GIANT LORE OF SCOTLAND

From

SCOTTISH FOLK-LORE AND FOLK LIFE

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Fomorian giants on hills - Fomorians of sea and islands - Everlasting combats of giants - Boulders and other missiles - Story of female Fomorian - Gargantuan jesting - Stories connected with boulders - Ben Ledi giant re-named Samson - Fife giant as Devil - Devil's stone at Dundee - Giants called after famous heroes - Giant of Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh - Arthurian giants in northern England and in Wales - Scottish Arthurian place-names - Sleeping giants - Giants as Fians - Thomas the Rhymer as a giant - Inverness and other sleepers - Giants as family gods-Giants' vulnerable moles-Morven giant story - Banffshire giant story - Ciuthach giant lore - Whale-fishing giants - English giants - "Long Meg" - giant figures - Manx, Welsh and Irish giants - Fomorians originally pirates - Original name of giants lost.

Throughout Scotland there are a number of hills which, by reason of their situation rather than heights, might be referred to as positions of strategic importance. All of them command wide prospects, and from each other hill, or two hills of like character, may be visible. They have all distinctive names with folk-lore associations, and a number have archælogical relics or are remembered as beacon hills. Some are referred to as "seats" or "chairs" of giants, or of heroes or saints who supplanted giants, and are connected in folk-tales with megaliths, or ice-carried boulders, supposed to be flung by giants.

As stated, these giants are in Gaelic referred to as the *Famhairean* ("Fomorians"). In the Gaelic Bible, *Genesis*, vi, 4 is rendered: *Bha famhairean air an talem `snag latish sin*, &c. ("There were giants on the earth in these days, &c.")[1]

The Fomorians of Scotland occupy not only hills, but caves among the mountains, while some come from the sea and others have strongholds in islands.

[1] *See also Deut., ii, 10; Numbers, xiii, 33; II Samuel, xxi, 16; and I Chronicles, xx. 4. In I Samuel, xvii, Goliath is, however, referred to as a currish (a hero, champion or warrior).*

As a rule hill giants are grouped in pairs, being rivals occupying opposing heights which may be only a mile distant, or from five twenty miles or

more, and separated by an inland loch or an arm of the sea. The opponents engage in the "Everlasting Battle". Each giant takes his turn at throwing a boulder at his rival with purpose to strike and injure him. A throws the boulder at B to-day, and B throws it back to-morrow. The boulder is sometimes referred to as a "quoit", and in the folk-tales it may sometimes be substituted by a stone hammer, a battle-axe or some other ancient or modern weapon. An Orkney giant flings a poker, but at Rousay giant flings a boulder to Westray.

The opposing headlands at Munlochy Bay in Ross and Cromarty are occupied by rival Fomorians who fling a battle-axe. a local folk-story tells that giant A had been severely wounded by the battle-axe and on the following morning was so weak from loss of blood that he was unable to fling back the battle-axe when B, his rival, appeared. His wife said, "I shall fling it myself against the boaster." She donned her husband's attire and took his place on the summit of the eminence. Then she flung the battle-axe across the bay. "Her aim was as true as her strength was great", and the axe "struck and struck in the forehead of the giant".

The giantess was well pleased and cried across the water, "That will keep you quiet for one day at any rate."

Hugh Miller [1] refers to the giant lore of the same county:

> "There is a large and very ponderous stone in the parish of Edderton which a giantess of the tribe is said to have flung from the point of a spindle across the Dornoch Firth; and another within a few miles of Dingwall, still larger and more ponderous, which was thrown from a neighbouring eminence by a person of the same family, and which still bears the marks of a gigantic finger and thumb on two of its sides."

The eminence in question is that of Knockfarrel, Strathpeffer, on the summit of which is a vitrified fort.

A boulder at Glenmorangie, near Tain, is reputed to be a "bad throw" by a giant of a hill near Edderton. He had been married on the previous evening and feasted and drank so freely that he suffered loss of strength. His boulder was intended to strike a giant above Tain, but fell half way. Another giant, who dwelt in Kintail, Wester Ross, flung a boulder at a giant above Portree, Skye, but it did not reach him, falling near the village.

Hugh Miller tells of the giants of the two head-lands (the Sutors) at the mouth of the Cromarty Firth.

[1] *Scenes and Legends, Chapter I.*

"The promontories of Cromarty," he writes, "served as work-stools to two giants of this tribe, who supplied their brethren with shoes and buskins.

They wrought together; for, being furnished with only one set of implements, the could not carry on their trade apart; and they used to fling these to each other across the opening of the firth where the promontories are only about two miles apart." In my boyhood I heard that only the awl was flung across from one giant to the other.

Two boulders lying on the beach near Cromarty were reputed to have been flung by the giant on the hill of Struie (called Gilltrax[1] in Cromarty) in the parish of Edderton.

There are giants on three hills near Inverness, known as Torvean, Dunain and Craig Phadrick. They are said to throw a stone hammer from one to the other each morning. There is a vitrified fort on the summit of Craig Phadrick.

A boulder-flinging giant occupies Dun-Fhamhair (Fomorian's Hill) at Kilmorack, overlooking Beauly. Two famous Fomorians face each other on eminences on opposite sides of Loch Ness. The southern giant, according to a local folk-tale, became angered against the northern giant on Dŭn Binniligh, Abriachan, and hurled a huge black boulder at him. The northern giant retaliated by flinging a huge white boulder. These boulders are still pointed out.

There are other boulder-flinging giants in Nairnshire, Morayshire, Banffshire, Aberdeenshire, Kincardineshire, Angus, Fife, Perthshire and the Lothians, and also along the western coast of Scotland.

A folk-story tells that the strongest giant in all Scotland is on Ben Ledi, near Callander. He challenged all the Scottish Fomorians to a trial of strength at "putting the stone" and was the winner in the contest. A large boulder called "Samson's putting-stone" lies in the lower eastern slope of the Ben, and is said to have been flung from the summit by "Samson". Not far from the stone is a hill fort.

Many of the giants are referred to simply as Fomorians, but some have been given person names or are referred to as devils.[2] The Ben Ledi giant evidently acquired his name after the introduction of Christianity, having been compared to Samson. The giant of Norman's Law in Fife is the "devil". He hurled a boulder across the Tay against the giant of Law Hill, Dundee, but if fell short. This boulder is known as the "de'il's (devil's) stane", and is protected at Dundee by an iron railing. The giant of Eildon

[1] *The Gaulish form of this old place-name suggests that it was Pictish. Cromarty people tell that the sun sets behind Gilltrax when it has reached its farthest-north point. Fishermen used to regard the hill with some degree of reverence*

[2] *The Gaelic word samh means both god and giant. (E 859)*

Hills in the east Lowlands had been named Wallace, after Scotland's hero of the War of Independence, and there is another Wallace giant at Easdale, a few miles distant from Oban. Alexander Stewart, son of King Robert II of Scotland, remembered as the "Wolf of Badenoch", is a giant in Moray folk-lore. The Patrick giant at Inverness acquired his name from St Patrick, Ireland's patron saint, who was probably a native of Strathclyde, and whose fame was celebrated by the missionaries of the Columban church. A Black Island giant is "Rory". A giant on Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh, acquired the name of King Arthur after the Arthurian romances were popularized in the Edinburgh area. Some of the old maps give the place-name as "Arthur's Chair". It is evidently not a name of great antiquity. Chalmers in his *Caledonia* remarks that "a late enquirer" declared it "a name of yesterday", but he notes tht Arthur's Seat "had that distinguished name before the publication of Camden's Britannia in 1585, as we may see in page 478; and before the publication of Major in 1521, as appears in folio 28; Kennedy in his flyting with Dunbar mentions `Arthur State, or ony hicher (higher) hill'."[1] Arthurian tales were current in Scotland in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Sir David Lindsay (1490-1555) in his "The Dreme" tells that he entertained the young king (James V) "with antique stories and deidis martiall" of

> Hector, Arthur and gentile Julius,
> Of Alexander, and worthy Pompeius.

The late John Stuart Glennie, who attempted to prove that Arthur was a Scottish king, notes in his Arthurian Localities (p. 67) tht in the west of Northumberland there is an "Arthur's Chair". It is one of the "Sewing Shields Crags", another being the chair, or crag, of the queen. according to the local folk-tale, King Arthur and Queen Guinevere had a domestic quarrel.

> "To settle the mater, the king, sitting on a rock called Arthur's Chair, threw at the queen an immense boulder which, falling somewhat short of its aim, is still to be seen on this side of the Queen's Crags. And on the horizon of the immense sheep farm of Sewing Shields, and beyond an outlying shepherd's hut very appropriately named `Fold Knuckles', is a great sone called `Cumming's Cross', to which there is attached another rude Arthurian tradition."

Another "Arthur's Seat" is in Cumberland.[2]

Welsh giants were similarly displaced by Arthurian heroes.

Glennie in his *Arthurian Localities* refers to "the famous cromlech called `Arthur's Stone'" in south Wales; it is situated "near the turnpike

[1] *Caledonia Vol. 1 p. 245*
[2] *Ibid. p. 68*

road from Reynoldstone to Swansea, on the north slope of Cefn Bryn". "Arthur's Chair" is a cromlech on an eminence adjoining the park of Mocras in Brecknockshire. "Arthur's Table" is a name attached to the remains of a Roman amphitheatre upon the Usk. Merlin's Hill and Grove are four miles south of Caermarthen. A stone called "Maen Arthur" near Colomendy Lodge in Flintshire is said to bear and impression of the hoof of Arthur's steed. Near Denby twenty-four holes cut out of the rock were called the Round Tale. still another Round table, an old camp, loverlooks Redwharf Bay. A rocking-stone in Anglesey, in the grounds of Llwydiarth, is called "Arthur's Quoit". The grave of Vortigern is Nant Gwrtheryn on the south of Caernarvon Bay. Cadbury Hill in Somersetshire is supposed to be a Round Table site. a little entrenchment near Camelford in Cornwall is "Arthur's Hall", and "between Camelford and Launceston, on Wilsey downs, is Warbelow Barrow, an ancient fortification of considerable size, in the centre of which is a large mound popularly called "King Arthur's Grave". An "Arthur's Stone" lies between Camelford and Tintagel. "King Arthur's Bed" is a group of rocky tors some miles north of Liskeard.

Professor W. J. Watson[1] writes:

"The best-known `Arthurian locality' is *Arthur's seat, Edinburgh. North of the Wall (of Hadrian) on the west are Suidhe Artair*, Arthur's Seat, Dumbarton, on the right bank of the Leven; *Beinn Artair* (the Cobbler), at the head of Loch Long; *Aghaidh Artair*, `Arthur's Face', a rock on the west side of Glenkinglas, in the same district, with the likeness of a man's profile; *Sruth Artair*, Struarthour, in Glassary, Argyll. In the east there are Arthur-stone near Cupar Angus; Arthouriscairne, apparently on the south side of Bennachie, Aberdeenshire; Arthur-seat in Aberdeenshire; and *Suidhe Artair*, Suiarthour, now *Suidhe*, in Glenlivet, Banffshire. There is, or rather was, also Arthur's Oven in 1293 *Furnus Arthuri*, described in 1723 as between the house of Stenhouse (Larbert) and the water of Carron, `an old building in form of a sugar loaf, built without like r any otter mortar'."

Other Arthurian names in Scotland suggest the influence of the metrical romances. "Ganore's Grave" is at Meigle in Perthshire, Ganore being a rendering of Guinevere. At Stirling is the "Tabyll Round", referred to by Sir David Lindsay and still earlier by Barbour who in his *The Bruce* calls it "The Rownde Tabill" (Book XIII, line 379). "Merlin's Grave" is a cairn on the Tweed. In the parish of Crawford, Lanarkshire, there is a well called "Arthur's Fountain".

There are sleeping giants under various hills in Scotland. Those under Arthur's Set, Edinburgh, ae Arthur and his knights. In northern Scotland

[1] *History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland, pp. 208-9.*

the sleeping giants have been named after the Gaelic hero Fionn,[1] folk-takes regarding whom were imported from Ireland. Both Arthur and Fionn have, however, been displaced by the later hero, Thomas the Rhymer, whose fame was spread by chap-books as far north as Cromarty.

The chief sleeping giant under Eildon Hills has been named Thomas the Rhymer, and Thomas sleeps also under Dunbuck Hill, near Dumbarton. "The last person that entered that hill found him resting on his elbow, with his hand below his head." Thomas asked, "Is it time?" and the man fled. The sleeping giants in Tomnahurich Hill, Inverness, are sometimes referred to as Fionn and his men and sometimes as Thomas the Rhymer and his company. Mac Codrum, the Uist bard, says in one of his poems:

Dar thigedh sluagh Tom na h-iubhraich
Co dh' eireadh air tús ach Tómas?

"When the hosts of Tomnahurich come, who should rise first but Thomas?"

Fionn and his men are the sleepers in the cave of Craigiehow,[2] near Munlochy, in the Black Isle and in the Smith's Rock in Skye. All these sleepers are supposed to be awaiting for the day of a great battle. In their cave is a whistle or horn, and when it is blown three times the heroes will come forth. Folk-stories tell of men who have blown the whistle or horn twice. The first sound caused the sleepers to open their eyes and shake themselves; the second made them rise, resting on their elbows. The visitor is afraid to blow a third blast, being terrified by the ferocious appearance of the warrior. As he retreats the chief giant calls after him, "Wretch mischief-maker, you have left us worse than you found us".[3]

Sir Walter Scott gives the version of the sleeping giants myth connected with the Lucken-hare hillock upon Eildon Hills. Thomas the Rhymer conducted a horse-dealer into an underground stable where armed warriors were seen sleeping beside their chargers. "All these men," said the wizard, "will awaken at the battle of Sheriffmuir." A sword and a horn hung on the wall at the end of the underground cavern. These were to be used to dissolve the spell.

"The man in confusion took the horn and attempted to wind it. The horses instantly started in their stalls, stamped and shook their bridles, the men arose and clashed their armour, and the mortal, terrified by the tumult he had exited, dropped the horn from his hand. A voice like that of a giant, louder even than the tumult around, pronounced these words:

[1] *Pounced fewn.*

[2] *In Gaelic creag a' chobh ("rock of the cave").*

[3] *J. G. Campbell, Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands, pp. 270 et. seq.;*

Woe to the coward that ever he was born,
That did not draw the sword before he blew the horn.

A whirlwind expelled the horse-dealer from the cavern, the entrance to which he could never again find."[1]

Similar sleepers are found in Wales, Ireland, Scandinavia, Germany and eastward to Ephesus and Arabia. In the Arabian and Scottish stories a dog is associated with the sleepers. Among the sleepers in India are the five Indras.[2]

Some Scottish Fomorians were connected with families, as if originally family gods or goddesses. One at Gortlich, in Inverness-shire, was supposed to scream when a Fraser chief was about to die. His hill was pointed out to the writer by an elderly native. Sir Walter Scott mentions "that species of spirits to whom, the Highlands, is scribed the guardianship, or superintendence, of a particular clan, or family of distinction . . . Thus in a MS. history of Moray we are informed that the family of Gurlinbeg is haunted by a spirit called *Garlin Bodacher* that of the Baron of Kinchardin by Lamhdearg, or `Red-hand', a spectre, of one of whose hands is a red as blood; that of Tullochgorum by *Mag Moulach*, a female figure whose left hand and arm were covered with hair . . . a familiar attendant upon Clan Grant. These superstitions were so ingrafted in the popular creed that the clerical synods and presbyteries were wont to take cognizance of them."[3]

There are folk-stories of giants who are invulnerable to human attack unless wounded on a particular spot marked by a mole.

A Morvern giant of this type is described in a ceilidh story, taken down by the writer in Argyll, as follows:

"He was tall as an oak tree and very strong; his hands were so large he could snatch up a bullock in one of them and make his fingers meet round the middle of it. There was not a giant in Mull who was a match for him, and two of them he killed with great boulders which he threw across the Sound. He used to sit on a hilltop with a great fishing rod made by stripping the branches from a tree. The line was a long rope he had stolen from fishermen in Ardnamurchan and he had for a hook the anchor of a large ship. The giant used to catch whales and it was a great sight to see him pulling one after another out of the water and throwing them on the beach!"

1 *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft (London, 1831 edition), p. 133 (Letter (IV),*

2 *My Myths of Babylonia and Assyria, p. 101.*

3 *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borer, Introduction (1907) Vol. i. pp. 208-0.*

The giant one day thrust his great hand down a chimney of the castle of the king of Ardnamurchan and stole a pot of gold. He was chased as he went eastward to go round the end of Loch Sunart. The bravest of the king's men crossed the loch in a boat to intercept him as he came westward towards the eminence at Lon More (big meadow), the Morvern hill on which he dwelt. The giant flung a boulder at the boat and it caused the waters of the loch "to heave as if a storm were raging". The men rowed hard and they landed on the other side as the giant was climbing the hill. As he drew near the summit he looked round. The king's champion archer bent his bow and shot an arrow which pierced a more on the giant's forehead and immediately the monster fell down dead. The warriors cut of his head and rolled it down the hill to the shore, and they recovered the pot of gold. The champion archer was given he king's daughter as his wife, and when the king died he became the ruler.

W. Grant Stewart[1] records a folk-take of a giant who had a mole over his heart. This giant, referred to as a "ghost", lived in the wilds of Craig-Aulnaic, a romantic place in the district of Strathdown, Banffshire. There was also a giantess. Stewart gives the name of the male as *Fhua Mhoir Bein Baynac* - his rendering of *Famhair* (giant) of the ben; and the name fo the female as *Clashnichd Aulnaic*, evidently the *Glaistig* of Craig-Aulnaic.

The giant ill-treats the female nightly and her shrieks disturbed those who dwelt in the neighbourhood. The greatest sufferer was "James *Owre* (*odhar*) or Gray, the tenant of the farm of Balbig of Delnabo". He and his family continually complained of the "cries and lamentations of the `Clashnichd'."

On day Gray met this female and she told him that the giant had expelled her from her dwelling and beaten her severely. He followed her "for the purpose of inflicting on her person every degrading torment which his brain could invent". She also told Gray that "Ben-Baynac was wholly invulnerable to all the weapons of man, with the exception of a large mole on his left beast".

One moonlight night she came to Gray's house and induced him to go against the giant. He consented, and she carried him on her ample shoulders. When they reached the giant's dwelling "he came forth to meet them with looks and gestures which did not at all indicate a cordial welcome".

Gray shot an arrow from his bow and pierced the mole, "large as a common bonnet", on the giant's breast. The giant yelled and then "vanished into air". The Clashnichd" was so grateful that she "vowed to

[1] *The Popular Superstitions and Festive Amusements of the Highlanders of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1823), pp. 6 et seq.*

devote the whole of her time and talents towards his service and prosperity". He set her to collect a herd of deer, saying they were his horses.

Then he returned home. Soon afterwards the "Clashnichd" entered to say that she had placed the "horses" in Gray's stable, but had found them unruly. "They shall be tame enough to-morrow," Gray remarked.

The writer heard from a Moray shepherd another version of this folk-tale. Two Fomorians occupied opposing eminences, and the dark one stole the bride of the other. He had a red mole over his heart and was mortally wounded by the wronged Fomorian, for, although "the dark fellow" could render himself invisible, the red more remained.

Scotland imported from Ireland stories about Fionn (Finn, called "Fingal" by Macpherson) and his warrior band of Fians, or Fianna (Fenians). But in doing so the natives mixed the tales with their own lore. All the Fians became Fomorians, or giants, and acquired the characteristics of these Fomorians. They were thus transformed, as were Arthur of the romances, Samson, Wallace and the devil, into boulder-throwing giants.

In the Outer Hebrides a famous giant is known as *Ciuthach* (pronounced "Kewach"). "At the present day in Lewis," writes Professor W. J. Watson,[1] "one expresses admiration of a young fellow's vigour (*tapachd*) by the expression *Bu tu fhéin an Ciuthach* (`It's yourself that's the Ciuthach')," A legend connected with an ancient for on Borronish ("fort point"), in Uig, Lewis, tells of a conflict between the Fians and this giant. Fionn was kept at bay by him, but Oscar took his place and slew the monster. The "Kewach" was "a giant and a real hero, a man not only of great size but great dignity . . . `He would scorn to lay hand on a common man'." In the island of Eigg the "Kewach" lives in a cave. He is still remembered in Barra.

On the north side of Loch Lomond a similar "hero" was associated with a circular fortress on a promontory which, according to Alexander Graham of Duchray, writing in 1724, was called "Gyants Castle". His name was Keith, son of Doillus. Professor Watson shows that Keith is to be read as "Ciuthach" or "Cithich". In a Scottish Fian story Grainne, who eloped with Diarmaid, was successfully wooed by a cave giant referred to as "Ciach" and, in another version, as "Ciuthach". Diarmaid slew him. J. F, Campbell in a prose tale says the giant's name was pounced "Kewach" and explains that "Kewachs" were naked wild men living in caves.[2] J. G. Campbell refers to "Ciuthach mac an Doill" (Kewach, son of the blind

[1] *The Celtic Review (January 1914), pp. 193 et seq.*

[2] *Popular Tales of the West Highlands, Vol. III. p. 49.*

man) in Tiree.[3] Other "Kewach, stories are given by Watson, who notes that a "Kewach" connected with a fort is associated with "Eibhinn and Trostan" and points out that "Trostan is a distinctively Pictish name" which occurs in Lewis, while "there was a Trostansfjord in Iceland". Traces of the Ciuthach are found "from Clyde to the Butt of Lewis".

Other giants are invulnerable against wounds, having their "souls" concealed in a stone, an egg, an animal or fish, or in a tree or a bush. The "should body" must be discovered and destroyed so that an end may be made of the giant.

Giant lore similar to that of Scotland is found in England.[1] The whale-fishing giant, for instance, was known to Daniel Kenricus, the seventeenth century Worcester physician, who describes one in his poem included in Dryden's Miscellany:

> "His angle rod made of sturdy oak,
> His line a cable that in storms ne'er broke;
> His hook he baited with a dragon's tail,
> And sat upon a rock and bobb'd for whale."

Two giants connected with Norden Hill in Dorset-shire engaged in a stone-putting competition like the giants on Ben Ledi in Perthshire. The stone was thrown across the valley towards "Hanging Hill". According to a folk-tale "he whose stone fell short was so mortified at the failure that he died of vexation and was buried beneath the mound, which has since been known as the `giant's grave'."

From a giant's hill at Armley, near Leeds, a giant flung a boulder across the adjacent river and on it may be seen "the impression of the hero's fingers". Fionn's "finger marks" are seen on a boulder he flung from Kockfarrel, Strathpeffer, Ross and Cromarty. Two small stone circles on Heathwaite in Furness, Lancashire, were called "giants' graves". Giants one lived in the district. The last of them is said "to have been shot by an arrow upon the adjacent hill of Blawithknott", as were the giant of Morvern in Argyll and the Banffshire giant.

A story regarding a giant's grave in Leicestershire was referred to by Ray in 1670. This giant was known as Bell and was famous for his three leaps. "At a place ever after called Mountsorrel, Bell mounted the sorrel horse and leaped a mile to a place since named One leap, now corrupted to Wanlip; thence he leaped another mile to a village called Burstall, from the bursting of both himself and his horse." He was buried in the place ever since called "Bell's Grave" or "Bell Grave". The amusing etymologies need not detain us. Apparently a story of a horsed giant, similar to the Scottish giant who pursues the Cailleach, has been localized.

[1] *The Fians, pp. 53 et seq.* [2] *E.J. Wood, Giants and Dwarfs (London, 1868).*

Giants caves are known in England. These include one near Edenhall by Penrith, the stronghold of the giant Tarquin slain by Lancelot; the "giant's cave" at Clifton near Bristol; a barrow similarly named, at Luckington in North Wilts; the "giant's cave" near Tolshill in the Scilly Islands and giants' caves in Cornwall &c. Of special interest is the connexion between giants and giantesses and relics of the megalithic period. The Luckington "giant's cave" contained cists. Another sepulchral site at Uleybury in Gloucestershire was known as the "giant's chamber". The stone circle of Little Salkfield, near Penrith, is known as "Long Meg and her daughters". Meg may have originally been a giantess like the Scottish Cailleach, who is connected with standing-stones near Glasgow, as will be shown.

English figures of giants are evidently of considerable antiquity. One on a steep hill near Cerne in Dorsetshire is 180 feet long and 44 feet across the shoulders. In one of the hands is a club 120 feet in length. Two giants, Gog and Magog, were cut in the earth at the Hawe, Plymouth. "The Long Man of Wilmington" is on he side of the downs near Wilmington in Sussex. It is 240 feet long and has in either hand clubs or magic wands. A giant on the Cambridgeshire chalk hills represented "Atlas, Gomagog's cousin".

William Cashen in his *Manx Folklore* tells of a giant "who flung a boulder from Peel Castle after his fleeing wife. This stone with the giant's finger-marks still lies poised on the Vaish Hill. The long mounds outside the wall of Pell Castle are supposed to be the graves of giants."

Miss Mary L. Lewis, author of *Stranger than Fiction*, informs me that in her Welsh home she has been familiar from childhood with the story that a Welsh giant flings a quoit into Ireland every morning. In her interesting book (p.8) she tells that near her home "the highest hill is crowned by the grave of a mighty *cawr* (giant) - though archæologists will tell you that it is merely a British burial mound". A big fortification called "Pen-y-Gair" at Llanderfell in Merionethshire is a fabled residence of giants.1

In Ireland the megaliths on the plain of Carrow-more, near Sligo are connected with the Dananns and Fomorians. A stone circle at Lugna Clogh is the "giant's grave" and at Corren a "giant's house" is found to be a series of caves. The Danann deities have been connected with New Grange and other megalithic relics. A dolmen at Ballycandan, near Dundalk, is the "Giant's load", and there is a "giant's grave" not far distant. A dolmen near Drumboe Hill in County Down is the centre of an earthwork called the "giant's ring" and megalithic remains near

[1] *See also Gossiping Guide to Wales, published at Oswestry.*

Clayonagh bear the name "giant's grave". Loch Neagh, according to contemporary lore, was formed by a giant who made a great excavation to fling missiles eastward across the land and ocean.

The Scottish Gaelic term *famhair* (Irish *fomhor*, early Irish *fomór*, "submagnus"; Stokes referred - *mor* to the same origin as *mare* in night*mare*, and Rhys took *mor* from the root of *muir*, sea, but in his later years informed the writer that he had abandoned that view. Watson shows that the Fomorians were in old Irish accounts represented as pirates who ravaged the coasts of Ireland, laying the people under tribute. They were "huge and ugly". In the *Tåin Bó Cŭalgne* Cuchulainn becomes "as huge as a *fomóir* or a sea man (*fer mara*)". The form *fomóra* shows that the name is not from *muir*, sea. One of the Fomorian kings was *Indech mac* Dé *Domnand* ("Indech, son of the goddess Domnu"). The Fomorians were connected with the Hebrides.[1]

As we have seen, the hill giants of Scotland received in the course of time the names of heroes like Samson, Patrick, Arthur, Wallace, Thomas the Rhymer, "the Wolf of Badenoch" (Alexander Stewart, son of King Robert II), &c. At an earlier period they appear to have been compared with, and named after, the piratical Fomorians whose raids and invasions are reflected in Irish mythology. The original name of the giants has therefore been lost.

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[1] *W. J. Watson, History o the Celtic Place Names of Scotland, pp. 41 et seq.*
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CHAPTER VII

A SCOTTISH ARTEMIS

Cailleach's links with Greek goddess - "Old wife" - name - Nun connexion - The *Beur* wives - Reed as distaff - The staff - Cailleach's association with cold weather - "Daughter of little sun" - Boulder from - The loathly hag - Cailleach one-eyed with blue-black face - Her magic wand - The enemy of spring - Whirlpool and tempest connexions - Ben Nevis seat - The captive maiden - The elopement - Spring storms - Patroness of wild bests - Cailleach's bird forms - Cailleach as a heron - Cailleach and witch lore - Artemis and Cailleach associates with swine - Boar hunt stories - Raven and corbie as oracular birds - Bird forms of Cailleach - Diarmaid slays Cailleach and oar - Human sacrifice - Gyre Carlin as Cailleach and as sow - Cailleach as "Nicnevin" - Birth from burnt bones - Myth of bone worm - Cailleach worm becomes water dragon - Cailleach's sheep and goats - Cailleach's cattle byre - Cailleach's wolves and wild pigs - Cailleach's herds of deer - Cailleach's fish connexion - Myths of origins of rivers and lochs - Artemis as "lady of the lake" - The river "black goddess".

Memories of an ancient goddess cling to a giantess who in the folk-lore of Scotland is referred to as Cailleach Bheur,[1] Mala Liath, the Muilearteach and other names connected with localities. She resembles somewhat the Greek goddess Artemis, being associated with wild animals and capable of transforming herself into animal shape. Withal, she is a weather controller, like the Artemus to whom Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, was sacrificed so that a favourable wind might be obtained for the fleet which was to set out from Aulis with the warriors who were to wage war against Troy.

In the Scottish goddess we appear to have glimpses of the fierce old Artemis who was ultimately idealized by Greek sculptors and accorded refining treatment by the poets after her character had been adjusted to changed social ideals and customs and after goats and boars were sacrificed to her instead of human beings.

Cailleach means in modern Gaelic "old wife" and originally signified a nun. Its oldest known form is *Caillech*, "veiled one", from *caille*, "veil", a rendering of the Latin *pallium*, the "p" becoming "c" in Q-Celtic. The supernatural Caileach was distinguished from a nun by being referred to as Cailleach Bheur. J. Gregorson Campbell gives the qualifying adjective as *beura* or *bheura*, meaning "shrill, sharp, cutting". He points out that the *beur* wives are sometimes spoken of in the plural number and referred to as staying in lochs and among rushes and as having been "very dangerous to come near". In this connexion he reminds us that a tall reed found beside lochs is called "the distaff of the Bera wives" and that a

[1] Pronounced *cal'yach vare* (ch guttural).

species of flag or water plant is known as the "staff" of these "sarcastic wives".[1]

The Cailleach Bheur is in the folk-stories associated with the coldest and stormiest period of the year. She is called "the daughter of Grianan" or "Grianaig" - that is, of the "little sun". In the old Celtic calendar the "big sun" shines during the period from Beltane (1st May) till Hallowe'en, and the "little sun" is the sun of the winter period. "Daughter of the little sun" does not mean, however, tht the sun was either her father or mother, but simply that she was born during the cold season The Cailleach was supposed to have been transformed into a grey boulder at the end of the period of the "little sun" and to have remained in that form during the period of the "big sun", I have heard references to this boulder being "always moist", and indication that it was reputed to contain "life substance".

Another conception was that the Cailleach change from a fierce old hag to a beautiful maiden. In a folk-story which was connected with the Fians, she appears one night as "a creature of uncouth appearance" who claims hospitality. Fionn and Oisean (Ossian) refuse to let her under their "coverings". Diarmaid pleads that she should be allowed to "come to the warmth of the fire". Soon afterwards she "sought to be under the warmth of the blanket together with himself". Diarmaid "turned a fold of it (the blanket) between them". Before long he "gave a start", for the hag had transformed herself into "the most beauteous woman that men ever saw".[2]

In the early poetic version of the Thomas the Rhymer legend given by Sir Walter Scott[3] the "fairy queen", as she became known, appears as a lovely woman, worthy of beng called "Queen of Heaven". She subsequently appears as a blue hag, like Cailleach Bheur:

> "Her heyre hang down about hyr hede,
> The tane was black, the other gray,
> Her eyne semyt onte before was gray,
> Her gay clethyng was all away . . .
> Her body as blow (blue) as ony bede (head)."

Scott gives another version of the folk-tale:

"The appearance of the beautiful lady is changed into that of the most hideous hag in existence; one side is blighted and wasted, as if by palsy;

[1] The Scottish Historical Review, Vol. XII, pp. 413 et seq.

[2] J.F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, Vol. III, Tale XXXXVI of "The Daughter of King Under-Waves".

[3] *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (London 1907 edition) Vol. IV, pp.122 *et seq.*

one eye drops from her head; her colour, as clear as virgin silver, is now of a dun, leaden hue."[1]

This is the story of the "loathly hag" of which a version is given in Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath's Tale.* The knight, under pain of death, has to discover what thing a woman most desires. He receives the answer from an ugly old hag on condition that he will marry her. It is that woman desire to have sovereignty over husband and love and also mastery in married life. The knight marries the hag and, when he kisses her, she becomes as fair " as any lady, empress or queen".

As the fair young woman, the Cailleach is the giver of luck and plenty during the summer.

The descriptions of the Cailleach Bheur heard by the writer in various parts of the Highlands agree in giving her "a blue-black face" with "one eye on the flat of her forehead, the sight of which is very keen". In songs put into her mouth she is made to say, "Why is my face so black, so black?" Her teeth are red as rust and her hair matted, confused and long and "white as an aspen covered with hoar frost". She wears a kerchief or mutch. All her clothing is grey and she is wrapped in a dun-coloured plaid drawn tightly about her shoulders. On her feet are buskins. She is of enormous stature and great strength, and capable of travelling very swiftly and of leaping from mountain to mountain and across arms of the sea. In her right hand she carried a magic *slachdan*, "beetle ", "rod", which is also referred to as a *farachan*, "hammer". Dr. Macbain derives *slachd* from and early Irish word signifying "thrash", "beat", "strike" and connects it with English "slay" and Latin *lacerare*, "lacerate". With her magic hammer or rod the Cailleach smites the earth, so that it may be hardened with frost and the grass prevented from growing. She is the enemy of growth.

The late Mrs. W. J. Watson (E. C. Carmichael) had heard in the Highlands and islands much about the Cailleach "as a wild hag with a venomous temper, hurrying about with a magic wand in her withered hand, switching the grass and keeping down vegetation to the detriment of man and beast". She is baffled in the early spring period which bears her name:

"When . . . the grass, upborne by the warm sun, the gentle dew and the fragrant rain, overcomes the Cailleach she flies into a terrible temper, and throwing away her wand into the rood of a whin bush she disappears in a whirling cloud of angry passion."

[1] *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (letter IV, London, 1831) p. 129.

The Cailleach then takes flight, saying as she goes:

"*Thilg mi'n slacan druidh donai*

Am bun pris crin cruaidh conuis,
Far nach fas fionn no fionnidh,
Ach fracan froinnidh feurach.

" I threw my druidic evil wand
Into the base of a withered, hard whin bush,
Where shall not grow *fionn* nor *fionnidh,*
But fragments of grassy *froinnidh*."[1]

In other versions the Cailleach flings her magic rod or hammer under a holly tree, "and that is why no grass grows under holly trees".

"Thilg i e fo'n chrasibh chruaidh chuilinn,
Air nach do chinn gas feur no fionnadh riamh.

"She threw it beneath the hard holly tree,
Where grass or hair has never grown."[2]

Like the Cailleach who is the mother of the giants in the Skye folk-tale "Finlay the Changeling", the Cailleah Bheur carried a druidic or magic wand, which, however, she used chiefly as a weather controller. Some of the folk-tales in which she approximates to a human being refer to her, however, as wielding her wand as a weapon. She had apparently a connexion with the holly tree and whins (gorse), as with marsh reeds and water plants.

The period of spring called A' *Chailleach* is the one in which she pauses to prepare or her final effort in arresting growth, as is usually explained in the " céilidhs" (house "gossipings"). The "daughter of the little sun" of winter had been an active influence since her revival at Hallowe'en.

According to the folk-tales, our Cailleach Bheur ushers in winter by washing her great plaid in the whirlpool of Corryvreckan (*Coire Bhreacain*), "which may be translated either 'Breacan's Cauldron' "which may be translated either 'Breacan's Cauldron' or the 'Cauldron of the Plaid'," writes Mrs. K. W. Grant, a native of Easdale, Argyll:

"Before the washing the roar of a coming tempest is heard by people on the coast for a distance of twenty miles, and for a period of three days before the cauldron boils. When the washing is over the plaid of old Scotland is virgin white."[3]

1 *The Celtic Review*, Vol. V (1908-9), pp. 65-6.

2 J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight n the Scottish Highlands,* p. 245.

3 Myth, Tradition and Story from Western Argyll (Oban, 1925), p. 8

The Cailleach, Mrs. Grant notes, is associated with "wintry tempests" and the "bitter, stinging winds of spring".

Her chief seat in Scotland is Ben Nevis and she keeps as a prisoner there a beautiful maiden, with whom her son fails in love. The young couple elope at the end of winter and the Cailleach raises storms to keep them apart. These, according to one account, begin in February, the "wolf" month (*Faoilleach*). Then comes the wind called *Feadag* (the "whistle"), which kills sheep, lambs, cattle and horses. It lasts for three days and is followed by *Gobag* (the sharp-billed one), which pecks in every corner and "lasts for a week" or, as some have it, "three four" or "nine days". Next comes *Sguabag* (the "sweeper"), which lasts for a month and is associate with the period called *Caoile* (leanness). The next period is *A' Chailleach* (the Cailleach).[1]

Mrs. Watson and her father, Dr. Alexander Carmichael, give a different arrangement of the spring gales from J. G. Campbell of Tiree.

The `wolf` month (February) is the last month of winter:
Attention:
"Mi Faoillich, month of `Faoilleach` - sharp, ravenous, tearing wind.
Naoi la Gearrain , nine days of `Gearran` - galloping wind like a `garron`.
Searching Feadaig, a week of `Feadag` - sharp, piping wind.
Seachdain Caillich, a week of `Cailleach` - a few simi-calm days.
Tri la sguabaig, three days of `Sguabag` - the souging blast which ushers in spring."

The "Gobag" wind, the voracious one, began on the day before "Faoilleach", and is called mother of "Faoilleach" (wolf month, from *faol*, wolf). A poetic reference is :

> "Gobag ! Gobag ! mother of the wolf-month cold,
> Thou didst kill the sheep and the lean lamb,
> Thou didst kill the grey goat in two watches,
> And the speckled stirk in one."[2]

Mrs Grant refers to *Latha na Caillich* (Cailleach Day), 25th March (old style) as the date of the Cailleach's overthrow. Until December, 1599, 25th March was New Year's Day and is now "Lady Day".

Some folk-stories tell that before the Cailleach had ceased her activities her son pursued her, riding a swift horse. According to Mrs Grant, the Cailleach, having in her final storm caused te death of the wild duck

[1] J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight*, pp. 250 et seq; A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica* (2nd edition), Vol. II. pp. 288-9.
[2] Mrs. Watson, *The Celtic Review* (1908-9), Vol. V. pp. 66-7.

and newly-hatched ducklings, "put out her eye". Other versions heard by the writer state that her eye was "put out" by her son. To escape destruction at his hands, she transforms herself into "a grey stone looking across the sea".

A place-name, "Horse Shoes", on Loch Etive side is connected with this myth, which the writer heard in his youth during his few years residence in the neighbourhood. another place-name is connected with the son's elopement. Mrs Grant tells that "on Ben Hynish in Tiree there is a rocky chasm called *Leum an eich*, the horse's leap`. Over it Cailleach Bheur's son fled from her on horseback with his bride. The Cailleach pursued him; and, on leaping across, the forefeet of his steed, on alighting on the opposite brink of the fissure, struck a piece out of the rock; hence the name by which the gap is still known."[1] In Skye a fragmentary folk-take tells of the Cailleah leaping from height to height to escape `the deil". Her transformation into a boulder tool place on *Beinn na Caillich*, and she is also associated with a prehistoric cairn on the summit of that mountain.

Another mountain connected with her activities is Schiehallion (*Sîdh Chailleann*, "fairy" or sacred" hill of the Caledonians" - the Caledonian Olympus). On this eminence "there is", as Mrs Grant records, "*sgrîob na Caillich*, the `Old Wife's Furrow`, where she unearthed huge masses of stones in her ploughing".

The writer has heard references to the pursuit of the Cailleach by her son beginning when the day and night are of equal length. In the west this period, 17th to 29th March, the "middle day", is known as *Feill Paruig* (St Patrick's Day) and there is supposed to be a south wind in the morning and a north wind at night. The son who pursues the Cailleach is supplanted by St Patrick, who is said to come from Ireland "to see his parishioners in Barra and other places on the west of Scotland". His wife is a daughter of Ossian, the last of the *Fianna* (Fians). After this day "the limpet is better than the whelk" and although "horses grow lean, crabs grow fat". Vegetation is reviving. a Gaelic saying is "There is not a herb in the ground but the length of a mouse's ear of it is out on St Patrick's Day". High tides come on St Patrick's Day. A swelling *(tòchadh*) in the sea is supposed to be caused by the increasing heat.[2]

The myth of the pursuit of the Cailleach appears to have been known in the Isle of Man. There the son is St Patrick and the Cailleach "a sea-monster of great size". The saint crosses from Ireland on horse-back and the print of his horse's hoofs "is in the cliffs" and "can be seen still by anyone venturesome enough to go there to see it". The saint cursed the

[1] Myth, Tradition and Story from Western Argyll, p.8.

[2] J. G. Campbell, Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Scottish Highlands. pp. 259-61.

sea-monster, which "was turned into a solid rock". On Peel Hill, where the horse stood still, "a beautiful spring of pure water sprang out of the ground, whereby the saint and the horse were both refreshed. The well is called the Holy Well unto this day . . . The Holy Well is said to be the first well, or water, where the first Christian was baptized in the island, and was for ages resorted to as a healing well, and latterly it was called `Silver Well` on account of the small silver coins that were left there by persons seeking to be cured of some disease."

Before St Patrick landed in Isle of Man he heard the cries of a curlew and the bleating of a goat whose kid had fallen down the rocks, "and he blessed them both".[1]

Like the goddess Artemis, the Cailleach, as has been stated, is the patroness of wild bests. The theory that she is mainly or wholly a deer deity is urged by Mr J. G. Mackay, but is not convincing to the writer, who agrees with Miss Eleanor Hull that it does not seem "to account for the various legends about her". Mr Mackay's view that some of the stories regarding the Cailleach reflect "the struggle between matriarchy and patriarchy" seem somewhat fantastic.[2]

Dr Farnell shows that Artemis sometimes assumed the form of the wild animals with which she is associated. One of these was the quail.[3] In Highland folk-references the Cailleach is spoken of occasionally as a gull, cormorant, eagle or heron. Charles St John, during his sojourn in Moray about a century ago, heard of the Cailleach in the form of a heron.[3] She was associated with "Loch A-na-Caillach" (*Lochan na Cailliche*), the Cailleach's small loch, "a bleak, cold-looking piece of water, with several small grey pools near it". Donald, a gillie, who related a long story of the origin of the name of the lochan, drew St John's attention to a large cairn of stones at he end of it. The Cailleach had been "spreading sickness and death among man and beast" and was opposed by the local clergyman by means of Bible and prayer, holy water "other spiritual weapons". It was subsequently discovered tht she had her abode in the cairn and was in the habit of flying through the air by night, especially when the moon was shining, towards "the inhabited part of the country". At length she was shot by Duncan, an ex-soldier, who placed in his gun a crooked sixpence and some silver buttons. Everyone was convinced that the heron brought

[1] Wm Cashen, Manx Folklore (Douglas, Isle of Man, 1912), pp. 48-9.

[2] J.G. Mackay, "The Deer Cult and the Deer Goddess Cult of the Ancient Caledonians" in *Folk-Lore* (June 1932) pp. 144 *et seq*; Eleanor Hull in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 225 *et. seq.*

[3] Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, Vol. II, pp. 432 et *seq.*

[4] C. St John, *Short Sketches of the Wild Sports and Natural History of the Highlands*, Chapter III.

down was "the Cailleach herself". Donald added, "She hasna' done much harm since yon, but her ghaist is till to the fore, and the loch side is no canny after the gloaming".

After beliefs in witchcraft were introduced into the Highlands, these were mixed with local beliefs. Memories of the Cailleach appear to account for the Highland beliefs regarding witches raising storms and drowning people, and appearing as various animals, including sheep, hares, wild cats, rats, ravens, gulls, cormorants, whales, &.[1]

Artemis had a close connexion with the wild boar. In the story of Meleager "it was Artemis herself . . . who sent the boar". Diodorus Siculus tells Phintias, the tyrant of Acragas, "dreamed that while hunting the wild boar he was attacked an slain by the wild sow". He appears to have sought the protection of Artemis and had coins struck with the head of the goddess on one side and a wild boar's head on the other. The untamed animals with which Artemis was "most frequently associated in cult and legend were he boar and the stag or fawn".[2]

In the Gaelic story of Diarmaid hunting the wild boar, as located in the neighbourhood of Loch Glass in Ross and Cromarty, the Cailleach referred to as Mala Liath[3] ("Grey Eyebrows") was protectress of a herd of swine. The writer has heard references in this area to the Cailleach and her swine. Dr Arthur Sutherland[4] has turned into verse he local form of the legend of the boar hunt. He tells of the "venomous wild boar of Glen Glass" and the hag:

"His lair on Meall-an-Tuire's rough side
Where Mala Lia' kept her swine-
Witch Mala Lia', evil-eyed,
Foul, shapeless and malign-
Was all begrimed with filth and gore
And horrid with the limbs of men
The unclean monster killed and tore
To feast on in his den."

Various warriors attempted in vain to slay the boar, but at length the heroic Diarmaid went towards its lair. He saw a raven pecking a dead hare and near it a corbie (hoodie-crow) perched upon a bare boulder. Both oracle birds warned him.[5] The raven said he was going to slay the

1 J.C, Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, pp. 19 et seq.*

2 Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States, Vol. ii, pp. 432-3.*

3 Pronounced mala lee'a.

4 *The Highland Monthly* (Inverness, November, 1892, Vol. IV, pp.491 et. seq.

5 These birds were forms of the Cailleach.

boar but would meet with his death, while the corbie advised him to return to Grainne, the wife of Fionn, with whom he had eloped, because the boar would cause him to die.

Diarmaid raised and pursued the boar. Mala Lia', the Cailleach, attempted to thwart him. She followed in his footsteps, taunting and cursing him and urging him to return to Grainne. At length, greatly annoyed by her bitter tongue, Diarmaid paused, caught her by a foot and flung her over a cliff. after slaying the boar, he was fatally wounded by a venomous bristle which pierced a vital spot on the inner side of one of his heels.

The reference in this folk-tale to the swine devouring human beings suggests a memory of human sacrifices. There are, as stated, traditions of human sacrifice in connexion with the early worship of Artemis.[1] We meet with a similar reference in the Scottish Lowland lore regarding the "Gyre Carling (Gay Old Wife), an undoubted form of th Caileach Bheur. Sir Walter Scott wrote of her as "mother witch of the Scottish peasantry" and quoted a poem regarding her from the Bannatyne MS, in which occur the lines:

"Thair dwelt ane grit Gyre Carling in awld Betokis bour,
That levit (lived) upoun menis flesche (men's flesh)."

The Carlin carried "ane yren (iron) club", the Cailleach's druidical hammer or wand, and when she was attacked by "all the doggis (dogs)" from Dunbar to Dunblane and "all the tykis of Tervey" she fled in her pig form:

"The Carling schup (shaped) her on ane sow and is her gaitis (road) gane,
Grunting our (over) the Greik sie (Greek sea)."

In his poem "The Dreme" Sir David Lindsay, the Scottish poet, relates how he had been wont to carry in his arms and "hap" full "warme" in bed the young King James V and to entertain him with recitals of poems and stories about ancient heroes and

"The Reid Etin (red giant) and the Gyir Carlyng."

The Carlin was sometimes called "Nicnevin", an interesting Gaelic survival in the Lothian and Border counties. "Nic" is the female patronymic prefix, but "nevin" presents a puzzle. It was probably the genitive of the Gaelic word for "bone". Professor Watson has drawn my attention in this connexion to the remarkable story of a child conceived from the ashes of old burnt bones.[2] This child was called Gille Dubh Mac nan Cnámh ("Black Lad, son of the Bones"), with an obscure added epithet. His place of origin was Annat in the parish of Kilmallie, Loch Eil.

1 Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, Vol. II, p. 439.

2 Macfarlane's *Geographical Collections*. Vol. II p. 162.

One has to go to India for similar births from sacrifices.[1] Apparently the "burnt bones" were sacrificial.

A north Irish folk-tale has an interesting bone reference. The Cailleach was slain and mutilated by the Fians and from one of her thigh bones crept out a long hairy worm. a red-headed dwarf warned the heroes that if this worm could find water to drink, it would destroy the whole world. Conan, the impulsive Fian, lifted the worm on the point of his spear and flung it into Lough Derg, saying, "there is water enough for you". The worm became "an enormous beast" which "overran the country, spreading destruction on every side and swallowing hundreds of people at a mouthful." Fionn knew that the monster had on its left side a mole, which was its vulnerable spot. He wounded it there disabling it, and the monster's blood coloured the water red, so that it was called Lough Derg (Red Lake). The monster continued to haunt the lough.

As I have shown elsewhere, this story links with the dragon-lore of India and the Far East.[2]

Apparently the Cailleach had a water-dragon form. Other evidence in this connexion will be given further on.

Mrs K. W. Grant makes mention of "the milking-fold of the Cailleach's sheep and goats - *Buaile nan Dròg*h", which is "a cave at Cailleach Point, that stormiest of headlands on the coast of Mull. There she sits among the rocks, ever gazing seaward. When she sneezes she is heard at the island of Coll."[3]

The writer often heard references to the rocks at the Falls of Lora at the mouth of Loch Etive, Connel Ferry, as the "stepping stones" of the Cailleach and her goats, which were at this place driven across the loch to Benderloch (Mrs Grants4 records this folk-story) and to *Acha-nam-bā* (cow-field) in Benderloch, where circular green hollows are referred to as "Caill-each Bheur's cheese-vats".

J. G. Campbell refers to the Cailleach Bheur's cattle:

"A natural enclosure in the rocks above Goren in Ardnamurchan is called `the Old Wife's Byre` (Báthaich na Caillich), it being said that she folded there cattle there."[4]

Deer are not kept in byres.

[1] In the *Adi Parva* (Section CLXIX) of the *Mahábhárata* King Drupada prevails upon the two Brahmans Yaja and Upayaja to perform sacrifices so that he may get a son. A boy child arose from the flames on the sacrificial platform and was named Dhrista-dyumna. Then arose a daughter, one of whose names was Drupadi.

[2] My *Buddhism in Pre-Christian Britain*, pp. 128-9; Thomas Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 3-4.

[3] *Myth, Tradition and Story from Western Argyll*, p. 8.

[4] *Ibid* ., p.7 [5] *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. XII,pp.413 et seq (E 859)

Like the Irish Morrigan, the Cailleach had a cow which gave great quantities of milk. The writer has heard Highlanders tell of the Cailleach's assistants (*na Cailleacha Beura*) riding on wolves and wild pigs as storm-bringers. They raise the storms of "the wolf month" (February).

Thus we have among the Cailleach's animals deer, swine, goats, cattle and wolves.

There are many folk-stories regarding the Cailleach's herds of deer. One of the pastures to which she drove them is in the Ross of Mull. She also wandered with them by night on wild beaches where they devoured sea-tangle, especially in th winter season. The winter has seen wild goats feeding on seaweed in Skye.

Cailleach Bheinn á Bhric is associated with the "speckled hen" in Lochaber. She pastured her herds of deer in Glen Nevis and milked them there, signing one of her songs the while. When hunters were unable to find deer, they blamed the Cailleach. J. F. Campbell gives a Suterland folk-tale regarding the "Cailliach Mhor Chlibhrich", who had enchanted the deer of Lord Reay's forest so that they eluded the hunters. A man named William kept watch one night and by means of some counter enchantments managed to be present when the Cailleah engaged in milking the hinds at the door of her hut in the early morning.

"They were standing all about the door of the hut till one of them ate a hank of blue worsted hanging from a nail in it. The witch (Cailleach) struck the animal and said: `The spell is off you; and Lord Reay's bullet will be your death to-day.` William repeated this to his master to confirm the tale of his having passed the night in the hut of the great hag, which no one would believe. And the event justified it, for a fine yellow hind was killed that day, and the hank of blue yard was found in its stomach."[1]

The blue yarn is of interest, contrasting with the red cords, berries, &., used by human beings to shield themselves against attack by the Cailleach, the fairies, &c.

Artemis had a connexion with fish and one of her forms resembled that of the mermaid, having been fused with a sea-goddess.[2] It is of interest therefore to find that in Lochaber the Cailleach "generally appeared to them (wanderers) in the form of a gigantic woman by a stream, in the act of cleaning fish". She was, Mrs Grant[3] says, "connected with good or evil luck in hunting and fishing".

[1] *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, Vol. II, Tale XXVII: also Mrs Grant, op, cit., p. 10

[2] Farnell Cults of the Greek States, Vol. II, pp. 429-30 and Plate XXIX, facing p. 522

[3] Ibid, p. 10

J. G. Mackay refers to a Gaelic song *Cailleach Liath Ratharsaidh*, which tells of "the three Hebridean Cailleachs of Rassay, Roma and Sligachan as being fond of fish. They were probably" he adds, "fish-goddess."[1] But the Cailleach was as complex a deity as Artemis. Her connexion with fish, the sea, refers, &c., is not confined to the Hebrides.

The Cailleach's association with water is emphasized by a folk-tale located in various parts of the Highlands. One version given by J. F. Campbell is as follows:

"Where Loch Ness now is, there was along ago a fine glen.
A woman went one day to the well to fetch water and she found the spring flowing so fast that she got frightened, and left her pitcher and ran for her life; she never stopped till she got to the top of a high hill; and when there she turned about and saw the glen filled with water. Not a house or field was to be seen."[2]

Mrs Grant[3] gives an Argyll version which tells that the Cailleach was the guardian of a well on the summit of Ben Cruachan. She had to cover it with a slab of stone every evening at sundown and remove the slab at daybeak.

"But one evening, being aweary after driving her goats across Connel, she fell asleep by the side of the well. The fountain overflowed, its waters rushed down the mountain side, the roar of the flood as it broke open an outlet through the Pass of Brander awoke the Cailleah, but her efforts to stem the torrent were fruitless; it flowed into the plain, where man and beast were drowned in the flood. Thus was formed Loch Awe. . . The Cailleach was filled with such horror over the result of her neglect of duty that she turned into stone. There she sits. . . among the rocky ruins at the pass overlooking the loch, as on the rocks at Cailleach Point in Mull she gazes seaward."

The origin of Loch Tay in Perthshire and Loch Eck in Cowal is accounted for in the same manner. According to the folk-lore of Ireland the River Boyne was similarly brought into existence by a nymph who walked round a well three times by the left, with the result that the water rose furiously and drove her, as the river, towards the sea.[4]

1 *Folk-Lore* (June, 1932), p. 162.

2 *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, Vol. II, Tale XXXIV.

3 *Myth, Tradition and Story from Western Argyll*, p. 9.

4 *Eleanor Hull, Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 249

The earliest form of Artemis was "connected with the waters and with wild vegetation and beasts". Farnell notes that in Arcadia, Laconia and Sicyon she was worshipped as "the lady of the lake". Near the lake of Stymphalus she "bred the deadly birds which Heracles slew". She was also "the goddess of the marsh" in Arcadia and Messene. "She was associated frequently with rivers as in Elis." Farnell comments, "The goddess of still and running water is also naturally a goddess of trees and fish."[1] As we have seen, the Cailleach was connected with the holly tree and whins and fish. No cultivated trees were associated with Artemis.[2]

It may be that the prototype of the Cailleach was connected with the River Lochy (*Lòchaidh*) in Lochaber, which Adamnan, in his *Life of Columba*, refers to as Nigra Dea ("black goddess"). Other river names of like character are the *Lóchá* and *Lòchaidh* in Perthshire and Lochy in Banffshire.[3]

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[1] Cults of the Greek States, Vol. II, pp. 427-8.

[2] Farnell, op. cit. p. 429.

[3] W. J. Watson, History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland, p. 50.
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