such a belief was that vast numbers of brooches, rings, and other objects bearing the names of the three holy

aisles, is unsurpassed in architectonic structure and the richness of its decoration," is figured in Lübke's *Ecclesiastical Art in Germany*, Eng. trans. 1885, p. 165. It dates from the twelfth century. "The central subject is the Virgin with the Infant Jesus; on the left, the Adoration of the Three Kings, accompanied by the Emperor Otho IV. On the right, the Baptism of Christ by John the Baptist, in presence of an Angel. All these figures are of pure gold, and in full relief. The architectural decorations are covered with enamels and precious stones. Above these figures is a cover of silver gilt, on removing which the skulls of the Three Kings are seen, with their names, Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, traced in rubies. The crowns of copper-gilt replace those of massive gold, which disappeared during the revolutionary storms. They weighed each six pounds, and were enriched with fine pearls and an aigrette of diamonds. Above the relics is the figure of Christ, as the Judge of men, between two angels, who hold the instruments of the Passion. This reliquary is 5½ feet long, by 3 wide, 5 feet high. It was begun in 1170, and made by order of Archbishop Philip von Heinsberg" (Labarte, *Handbook of the Arts of the Middle Ages*, &c., Eng. trans. 1855, p. xxiii. ; and p. 116, where it is also figured; see also King, *Handbook of Engraved Gems*, 2nd ed., p. 108). A London sign of the three kings, dated 1667, from Lambeth Hill, and now in the Guildhall Museum, is figured in Norman's *London Signs and Inscriptions*, 1893, p. 27. In an old English Miracle-Play of "The Nativity" (*English Miracle-Plays or Mysteries*, edited by W. Marriott, Basil, 1838, p. 82), the three kings are hailed by an angel as—

"Kyng of Tawrus, Sr Jesper!  
Kyng of Arrayb, Sr Balthazar!  
Melchor kyng, of Aginare!"

Peter Levens, in his *Pathway to Health*, 1664 (quoted in *Notes and Queries*, 1st series, vol. ii. p. 435), gives the following prescription for the cure of the falling sickness (epilepsy), in which the three kings are named:—

"For all manner of falling evils.—Take the blood of his little finger that is sick, and write these three verses following, and hang it about his neck:—

'Jasper fert Mirrham, Thus Melchior, Balthazar Aurum,  
Hæc quicumque secum portat tria nomina regum,  
Solvitur à morbo, Domini pietate, caduca.'

and it shall help the party so grieved." These words, with a slight variation in the second line, occur on a ring found at Dunwich, Suffolk (Jones, *Finger-Ring Lore*, p. 144; *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, vol. ii. p. 248). The names of the three kings occur on the Oldenburg Horn preserved in the Rosenberg Palace, Copenhagen. The horn "bears coats of arms and inscriptions, showing that it was made for King Christian I. of Denmark [1448-81], in honour of the Three Kings of Cologne, and cannot therefore be older than the middle of the fifteenth century" (Hartland, *Science of Fairy Tales*, 1891, p. 149). Another horn formerly at Holsteingaard, Aal parish, Hallingdal, Norway, and now in the museum at Bergen, is also in-

kings were sold to pilgrims to their shrine at Cologne.<sup>1</sup> The only object in the Museum bearing the names of the three kings is a plain hoop finger-ring of gold, found in excavating on the Castle Hill of Edinburgh, and inscribed *Jaspar . Melchior . Baltazar*. Another plain hoop finger-ring of gold in the Museum, formerly in the Collection of the Faculty of Advocates, bears an inscription in two lines, the meaning of which I am unable to give. By combining a few letters from each line it is possible

scribed with the names of the three kings (*ibid.*, pp. 150, 151). A third horn in the museum at Arendal is said to bear the following inscription :—“Potum servorum benedic deus alme [tuorum reliquam unus benede le un] ? Caspar Melchior Baltazar” (Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, vol. ii. p. 15 ; Hartland, p. 150). In Denmark, girls before going to bed on the eve of Epiphany, prayed to the three kings to let them see their future husbands (Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, vol. ii. p. 270). For some further examples of the use of the names of the three kings on Pilgrims' Signs, Rings, &c., see *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. i. pp. 115, 120, 121. For notices of the three kings in early art (with illustrations), see Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, vol. ii., s.v. MAGI, and *Dictionary of the Bible*, *ibid.*

According to Mr Roach Smith (*Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. i. pp. 119, 120, quoting Bishop Patrick's *Reflections upon the Devotions of the Roman Church*, 8vo, London, 1674), the following are two prayers formerly used in the Roman Catholic Church to procure the intercession of the Three Kings of Cologne :

*Horæ Sec. usum Romanum*, 1570.

1. O rex Jasper, rex Melchior, rex Balthasar, rogo vos per singula nomina, rogo vos per Sanctum Trinitatum, rogo vos per regem regum, quem vagientem in cunis videre meruistis ; ut compatiamini tribulationibus meis hodie, et intercedite pro me ad Dominum, cujus desiderio exules facti estis : et sicut vos per angelicum nuntiationem de reditu ad Herodem eripuit, ita me hodie liberare dignetur ab omnibus inimicis meis visibilibus, et invisibilibus, et à subitanea et improvisa morte, et ab omni confusione mala, et ab omni periculo corporis et animæ.

2. Oremus. Deus qui tres magos orientales, Jasper, Melchior, et Balthasar, ad tua cunabula, et te mysticis venerarentur muneribus sine impedimento stella duce duxisti ; concede propitius, ut per horum trium Regum pias intercessionem et merita commemorationum, nobis, famulis tuis tribuas, ut itinere quo ituri sumus, celeritate lætitia, gratia et pace, teipso sole, vera stella, vera luminis luce, ad loca destinata in pace et salute, et negotio peracto cum omni prosperitate, salvi et sani redire valeamus. Qui vivis, &c. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> A similar practice prevailed in the beginning of the present century at St Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg, Donegal, Ireland, when immense numbers of small rudely carved wooden crucifixes were sold to pilgrims. Several specimens of these crucifixes are in the Museum. See *St Patrick's Purgatory*, by Thomas Wright, London, 1844.

to make out the name "Malchior." This ring has been assigned to about 1300 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

The Glenlyon Brooch<sup>2</sup> of silver, 5½ inches in diameter, richly jewelled, said to have been preserved in the family of the Campbells of Glenlyon for many generations, is inscribed on the back in black-letter :

Casp̄ar . Melchior . Baltazar . Consummatum [sic].

The introduction of the word "Consummatum" in the inscription is an allusion to the dying words of Christ, when the soldier held up the sponge with vinegar: "quum autem accepisset Jesus acetum, dixit, Consummatum est" (John xix. 30; Beza's version).

A small ring-brooch, of silver, in the Museum at Forres, Elginshire,<sup>3</sup> bears the reversible inscription "ANSOGANAGOSNA," which may possibly have a meaning, but I have not noticed any such word amongst Gnostic formulæ.

Other and much more common talismanic formulæ occurring on mediæval brooches are "Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judeorum," and "Ave Maria gracia plena." The former is sometimes shortened to "Jesus Nazarenus" or "Jesus Na"; and the latter frequently appears as "Ave Maria," or simply "Maria." The latter formula is a variation of the greeting of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary<sup>4</sup> at the Annunciation. In the English Miracle-Play of the "Nativity" the form of greeting is:<sup>5</sup>

"Hayle! Mare, full of grace,  
Oure Lord God ys w<sup>t</sup> the  
Aboue all wemen that eyuer wasse;  
Lade blesside mote thow be."

<sup>1</sup> *Catalogue of the Archæological Institute Museum, Edinburgh*, 1856, p. 128, where a facsimile of the inscription is given.

<sup>2</sup> Figured in Pennant's *Tour in Scotland*, vol. i., 4th ed., pl. xiii.; Wilson's *Pre-historic Annals of Scotland*, vol. ii. pl. xx.; and in *The Lairds of Glenlyon*, frontispiece.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxii. p. 353.

<sup>4</sup> St Luke, i. 28, "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." In Wycliffe's version (1380-88) of the New Testament this reads, "And the aungel entride to hir, and seide, Heil, ful of grace; the Lord be with thee; blessid be thou among wymmen."

<sup>5</sup> *English Miracle-Plays*, ed. Marriott, p. 60.

where the first line is exactly the same as the formula on the brooches. Only one brooch in the National Collection bears the angelic greeting and unfortunately it is without a locality. It is a flat circular ring of silver,  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches in diameter, and is inscribed on the face, "IHESVS . NAZARENVS . REX . IVDEORVM," and on the reverse, "AVE . MARIA . GRACIA . PLENA . ORA." The formula "MARI . IHS" occurs on two finger-rings of silver gilt, one of which was found at Pluscarden, Elginshire, and the other in an old graveyard near Fintray House, Aberdeenshire, facsimiles of both of which are in the National Museum. On another ring of silver gilt in the Museum the inscription is "IHS . MARIA."

Brooches inscribed with the legend "Jesus Nazarenus," either abbreviated or in full, are much more common than those bearing the angelic greeting. The frequency of this inscription on brooches, &c., is probably due to the fact that it was the title affixed to the Cross at the Crucifixion (Matt. xxvii. 38; John xix. 19).<sup>1</sup> The National Museum possesses thirteen specimens, of which six have been found in association with coins by which their date may approximately be determined. One of circular form,  $2\frac{3}{16}$  inch in diameter, inscribed "✠ IHESVS . NAZARENVS . REX," was found in 1864 at Woodhead, Canobie, along with three other silver brooches, and fifty pennies of Edward I. and II. of England, one of Alexander III. of Scotland, and two of John Baliol. The date of this brooch may therefore be assigned to the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Another found at Langhope, Roxburghshire, was accompanied by two other brooches, a pin of silver, a tripod pot of brass, and a hoard of coins of Edward I., II., III. It is simply inscribed "IESVS NAZR." Two brooches were found in January 1892, along with 143 silver pennies of the English Edwards, four of Alexander III., and one of Baliol, in an earthenware jar, within the area of the old fort of Ayr.<sup>3</sup> One of the brooches is circular, and is inscribed

<sup>1</sup> Mark and Luke differ from Matthew and John in their versions of the words placed over the cross. The former gives the title simply as "The King of the Jews" (xv. 26); and the latter "This is the King of the Jews" (xxiii. 38).

<sup>2</sup> *Transactions, Dumfriesshire Antiquarian Society*, 1891-92, p. 98; *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. v. pl. viii. p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxvi. p. 60. *Collections, Ayrshire and Galloway Archaeological Association*, vol. vii. p. 10.



"IHESVS NAZARENVS REX IVDEORVM"; the other is octagonal, and is inscribed "IHESVS NA." Of the remaining brooches: (1) found with two others (uninscribed) at Middleby Church, Dumfriesshire, is inscribed "IHESVS : NAZARENVS : REX : IVDE"; (2) without a locality, is inscribed "IHESVS NAZARENVS REX NAZAR";<sup>1</sup> (3) found in a grave at Athelstaneford Churchyard, is inscribed "IHESVS NAZAR"; (4) found in 1818 under the floor of Dunfermline Abbey, in excavating the tomb of King Robert the Bruce, inscribed "IHESVS . NAZARENVS . REX . IVDEORVM"; (5, 6) found with two other brooches of silver and a quantity of coins of the Edwards in a garden at Brechin, one inscribed "IHESVS NAZARENVS REX IVDEORVM," the other inscribed "IHESVS NAZAVRIX," with the same inscription on the other side, but still more blundered; (7) without a locality, inscribed "IESVS NAZA"; (8) found on the Culbin Sands, inscribed "✠ IESVS NA"; (9) of bronze or brass, found at the Broch of Yarhouse, Caithness, "about two feet and a half under the surface of the mound, close by an interment which had evidently been made long after the ruined broch had become a grass-covered mound."<sup>2</sup> Three finger-rings in the Museum also bear the legends abridged. One of the rings is a plain hoop of silver, inscribed "IHESVS NAZARENVS"; the second is panelled and inscribed "IHESVS"; and the third, a thumb-ring of silver-gilt, found at Restennet Priory, Forfarshire, is inscribed "IESVS NAZAR." These brooches and finger-rings were worn as charms to preserve the wearer from sudden death, the falling sickness or epilepsy, etc.<sup>3</sup> In a curious work entitled *The Revelation to the Monk of Evesham*, edited by Prof. Arber, from the unique copy in the British Museum,<sup>4</sup> there is an account of an interview between the monk and a goldsmith

<sup>1</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. ix. p. 535.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. ix. p. 144; *Scotland in Pagan Times: The Iron Age*, p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> See a note by the late Mr Albert Way, quoted in Hume's *Antiquities found at Hoylake*, 1847, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> The *Revelation* was probably not written earlier than its ostensible date, 1196 A.D. Its author is unknown. The story is also given in the *Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris, under the year 1196 (Rolls ed., vol. ii. pp. 423-437). An abridgment of the story is given by Roger of Wendover in his *Flores Historiarum*, under the same year. The English version of the work was printed by William de Machlinia about 1482. The language quoted above is of this latter date.

in Purgatory, in the course of which the monk inquired "yeffe hyt were possyble by any thyng that the folke myght schonne and eschewe soden dethe." The goldsmith replied—

"O he seyde Sothely and yf y hadde knowyn whenne that y was in the world leuyng suche thyngys as y knowe nowe y wulde haue taughte and defende all the world fro that grete hurte and dammage. howe the pepulle and folke myght be sewre and safe fro the fallyng of soden dethe. Trewly and verily and the crystyn pepulle wolde wryte dayly on her [=their] forhedys and aboute the placys of her herte wyth her fyngur of [or ?] in any other wyse. these ii. wordys that conteynyth the mysterye of the helthe and saluacyon of mankynde that ys to wytte and to say *Ihesus Nazarenus*<sup>1</sup> wythowtyn dowte the trewe pepulle of oure sauour ihesu cryste schuld be harmeles and preserued fro suche a grete peryll and hurte."<sup>2</sup>

It is but a step from this to engraving the words on a brooch or a ring to be worn on the person.<sup>3</sup>

Small brooches of silver in the form of a heart, such as were in common use in Scotland at the end of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth as personal ornaments, were also believed to be endowed with the property of protecting children from witchcraft and enchantment. An interesting account of the manner in which such brooches were used in the beginning of this century is given by the Rev. James Hall, who states that he saw one fastened to an infant's clothes in a clergyman's house in Speyside, and adds, "This was done by the nurse; the clergyman was certain it could be of no use, but allowed it to continue, as one and all the females in the house were of a different opinion. They always fix it to girls, somewhere to the clothes about the left hip, and on boys about the middle of the left thigh, to protect his powers of generation."<sup>4</sup> Hall also mentions having met an old

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Paris gives the words as "*Jesus Nazarenus rex Judæorum*" (*op. cit.*, p. 431) which is more probable.

<sup>2</sup> *The Revelation*, pp. 53, 54. During a great tempest at Cremona in 1239, a large stone fell into the monastery of Gabriel, "in quo erat crux et ymago Salutoris impressa, et desuper literis scribebatur IHESUS NAZARENUS REX JUDEORUM" (*Extracta e variis Cronicis Scocie*, Abbotsford Club, p. 97).

<sup>3</sup> For numerous amulet rings bearing inscriptions, see Stephens' *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, vol. i. pp. 492-500.

<sup>4</sup> *Travels in Scotland*, 1807, vol. ii. p. 415. Lord Teignmouth also mentions that at the time of his tour "The Highlanders carry on their breasts a brooch,

woman near the source of the Spey, "with a large brass brooch, in the form of a circle, about five or six inches in diameter, fixed on her clothes upon the left hip, which she had worn night and day for more than half a century to preserve her from mischief." Two small brooches from Roseheart, Banffshire, similar to those described above, have been presented to the Museum through Dr Gregor, of Pitsligo; and another is exhibited by Mrs Mitchell, of Perth, through Dr R. de Brus Trotter. In a letter to me, Dr Gregor states that one of the brooches presented through him "was worn on the breast of the chemise by the grandmother of the donor when she was nursing, to prevent the witches from taking away her milk," and that "such charms were also used to keep off evil from infants. They were stuck into their petticoats behind." The other specimen is only stated to have been worn in the breast of the chemise. The brooch exhibited by Mrs Mitchell "belonged to her

as a preservative against supernatural mischief; and the Catholic priests of Barra sell holy water to the fishermen to propitiate the winds" (*Sketches of the Coasts and Islands of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 139, London, 1836). In Argyllshire, to prevent fairies from injuring children, the most efficacious expedient was "to fasten a circular iron brooch, of the size of a penny piece, in the child's frock, where it continues to be worn for years" (*Literary and Statistical Magazine for Scotland*, 1819, vol. iii. p. 366). When a mother has occasion to go out and leave a child sleeping in the house "an old rusty sword is placed under the bed or cradle; or should she not be possessed of this, the milking dish, with a parcel of old keys thrown in it, is used for the same purpose" (*ibid.*). The use of the sword or keys was to keep away the fairies and prevent their abstracting the human child and leaving one of their own in its place, as according to Ure the fairies "are supposed to have an utter abhorrence at iron" (*Rutherglen and East Kilbride*, 1793 p. 131). In Scottish superstition iron appears to have been endowed with certain mysterious properties. Thus Wallace (*Description of Orkney*, reprint, 1833, pp. 32, 33) says "at the Noup-head in Westra is a Rock surrounded with the Sea, called Less, which the inhabitants of that Isle say has this strange propertie, that if a man go upon it, having any Iron upon him (if it were an Iron Nail in his shoe), the Sea will instantly swell in such a tempestuous way, that no boat can come near to take him off, and that the Sea will not be settled till the peece of Iron be flung into it." Pennant mentions (*Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 264) a charm current in Islay in his time to discover a witch who had bewitched milk cows. The owner of the cows drains from them what little milk the witch had left and boils it with certain herbs, flints, and untempered steel, which puts the witch in such agony that she is obliged to come to the house to obtain relief and so discovers herself to the injured party.

grandmother, and was worn on some part of the dress of all her children, for the purpose of averting the evil eye and keeping away witches." Mr J. Christie of Bolfracks, Aberfeldy, informs me that he has one of these small brooches in his possession, which was pinned under the petticoats of his grandfather "when, as an infant, he was taken out for an airing by his nurse. It bears his initials and the date 1792."

#### WRITTEN CHARMS TO CURE TOOTHACHE.

Charms written on slips of paper and carried about the person for the purpose of curing the toothache were not uncommon throughout the North of Scotland within recent years, and indeed may still be in use. Two of these written charms are in the National Museum, and are here described.

1. The first is written on a slip of paper 8 inches in length by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in breadth. It was written and sold in 1855 by a professional witch named Kate M'Aulay, residing at Kishorn, Lochcarron, Ross-shire, and reads as follows:—

"Petter was Laying and his head upon a marrable ston weping and Christ Came by and said what else [ails] thou Petter Petter answered and sad Lord god my twoth Raise thou Petter and bee healed and whosoever shall carry these Lines in my name shall never feel the twothick. Kett M'Aulay."

The paper, which was folded eight times, was worn for at least a year in a small silk bag, hung round the neck of a shepherd, who had given half-a-crown to the witch for the charm; which, however, was to lose its efficacy when looked at.<sup>1</sup>

2. The second charm was given in 1869 to a domestic servant in Dingwall, by the wife of a gamekeeper at Garve, Ross-shire. It is of

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. ix. pp. 57, 58. It appears to have been a custom with the vendors of these charms to caution their dupes against examining into their contents. My namesake, Mr William George Black, quotes an instance (*Folk Medicine*, p. 171) of a young woman in Chelsea, who obtained a sealed paper to guard her against the toothache. On examination it was found to read:—

" Good devil, cure her,  
And take her for your pains."

Another and rather more forcible example is quoted by Cockayne (*Leechdoms, &c.*, vol. i. p. xxxiii).

similar import to the one already mentioned, and is written on a half-sheet of notepaper. The spelling is more uncouth than in the first specimen. It reads as follows:—

“Petter Sate Weapn on a Marabl Stone Christ Came Passn By and asynd watht eleth the Petter Petter ansered and sayed my Lord my Gode my tothe Christ ansered an sayed those that will carry those lines in my Name shall Be Heald for my Nam Sake. Amen. Jessy M<sup>c</sup>Kenzie.”

This charm has also probably been carried about the person in the same manner as the previous one as it has been folded seven times.<sup>1</sup>

In Orkney the toothache was supposed to be caused by a worm gnawing at the affected tooth,<sup>2</sup> and to drive it away, a copy of the above lines, called “Wormy lines,” written on a slip of paper, was sewed into some part of the dress of the person affected, and carried about as long as the paper lasted.<sup>3</sup> In Brand’s time a spoken charm appears to have been in use in Orkney for the cure of the toothache, as he writes:

“There is a Charm likewise they make use of for the toothach, whereof I had the following instance from an Honest Man worthy of Credit. Some years ago, there was one who used this Charm, for the abating the pain of one living in Eda, tormented therewith, and tho’ the action then was at a distance, the Charmer not being present with the Patient, yet according to the most exact calculation of the time when the charm was performed by the Charmer, there fell a living worm out of the Patient’s Mouth when he was at supper.”<sup>4</sup>

A similarly worded charm, formerly in use in Aberdeenshire, is printed by the Rev. Dr Gregor.<sup>5</sup> It was also in common use in England

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. xi. p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> The Highlanders appear to have held the same belief. In Gaelic, “Toothache” is *Cnuimh-fhiacall*, from *Cnuimh* a “worm” and *fiacall* a “tooth.”—*Highland Society’s Dictionary* s.v. This belief is widely diffused over the world; see references in W. G. Black, *Folk Medicine*, p. 33. See also the Finnish song, “The Origin of the Tooth Worm,” in *Folk-lore*, vol. iii. pp. 59, 60.

<sup>3</sup> A copy of the Orkney version was communicated to the Society in 1848 by the late W. H. Fotheringham, of Kirkwall, along with a number of other charms (*MS. Communications*, vol. viii., 1842-52). In 1854 Mr Fotheringham appears to have published the charms in *Notes and Queries*, first series, vol. x. pp. 220, 221. The communication in *Notes and Queries* is signed “F.”

<sup>4</sup> *Description of Orkney, Zetland, &c.*, 1703, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 48; see also *Notes and Queries*, vol. i., first ser., p. 397; and W. G. Black, *Folk Medicine*, p. 78.

and Ireland.<sup>1</sup> A much fuller version of this charm, and one which is probably the original of the versions current in Britain and Ireland, is contained in the *Saxon Leechdoms*, where it reads as follows :<sup>2</sup>

“Contra dolorum dentium.

“Xr̄s super marmoreum sedebat petrus tristis ante eum stabat manum ad maxillum tenebat et interrogabat eum dñs dicens : quare tritis es petre ? respondit petrus et dixit : domine dentes mei dolent ; et dominus dixit : adiuro te migranea [ἡμικρᾶνία] vel gutta maligna per patrem et filium et sp̄m sc̄m et per celum et terram, et per xx. ordines angelorum, et per lx. prophetas et per xii. apostolos et per iiiii. euangelistas et per omnes sc̄os qui deo placuerunt ab origine mundi ; ut non possit diabolus nocere ei nec in dentes nec in aures nec in palato famulo dei illi non ossa frangere nec carnem manducare ut non habeatis potestatem nocere illi non dormiendo nec vigilando nec tangatis eum usque lx. annos et unum diem rex pax max in Xr̄o filio. Amen. Pater Noster.”

#### THE LEE-PENNY.

Of the Lee-Penny it may justly be said that, thanks to the *Talisman* of Sir Walter Scott, it is the most widely known of all the Scottish amulets. Although it has already been repeatedly described,<sup>3</sup> it is

<sup>1</sup> English versions are given in *Notes and Queries*, first ser., vol. i. p. 293 ; *ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 259 (Devonshire) ; *ibid.*, second ser., vol. xii. p. 501 (Shropshire) ; *ibid.*, fifth ser., vol. viii. p. 275 (Somersetshire), and references on p. 377 ; Henderson, *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 172 ; *Folk-lore Record*, vol. i. p. 40 (Sussex) ; Black, *Folk Medicine*, p. 77 (Lancashire) ; *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. ii. p. 95, vol. v. p. 201 (both Cornwall). Irish versions are given in *Notes and Queries*, first ser., vol. i. pp. 349, 429 (Kilkenny) ; *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. ii. p. 33 (Kerry). Dr Jon Stefansson, of Copenhagen, informs me that the same charm is known in Iceland.

<sup>2</sup> *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England* (Rolls Series), vol. iii. p. 64. The editor, Rev. Oswald Cockayne, says of this charm “an absurd story, not to be found in the Codices Apocryphii published by Thilo or Tischendorf.” See also Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (Eng. tr.), vol. iii. p. 1248.

<sup>3</sup> The Lee-Penny has been described in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1787, vol. lviii. pt. ii. pp. 1045, 1046 ; *Edinburgh Magazine*, 1796, vol. viii. new series, pp. 329, 330 ; Hone's *Table Book*, vol. ii. pp. 143-145 ; *Scottish Journal of Topography, &c.*, vol. i. pp. 72, 73 ; Irvine's *Upper Ward of Lanarkshire*, vol. ii. pp. 289-291 ; *New Statistical Account*, Lanarkshire, pp. 16, 17 ; *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. iv. pp. 222-224 ; *Journal, Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland*, 4th series, vol. iii. p. 443 ; Roger's *Social Life in Scotland*, vol. iii. pp. 214-216 ; Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, Bohn's edition, vol. iii. pp. 327, 328 ; Simpson, *Archaeological Essays*, vol. i. pp. 214-217.

necessary that it should be included in the present notice of Scottish charms, otherwise this paper would be incomplete. The amulet consists of a small, dark-red stone, of an irregular triangular or heart shape, set in the reverse of a groat of Edward IV., of the London Mint.<sup>1</sup> According to tradition, the stone was brought in the fourteenth century by Sir Simon Lockhart of Lee from the Holy Land, where it had been used for the cure of fevers, etc. When used for healing purposes in Scotland, the Lee-Penny was drawn once round a vessel filled with water and then dipped three times into the liquid. In an "Account of the Penny in the Lee," written in 1702, it is stated that the amulet "being taken and put into the end of a cloven stick, and washen in a tub full of water, and given to cattell to drink, infallibly cures almost all manner of diseases," and that "the people come from all airts of the kingdom with their diseased beasts."<sup>2</sup> About the year 1629 the "routting ewill, a strange and suddane diseas," prevailed in Scotland, "quhairthrow" an ox "was never able to ly down, bot rought continually till he deid." To cure this disease some persons travelled from East Lothian "to the laird of Leyis house and cravett the len" of "his curing stane—quhilk was refusit be the lady; but [she] gave thame ane certaine quantitie of water in flacones quhairin the said stane was dippit, quhilk being gevin as drink to the bestiall hailit thame." For

<sup>1</sup> Dalzell states that the amulet was described to him by a member of the family of Lee "as a yellowish stone, somewhat resembling amber, about half the size of the thumb-nail, set in a silver coin of Edward I. of England" (*Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 157). The coin was, however, stated by the late George Sim, a high numismatic authority, to be a groat of Edward IV., as mentioned above. Napier (*Folk-lore of West of Scotland*, p. 95) erroneously describes the coin as of gold. The stone was tried by a lapidary, but of what nature it was he could not determine (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1787, p. 1046). Jones, in his *Credulities Past and Present* (pp. 329, 330), confuses the Waterford Ball of rock-crystal with the Lee-Penny.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Dalzell, *Darker Superstitions*, Addenda, p. 680. In Carlisle, in 1845, there could "still be seen hanging in some byres a phial of Lee-penny water, to keep the cows from parting calf, and to preserve the milk from changing" (*New Statistical Account*, Lanarkshire, p. 586). Sir James Simpson says he was "lately [before 1861] told by the farmer at Nemphlar, in the neighbourhood of Lee, that in his younger days no byre was considered safe which had not a bottle of water from the Lee-Penny suspended from its rafters" (*Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. iv. p. 222, note).

this conduct the parties were subjected to ecclesiastical censure and appointed to undergo penance in the church of Dunbar, although they urged in extenuation of their offence that such was the ordinary practice of "husbandmen of the best soirt."<sup>1</sup> It is said that "in one of the epidemics of the plague which attacked Newcastle in the reign of Charles I., the inhabitants of that town obtained the loan of the Lee-Penny by granting a bond of £6000 for its safe return. Such, it is averred, was their belief in its virtues, and the good that it effected, that they offered to forfeit the money and keep the charm-stone."<sup>2</sup> But "the most remarkable cure performed upon any person was that of a Lady Baird of Saughtonhall, near Edinburgh, who, having been bit by a mad dog, was come the length of a hydrophobia; upon which, having sent to beg that the Lee-Penny might be sent to the house, she used it for some weeks, drinking and bathing in the water it was dipped in, and was quite recovered. This happened about eighty years ago [that is, about 1707], but it is very well attested, having been told by the Lady of the then Laird of Lee, and who died within these thirty years. She also told that her husband Mr Lockhart and she were entertained at Saughtonhall by Sir — Baird and his Lady for several days in the most sumptuous manner, on account of the lady's recovery, and in gratitude for the loan of the Lee-Penny so long, as it was never allowed to be carried away from the house of Lee."<sup>3</sup>

Towards the latter end of the seventeenth century the Lee-Penny formed the subject of a complaint by Gawen Hammiltoune of Raplocke to the Presbytery of Glasgow, the result of which was the following deliverance by the brethren:<sup>4</sup>—

"Apud Glasgow, the 25 Octobr. Synod Sess. 2.

"Quhilk daye, amongst the referries of the brethren of the ministrie of

<sup>1</sup> Dalzell, *Darker Superstitions*, pp. 156, 157; quoting from the Records of Justiciary.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. iv. p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1787, vol. lvii. pt. ii. pp. 1045-46. The *Edinburgh Magazine*, 1796, p. 330, gives the name of the Baird of Saughtonhall as Sir "Robert."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* This deliverance has also been printed by some of the authorities above quoted.



Lanerk, it was propondit to the Synode, that Gawen Hammiltoune of Raplocke had preferit an complaint before them against Sir James Lockart of Lie, anent the superstitious vsing of an stene set in selver for the curing of diseased cattell, q<sup>lk</sup>, the said Gawen affirmit, coud not be lawfully vsed, and that they had differit to give ony decisioune therein, till the advice of the Assemblie might be had concerning the same. The Assemblie having inquirt of the maner of vsing thereof, and particularlie vnderstoode, by examinatioune of the said Laird of Lie, and otherwise, that the custome is onlie to cast the stene in some water, and give the diseasit cattil thereof to drink, and y<sup>t</sup> the sam is dene w<sup>out</sup> vsing onie words, such as charmers and sorcerers vse in their unlawfull practicess; and considering that in nature they are mony thinges seen to work strange effects, q<sup>r</sup> of no humane witt can give a reason, it having pleasit God to give vnto stones and herbes special virtues for the healing of mony infirmities in man and beast,—advises the bretheren to surcease thir proces, as q<sup>r</sup>in they perceive no ground of offence; and admonishes the said Laird of Lie, in the vsing of the said stone, to tak heed that it be vsit heirafter w<sup>t</sup> the least scandal that possiblie maye bie.—Extract out of the books of the Assemblie holden at Glasgow, and subscribed be thair Clerk, at thair comand.

“M. Robert Young,

“Clerk to the Assemblie at Glasgow.”

Henderson mentions a piece of silver called the Lockerby Penny, which he states is still preserved at Lockerby, in Dumfriesshire. When used for the cure of madness in cattle “It is put in a cleft stick, and a well is stirred round with it, after which the water is bottled off and given to any animal so affected. A few years ago, in a North-umbrian farm, a dog bit an ass, and the ass bit a cow; the penny was sent for, and a deposit of 50*l.* actually left till it was restored. The dog was shot, the cuddy died, but the cow was saved through the miraculous virtue of the charm. On the death of the man who thus borrowed the penny, several bottles of water were found among his effects, stored in a cupboard, and labelled ‘Lockerby Water.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Folk-lore of Northern Counties of England*, p. 163. Inquiries made for me by Mr John F. Cormack, Solicitor in Lockerbie, through Dr Chinnock, Rector of Dumfries Academy, have failed to find any trace of the charm. Mr Cormack says that until he received Dr Chinnock’s letter, he had “never heard of the ‘Lockerbie Penny,’” and that he had “applied to several likely persons hereabouts, but regret that I cannot render you any help.” The account of this amulet reads remarkably like that of the Lee-Penny.

## CALF'S HEART USED AS A CHARM.

One of the principal charms in the National Museum is a calf's heart stuck full of pins, which was found under the floor of an old house in Dalkeith in 1812, and presented to the Museum in 1827 by Mr James Bowd, the finder. From an account of the circumstances under which it was found, communicated in a letter to the Society in 1827,<sup>1</sup> it appears that the heart was discovered among the rubbish under the flagstones of an old house undergoing repairs. The house is said to have been built as a Roman Catholic chapel, but about fifty years previous to 1827 the house was occupied by people who kept a number of cattle, and it is surmised that they were the persons who deposited the heart in the place where it was found. The following additional particulars relating to the heart are given in a letter from James Skene of Rubislaw to Dr Samuel Hibbert, who was at that time Secretary to the Society :<sup>2</sup>—

“I enclose the Letter respecting the heart stuck full of pins; and learnt farther, in conversation with Mr Bowd, that he had seen an old woman of past eighty, who lived in the neighbourhood where the heart was found; that she recollected in her youth, a bad disease having got amongst the cattle in that quarter, and particularly among those kept in the house in question; and that she knew that it was then the practice, when such calamities befell their cattle, for the country people to take the heart of a calf, as a representative for the heart of the witch by whose malice their cattle were visited, and to place it on a spit before the fire, sticking in a pin at every turn, until it was completely roasted, by which the witch was subjected to a simultaneous operation of proportional severity in her own bosom; or the roasting was reserved until she had obtained the place assigned her in infernal regions, of which event the incantation had the effect to make her presently sensible. The heart thus prepared was secretly deposited near the cattle: and no doubt the one in question had been of that description.”

I have not been able to discover any record of such proceedings as here mentioned having been practised in Scotland; but Henderson<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia Scotica*, vol. iii. p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England*, pp. 221–224. One or two instances may be quoted. A girl residing in a village near Preston, “when slighted by her lover, got a hare's heart, stuck it full of pins, and buried it with many imprecations against the faithless man, whom she hoped by these means to torment” (*ibid.*, p.

gives several English examples of the use of the hearts of various animals stuck full of pins in order to discover the cause of the death of a valued animal, or to inflict a grievous torment on some one.

#### CHARM SERPENT'S SKIN.

A "charm serpent-skin and a talisman ring with adder-bead attached" was exhibited in the Glasgow Exhibition of 1888,<sup>1</sup> and is now deposited in the Museum of Science and Art, Edinburgh. The skin is sewed on a ribbon of silk, to one end of which is attached a bead of mottled serpentine. The finger-ring, which is of silver, with a small pebble of jasper set in the bezel, is probably of eastern origin. Unfortunately no particulars have been preserved of the virtues of this charm. The following extract from Martin,<sup>2</sup> however, may throw some light on its use: "Some of the Natives [of North Uist] wear a Girdle of the Seal-

223). A publican at Dittisham lost a number of pigs in an unaccountable manner. "Persuaded that they had been bewitched, he took out the heart of one of the victims, stuck it over with pins and placed it in front of the fire till it was charred to a cinder, in order, he said, to counteract the evil designs of the witch" (p. 224). Another case in the West Riding of Yorkshire was that of a woman affected with a wasting disease. "She had no definite illness, but complained that she felt as if pins were being run into her body all over her." On consulting a "wise man" he advised a search in the garden for hidden spells. "They did so, and found buried under the window a sheep's heart stuck full of pins like a pin-cushion. The thing was removed and destroyed and the woman recovered" (p. 223). An instance occurred in the cathedral city of Wells in 1882. In this case a woman became mentally affected and was removed to an asylum. The people said she was bewitched, and the husband was directed to adopt the following mode of removing the spell. He was to stick a number of pins in an animal's heart, and in the dead of night roast it before a quick fire, the revolutions of the heart on the spit to be as regular as possible. After roasting, the heart was to be placed in the chimney and left there, in the belief, that as the heart rotted away, so would the heart of the witch rot, and the bewitched be released from her power (*Folk-lore Record*, vol. v. p. 172).

<sup>1</sup> *Scottish National Memorials*, p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> *Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, p. 65. Aubrey (*Gentilisme and Judaïsme*, p. 38; see also p. 224), says, "Ye cast skin of an Addar (*συφαρ*, Anglice the slough of an Addar) is an excellent remedie to drawe out a Thorne out of ones flesh. The Sussexians doe weare them for Hatt-bands, which they say doe preserve them from the gripeing of the Gutts." In North Lincolnshire they were worn round the head against headache (*Notes and Queries*, 1st series, vol. viii. p. 382).

Skin about the middle, for removing the Sciatica, as those of the Shire of Aberdeen wear it to remove the Chin-cough."

According to the Rev. Dr Henry, in the Highlands, "when a birth was attended with any difficulty, they put certain girdles, made for that purpose, about the woman in labour, which they imagined gave her immediate and effectual relief. . . . Such girdles were kept with care, till very lately, in many families in the Highlands of Scotland. They were impressed with several mystical figures; and the ceremony of binding them about the woman's waist was accompanied with words and gestures, which showed the custom to have been of great antiquity."<sup>1</sup>

"The skin of an eel tied round the leg or the arm was a specific against cramp when bathing" in the North-East of Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

#### WILLOX'S BALL AND BRIDLE.

Dr Gregor in his work on Folk-lore<sup>3</sup> describes a famous charm known as "Wilcox's Ball and Bridle," which at one time was held in great repute throughout the North-East of Scotland. "The 'Ball' is the half of a glass<sup>4</sup> ball, whose original purpose it is not easy to divine. It was concealed for untold ages in the heart of a brick, and was cut from its place of concealment by a fairy, and given generations ago to an ancestor of the present owner as payment for a kind service."<sup>5</sup> The "Bridle" is a small brass hook, and is said to have been cut from a Water-Kelpie's<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of Great Britain*, 1771, vol. i. pp. 459, 460.

<sup>2</sup> Gregor, *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, p. 145; see also Henderson, *Folk-lore of Northern Counties of England*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, pp. 38, 39.

<sup>4</sup> It may really be a hemi-spherical piece of rock-crystal.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> For accounts of the Water-Kelpie or Water-Horse, see Forbes-Leslie's *Early Races of Scotland*, vol. i. pp. 144-146, vol. ii. p. 438; Dalrymple's *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, pp. 543, 684; Campbell, *Tales of the West Highlands*, vol. iv. pp. 337, 338; Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, new ed., p. 335; Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. ii. p. 491. A tradition formerly current in St Vigean, Forfarshire, was to the effect that the stones of the parish church had been carried by a water-kelpie, and that the foundations of the church rested on bars of iron placed across a deep lake. In 1736, on the first administration of the Sacrament since 1699, the people would not go into the church, but sat on the mound on which the present

bridle by an ancestor of Willox. The story of the meeting with the Kelpie and capture of the "Bridle" is given by Dr Gregor and at greater length by Stewart,<sup>1</sup> the latter of whom states that he had the details from "the celebrated Mr Wellox" of that time. It is therefore unnecessary to repeat the story here. The manner in which the Ball and Bridle were used in order to effect a cure was as follows: "A small quantity of water is poured into a basin. The stone is put into the water and turned three times round while the words, 'In the name of the Father the Son and of the Holy Ghost,' are repeated. The bridle is then dropped into the water and turned round in the same way, and with the same words. The water so treated has the power to cure all manner of disease."<sup>2</sup>

Willox's Ball appears to have been held in great repute in the early part of this century, and two instances of its use are recorded by Hall, who says:<sup>3</sup> "There are in the Highlands quacks and pretenders, even yet, to prevent witchcraft, enchantments and barrenness in women. There is a Mr Willox, near Tamintoul, a man of some information, and who always wears scarlet clothes, that pretends he possesses this art; and, I am sorry to hear, is not unfrequently applied to." A man on the banks of the Spey, "who had been married nine years, and had no children, went to the said Willox, and laid down his guinea, the ordinary fee. Willox, having a large black pebble of a curious shape,<sup>4</sup> which he

manse stands, expecting every minute that the church would sink into the earth (*Literary and Statistical Magazine*, vol. iii. p. 247; see also M'Bain's *Arbroath Past and Present*, p. 28). The Kelpie appears to be identical with the Noggle or Shoupiltin of Shetlandic Folk-lore, of which Sir Robert Sibbald says: "Sometimes they catch with their Nets and Hooks Tritons, they call them *Showpiltins* and Mermaids, but these are rare and but seldom seen" (*Description of the Isles of Orkney and Zetland*, 1711, p. 9; Reprint, 1845, p. 25). I have been informed by a native of the island that not more than twenty years ago it was common in Foula for mothers in putting their children to bed to caution them to be good or the Noggle would come and take them away. For notices of the Noggle see the *Contemporary Review*, vol. xl. pp. 189-191.

<sup>1</sup> *Superstitions of the Highlanders*, "Water-Kelpies," pp. 147-157.

<sup>2</sup> Gregor, pp. 187, 188. "The sword that did the good deed was sometimes waved over the water with the utterance of the same formula" (*ibid.*, p. 39).

<sup>3</sup> *Travels in Scotland*, 1807, vol. ii. p. 438.

<sup>4</sup> This does not tally with Dr Gregor's description of the ball. The latter, who

keeps in an elegant gold and silver box, and which he says came from Italy, being handed down to him from his grandfather, took it, went out to a well, near his house, brought in about half an English gallon of water; and, with the pebble or stone in his hand, moved the water quickly, several times; then, saying the Lord's prayer three times, in Latin, and other Latin prayers, which, as he is a Roman Catholic, he can do, he bottled up the water, desired the man to say his prayers regularly every evening, and give his wife three wine glasses of this water at bed time, and there was no fear. The man did so, and actually, I am assured, has had a child every other year since. This seems to exceed the miracle of what made so great a figure in advertisements in London newspapers, some years ago, of the nine times died blue flannel."<sup>1</sup> The second case was that of a farmer, who lived at a distance of more than forty miles from Tamintoul, "whose wife had lingered for years, without any physician being able, and many were tried, to discover what was the matter with her, was at length persuaded by his neighbours that she was witched, as they term it. . . . He sent to Willox, paid him a guinea, and all expenses. When Willox came, in his scarlet coat, breeches, &c., he perambulated the house, garden, barns, &c., frequently standing and holding out his nose, as if to smell where the witchcraft was lodged. At length he pretended he had discovered it; and, running hastily, put his hand into a hole of the wall of the house, and pulled out a fowl's stomach, broiled, and cut into certain bits, which he said had been put there by some person, in concert with the devil. The poor woman, it seems, got a little better; and, so credulous was the farmer, as well as his neighbours, as to believe that Willox cured her."<sup>2</sup>

saw it used about thirty years ago, describes it as of glass. Probably it has been wrongly described to Hall, or it may perhaps be a different charm.

<sup>1</sup> In Teviotdale a blue bonnet was used as a charm, especially for warding off the evil influence of the fairies. "An unchristened child was considered as in the most imminent danger should the mother, while on the straw, neglect the precaution of having the blue bonnet worn by her husband constantly beside her. When a cow happened to be seized with any sudden disease (the cause of which was usually ascribed to the malignant machinations of the fairies), she was said to be *elf-shot*, and it was reckoned as much as her life was worth not to 'dad her wi' the blue bonnet'" (*Edinburgh Magazine*, 1820, pt. i. p. 344).

<sup>2</sup> *Travels in Scotland*, vol. ii. pp. 438, 439.

## MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS, &amp;c.

*Snail-Stones.*—The snail-stone is one of the few amulets mentioned by Lhwyd, who describes it as “a small hollow Cilinder of blue Glass, composed of four or five Annulets: So that as to Form and Size it resembles a midling *entrochus*. This, among others of its mysterious Virtues, cures Sore Eyes.”<sup>1</sup> The Rev. John Fraser, in his letter to Wodrow already quoted, also mentions these stones as having “the exact figure of the snaile,” and says they “are much comended for the eyes, and I’m confident their cooling vertue is prevalent against pains bred by a hott cause.”<sup>2</sup> The engraving of the snail-stone given by Sir Robert Sibbald<sup>3</sup> shows it to be nothing more than an oblong glass bead of early type, constricted round the circumference so as to resemble four disc-shaped beads joined together.

*Mole-Stones.*—So far as I am aware, the only writer who mentions these stones is Lhwyd, and he only briefly refers to them as “Rings of blue Glass, annulated as the aforesaid Snail-Stones.”<sup>4</sup>

*Cock-knee Stone.*—Lhwyd describes the Cock-knee stone as an *Echinites pileatus minor*, of flint, and states that the Highlanders firmly believe it “to be sometimes found in the Knees of old Cock[s]; and a Fellow in Mul protested to me (though I was never the nearer believing him) that he had with his own Hands taken one of them out of a Cock’s Knee; and named two or three others who had done the like.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. xxviii. p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Analecta Scotica*, First series, p. 119. Mizauld says the stone is found in the head of the snail, and that pounded and mixed with wine it was good for various distempers, &c. : “Lapilli ex capite limacum et grandiorum cochlearum eruti, straguriosis vrinam moliantur, illius meatus lubricando, si comminuti ex vino exhibeantur. Auxiliatur etiam parturientibus, laxando et dilatando muliebres locos.”—*Memorablegium, Utibium, ac Jucundorum Centuriae Novem*, 1567, cent. iii. 41; see also Boetius de Boot, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, lib. ii. cap. 189.

<sup>3</sup> *Portus Coloniae et Castellae Romanae, ad Bodotriam et ad Tuam*, pl. i. fig. 12. The “snail-stone” figured by Sibbald is stated in a letter of the Rev. Robert Wodrow’s to have been found in the parish of Kilbride, Lanarkshire (*Wodrow’s Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 173).

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 98. In a letter of earlier date addressed to Samuel Dale of Braintree, Lhwyd writes: “As your Chalky Countries only afford those Echinittæ I have stil’d,

Fraser mentions having had "a ston of the diamiter of half ane inch that grew as ane excrement upon a cock's knee, and made him halt at the weight of it;" but he does not ascribe any virtues to it.<sup>1</sup> Pennant states that when in Islay a present was made to him of a *clach clun ceilach*<sup>2</sup> [*sic*] or cock-knee stone, but that he had unluckily forgotten its virtues. He adds: "It very much resembles a common pebble."<sup>3</sup> There is another cock-stone, the *Alectorius*, which is found within the body of a castrated cock of three or four years of age. "Gemma haec colore est pellucido crystalli specie, magnitudine fabae."<sup>4</sup> It does not appear to have been used as a charm in Scotland, but Fraser mentions it in connection with the knee-stone, and says: "the cock-ston is reported by Levinus worn near the skin—'vehementer excitare ad res venereas.' It would look to be reasonable, because the cock himself in whose gasorde it's found is a creature full of lust."<sup>5</sup>

*Pileatus, Galeatus, Cordatus*: So I never could find them in all my Travels but at that place; from whence in the time of Paganism the Druids procur'd them, and sold them amongst our Northern Britains for Stones of Miraculous efficacy against perils by Fire and Water; perswading the Vulgar they were generated in *Cocks-knees*; as Thousands in the High-Lands believe at this day. And one Fellow had the impudence to tell me (finding me a little hard of belief) that he himself had taken one (that his Master had shew'd me) out of a Cocks knee with his own hand" (*Philosophical Transactions*, vol. xxiv., No. 291, p. 1566).

<sup>1</sup> *Analecta Scotica*, 1st series, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> "*Clach-glwin a Choilich*, an amulet supposed to cure sundry distempers" (MacLeod and Dewar, *Gaelic Dictionary*, s.v.).

<sup>3</sup> *Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 265.

<sup>4</sup> Lemmins, *De Miraculis Occultis Naturæ*, 1611, p. 407. Lemmins is here merely repeating Pliny: "*Alectorias vocant in ventriculis gallinaceorum inventas, crystallina specie, magnitudine fabæ*" (*Hist. Nat.*, lib. xxxvii. cap. 54). Pliny adds that Milon the famous athlete of Crotona carried a cock-stone about with him, whereby he became invincible in all he undertook: "*Milonem crotoniensem usus in certaminibus invectum fuisse videri volunt.*" See also Dioscorides, *De Medica Materia*, lib. ii. cap. 43.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* The following have written on the *Alectorius* or Cock-Stone: Marbodus, *Liber de Gemmis*, cap. iii; Levin Lemmins, *De Miraculis Occultis Naturæ*, pp. 406, 407; Andreas Baccius, *De Gemmis et Lapidibus Pretiosis*, 1643, pp. 171-173; Antoine Mizauld, *Memorableium*, 1567, cent. iv. 59, vi. 72; Franciscus Rueus, *De Gemmis Aliquot*, 1608, pars ii. cap. xvii.; Nicols, *Arcula Gemmea*, 1653, pp. 173, 174; Rulandus, *Lexicon Alchemiæ*, p. 28; Boetius de Boot, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, 1647, lib. ii. cap. 169; Camillus Leonardus, *Speculum Lapidum*, 1717,



*Aetites* or *Eagle-Stone*.<sup>1</sup>—The only writer who mentions the Eagle-stone in connection with Scottish superstition is Ure, and what he says is little more than a summary of Pliny's account of it.<sup>2</sup> The stone was believed to be found only in the nests of eagles, being brought there by the birds themselves to facilitate the hatching of their eggs and to drive away serpents. Among other virtues it was believed to be of great value to women in rendering childbirth easy and safe, and also for detecting theft. "These stones are formed of two different substances,

p. 50; de Laet, *De Gemmis et Lapidibus*, 1647, lib. ii. cap. iii. (three specimens figured); Bartholomew, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Trevisa's trans., lib. xvi. cap. xvii. See also Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. iii. pp. 1219, 1220.

<sup>1</sup> Many writers in ancient and mediæval times have written on the eagle-stone and its virtues. Among these are Dioscorides, *De Medica Materia*, lib. v. cap. 161, in *Pedacii Dioscorides Anazarbaei opera quae extant omnia, etc.* Frankfort, 1598; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, lib. x. 4, xxx. 44, xxxvi. 39, xxxvii. 72; Aelian, *De Natura Animalium*, lib. i. cap. 35; Philostratus, *De Vita Apollinii Tyanesis* (Lipsig ed. 1709, tom. i.), lib. ii. cap. 14; Plutarch, *Fragmenta*, ed. Didot, tom. v. p. 96, 5; Mizauld, *Memorabilium*, cent. v. 10, vi. 56, 88; Rueus, *De Gemmis Aliquot*, pars ii. cap. 23; Nicols, *Arcula Gemma; or a Cabinet of Jewels*, 1653, pp. 184–189; Rulandus, *Lexicon Alchemiae*, 1612, pp. 21–23 (two specimens figured); Lemmins, *De Miraculis Occultis Naturæ*, p. 407; Baccius, *De Gemmis et Lapidibus Pretiosis*, pp. 211–214; Boetius de Boot, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, 1647, pp. 375–380 (with thirteen specimens figured); Glanvil Bartholomew, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Eng. trans. of John Trevisa, lib. xvi. cap. xxxix; de Laet, *De Gemmis et Lapidibus*, lib. ii. cap. vii. (one specimen figured); Levret, *Essai sur les Accouchements*, 1766, p. 52. Lucan also has a reference to the use of the eagle-stone in witchcraft in *Pharsalia*, vi. line 676. Dean Bargrave of Canterbury, in the Catalogue of his Museum (bequeathed in 1676 to Christ Church, Canterbury), describes a Lapis Aquilarius or Eagle-stone in his possession which he bought from an Armenian in Rome. "They differ sometimes in colour. This is a kind of a rough, dark, sandy colour, and about the bigness of [a] good walnut. It is rare, and of good value, because of its excellent qualities and use, which is, by applying it to child-bearing women, and to keep them from miscarriages. It is so useful that my wife can seldom keep it at home, and therefore she hath sewed the strings to the knitted purse in which the stone is, for the convenience of the tying of it to the patient on occasion; and she hath a box to put the purse and stone in. It were fitt that either the dean's or vice-dean's wife (if they be married men) should have this stone in their custody for the public good as to neighbourhood; but still, that they have a great care into whose hand it be committed, and that the midwives have care of it, so that it still be the Cathedral Church's stone" (*Camden Society Publications*, vol. xcii. pp. 125, 126).

<sup>2</sup> *Rutherglen and East Kilbride*, p. 282, 283.

the one much harder and more compact than the other; the Nucleus, which is of a softer Matter than the surface, shrinks as it petrifies, thereby leaving a cavity between the harder circumference and itself, and being of course loose, must necessarily rattle.”<sup>1</sup> In Iceland a powerful charm, known as the *Lausnar-stein*, possessed, like the aërites, the power of loosening the pains of labour. It has to be sought for in the nests of eagles, and is also distinguished as male and female. It appears to be the fruit of *Mimosa Scandens*.<sup>2</sup>

*Toad-Stone*.<sup>3</sup>—The belief that the toad bore a precious stone in its head was formerly common throughout Western Europe, and in Scotland at least the belief can hardly be said to be extinct. The superstition has also become classical in English literature, through Shakespeare’s allusion to this stone:<sup>4</sup>

“Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.”

Similarly, Ben Jonson alludes<sup>5</sup> to the toad-stone set in rings:

“Were you enamour’d on his copper rings,  
His saffron jewel with the toad-stone in’t?”

The stone is described by Lhwyd<sup>6</sup> in his letter from Linlithgow already quoted, as “some Peble, remarkable for its Shape and sometimes variety of Colours. This is presumed to prevent the burning of a House, and the sinking of a Boat: And if a Commander in the Field has one of them about him, he will either be sure to win the Day,<sup>7</sup> or

<sup>1</sup> *General Contents of the British Museum*, 2nd. ed., 1762, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> Maurer, *Isländische Volkssagen*, pp. 180, 181.

<sup>3</sup> The following authors have written on the Toad-stone and its supposed virtues: Mizauld, *Memorabilium*, cent. iii. 3, ix. 14, 21; Leonardus, *Speculum Lapidum*, pp. 58, 59; Boetius, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, lib. ii. capp. 149–151 (who figures four specimens); de Laet, *De Gemmis et Lapidibus*, lib. ii. cap. i.; Baccius, *De Gemmis et Lapidibus Pretiosis*, cap. xli. pp. 216–218; Nicols, *Arcula Gemmea*, pp. 158, 159.

<sup>4</sup> “As You Like It,” Act ii. Scene 1, ll. 12–14.

<sup>5</sup> “Volpone or The Fox,” Act ii. Scene iii.

<sup>6</sup> *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. xxviii. p. 99.

<sup>7</sup> An old German poem quoted by Grimm (*Teutonic Mythology*, vol. iii. p. 1219),

all his Men shall fairly dye on the spot." Nicols<sup>1</sup> describes the stone as of a "brownish colour, somewhat tending to redness; convex on the one side; and on the other side, sometimes plain, sometimes hollow;" and he adds: "It is reported of it that it is good against poyson if it be worn so that it may touch the skin, and that if poyson be present it will sweate, and that if any inflations procured by venomous creatures be touched with it, it will cure them." According to Mizauld, to obtain the stone it was necessary to bury the toad in a hole to remove the flesh; and the legitimacy of the stone was proved by holding it near a toad, when the animal immediately raised itself and snatched at it.<sup>2</sup> Another method was to place the toad on a red cloth, when it immediately disgorged the stone. Boetius mentions his having tried the experiment, and says he sat up all the night watching the toad, but the only result was the loss of a night's sleep.<sup>3</sup> Toad-stones were simply "the bony embossed plates lining the palate or the jaws, and serving instead of teeth to a fossil fish, an arrangement observable in the recent representatives of the same species."<sup>4</sup>

mentions the adder and toad stone as one, and as securing victory to whoever possesses it:

" Ich here von den steinen sagen,  
Die natern und krotten tragen,  
Daz grôze tugend dar an lige,  
Swer si habe, der gesige."

<sup>1</sup> *Arcula Gemmea*, pp. 158, 159.

<sup>2</sup> Mizauld's description of the toad-stone is as follows (*Memorabilium*, cent. ix. 14, 21):—"Lapidem ex bufone (qui Gallis vt diximus, erapaudina vocatur) ad hunc modum eliciunt nonnulli. Bufo in quampiam caueolam cum pâno puniceo detruditur, Soli ardentissimo dies aliquot exponitur, ibique tantisper retorretur, ac siti excruciat, donec onus capitis per os deponere et euomere cogatur: quod per medium caueæ foramen, vasculo supposito, excipi debet vel aliter detrahi, idque celeriter, ne ab eo resorbeat. Sunt qui paulo tutius ac facilius rem eam exequantur, bufonem pertuso, multis locis, fictili immittendo, et formicis depascendum in myrmecia exponendo. Sic enim fit, vt exesa eius carne, lapis ipse cum ossibus relinquatur: sicuti frequenter à nobis, et aliis plerisque expertum fuit" (cent. ix. 14). "Crapaudinâ, seu bufoniû lapidè, de quo paulo ante, legitimû esse experieris, si in illû præostensum vel obiectû, sese ita attollat bufo, ac si vellet contingere et saltu præripere: vsque odeo lapidem eum homini inuidet. Ex relatione cuiusdâ medici Regij, qui id vidisse nobis affirmabat" (cent. ix. 21).

<sup>3</sup> Boetius, *op. cit.*, cap. 149.

<sup>4</sup> King, *Natural History of Gems or Decorative Stones*, 1867, p. 46. Pennant

Two so-called Toad-stones formerly in use in Scotland are still in existence, one of which is in the Museum at Kirkcudbright and the other in private hands.<sup>1</sup> They differ from the true toad-stones already mentioned in being merely small pebbles. The stone in the Museum at Kirkcudbright is known as the "Cowan's Taid-stane," and is traditionally assigned to the founder of Cowan's Hospital, Stirling.<sup>2</sup> This amulet is a small pebble of mottled jasper, flattish-oval in form, measuring  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in length by  $\frac{11}{16}$  inch broad and  $\frac{9}{16}$  inch thick, and is mounted in a broad band of silver, with a loop for suspension. The silver-mounting appears to have been twice broken, and as often repaired. The stone is stated to have possessed great curative properties, especially in diseases of cattle; and it is said that an entry was inserted, in Cowan's time, in the St Ninian's, Stirlingshire, Kirk-Session Records, denouncing the belief in it as superstition, and forbidding the parishioners to use the charm in any shape or form. A search through the Kirk-Session Records, however, has hitherto failed to find any such reference. In 1859 the stone was in the possession of the late C. J. Finlayson, Postmaster of Kirkcudbright, who inherited it from his mother, Marion Cowan, a lineal descendant of the founder of the hospital, through whom again it can be traced to her great-grandfather. After 1859, the stone passed into the hands of the Rev. Mr Underwood, Kirkcudbright, at whose death it was deposited in the Museum.<sup>3</sup>

(*British Zoology*, 1812, vol. iii. p. 21), speaking of the wolf-fish teeth says, "These and the other grinding teeth are often found fossil, and in that state called Bufontes, or Toad-stones; they were formerly much esteemed for their imaginary virtues, and were set in gold and worn as rings." Three toad-stones set in rings were formerly in the Londesborough Collection, and also a fourth on which the figure of a toad was substituted for the stone. One of the three rings is engraved with the figure of a toad on the stone, and is supposed to date from the fifteenth century (*Miscellanea Graphica*, p. 70, and pl. x. fig. 8).

<sup>1</sup> A small pebble of mottled jasper, similar in size and form to the "Cowan's taid-stane," was exhibited to the meeting by Sir Arthur Mitchell, K.C.B. It was formerly used as a charm-stone, and was obtained in Fife.

<sup>2</sup> The stone is exhibited by the Kirkcudbright Museum Association, through Mr John M'Kie, the Curator. Cowan's Hospital was founded in 1639 by John Cowan, a merchant in Stirling, for the support of twelve decayed Guild-Brethren. The sum left was £2222 sterling.—Nimmo, *History of Stirlingshire*, 2nd ed., vol i. p. 346.

<sup>3</sup> The above details are quoted from the *Transactions of the Stirling Natural*

The second Toad-stone, which has already been described in the *Proceedings* (vol. xxiv. pp. 157-159), differs in its origin from all other toad-stones in that it grew not in, but *on*, the head of a toad. This stone "is in shape and size like a small orange;<sup>1</sup> of a dark chocolate colour;" and is "an impure chalcedony, coloured with ferric oxide, and has probably come from an amygdaloidal cavity in some igneous rock." It was used for healing various ailments, but of what nature it is not mentioned. "Sometimes the charm was applied directly to the seat of pain, and at other times it was dipped in water from a running stream, over which an incantation was said, and the patient was made to drink of the water, and had some of it sprinkled over him."

Dr R. de Brus Trotter, in his letter already quoted, states that a man in Kirkmichael, on the Water of Ae, Dumfriesshire, offered him a toad-stone "which was used for taking out adder poison and stopping bleeding," but he declined it, thinking that toad-stones were frauds. "The stone was a smooth polished black substance of oval shape, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in length by  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, and very light, not heavier than cork. The man gave me a rhyme to be said when it was placed on the wound, which is as follows:—

" 'The water's mud [? wud] and runs a flood,  
And so does thy blood.  
God bade it stand and so it did.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, stand blood!'"<sup>2</sup>

*Bats' Stones.*—In a letter dated "Inveraray, Apryle 20, 1702," from Mr John MacLean to the Rev. Robert Wodrow, the writer states that he had received "a cylindrical white stone, and a little stone which they call bats' stones, because they heall horses of the worms they call

*History and Antiquarian Society*, 1887-88, p. 38; and from an autograph letter of the late C. J. Finlayson, in the possession of the Kirkcudbright Museum.

<sup>1</sup> Boetius, *op. cit.*, cap. 150, says the toad-stone is sometimes as big as an egg.

<sup>2</sup> In a paper entitled "Extracts in Prose and Verse from an Old English Medical Manuscript" in the Royal Library at Stockholm, printed in the *Archeologia* (vol. xxx. pp. 349-418), Prof. Stephens quotes (p. 398) from another English MS. in Stockholm, dated 1597, the following word charm:

"Water was woode, and hye of floude,  
Christ had it stand and still it stood,  
So do the bloode," &c.

bats. They grow out of a rock near the sea in Mull.”<sup>1</sup> These stones are also found in Skye, and are referred to in the “Description of Skye” contained in Macfarlane’s Geographical Collections. “Under the sands are found stones of a finger-length, and pyramid shape, which they call *botston*, because it kills worms in horse, which they call *bots*. This is confirmed by daylie experience; they drink of the water where-in it is steeped.”<sup>2</sup> Martin also refers to these stones in Skye, and describes them as *Velumnites* which grow in banks of clay; “some of ’em are 12 Inches long, and tapering towards one end.”<sup>3</sup> They are probably fossil belemnites.

*Cramp Stones*.—These stones are mentioned by Martin, who refers to them as follows:—“Some Banks of Clay on the East Coast [of Skye] are overflow’d by the Tide, and in these grow the *Lapis Ceranius*, or *Cerna Amonis* [? *Cornu Ammonis*], of different shapes. . . . These Stones are by the Natives call’d Cramp Stones, because (as they say) they cure the Cramp in Cows, by washing the part affected with Water in which this Stone has been steep’d for some hours.”<sup>4</sup>

*Auchmeddan Stone*.—A globular ball of ironstone about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter, mounted in four bands of silver like the crystal balls already described, is in the possession of Mr W. N. Fraser of Findrack, and has probably been used as a charm. This ball was formerly in the possession of the Bairds of Auchmeddan, and is known as the “Auchmeddan Stone.” An inscription on the silver mounting, probably engraved at the beginning of the present century, states that the stone “belonged to the Family of Baird of Auchmeddan from the year 1174.” In the absence of documentary evidence in support of this statement, probably no great importance need be attached to it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Analecta Scotica*, 1st series, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Printed in *Spottiswoode Miscellany*, vol. ii. p. 351.

<sup>3</sup> *Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 134.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas (*Nenia Britannica*, p. 15) mentions having in his possession a circular stone (? ball) of hematite, “ornamented with silver, and a silver ring to suspend it by.” A remarkable charm formerly in the Londesborough Collection is figured in the *Miscellanea Graphica*. It consists of a jointed hoop of silver about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches

To Dr Joass of Golspie I am indebted for the following notice of a glass nodule now in his possession, and which is supposed to be the charm referred to in the note :

“Rather over forty years ago a case was tried in the Dornoch small debt court when “a man of skill” from Lairg, prepaid to cure a cow, declined to remit the fee although he failed to effect the cure. The present sheriff-clerk, who writes that he distinctly remembers the case, says that the sheriff pressed hard to find out the usual methods employed by the wizard but could get no other reply than “that is my secret.” At last a hint of imprisonment (without option) brought out the admission that a glass charm was placed in water with which, after invocation of the Trinity, the head, especially the nostril, was washed and the ceremony concluded by a solemn assurance to the owner of the ailing beast that according to *his* faith it should fare with his property. All this he had carefully done on the occasion in question, so that he had earned his fee, he said, and could not be blamed for the failure.

Some years ago, during trenching near the Wizard’s Cottage, a glass-nodule was found containing a clear liquid shut in when the glass was so hot that a crack was formed which almost reached the surface. This is believed to have been the wizard’s so-called Jewel, discredited and thrown away.”

Frequent mention is made in the witchcraft trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the use of certain pebbles for the cure of different diseases. The stones were sometimes applied directly to the seat of the pain, but more often they were laid in water, which thus became endowed with healing properties.<sup>1</sup> Thus in 1590 Hector in diameter and  $\frac{3}{8}$ th inch broad. On the outside of the hoop is the following inscription, engraved and inlaid with niello :

+ IONA + IHOAT + LONA + HELOI + YSSARAY + ||  
 + MEPHENOLPHETON + AGLA + ACHEDION + YANA + ||  
 || BACHIONODONAVALIKILIOK +  
 || BACHIONODONAVALIKACH +

The hoop has had originally four pendants, three only of which still remain, with the silver setting of the fourth. The first pendant is a brownish pebble similar to the Auchmeddan Stone, and secured by three narrow bands of silver. The second is an oval cage of silver wire bands, and contains a nut or seed of some kind. The third is a locket-shaped setting of silver ; on one face of which is set a circular convex pebble, and on the other three smaller pebbles (*op. cit.*, p. 83).

<sup>1</sup>Loch Monar, in Strathnaver, Sutherlandshire, is an instance of water rendered medicinal through contact with charmed pebbles. A woman in Strathnaver possessed certain stones, which when thrown into water had the power of making it efficacious in diseases. One day a man anxious to possess the stones assaulted her, but escaping

Munro of Fowles was accused of having consulted a witch named Marioune McIngaruch, and with having received from her "thre drinkis of watter furth of thre stainis, quhilkis sche had."<sup>1</sup> Ewfame McCalzane was accused in 1591, among other things, "of consulting and seiking help att Anny Sampsoune, ane notorious Wich, for relief of your payne in tyme of the birth of youre twa sonnes; and ressauing fra hir to that effect ane boirdstane, to be layit under the bowster putt under your heid."<sup>2</sup> Katherine Cragie was accused in 1640 of having brought threë stones to Jonet Cragie's house for the purpose of finding what kind of spirit troubled the latter's husband:<sup>3</sup>

"Ye the said Katharein cum to the said Jonet's house befor day, and brocht with you thrie stones, which ye put on the fyre, wher they continowed all the day till eftir sone sett; and than ye took thame out of the fyre, laying thame vnder the threshold of the doore, where they continowed all night till vpon the morow timeous befor sun rying, ye took thame vp frome vnder the said doore threshold, and taking a veshell filled with water, ye put the stones thairin severallie, on after another; of which stones, being thus put into the said water be yow, the said Jonet Crogie hard on of thame chirme and churle into the water, wharvpon ye said to the said Jonet on this maner: Jonet, it is a kirk-spirit which troubleth Robbie your husband. Thairefter ye gave the vessel with the water to the said Jonet, wharinto ye haid put the thrie stones, and directed her to wasch hir husband thairwith."

This she was accused of repeating three times. The same woman from him she ran to the loch, and exclaiming in Gaelic "mo-nar, *shame*," threw the pebbles into the water. "The lake was straightway supposed to be endowed with curative powers, but it is somewhat remarkable that its hygienic efficacy is believed to exist during only four days in the year. These are the first Mondays in February, May, August, and November. During February and November, no one, according to the Rev. D. Mackenzie, minister of Farr parish, visits it, but in May and August numbers of people from Sutherland, Caithness, Ross-shire, and even from Inverness-shire and the Orkneys, make a pilgrimage to the loch. The supposed benefits are not, however, conferred without further penance. You must be on the banks of the lake at midnight; and at one or two o'clock, you must plunge three times into the waters, drink a small quantity, and throw a coin into the lake as a tribute to the spirit of the old woman, taking especial care to be fairly out of sight of the lake before the sun rises, otherwise all your labour will have been in vain" (Weld, *Two Months in the Highlands, Orcadia, and Skye*, pp. 211, 212).

<sup>1</sup> Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials*, vol. i. pt. ii. p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> *Miscellany of the Abbotsford Club*, vol. i. p. 165.



was further charged with curing Thomas Corse in a somewhat similar manner also by means of three stones, "quhillkis tymous in the morneing, ye laid in thrie corneris or nookis of the hearth, quher the samen continwit till about day-setting; and then ye did, with your awin handis, tak vp the thrie stones from their severall places, and laid thame behind the dore all night; and tymous in the morneing, ye did tak vp these thrie cold stones, and put thame in ane vessell, with water," &c.<sup>1</sup> In 1643 another witch named Jonet Reid was accused of having charmed Elspeth Sinclair of the boneshaw, and that she "vseit besyd wordis, nyne blue stones, quhilck shoe did putt in ane vessell with water, twitching her joyntis with each of the severall stones, which ye keipit in your lap, and went fourth with; and efter washed her with the water that was in the wessell in which the stones lay."<sup>2</sup>

The Rev. Robert Wodrow in a letter to Sir Robert Sibbald dated "23 Nov. 1710," says he received "severall other flints and bleu stones of noe regular figure, which wer in the hands of [a] woman that made use of them as a charm. She boyled them in watter, and poured out the watter within a little after it came to the boyl (as a libation to Satan noe doubt), and then put a second watter on them, and let it boyl a little, and poured it of for use, viz., a soveraigne to all poison, pains, etc. The watter, she told me, would be of noe use unless the first wer poured out."<sup>3</sup>

In 1624 James Keith of Benholme, a landed proprietor, was accused of the "tressonabill and theftious steilling by way of Maisterfull-thift and Stouthe-reiff" from the house of George, Earl Marischal, numerous articles of value, among which was "ane jasp stane for stemming of bluid, estimat to fyve hundreth French Crownes."<sup>4</sup> Another blood-

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellany of the Abbotsford Club*, vol. i. p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> Printed in Sibbald's *Memoir of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh*, 1839, p. 39; also in *Wodrow's Correspondence*, Wodrow Society, vol. i. p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials*, vol. iii. pp. 563, 564. Numerous virtues were formerly assigned to jasper. Boetius says that in his own observation wonderful effects have followed the application of the red jasper in cases of hemorrhage: "Rubicunda mirificè sanguinis fluxum cohibet, non solum è naribus et hæmorrhoidibus, verum è vulneribus fluentem" (*Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, lib. ii. cap. 102).

stone is mentioned in the "Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland" as follows: "Feb. 9, 1504. Item, to the said Williame [Foular, potingary], for ane bludestane, and thre vnce upir stuf for the Queen, for bleding of þe nese; eftir ane R. (recipe) of Maister Robert Schaw, xxij s."<sup>1</sup>

The altar slab in the old church at Iona, for some reason or other, appears to have become suddenly endowed with many valuable qualities, such as preserving from shipwreck, fire, etc. From being almost entire in 1688, by 1773 (the year of Johnson's visit with Boswell) it was entirely destroyed. Sacheverell in his "voyage to I-columb-kill" in 1688, describes the slab as follows:—"There is one thing yet which is very noble in its kind, which was the ancient altar of the church, one of the finest pieces of white marble I ever saw; it is about six foot long, and four broad, curiously veined and polished; it is all yet entire, except for one corner, which has been broken by accident."<sup>2</sup> Eighty-five years later, Dr Samuel Johnson writes:—"In one of the churches was a marble altar, which the superstition of the inhabitants has destroyed. Their opinion was, that a fragment of this stone was a defence against shipwreck, fire, and miscarriages."<sup>3</sup> Pennant also refers to the super-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Pitcairn, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Account of the Isle of Man, with a Voyage to I-columb-kill*, Manx Society ed., p. 101. The slab is not mentioned by Martin.

<sup>3</sup> *Journey to the Western Islands*, Glasgow ed., 1817, p. 233. In Iona there also existed a curious superstition concerning three balls of white marble, which is mentioned by Sacheverell and by Pennant. The former says:—"We were obliged to pass by a place where had formerly stood three noble globes of white marble, I suppose designed for some mathematical uses; they were placed on three stone basons, and custom, or superstition, had taught all persons who passed by to turn them round. These globes were called *Day-of-Judgment-stones*, and the people were made believe that when they had worn the sockets or pedestals by the continued motion of passengers, that then the world should be at an end. These globes the synod ordered to be thrown into the sea, perhaps hoping that when these dangerous instruments of it were removed, it might never come to pass. They likewise ordered sixty crosses to be cast into the sea" (*Account of the Isle of Man, &c.*, p. 107). Pennant's words are:—"A little north-west of the door [of St Oran's chapel] is the pedestal of a cross; on it are certain stones, that seem to have been the supports of a tomb. Numbers who visit this island think it incumbent on them to turn each of these thrice round, according to the course of the sun. They are called *clacha-bràth*; for it is thought that the

stition and adds that "a piece of it [the slab] conveyed to the possessor success in whatever he undertook."<sup>1</sup>

*bráth*, or end of the world, will not arrive till the stone on which they stand is worn through. Originally, there were three noble globes of white marble. . . . The present stones are probably substituted in place of these globes" (*Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 288). A practice somewhat similar to that described in the foregoing extract, appears to have been followed in Colonsay. Near the remains of the church of Kilcatrine (*Kil-a-Cathrina*) is a rough boulder, with a cavity 15 inches by 11 inches, and 6 inches deep in one side of it, which goes by the name of the priest's well or baptismal font. It is usually covered with irregularly-shaped bits of pavement, each bit having a round hole through it. "The holes vary in diameter from about 1 inch to 3 inches, no two being the same diameter . . . . Beside this trough and bits of pavement is a large pebble or waterworn stone about 7½ inches long and 4 inches diameter, which goes under the name of the woman's pap or breast (*Cioch nam Ban*). It is pear-shaped, but thicker or rather dumpier at the small end than a pear. The small end of this stone fits into the hole of the larger bit of pavement. A practice is said to have existed of turning or twisting this stone round sun wise in the hole of the largest bit of pavement" (*Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xv. pp. 120, 121). Nothing could be ascertained of the object of turning this stone, or the superstition connected with it. In connection with the above extracts, it may be worth while to draw attention to the superstition connected with the "cursing stones" of St Fechin and of St Bridget. The former is at Innismurry, and was described in 1779 as "a kind of altar stone, about 2 feet high, covered with globular stones, somewhat flattened, of different sizes, very like the Dutch cheeses; the tradition is, that if any one is wronged by another, he goes to this altar, curses the one who wronged him, wishing such evil may befall him, and turns one of the stones; and if he was really wronged, the specified evil fell on his enemy; but if not, on himself, which makes them so precautionate that the altar is become useless" (*Jour. Roy. Hist. and Arch. Assoc. of Ireland*, 4th series, vol. i. p. 136. The stone which was turned, known as the *Leac na Fecheen*, is believed to have been thrown into a bog-hole some time after 1839—*ibid.*, note). St Bridget's stone is a boulder of red sandstone, 5 feet 9 inches long by 5 feet 2 inches, with a table-like top, displaying "nine cavities placed somewhat irregularly; one being as near as possible in the centre of the group. Each of these depressions contains a stone of a form nearly filling it, and generally more or less oval." The stone is known in the neighbourhood as the "cursing stone" (*ibid.*, 4th series, vol. iii. pp. 459, 460). Another rock with five hollows containing oval-shaped stones, at Keim-an-eigh, near Bantry, county Cork, is believed by "the neighbouring peasantry to have formed portion of the belongings of a dairy; and the stones are looked upon as petrified 'meskins' of butter" (*ibid.*, p. 460). The "Cradle-Stone" at Burghead, described by Sir Arthur Mitchell *The Past in the Present*, pp. 263, 264; *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. x. pp. 646 647), may also be noted in this connection.

<sup>1</sup> *Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 290.

Among the articles exhibited in the temporary museum of the Archæological Institute in Edinburgh in 1856, was "a necklace of blood-stone, and two ornaments of beautiful workmanship; one of them has on both sides a gem engraved in cameo; the other bears an enamel representing a figure holding a tablet. A portion of this rich ornament had been esteemed as of special efficacy, like the eagle-stone or ætites, in child-birth."<sup>1</sup>

In Martin's time there lay on the altar in St Ronan's Chapel, North Rona, "a big Plank of Wood about 10 Foot in length; every Foot has a hole in it, and in every hole a Stone, to which the Natives ascribe several Virtues: one of them is singular, as they say for promoting speedy Delivery to a Woman in Travail."<sup>2</sup> The stone was probably removed from its place on the altar when required.

A stone implement which, from the description of it, is apparently a small whetstone of Bronze Age type, was found at Stoer Head, Assynt; about sixty years ago. "It is said that at the place where it was found the cattle used sometimes to drop down dead without any apparent cause. The stone was warm when it was found, owing, it is believed, to its having been newly thrown or shot at some of the cows by the invisible members of the elfin world. These stones are credited with the power of being able to vanish the instant you take your eye off them, that is, if they are not secured the moment they are first seen. The belief is common on the West Coast that if you keep one in a house it will be a protection against fire, but this belief is unknown among the people of the Lewis."<sup>3</sup>

A small flattish oval pebble of quartzite, measuring  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in breadth, now in the National Museum, was formerly worn as a charm by a farmer in Forfarshire, who died in 1854, at the age of eighty-four. The stone was kept in a small bag which was hung round his neck by a red string. Unfortunately no further particulars as to its use are given.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Catalogue*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> *Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, pp. 21, 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. x. p. 743.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. v. p. 327. The colour red was believed to be of great efficacy in Folk Medicine, and numerous instances of its use are given by Wm. G. Black, *Folk Medicine*, pp. 108-112.

*Bronze Implements used as Charms.*—A bronze axe of the type with flanges and slight stop-ridges, now in the Museum, found near Perth about sixty years ago, was in use till about 1877 as a charm. It was kept hung up in the cow-byre by a farmer, and was believed to possess the power to make the cows yield well (see *ante*, p. 373). A small bronze knife or dagger with tang, 4 inches in length, found at Nordhouse, Sulem, Northmavine, Shetland, presented to the Museum in 1876, is stated to have been “long used as a ‘trow’s sword’ for magical purposes.”<sup>1</sup>

“*Barbreck’s Bone.*”—A charm long known in Argyllshire as “Barbreck’s Bone, was presented to the museum in 1829 by Frederick William Campbell of Barbreck. It is a smooth slab of elephant ivory,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length by 4 inches in breadth and is  $\frac{3}{8}$ ths of an inch in thickness. Unfortunately little or nothing is known about it save that was “celebrated in ancient times for the cure of madness,<sup>2</sup> when it was deemed of so much value that a deposit of £100: was always exacted for its safe return.”—(MS. Letter of Donation).

*Goose’s Thrapple.*—A goose’s thrapple bent round into the form of a ring and containing a number of small duck-shot was presented to the Museum in 1888 by Sir Herbert Maxwell, along with his collection of Antiquities. Sergeant M’Millan of the Wigtownshire Constabulary informs me that he obtained the charm from an old woman in Balmaghie Parish, Kirkcudbrightshire. “It was worn hung round the neck by her mother when a child, and was considered an almost infallible preventative against whooping cough, or at least any fatal effect from the same.” Sergeant M’Millan further states that the use of such a charm was common in past times in the county, but that the one now in the Museum is the only one known to him to have been preserved.

A charm from Ardgour used “chiefly in the alleviation and cure of infantile ailments was exhibited and described to the Society in 1890,<sup>3</sup> by the Rev. Dr Stewart of Nether Lochaber. On examination it was

<sup>1</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xi. p. 471.

<sup>2</sup> Ivory pounded with honey was good for removing ill spots from the body. Applied as a dust to the face of a woman it would remove spots and blemishes.—*Anglo-Saxon Leechdoms*, vol. i. p. 369.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxiv. pp. 159, 160.

found to be nothing more than a toy universal calendar about the size of a sixpence, intended probably to be worn hung to a watch chain, and not older than the beginning of the present century. The letters on it were believed to be "charmed letters which nobody could read."

A sixpence of George II., called a "crossie-croon shilling" by the country people, was presented to the National Museum by Dr Gregor of Pitsligo, who obtained it from a farmer's wife in the parish of Pitsligo, by whom it was used as a charm. It was placed in the milking cog when a cow was milked for the first time after calving, for the purpose of preventing the witches from taking away the cow's milk.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Folklore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 190. Great virtue appears to have been attached to silver in Scotland. A few instances are here given. The water-bull of Loch Rannoch was said to be vulnerable only with silver shot (Macculloch, *Western Islands*, vol. iv. p. 330). In Colonsay and in Islay, and in the North-east of Scotland a silver coin was placed under the foot of the bride or bridegroom during the marriage ceremony to counteract witchcraft (*Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xv. p. 139 note; Pennant *Tour in Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 265; Gregor, *op. cit.*, p. 98). Witches were invulnerable to ordinary shot, and could only be hit by one of silver (Forbes-Leslie, *Early Races of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 500; Gregor, pp. 71, 72, 128). Water which had been poured over a new shilling was of great efficacy in many diseases of cattle (Gregor, p. 187). Some silver was put into the water prepared for elf-shot cattle in Caithness (see *supra*, pp. 454, 466). The Covenanters held the belief "that their principal enemies, and Claverhouse in particular, had obtained from the devil a charm which rendered them proof against leaden bullets. . . Howie of Lochgoin, after giving some account of the battle of Killiecrankie, adds: 'The battle was very bloody, and by Mackay's third fire Claverhouse fell, of whom historians give little account; but it has been said for certain, that his own waiting-servant, taking a resolution to rid the world of this truculent bloody monster, and knowing he had proof of lead, shot him with a silver button he had before taken off his own coat for that purpose'" (*God's Judgement on Persecutors*, p. xxxix., quoted by Sir Walter Scott, note J to *Old Mortality*). See also for additional instances Aubrey, *Gentilisme and Judaisme*, p. 154; Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, vol. ii. pp. 6, 191, 192, 276; Thoms, *Anecdotes Illustrative of Early English History and Literature* (Camden Society), pp. 111, 112 and note; *Literary and Statistical Magazine for Scotland*, 1819, vol. iii. pp. 365, 366.

## APPENDICES.

## I. MIRACULOUS POWERS OF SAINTS' RELICS, &amp;c.

St Drostan's bones were preserved in a stone tomb at Aberdovvyr, where many sick people were restored to health (*Breviarium Aberdonense*, pars hyem., fol. xix b). St Marnock's head was washed every Sunday in the year, amid the prayers of the clergy and the blazing of lights, and the water drunk by sick persons on account of its curative properties (*ibid.*, fol. lx, lxi). The silver head [*i.e.* shrine] of St Modan was in pre-Reformation days carried in procession through the parish for the purpose of bringing down rain, or clearing up the weather (*New Statistical Account*, Aberdeen, p. 168). The bachul or pastoral-staff of St Fergus cast into the waves caused a storm to cease (*Brev. Aber.*, pars estiv., fol. clxiv). The bell of St Fillan (now in the Museum) was placed on the heads of persons suffering from insanity, to assist in their cure. If stolen from its resting-place it returned of its own accord, ringing all the way (*Old Statistical Account*, vol. xvii. p. 378; *Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. viii. p. 267). The shirt in which St Columba died was carried round the fields by the monks for the purpose of bringing down rain (Adamnan, *Vita Sancti Columbæ*, lib. ii. cap. 44; ed. Reeves). The shirt of St Margaret ("Sanct Margaretis sark"), wife of Malcolm Canmore, was worn by the queens of Scotland in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when undergoing the pains of labour, in the belief that the wearing of it would mitigate their suffering (*Invent. de la Royne D'Ecosse*, intro., p. xiv.; see also *Accounts of Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, 1473-98, vol. i., preface, p. lxxiii., and *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, 1437-54, vol. v. p. 447). Sir David Lindsay says (*Poetical Works*, ed. Chalmers, 1806, vol. iii. p. 7) that women invoked St Margaret to aid them when about to undergo the pains of labour:

"Sum wyffis Sanct Margaret doith exhort,  
Into their birth thame to support."

The shirt of St Duthac, which hung in one of the churches within his sanctuary at Tain, was worn by the earls of Ross in the fourteenth century on going to battle (*Invent. de la Royne D'Ecosse*, intro., p. xiv.). The church of St Adrian on the Isle of May was famous for its miracles, and women went to it in hopes of having offspring (*Brev. Aber.*, pars hyem., fol. lxiii.). St Ninian's staff was stolen by a youth who embarked with it in a boat, where it served the double purpose of sail and anchor. On reaching the shore he stuck it in the ground, when it immediately sprouted and became a good sized tree (Ailred, *Vita Niniani*, apud Pinkerton, *Vite Sanctorum Scotiae*, cap. x. pp. 18, 19). St Kentigern is stated by his biographer Jocelin to have erected a cross (*triumphale vexillum sanctæ crucis*) wherever he preached, and two of these are specially

mentioned: one in the cemetery of the church of the Holy Trinity in Glasgow, where the cathedral stands; and the other, of sea-sand (*de sola arena maris construxit*) at Lothwerwerd (now Borthwick). Insane persons, and persons vexed with unclean spirits, bound to these crosses at night were often found cured in the morning (*Vita Kentegerni*, in Pinkerton, *Vita Sanctorum Scotiæ*, cap. xli., pp. 285-287). This latter cross is probably the one referred to by Sir David Lindsay in his *Monarchie* (*Poetical Works*, ed. Chalmers, 1806, vol. iii. p. 6):

“Thay bryng mad men, on fute, and hors,  
And byndis thame to Sanct Mungois cors.”

Part of a cross-shaft, with sculpturing of an unusual character, found at Borthwick, is now in the Museum, and has been figured and described (*Proceed. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxiii. pp. 350, 351). The mother of St Senán held “a stake of rowan” in her hand “when she was bringing forth her son,” which “took the earth, and burst at once into flower and leaf” (*Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore*, ed. Dr Whitley Stokes, pp. 57, 204). Similarly it is told of St Maedhóg, Bishop of Fearná, “Of his miracles also was that the spinster’s distaff, which was in the hand of Maedhóg’s mother, Eithne, when she was bringing him forth, which was a withered hard stick of hazel, grew up with leaves and blossoms and afterwards with goodly fruit, &c.” (*Martyrology of Donegal*, p. 33). A rock which impeded navigation moved beneath St Baldred to the shore, and is still known as the “tumba seu scapha beati baldredi”. (*Breviarium Aberdonense*, pars hyem., fol. lxiii.-iv.). A leper sailed on an altar-slab beside the ship of St Patrick (*ibid.*, fol. lxxi. b). St Medana and her two maidens, to escape the admiration of a soldier, embarked upon a stone, which floated thirty miles to a place called Farnes (*ibid.*, pars estiv., fol. clviii). St Convall wishing to leave Ireland, his native country, the stone on which he was standing by the sea-shore became a boat, whereon he sailed across to the Clyde. The stone was afterwards known as St Convall’s chariot, and men and cattle were healed of disease by the touch of it or by lotions of it<sup>1</sup> (*ibid.*, pars estiv., fol. cxvii.).

<sup>1</sup> According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Merlin, in advising King Aurelius to remove the “Giant’s Dance” (Stonehenge) from the mountain Killaraus in Ireland to Salisbury Plain, said of the stones forming the circle: “They are mystical stones, and of a medicinal virtue. The giants of old brought them from the farthest coast of Africa, and placed them in Ireland, while they inhabited that country. Their design in this was to make baths in them, when they should be taken with any illness. For their method was to wash the stones, and put their sick into the water, which infallibly cured them. With the like success they cured wounds also, adding only the application of some herbs. There is not a stone there which has not some healing virtue” (*British History*, book viii. chap. xi. in Bohn’s *Six Old English Chronicles*, p. 216).



Among the first miracles of St Maedhóg, Bishop of Fearna, "was the flagstone upon which he was brought to be baptized, upon which people used to be ferried out and in, just as in every other boat" (*Martyrology of Donegal*, p. 33). Brand mentions a stone in Lady Kirk, South Ronaldsay, on which there is the print of two feet, "concerning which the Superstitious People have a Tradition, that *St Magnus*, when he could not get a Boat on a time to carry him over Fichtland Firth, took this stone, and setting his Feet thereupon, passed the Firth safely" (*Description of Shetland, &c.*, 1701, p. 60; Martin, *Western Islands*, 1716, p. 367; Low's *Tour*, p. 27, where it is figured). See also Jo. Ben (*apud* Barry, *Orkney Islands*, 2nd ed., p. 427) who gives a different version of the story. He makes the stone to have been first a whale, afterwards turned into a stone of the same colour, *Bellua tandem mutata in lapidem ejusdem coloris*. Brand further mentions (*ibid.*, p. 109) another stone which tradition stated to have come ashore on Papa-Stour with a dead man tied to it. From his description, the stone appears to have been an ordinary stone coffin. A Danish tradition mentions a holy woman, named Helen, who, to escape some wicked men, threw herself into the sea. "There a large stone received her lifeless corpse and floated with it over to Seeland, where it was found under a high acclivity in Tibirke parish. . . . The stone . . . yet lies on the strand, and bears evident traces of her body" (Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, vol. ii. p. 216). The Black Stone of St Declan (referred to on p. 444) was left lying on a rock by the monk who had charge of it, and it was not missed till the saint and his party were well out at sea. On discovering the loss, Declan prayed manifestly "to God and to heaven in his mind," upon which, contrary to the law of nature, the rock "swam or floated after the vessel directly, and it was not a long time until Declan and his disciples saw the rock with the stone on it." The rock is still to be seen in Ardmore Bay, "and is looked on by the peasantry with the greatest reverence; it is celebrated for innumerable healing virtues, and is always the centre of great attraction on St Declan's patron day" (*Journal of Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, vol. iii., new series, pp. 52, 53). St Brynach, wishing to leave Lesser Britain (Brittany), placed a piece of rock on the face of the water, and committing himself to God, went on the rock, and was carried the length of the British sea, and brought to the port of Milford (Milford Haven) in the region of Demetia, on the banks of the river Cleddyf (Rees, *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints*, pp. 6, 291). Nimanauc, a disciple of St Padarn, not being able to live in Armorica after the saint's departure, went to the sea-side, where he found a certain stone, on which he stood. He then said, "If those things are pleasing to God which I intend, and if Padarn, whom I wish to follow, is truly a saint, the stone will rise and swim on the sea, the waves will become solid, the sea will be rendered hard, so that the stone will not sink in it, and I shall be carried safe to my master, the leader Saint Padarn."

Sooner than said, by a wonderful voyage he arrived at a maritime church on the coast of Britain (*ibid.*, pp. 191, 506). St Patrick, coming from Italy to Ireland, left his bible behind him, and only missed it when he landed. He prayed that it might be restored to him, and immediately a big stone like a curragh was seen approaching, and on it was the book. The stone remains to this day between Kilmore Point and the North Saltee, Wexford, and is known as *Curach-na-Pandrich*, i.e., "St Patrick's boat" (*Folk-lore Record*, vol. v. p. 171).

## II. BALLS OF ROCK-CRYSTAL.

The following notes are an attempt to gather together in a brief compass the various discoveries which have been made of rock-crystal balls in England and on the Continent. It is to be understood, however, that this list makes no pretensions to completeness. The bulk of the specimens here recorded have accompanied burials, those in England being usually found in graves of Anglo-Saxon date. From the position in which some of the balls were found in the graves, they appear to have been ornaments "suspended from the girdle or attached to some part of the person or dress" (*Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. vi. p. 150). The instances of the use of rock-crystal in Japan, Australia, and elsewhere are of considerable interest, and are worthy of attention in connection with the crystal balls found in Europe.

ENGLAND.—(1) One,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, found in a tumulus on Kingstown Down, is in the Faussett Collection, and is figured in the *Inventorium Sepulchrale*, p. 42. (2) "Just such another, among Sir W. Fagg's antiquities," from a tumulus on Chartham Down (*ibid.*; Douglas, *Nenia Britannica*, p. 14). (3) One found in a Roman sepulchral interment at Avisford, Sussex (*Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. i. p. 124). (4) Two specimens, mounted, found in Saxon graves on Chessell Down, Isle of Wight (*Collect. Antiq.*, vol. vi. p. 150, and pl. xxviii., quoting Hillier's *Antiquities of the Isle of Wight*, pt. ii. pp. 29, 30; see also *Coll. Ant.*, vol. iv. p. 196). (5) One found in a Saxon grave in Harrietsham Churchyard, Kent, is in the Maidstone Museum (*Catalogue*, 1892, p. 30). (6) One, nearly  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, mounted in silver bands, with a loop at the top for suspension, was found in an Anglo-Saxon grave at Sarre, Kent (*Archæologia Cantiana*, vol. v., pl. i., p. 317). (7) Another, unmounted, also found at Sarre, but in a different grave, is in the Maidstone Museum (*Catalogue*, p. 3). (8) Three specimens, all mounted in bands of silver, found in Anglo-Saxon graves at Bifrons, Kent, are also in the Maidstone Museum (*Catalogue*, p. 20, and pl. opp.; see also *Archæologia Cantiana*, vol. x. p. 314, and pl. opp.; vol. xiii. p. 552). (9) A "crystal ball now lost," is said to have been found at Fairford, Gloucestershire (Wylie, *Fairford Graves*, p. 15). (10) In one of the tumuli (No. iv., that of a woman) on Chatham Lines, opened by Douglas, among other objects was "a crystal ball enclosed in a lap of silver, pendant to two.

silver rings" (*Nenia Britannia*, pl. iv. 8, p. 14; Akerman, *Archæological Index*, pl. xviii., p. 142). (11) In another tumulus (No. V.) on Chartham Downs, 4 miles from Canterbury, there was found another ball, unmounted (*Nenia Brit.*, pl. v. 3, p. 21; *Inventorium Sepulchrale*, p. 164). (12) One,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, encircled by four bands of bronze, was found in a Saxon grave at Kempston, Bedfordshire (*Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. vi., pl. xl., p. 218). (13) One in the British Museum has no locality (*Nenia Brit.*, p. 14). (14) One egg-shaped and two globular balls of rock-crystal from England were exhibited at the meeting by Mr R. W. Cochran-Patrick, F.S.A. Scot. The egg-shaped one is  $2\frac{5}{8}$  inches in length by  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches in greatest diameter, and was purchased at the Hailstone Sale; the globular balls measure  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inch and  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches in diameter; all three are probably modern. (15) Two specimens, mounted in silver, were exhibited and described at a meeting of the Archæological Association in 1849. They have no history (*Arch. Assoc. Journal*, vol. v. pp. 51-53). In the British Museum there are "some Crystal Balls, which are said to be used in cold Countries for warming the Hands, and (after being kept some Time in a Cellar) for cooling them in hotter climates; but this is not certain, many imagining they were designed for other uses" (*General Contents of the British Museum*, 1762, p. 98).

In addition to the balls of rock-crystal enumerated above, a number of beads (?) of the same material and of polygonal form have also been found in graves in England. (1) One,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, was found with a large fibula at Myton, Warwickshire (*Archæological Journal*, vol. ix. p. 179). (2) Another, found at Hunsbury Hill, Northamptonshire, is in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of London (Akerman, *Remains of Pagan Saxondom*, p. 10; *Catalogue, Museum of Society*, 1847, p. 20). (3) A third, found with Anglo-Saxon relics at Fairford, Gloucestershire (Wylie, *Fairford Graves*, pl. iv. and p. 14). (4) Another,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, was found at St Nicholas, Warwickshire (*Pagan Saxondom*, pp. 39, 40). (5) A perforated globular bead,  $\frac{3}{4}$ th inch in diameter, was found with eighteen beads of amethystine quartz in a barrow on Breach Down, Kent (*Pagan Saxondom*, pl. v. and p. 9, *Archæologia*, vol. xxx. p. 48, pl. i.).

IRELAND.—(1) Sir William Wilde describes a ball of rock-crystal in the possession of the Marquess of Waterford, "concerning which there is a tradition in the family that it was brought from the Holy Land by one of his Le Poer ancestors at the time of the Crusades. This is eagerly sought after, even in remote districts, in order to be placed in a running stream, through which the diseased cattle are driven backwards and forwards, when a cure is said to be effected; or it is placed in the water given them to drink" (*Catalogue of Museum of Royal Irish Academy*, pp. 127, 128. This ball is hooped in silver; *Journal, Kilkenny Archæological Society*, vol. v., n.s., p. 323). (2) A very fine crystal ball is mentioned by Vallancey (*Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, vol. iv. p. 17)

as being in the possession of the Earl of Tyrone. (3, 4) Two specimens are in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy; one of which is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, "and is reputed to have belonged to the Regalia of Scotland;" the other was found at Uppercourt, Kilkenny, and is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter (*Catalogue*, p. 149). (5) An amulet "of shining crystal, about the size of a large marble," was dipped into water once a year, and the water given to farmers for their cattle (*Journal, Royal Hist. and Archæol. Assoc. of Ireland*, 4th ser., vol. iii. p. 444). Vallancey describes a box of brass cased with silver, apparently a shrine to contain a copy of the Gospels or other manuscript. On the centre of the lid is an oblong piece of rock-crystal, 5 inches in length by 2 inches in breadth, and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. This stone, Vallancey says, was called "*Liath Meisicith*, or the Magic Stone of Speculation" (*Collectanea*, vol. iv. p. 13, *et seq.*). The silver chalice found with four large penannular brooches at the Rath of Reerasta, near Ardagh, has a cone-shaped piece of rock-crystal set in the centre of the underside of the foot (*Trans. Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv. p. 438). The harp of "Brian Boroihme" has a large crystal set in silver on the front (*Catalogue, Museum, R.I.A.*, p. 246). The cross of Cong is set with a large crystal at the junction of the arms.

DENMARK.—A ball,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, is figured by Worsaae (*Nordiske Oldsager*, 2nd edition, p. 87). It bears on one side the inscription ΑΒΛΑΘΑΝΑΛΒΑ in Greek capitals. Below the inscription is an arrow, ↓, with the head pointing downwards. This ball was found with a skeleton and a number of other objects in a grave, supposed to have been that of a woman, near Aarslev, by Svendborg, in Fyen (Engelhardt, *Denmark in the Early Iron Age*, p. 13). So far as I am aware, this is the only specimen of a crystal ball bearing a talismanic inscription. The word ΑΒΛΑΘΑΝΑΛΒΑ was a common Gnostic invocation, and occurs frequently on gems, either in full, ΑΒΛΑΝΑΘΑΝΑΛΒΑ, or abbreviated in various ways. Kopp (*Paleographica Critica*, vol. iii. pp. 681–82) gives a list of twenty-eight variations of the word, which he says means *pater nobis tu (es)* (*ib.*, p. 683; see also C. W. King, *Gnostics and their Remains*, 1st ed., p. 233, 2nd ed., p. 317; *ib.*, *Handbook of Engraved Gems*, 2nd ed., p. 72). The word seems also to be connected with the New Testament phrases Ἰησοῦς ὁ πατήρ (Mark xiv. 36; Romans viii. 15; Galat. iv. 6) and with Ματῶν ἀθῶ (1 Cor. xvi. 22) (Kopp, *ib.*, p. 684; *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxiv., p. 258, note). The word is generally given in full so as to be read either backwards or forwards (King, *Gnostics*, 2nd ed., p. 318), though it occurs also in the form of an inverted pyramid (Kopp, p. 687; Tassie, *Descriptive Catalogue of Engraved Gems*, ed. 1791, vol. i. No. 621). See also Tassie (*ib.*, Nos. 216, 355, 372, 532, 553, 582, and 621) and Montfaucon (*Antiquity Explained*, Eng. tr. 1721, vol. ii. p. 233, and pl. 51, No. 29) for additional instances.

No specimens of crystal balls from Norway or Sweden are recorded in the

albums of Rygh (*Norske Oldsager*) or Montelius (*Sveriges Fornrid*), nor by Lorange (*Samlingen af Norske Oldsager*).

GERMANY.—(1) A ball, 1 inch in diameter, enclosed within four bands of gold, with a loop at the top for suspension, was found along with a smaller ball of ironstone enclosed within two bands of silver crossing each other at right angles, in a woman's grave at Alzay, near Mainz (Lindenschmidt, *Alterthümer unserer heidnischen Vorzeit*, Band ii. Heft xii. Taf. 6, figs. 6, 12. (2) A "Spindelstein aus Bergkrystall,"  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, cut into facets, was found in a Frankish grave at Freilaubersheim, Rheinhessen (*ibid.*, Bd. iii., ht. x. taf. 6).

FRANCE.—(1) One, found in the tomb of Childeric at Tournai, is figured by Montfaucon (*Les Monumens de la Monarchie Française*, vol. i., pl. v. fig. 6) and by Cochet (*Le Tombeau de Childeric*, p. 299). Cochet figures and describes several of these balls which have been found in France, in chapter ii. part iv. of his work already cited. (2) One, mounted in silver, was found in the ancient cemetery of Vicq (Cochet, p. 303; *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. iv. p. 196). (3) One, unmounted, found in a grave at Moineville, Moselle, figured (Cochet, p. 301). (4) Another, found in a grave at Saint Privat-la-Montagne (Cochet, p. 301). (5) One, in the grave of an infant at Sablon (Cochet, p. 301). (6) One, mounted in four gold bands, with loop for suspension, found in a Frankish tomb at Lens, figured (Cochet, p. 302). (7) One, found in the environs of Arras, possessed the "monture en or qui servait à la suspendre probablement au collier" (Cochet, p. 302). (8) One, perforated, found at Douvrend in a Merovingian cemetery, is figured (Cochet, pp. 301, 303). (9) Cochet also mentions, on the authority of the late Thomas Wright, five balls of crystall found in the "sépultures des anciens rois de France, violées à l'époque de la grande Révolution," and now in a private collection in England (p. 305).

ITALY.—(1) Montfaucon mentions "vingt globes de crystal" being found with a number of other objects in an alabaster urn in Rome (*Les Monumens de la Monarchie Française*, tome i. p. 15). (2) Among the numerous objects found in a Roman urn were a "crystal Ball and six Nuts of crystal" (*Browne, Hydriotaphia, Urne-Buriall*, London, 1658, pp. 23, 24).

GREECE.—A perforated ball of rock-crystal,  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches in diameter, found in the third sepulchre at Mycenæ, is figured by Schliemann (*Mycenæ Tiryns*, p. 200).

JAPAN.—Balls of rock-crystal, mounted in silver like the Scottish specimens, apparently for use as charms, are not uncommon in Japan. A specimen so mounted, 1 inch in diameter, is exhibited by Mr William Simpkins, who, unfortunately, has forgotten its use.

AUSTRALIA.—The Rev. J. G. Wood (*Natural History of Man*, vol. ii. pp. 77, 84) describes a powerful Australian charm-stone as a piece of "quartz crystal," which the native magicians profess to make themselves, keeping the recipe a

secret! The sight of it is fatal to women, and it will destroy a man if thrown at him with certain incantations. The stone may be merely a pebble of rock-crystal. Of the Tasmanians, Major T. L. Mitchell says (*Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, vol. ii. p. 230), "the men, and especially their *coradjes* or priests, frequently carry crystals of quartz or other shining stones which they hold in high estimation, and very unwillingly show to any one, invariably taking care when they do unfold them that no woman shall see them."

YUCATAN.—Dr D. G. Brinton describes a quartz crystal, or clear stone (*zastun*), used by diviners in Yucatan, which, after certain magical ceremonies, becomes "endowed with the power of reflecting the past and future. . . . There is scarcely a village in Yucatan without one of these wondrous stones" (*Folk-lore Journal*, vol. i. p. 245).