

# FOUR LOCAL ANECDOTES FROM HARRIS

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The stories which follow were taken down, in phonetic script, in 1951 from the recitation of Angus Macleod ("Angus the Tailor") of Malaclett, Sollas, North Uist, tailor and crofter, then aged 66. He himself learned all four in Harris, where he had relatives; the first from a story-teller in Caolas Scalpaich, aged over 90; the second and third from the same man's widow; and the fourth from a Leverburgh man. Angus himself loved stories and story-telling, and was an enthusiastic collector of tales; a considerable number of his stories, recited by himself on to Ediphone records, are now in the archives of the School of Scottish Studies. The present writer made a collection of about a dozen of his tales, in phonetic script, including these four, for the Linguistic Survey of Scotland and deposited copies with the School of Scottish Studies, to which bodies he is now indebted for permission to print these extracts.

## I

Ma cuairt air ceithir fichead bliadhna air ais agus rhoimh na sin, bhiodh mòran shoithichean seòlaidh tigh'nn a Loch an Tairbeart na Hearadh, deireadh an fhoghmhair; bhiodh ad a' fuireach ann gu toiseach an earraich. 'S ann a tìr mhóir na Roinn Eòrpa bhà 'd a' tigh'nn; bhà 'd an uair sin a' seòladh a dh' *America* 's do thìrean eile. Bhiodh ad a' reic 'ach uile scòrsa deoch. Bhiodh na croitearan a' toirt dhaibh itean còin, uighean, cearcan, agus feòil air son deoch; ach 's ann gun fhiosd a bha a' mhalairt seo a' dol air adhart. Bhiodh soithichean an toigh Cuspainn a' coimhead a mach air son *smuggling*, agus dh'fheumadh ad bhith faicleach. Bhiodh ad uaireannan a' tiolacadh casgaichean fìon 's ruma 's uisge beatha 'sna h-eileinean beaga tha 'sa' locha. Bha mòran do ghnothaichean eile aca dh'a fhaighinn o na daoine seo.

Bha duine tapaidh an Caolas Scalpaich ris an canadh ad Coinneach Mór MacAsgaill. Fhuair e fhéin 's a chombanaich trì casgaichean 's chuir ad a' falach ad anna'n eilein ris an canar Sgeotasbhaidh [*sic*]. An ceann ùine nuair a bha na bha 'ca a dh' uisge beatha air teirgeachainn, smaoinich ad dhol

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## I

About eighty years ago and before that, there used to be many sailing vessels coming into Loch Tarbert, Harris, at the end of autumn; they used to stay there till the beginning of spring. It was from the mainland of Europe they used to come, and they sailed then to America and to other countries. They used to sell every kind of drink. The crofters used to give them birds' feathers, eggs, hens, and meat in exchange for drink; but it was in secret that this traffic was carried on. The Customs boats used to be looking out for smuggling, and they had to be careful. They sometimes buried casks of wine and rum and whisky on the small islands that are in the loch. They got many other things from these people.

There was a stout fellow in Caolas Scalpaidh whom they called Big Kenneth MacAskill. He himself and his mates got three casks and hid them on an island called Sgeotasbaidh. After a while, when the whisky that they had was used up, they thought of going to fetch the three casks that were on the

a dh' iarraidh nan trì casgaichean a bha 'san eilein. Dh'fhalbh ad bial oidhcheadh. Tha e coltach gun d'fhuir sgiobair bàta 'n toigh Cuspainn fios air dhòigh air chor-eiginn an turus air a robh na daoine. Nuair a bha Coinneach Mór leathach caolais 's ann a chunnaic ad bàta 'n toigh Cuspainn a' tighinn. Dh'iomair ad gu math—bha 'd air son gu faigheadh ad air tìr mas nochdadh bàta an toigh Cuspainn—agus abraidh sìse gun do roinn ad cafac. Fhuair ad air tìr 's na casgaichean thoirt as a' bhàta nuair a nochd bàta 'n toigh Cuspainn. Cha robh ùin' aca air dad a dhianamh, oir chitheadh sgiobadh bàta 'n toigh Cuspainn ad na fiachadh ad ris na casgaichean a chuir a falach. Dh'fhalbh Coinneach Mór, chuir e dheth té dha na brògan, 's thug e dheth a sdocainn; bhuail e stràc ma seach air na casgaichean, 's cha'n aithnichea' tu ad seach clachan a' chladaich. Thànaig bàta 'n toigh Cuspainn a steach far a robh ad, dh'fhoighneachd a sgiobair dhiùbh c'àite robh na casgaichean. “Casgaichean?” arsa Coinneach Mór, “cha'n eil a leitheid a rud againne idir. Cha'n eil agaibh ach coimhead dha'n bhàt' againn, 's ma chì sibh nì 'sa' bith innte nach còir a bhith innte, thugaibh libh e”. Rannsaich sgiobadh bàta 'n toigh Cuspainn am bàta, 's sheall ad ma'n cuairt feadh a' chladaich, ach cha'n fhac' ad dad a cholas rud 'sa' bith ach clachan a' chladaich. Ghabh a' sgiobair a leisgeal fhéin agus thill e chon an Tairbeart. Cha luaithe chaidh e as a fianais na thug Coinneach Mór dheth a bhròg a rist, thug e dheth a sdocainn, bhuail e na clachan, thionndaidh ad mar a bhà 'd rhoimhe 'n a'n trì casgaichean uisge bheatha, agus dh'fhalbh ad leotha dhachaidh; agus abraidh sìse gu robh oidhche mhór aig balaich agus bodaich a' Chaolais 'n oidhche sin.

## II

Bho chionn iomadh linn air ais bha duine air ceann an iar na Hearadh; bha spréidh aige, crodh agus caoirich. Bhiodh e saodachadh chon a' mhonaidh, agus bhiodh e 'na chleachdadh aige, nuair a bhiodh e saodachadh a' chruidh, bhiodh e 'g éibheach, “Ho, ho!” agus “Fuirich a bhos!” Bha e 'na dhuine bha ghnòthaichean a' soirbheachadh glé-mhath leis, agus bha bean anbarrach math aige gos cùisean a chuir air adhart.

Bha e là bria' samhraidh a' falbh leis a' chrodh, agus mar a b' àbhaist, bha e 'g éibheach, “Ho, ho!” agus “Fuirich a bhos!” 'Ach uile h-uair a dh'éibheadh e, bha e cluinntail

island. They left at nightfall. It seems that the captain of the Customs boat got information in some way about the trip the men were going on. When Big Kenneth was half-way across the sound, they saw the Customs boat coming. They rowed hard—they wanted to get ashore before the Customs boat appeared—and you may say that they made haste. They got ashore and succeeded in getting the casks out of the boat when the Customs boat appeared. They had no time to do anything, because the crew of the Customs boat would see them if they tried to hide the casks. Big Kenneth went and took off one of his shoes and removed his sock; he gave a blow to each cask in turn, and you would not have known them from the rocks of the beach. The Customs boat came in where they were, and the captain asked them where the casks were. “Casks?” said Big Kenneth, “we have nothing of the sort at all. You have only to look at our boat, and if you see anything at all there that ought not to be there, take it with you.” The crew of the Customs boat searched the boat, and looked round all over the beach, but they did not see a sign of anything but the rocks of the beach. The captain excused himself and went back to Tarbert. No sooner had he gone out of sight than Big Kenneth took off his shoe again, took his sock off, and struck the rocks. They turned into three casks of whisky as they had been before; and you may say that both young men and old had a great night in Caolas that night.

## II

Many generations ago there was a man in the west of Harris; he had livestock—cattle and sheep. He used to drive them to the hill, and it was his custom, when he was driving the cattle, that he used to cry, “Ho, ho!” and “Stop here!” He was a man with whom matters prospered very well, and he had a wife who was exceedingly good at carrying forward their affairs.

One fine summer day he was going off with the cattle, and he was calling, “Ho, ho!” and “Stop here!” in the usual way. Every time he called he heard a voice answering him; the

guth 'ga fhreagairt; bha [a'] guth 'g ràdh, "Ho, ho! Fuirich a bhos! Slàn tilleadh leat agus slàn falbh leat!" Sheas e is dh'éibh e, "Ho, ho!" a rìst. Fhreagair a' guth, "Ho, ho! Slàn gun till thu agus slàn gu falbh thu!" Chum e rhoimhe, cha robh e cuir an còrr diù a'sa' ghuth a bha 'ga fhreagairt.

Ma dheireadh rànaig e tolman uaine; chual' e ceòl agus ceilearadh agus sheas e, agus chunnaic e doras fosgailte ri taobh an tolmair. Ghabh e stoigh. Thànaig boireannach bria' agus dh'fhàiltich i stoigh e. Thànaig bodach beag a nall far a robh e agus cup' òir aige làn de dh' uisge beatha. Dh'iarr e air a' duine 'ch uile diar dheth òl, oir bha cuirm mhór aig na sìthichean an diugh agus bha na bha stoigh an deoghaidh òl as a' chupa ach e fhéin; agus dh'fhàg am bodach e agus chaidh e miosg na cuideachd. Fhad 's a bha [a'] duine ag òl cha robh duine cuir dragh air. Thug a' nighean a dh'fhàiltich e stoigh sanais dha e theannadh mion air mhion chon an dorais, a chionn nuair a dh'òladh e na bha 'sa' chupa gun doireadh ad bhuidh' e agus gu dùnadh a' dorus agus nach fhaigheadh e mach tuilleadh. Seo rud a roinn e; bha e toirt balgam agus balgam as a' chupa agus a' sìor-theannadh air a' dorus. Ma dheireadh bha 'm balgam ma dheireadh a'sa' chupa. Ghearr e crui[nn]-léim a mach air an dorus agus thug e na boinn dhi dhachaidh, agus an cup' òir aige 'na làimh agus an balgam ma dheireadh annsa' chupa gun òl. Lean an treud sìthichean as a dheoghaidh.

Nuair a bha ad tigh'nn faisg air dh'éibh e, "Ho, ho! Slàn gu till thu is slàn gu falbh thu!" Sheas na sìthichean, ach nuair a sheas ad theich esan; cha bu luaithe a theich na bha ad air a thòir a rìst. 'H uile turus a bha ad gu breith air dh'éibheadh e 'n ao' rud, "Ho, ho! Slàn gun till thu! Slàn ruighinn dhut!" Ma dheireadh bha e fianais an taigh' aige fhéin. Chual' a bhean an iorghail a bha muigh, agus sheas i 'san dorus. Cho luath 's a chunnaic an duine i, dh'éibh e, "Fhionnghala, Fhionnghala, mach an cuman mùin!" Ghrad-chaidh i a stoigh, agus anna'n tiotan bha i mach; bha an duine tigh'nn a stoigh. Bha na sìthichean gu bhith aice. Dh'fhiach i na bha 'sa' chuman air an treud sìthichean. Fhuair a' fear a bh' air thoiseach steall mùin as a' chuman; bha e air a dhalladh agus air a thachdadh còmhladh. Chuir e ma'n cuairt e fhéin is na bha còmhladh ris. Cha do chuir ad an còrr dragh air fhéin na air a bhean.

Chuala MacLeòid Dhun-Bheagain ma dheodhainn a' chup' òir; 's ann a thànaig e choimhead air. Chòrd an cupa

voice was saying, "Ho, ho! Stop here! A safe return to you and a safe journey to you!" He stood still and called, "Ho, ho!" again. The voice answered, "Ho, ho! May you come back safe and may you go safe!" He kept going and did not pay any further attention to the voice that was answering him.

At last he reached a green knoll; he heard music and melody, and he stopped and saw an open door in the side of the knoll. He went in. A beautiful woman came and welcomed him in. A little old man came over where he was with a golden cup full of whisky. He asked the man to drink every drop of it, for the fairies had a great feast that day, and all who were inside had drunk from the cup but himself; and the old man left him and went among the company. While the man was drinking no one troubled him. The girl who welcomed him in gave him the hint to work his way to the door little by little, because when he had drunk all that was in the cup they would take it from him, and the door would be shut and he would never get out again. This is what he did; he was taking one sip after another from the cup and continually working his way to the door. Finally the last mouthful was [left] in the cup. He leaped suddenly out of the door and took to his heels homewards, with the golden cup in his hand and the last mouthful in the cup not drunk. The troop of fairies followed after him.

When they were coming close to him he cried, "Ho, ho! May you come back safe, and may you go safe!" The fairies stood still, but when they stood he ran away; no sooner did he run away than they were in pursuit again. Every time they were about to catch him he called out the same thing, "Ho, ho! May you come back safe! A safe arrival to you!" At last he was in sight of his own house. His wife heard the uproar outside, and stood in the doorway. As soon as the man saw her he cried, "Flora, Flora, out with the chamber-pot!" She rushed in, and in a trice she was out; the man was coming in, and the fairies were almost upon her. She dashed what was in the pot on the troop of fairies; the one in front got a torrent of urine from the pot—he was blinded and choked at the same time. He went to the right about, himself and those with him; and they never troubled the man or his wife further.<sup>1</sup>

Macleod of Dunvegan heard about the golden cup, and he came to look at it. The cup pleased him so much that the man

cho maith ris 's gun dug an duine dhà e. Thug MacLeòid dhà fearann saor air son a' chupa. Tha'n cupa fhathast an caisteal Dhun-Bheagain gos a' là diugh; thà e ri fhaicinn aig duine 'sa' bith a thèid a' rathad. Sin agaibh sgeula cup' òir Dhun-Bheagain.

### III

Bha fear anna' Ródal na Hearadh; phòs e boireannach a mhuinntir Shrannda. Bha i bho dhaoine cothromach, ach bha amharus aice nach robh ann ach droch-dhuine. Thànaig bràthair dhi a choimhead oirre, agus bha e dol a dh' fhuireach fad na h-oidhche. Thòisich fear an taighe air magadh air muinntir Shrannda, ach gu dé bha bràthair na mnàthadh ach agh a reic ris bliadhna rhoimhe sco, agus cha do phàidh fear an taighe riamh dhà è. Bha a chuid bigireachd a' cuir feirge air. 'S ann a thionndaidh e ris agus thuirt e, "Bu chòir dhut an t-agh breac a phèidheadh." "Nì mi sin, ach bithidh è glé-phèite dhut ma'n dig a' mhaduinn."

Thuig a bhean gu robh olc air [a] aire, agus dh'fhan i 'na dùisge. Lig i oirre gu robh i 'na cadal. Nuair a shaoil è gu robh i air cadal dh'èirich e agus mharbh e a bhràthair-chéile. Ghrad-dh'èirich a bhean agus thug i na buinn dhi, agus roinn i air a càirdean. 'S ann a mach air an uinneag aig a' rùm cadail a chàidh [sic] i; fhuair i mach gun fhios dh'a combanach. Nuair a thill esan dha'n leabaidh an deoghaidh an gnìomh oillteil a dhianamh bha e dol a mharbhadh na mnàthadh cuideachd; ach nuair a chunnaic e nach robh i rhoimhe 'sa' leabaidh thuig e gun deach i dh'iarraidh cuideachd, agus 's ann a theich e, oir bha fhios aige gum biodh an tòir air.

Fhuair e bàta agus roinn e air Dun-Bheagan; bhà e an dùil gu dìonadh MacLeòid è. Rànaig è Dun-Bheagan. Thuig MacLeòid gur h-ann a' teicheadh a bha è an deoghaidh cron a dhianamh, agus cheasnaich e è, agus cha do chòrd na freagairtean a thug e seachad dhà. Thuirt e ris gu faigheadh e biadh is deoch agus leaba gus a faigheadh e fios as na Hearadh dé roinn e cearr. Dh'fhuirich a' duine 'sa' chaisteal; fhuair e biadh is deoch agus bha e glé-sheumach orra.

Ach dh'èirich e ma'n do shoilleairich an là agus thug e chasan leis. Chuir e aghaidh air Sléite, fiach an cuireadh MacDhomhnaill dìon air. Gheall MacDhomhnaill siod a dhianamh, ach cha chumadh e 'sa' chaisteal idir e, ach chuir e còmhladh le gibeir e aig a robh toigh a mìosg nam beann. Cha robh e dianamh car còmhladh ris a' ghìbeir. Bha

gave it to him, and Macleod gave him a farm rent-free in return for the cup. The cup is at Dunvegan still, to the present day; it may be seen by anyone who goes that way. There you have the story of the golden cup of Dunvegan.

### III

There was a man in Rodil in Harris who married a woman from Strond. She came of well-to-do people, but she suspected that he was nothing but a blackguard. A brother of hers came to visit her, and was going to stay the night. The man of the house began to make fun of the Strond folk. Now the wife's brother had sold him a heifer the year before, and the man of the house had never paid him for it. His taunting enraged him. He turned on him and said, "You ought to pay for the spotted heifer." "I'll do that, but you'll be well paid for it before morning comes."

His wife realised that he was planning mischief, and she stayed awake. She pretended to be asleep. When he thought she was asleep he got up and killed his brother-in-law. His wife jumped up and took to her heels, and made for her relatives. Out through the bedroom window she went; she got out unknown to her husband. When he returned to bed after doing the dreadful deed he was going to kill the woman too; but when he saw she was not in bed when he got there he realised she had gone to get help, and he ran away, for he knew he would be pursued.

He got a boat and made for Dunvegan in the hope that Macleod would protect him. He reached Dunvegan. Macleod saw that he must be escaping after doing some wickedness, and he questioned him, and the answers he gave did not satisfy him. He told him he should have food and drink and a bed, until he got information from Harris about what wrong he had done. The man stayed in the castle; he got food and drink, and was badly in need of them.

But he got up before day dawned and took himself off. He set out for Sleat to see whether MacDonald would protect him. MacDonald promised to do this, but he would not keep him in the castle on any account, but put him with a shepherd who had a house among the mountains. He did not do a handsturn along with the shepherd. He went to hide every



e dol a' falach 'ach uile maduinn miosg a' fhraoich anna' sealladh toigh a' ghìbeir, oir bhà eagal air gu biodh an tòir air. Bhà eagal air a' ghìbeir rhoimhe, air son bha airm aige—biodag agus saigheadan. Dh'fheumadh e feòil a bhith aige 'ach uile oidhche nuair a thigeadh e dhachaidh.

Nuair a rànaig am boireannach toigh a h-athar dh'inns i mar a thachair. Chruinnich muinntir Shrannda 'ch uile duin' òg làidir agus roinn ad air toigh a' mhurtair, ach nuair a rànaig ad cha robh aca ach an gad aig a robh an t-iasg—bha a' murtair air teicheadh. Rannsaich ad a mach 'ch uile cùil agus cial,<sup>2</sup> ach dh'ionndrain ad an t-eathar a thug esan leis agus thuig ad gur h-ann dha'n Eilein Sgitheanach a chaidh a' murtair. Fhuair ad biurlainn, thug ad Dun-Bheagan orra.

Rànaig ad, chaidh ad chon a' chaisteil agus dh'inns ad dha'n uachdaran mar a thachair. Fhreagair esan agus dh'inns e dhaibh mar a thànaig an duine chon a chaisteil aig iarraidh dìon a chuir air, gu robh naimhdean as a dhcoghaidh. Dh'inns e dhaibh mar a roinn e fhéin agus mar a theich an duine, ach gu robh e am beachd gu dug e Sléite air; agus thuirt e riu, “S e rud a nì mi, cuiridh mi teachdaire go'n [*sic*] Domhnallach Shléite, a ghrad-liobhraigeadh a' mhurtair dhà-san, nò mara liobhraigeadh—!”

Dh'fhalbh an teachdaire agus dh'inns e dha'n Domhnallach a' seòrsa duine a bha e air dìon; dh'inns e an teachdaireachd a chuir MacLeòid uige. Fhreagair an Domhnallach agus thuirt e gu robh an duine air an oighreachd aige-san, agus MacLeòid a thighinn 'ga iarraidh; “Ach ma thig—!” Thill an teachdaire dhachaidh agus dh'inns e do MhacLeòid mar a chaidh dhà, agus a' freagairt a thug a' Domhnallach dhà. Ghabh MacLeòid an shearg, chruinnich e a dhaoine còmhla ris agus na bha [a] mhuinntir na Hearadh còmhla riu; bhà móran sluaigh ann.

Dh'fhalbh MacLeòid leo, agus rànaig ad fearann an Domhnallaich. Nuair a chunnaic sluaigh na dùthchadh a' tighinn ad fo 'n cuid armachd 's ann a ghrad-chuir ad fios dh'ionnsaigh an Domhnallaich gu robh móran sluaigh a' tighinn agus nach robh ad deiscail ar a son, agus nach robh ad deònach a dhol a shabaid air son murtair coimheach. Ghrad-chuir a' Domhnallach teachdaire gu MacLeòid 'g innse dhà far a robh [a'] murtair a' falach, agus e dha thoirt leis, agus nach cuireadh duine 'sa' bith a bh' air an oighreachd aige-san dragh air; ach gu feumadh e bhith seòlta, oir bha 'n duine an barrach carach.

morning in the heather within sight of the shepherd's house, for he was afraid he would be pursued. The shepherd was afraid of him, as he had weapons—a dagger and arrows. He had to have meat every night when he came home.

When the woman reached her father's house she told him what had happened. The Strond men gathered every young able-bodied man and made for the house of the murderer, but when they got there they found nothing but the withy on which the fish had been<sup>3</sup>—the murderer had fled. They searched every nook and cranny, but they found that the boat he had taken with him was missing, and they understood that the murderer had gone to Skye. They got a galley and set off for Dunvegan. They arrived and went to the castle and told the Chief what had happened. He answered them and told them how the man had come to the castle asking for protection, because his enemies were after him. He told them what he himself had done and how the man had fled, but that he supposed that he had gone to Sleat; and he said to them, "This is what I will do, I will send a messenger to MacDonald of Sleat telling him to hand the murderer over to him, or if he won't hand him over—!"

The messenger set off and told MacDonald what sort of man he had given protection to; he told him the message Macleod sent him. MacDonald replied and said the man was on his lands, and let Macleod come and seek him; "But if he comes—!"<sup>4</sup> The messenger returned home and told Macleod how he had fared, and the reply MacDonald had given him. Macleod was seized with rage. He gathered his men to him, and all the Harris men who were along with them; there was a great host there.

Macleod set off with them and they reached MacDonald's land. When the people of the country saw them coming under arms they quickly sent word to MacDonald that a great host was coming and that they were not ready for them; and that they were unwilling to go and fight for an alien murderer. MacDonald at once sent a messenger to Macleod, telling him where the murderer was in hiding, and saying he should take him away and no one in his lands would hinder him; but that he would have to be cautious, as the man was exceedingly cunning.

'S e rud a roinn MacLeòid, chuir e dithis dhaoine gu toigh a' ghìbeir a dh'fhoighneachd ma'n duine bha fuireach a stoigh aige. Bha 'n gibeir seachd-sgìth dhana choigreach chuir a' Domhnallach dh'a ionnsaigh. Dh'inns na daoine dhana ghìbeir a' seòrsa duine a bha aige 'san toigh, agus dh'inns a' gibeir dhaibh m' a dheodhainn, agus gu robh biodag aige agus bogha is saigheadan; mar a bha e falach fad a' là a'sa' fhraoch; mar a bha e tighinn am bial na h-oidhcheadh agus gu feumadh e feòil a bhith aige dhà. "Ach 's e rud a nì mise; nuair a thig e dhachaidh a nochd cha bhi feòil agam ach ceann caorach, agus iarraidh mi a bhiodag air air son ceann na caorach a bhristeadh. Ma feir e dhomh i éibhidh mi oirbh-se tighinn a stoigh". Dh'inns e dhaibh mar a gheobhadh ad faisg air an toigh gun duine 'ga' faicinn. Siud mar a roinn na balaich; dh'fhalbh ad gu toigh a' ghìbeir a'n dorchnachadh na h-oidhche agus fhuair ad gu sàbhailt gu faisg air toigh a' ghìbeir gun duine 'ga' faicinn.

Thànaig a' murtair dhachaidh, dh'fhoighneachd e dha'n ghìbeir gu dé dithis dhaoine a bh' aig an toigh an diugh. Fhreagair an gibeir nach robh ann ach feodhainn a bha gabhail a' rothaid. Thuirt e an uair sin, fear an taighe, nach robh feòil aige ach ceann caorach, agus nach robh sgian aige a ghearradh i; ach na doireadh e dhà a bhiodag gu bristeadh e ceann na caorach leatha. Cha robh a' murtair deònach a toirt dhà, ach bha 'n t-acaras air, agus bha è smaoineachadh nach robh duine an tòir air mìlte ma'n cuairt dheth. Thug e gu h-ainneanach seachad a bhiodag dha'n ghìbeir. Fhuair a' gibeir gun fhiosd an iall a bh' air a bhogha a ghearradh agus dh'fhiach e 'n uair sin a' bhiodag air ceann na caorach; agus a' brag a thug a' bhiodag a dol throimh na cnàmhan, chuala an fheodhainn a bhà muigh, agus a stoigh a ghabh ad. Bha ad air muin a' mhurtair ma'n do thàrr e sealltainn.

Cheangail ad e 's thug ad leo e. Fhuair ad gu sàbhailt gu Ródal e. 'S e MacLeòid am briteamh. Thug è a bhinn a mach, gu bhith air a chrochadh. Roinn ad siod; 's ann a muigh a chrochadh e. Bha pèidhear do bhrògan ùr' air a' mhurtair; dh'fhàg ad air ad agus a chuid aodaich, agus an oidhche sin fhéin ghoideadh na brògan dheth; ach dh'fhàgadh crochte e gus an do dh'fhalbh an fheòil far na cnàmhan aige.

Bha gill' òg a' dol seachad oidhche dhorcha, agus chual' e bragadaich nan cnàmhan mar a bhà ghaoth cuir a' chuirp air ais's air adhart, agus ghabh a' gille eagal. Ruithe dhachaidh; cha do dh'fhan e ris an dorus fhosgladh, chaith e a' chomhla

This is what Macleod did; he sent two men to the shepherd's house to ask about the man he had staying with him. The shepherd was utterly sick of the stranger whom MacDonald had sent him. The men told the shepherd what sort of man he had in the house, and the shepherd told them about him; that he had a dagger and a bow and arrows; how he used to hide all day in the heather; how he used to come at nightfall, and he had to have meat for him. "But this is what I will do; when he comes home to-night I'll have no meat but a sheep's head, and I'll ask him for his dagger to break up the sheep's head. If he gives it to me I will call to you to come in." He told them how they could get close to the house without anyone seeing them. That is what the young men did; they went to the shepherd's house at nightfall, and got safely close to the shepherd's house without anyone seeing them.

The murderer came home, and asked the shepherd who were the couple of men that had been at the house that day. The shepherd answered that they were nothing but people who were travelling the road. Then he said, the man of the house, that he had no meat but a sheep's head, and that he had no knife which would cut it, but if he would give him his dagger he would break up the sheep's head with it. The murderer was not willing to give it to him, but he was hungry, and he thought there was no one pursuing him for miles round. He handed his dagger reluctantly to the shepherd. The shepherd succeeded in cutting the bow-string unobserved, and he then tried the dagger on the sheep's head; and the people outside heard the crack that the dagger made as it went through the bones, and in they came. They were on the murderer's back before he was able to look.

They bound him and took him away with them. They got him safely to Rodil. Macleod was the judge. He gave his sentence that he was to be hanged. They did that; he was hanged outside. There was a pair of new shoes on the murderer; they left them on him, and his clothes, and that very night the shoes were stolen off him; but he was left hanged until the flesh fell away from his bones. There was a young lad going by one dark night, and he heard the creaking of the bones as the wind swung the body back and forth, and the lad was seized with fright. He ran home; he did not stop to open the door but dashed the door and the doorposts in on the floor,

's na h-ursannan a stoigh air an ùlar 's chaidh e air chùl a athar dha'n leabaidh le bhrògan is le chuid aodaich, agus bha e fhad mhìos gun éirich. 'S ann 'na dhcoghaidh sin thug ad an corp thar na croiseadh agus thìolaic ad è.

#### IV

Bho chionn ciadan bliadhna bha e 'na chleachdadh a'sna Hearadh bhith cumail oidhche Shamhna 'g òl is ceòl is damhsa. Bhiodh ad a' cruinneachadh a dh'aon àite agus a' cuir na h-oidhche seachad gu toilichte còmhladh. An oidhche bha seo bha ad cruinn anna'n toigh seann-duine, bhà móran boireannach ann ach cha robh fireannach ann ach fear an taighe. Bha na daoine òga air falbh bho 'n toigh, bhà 'd anna' baile faisg orra, agus bha dùil aca tighinn a thoigh a' bhodaich an deoghaidh meadhoin oidhche. Bha iad an deoghaidh an suipeir a ghabhail. Chuir am bodach peirceall caorach dha'n teine, thòisich e air a leubhadh. Ghrad-thug e leum as, agus dh'éibh e; dh'iarr e air na boireannaich ad a theicheadh, gu robh naimhdean gu math faisg orra, gun d'reaghadh e fhéin agus gun cumadh e air ais ad cho fad 's a b' urrainn dhà.

Dh'fhalbh na boireannaich gu sgiobalta agus chaidh ad air adhart a'sa' mhionaid, fiach a ruigeadh ad far a robh na daoine cruinn, fiach am biodh ad 'na uair air son am bodach a chuideachadh ma'n digeadh a' nàmhaid. Rànaig na boireannaich far a robh na daoine, dh'inns ad dhaibh mar a thachair; ad a ghrad-dhol fo 'n armaibh. Cha robh maill air a' chùis, ach mo thruaighe, bha ad tuilleadh is fadalach—thachair am bodach riu 's e marbh. Chaith e na saigheadan uile. Cha do thachair a' nàmhaid idir riutha.

Thòisich ad fiach a faigheadh ad ad; fhuir ad ràimh nam biurlainnean anna' lagan, agus canaidh ad Lag na' Ràmh ris chon a' là an diugh. Dh'fhalbh ad leis na ràimh 's chuir ad a falach ad. Chaidh ad an tòir air a' nàmhaid; choinnich ad riu, thug ad blàr fuilteach. 'S e Clann Nèill bha 'sna coigrich. Theich Clann Nèill far an do dh'fhàg ad na ràimh 's cha robh aca ach an gad air a robh an t-iasg; agus theich ad gon a' chladaich. Thànaig an cath cho teth orra 's gu b' fheadar dhaibh leum a mach air a' mhuir. Canaidh ad Cath a' Bhàdhaidh ris gos a' là an diugh.

Thìolaic ad a' bodach gaisgeail far an do thuit e, mar a bhà e 'na chleachdadh dhaibh a dhianamh aig na h-amannan ad; agus gos a dhearbhadh gur e 'n fhirinn a tha 'sa' sgeula seo

and went to bed behind his father with his shoes and clothes on, and remained for a month without getting up. After that they took the body down from the gallows and buried it.

#### IV

For centuries it was the custom in Harris to keep Halloween with drinking and music and dancing. They used to gather in one place and pass the night pleasantly together. One night they had gathered in the house of an old man; there were many women there but there was no man there but the man of the house. The young men had left the house, and were in a nearby hamlet, and they expected to come to the old man's house after midnight. They had had their supper. The old man put a sheep's jawbone in the fire and began to "read" it.<sup>5</sup> He suddenly jumped up and shouted; he told the women to escape, that enemies were very close at hand to them and that he himself would go and keep them back as long as he could.

The women set off quickly and were off in a moment, to try to get to where the men were gathered, to see if they would be in time to help the old man before the enemy arrived. The women reached where the men were and told them what had happened, and said they should arm themselves at once. There was no delay about the matter, but alas, they were too late—they came upon the old man dead. He had used up all his arrows. They did not meet the enemy at all.

They began to try to find them; they found the oars of the galleys in a hollow, and they call it *Lag nan Ràmh*<sup>6</sup> to the present day. They went off with the oars and hid them. They went after the enemy; they encountered them and fought a bloody battle. The strangers were MacNeills. The MacNeills fled to where they had left their oars, and found nothing but the withy on which the fish had been,<sup>7</sup> and they fled to the shore. The fight became so hot for them that they had to jump out into the sea. They call it *Cath a' Bhàdhaidh*<sup>8</sup> to the present day.

They buried the valiant old man where he fell, as it was their custom to do in those days; and to prove that this story is true *Lag nan Ràmh* is still there, and *Cath a' Bhàdhaidh* where

tha Lag na' Ràmh fhathast ann agus Cath a' Bhàdhaidh far an do leum na coigrich a mach air a' mhuir. Mu thimcheall daichead bliadhna air ais bha ad a' deanamh rathad mór ùr tromh Ródal, agus thachair cnàmhan duine riu. Dh'aithnich ad gur e cnàmhan a' bhodaich a fhuair ad. Thìolaic ad e an cladh Ródail.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Compare J. G. Campbell, *Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow 1900) 49, for urine sprinkled on doorposts and walls to keep away the fairies, etc.
- <sup>2</sup> Angus said *tial*.
- <sup>3</sup> A proverbial expression meaning "the bird was flown". "The withy" refers to the practice of stringing fish on a willow withy by the gills, to carry them.

the strangers jumped out into the sea. About forty years ago they were making a new high-road through Rodil, and they came upon the bones of a man. They recognised that it was the bones of the old man that they had found. They buried him in the graveyard at Rodil.

- <sup>4</sup> There is a striking parallel to these unfinished threats in the *Dream of Macsen Wledig* in the medieval Welsh *Mabinogion*. The Roman Emperor writes a letter to Macsen saying simply, "If you come, and if ever you come to Rome . . .!" and Macsen replies with an equally laconic letter, "And if I go to Rome, and if I go . . .!"
- <sup>5</sup> Refers to the custom of divination from the marking on the bones of an animal, generally the shoulder-blade of a sheep. Cf. J. G. Campbell, *op. cit.*, 263; Carmichael, *Celtica* 2 (1954) 277.
- <sup>6</sup> "The Hollow of the Oars".
- <sup>7</sup> For this phrase compare note 3.
- <sup>8</sup> "The Battle of the Drowning".