

'Se rìgh òg — Rìgh na h-Eireann a bh'ann, agus, mar sin fhéin, bha e 'na bhantrach, ach bha balach aige. Agus phòs e sin a rithist. Agus a nis, bha nis, bha 'n giollan, bha e cuide ri 'athair agus ri 'stepmother. Agus dar thainig e sin 'na bhalach, thuirt a mhàthair ris — *well*, a' leas-mhàthair dha — thuirt i ris gu robh i 'dol 'thoirt dha préasant. Agus: "Och," thuirt am balach rithe, "cha tug mise préasant dhuibh-fhéin," thuirt e.

"Och, chan eil sin gu dad. Bheir mis' dhut-s' seo." 'S thainig i suas 's bha léin aice. O chan fhac am balach léin riamh bha cho brèagh rith.

"Sin agad," thuirt i, "léin."

'S latha no dhà as a deaghaidh sin chuir e, bha e 'dol 'g a dhreasaigeadh fhéin 's chuir e 'léin air. Bha e cho pròiseil leis a' léin ùr a fhuair e: bha i cho brèagh. Ach cha robh i fad 'sam bith air dar a dh'fhaigh e a' léin a' cur laigeadh mu'n cuairt air a mheadhoin a seo 's: "Dé," thuirt e, "dé th'air a' léin?"

Ach churlaig i 's churlaig i 's 'nuair thàinig i 'n àird a seo air agus..... gus an deach i timchioll air' amhach. Agus 's e seo, 'nuair a thàinig i timchioll air 'amhaich, 'se bh'ann biast de nathair. "A *well*," thuirt am balach, "fhuair mis' préasant."

Chunnaig sin a' rìgh e, 'athair e, 's thuirt e ris, "O," thuirt e, "thug i préasant dhut."

Agus a nis, as na tìdean sin bha boireannach aca ris an canadh iad "Cailleach nan Cearc". Agus thuirt 'athair ris, "Ruith agus faic Cailleach nan Cearc." O chaidh e sin 's chunnaig e..... Bha e 'bruidhinn ri Cailleach nan Cearc.

"O," thuirt a' bhean ris, "tha sin cianail, a bhròinean," thuirt i, "'rud fhuair thu ann a sin a chur ort."

"Bheil gin idir ann," thuirt e, "a leigheas mi no bheir seo dhiom?"

"*Well*," thuirt Cailleach nan Cearc ris, "'n aon aon as aithne dhomh-s' leigheasas thu, ach ciamar a tha thu 'dol a dh'fhaighinn a sin? Tha boireannach," thuirt is', "ann am bàrr Eilean Loch Leug 's nam biodh thu ann a sin cha chreid mi nach leighiseadh i thu." Agus: "Ach"..... thuirt i ris, "ciamar tha thu dol a dh'fhaighinn ann? 'N aon aon chuireadh ann thu 'se 'Maraiche Màirneal. 'S tha es', tha e seachd bliadhn' air a' leabaidh, 's tha e dall 's tha e bodhar."

Ach thug e sin leis suas 's char iad gus a' Mharaich.

"Och," thuirt am Maraich riutha, "chan urrainn dhomhs' éirigh as a' leabaidh 's chan urra dhomh dad a dheanamh, ach tha 'm bàt' ann a shin 's ma chuireas sibh-fhéin mach air flod i tha sibh di-beatht air son a faighinn."

This was a young king, he was King of Ireland and, once again, he was a widower and he had a son. And then he married again. And now the lad, he was living with his father now, and his stepmother. And when he grew up then to be a big lad, his mother said to him — well, his stepmother — she told him that she was going to give him a present. And: "Oh," said the lad to her, "I've never given you a present," said he.

"Oh, that doesn't matter. I'm going to give you this." And she came up and she had a shirt. Oh, the lad had never seen a shirt as beautiful as this one.

"There's a shirt for you," she said.

And a day or two after that he was going to put on his best clothes and he put the shirt on. He was very proud of the new shirt he had got; it was so beautiful. But he hadn't had it on very long when he felt the shirt curling around his waist there and: "What," said he, "what's wrong with the shirt?"

But it went on curling and curling and when it came up on him then and..... till it was round his neck. And this, when it got round his neck, this turned out to be a great snake. "Ah well," said the lad, "that's some present I've got!"

The King saw him then, his father, and he said to him, "Oh," said he, "that's some present she's given you!"

And now, in these times, they had a woman whom they called "The Hen-wife." And his father said to him, "Run and see the Hen-wife."

"Oh," said the woman to him, "that's terrible, my poor lad," said she, "that thing that you've had put on you."

"Is there anyone at all," said he, "who can cure me or take this off me?"

"Well," said the Hen-wife to him, "there's only one person I know who can cure you, but how are you going to get there? There's a woman," said she, "on the summit of the island of Loch Leug, and if you were there, I think she might be able to cure you." And: "But," said she to him, "how are you going to get there? The only one who could get you there is the Maraiche Màirneal [the Weatherwise Mariner], and he — he's been bed-ridden for seven years and he's blind and deaf."

But he took the thing along with him and they went to see the Maraiche.

"Oh," said the Maraiche to them, "I can't get up out of my bed and I can't do anything, but the boat is lying there and if you can get her out and afloat yourselves, you're welcome to have her."

Chaidh iad sin a bhàn gus a' bhàt 's dh'fheuch iad a cur a mach air muir, ach, och, cha dèanadh iad..... cha ghluaisleadh iad i. Thàinig iad a sin air ais 's thuirt iad ris nach dèanadh iad dad dhe'n a' bhat', nach b' urra dhaibh a cur a mach.

"Ach *well*," thuirt a' Maraich riutha, "feuch a faic sibh mo thriùbhsair."

Thug iad a sin dha a thriùbhsair 's char e staigh 'na thriùbhsair 's chuir e 'aodach air 's thug iad bhàn gus a' bhàt' e. 'S dar thug iad a bhàn gus a' bhàt' e: "Nis," thuirt e, "cuiribh mo ghualainn ris a' chuinnlein aic". Chuir iad a sin a ghualainn ris a' chuinnlein aic' 's thug e aon tilgeil dhi 's chuir e trì faid fhéin a mach air a' mhuir i. Agus dh'fholbh iad a sin 's bha iad a' dèanamh gu bàrr Eilean Loch Leug. 'S dar a chunnaig a' bhean: "O *well*," thuirt i, "thig e as an iarach no as an uarach, ach sin agaibh bàrr cruinn soitheach a' Mharaiche Mhàirneil a' tighinn aon uair fhathast."

'S char i sin a mach 's bha i dèanamh *welcome* ris a' Mharaich.

"Dé," thuirt i ris, "an carago th'agad an dràs?"

"O," thuirt e, "tha carago agam an dràsdaich nach robh riamh a leithid agam. Seo agad e," thuirt e. Thug e 'n aird am balach air an *deck* 's a' cheud sùil a thug i air: "Cho luath," thuirt i, "'s gun toir thu do chasan, thu fhéin 's do bhàt, as an eilean, nam bu..... nam bu tig....." thuirt i, "cuiridh mi thu-fhéin agus am bàta a ghrunn, ma bheir thu 'fear seo air tìr a seo."

"Ach *well*," thuirt am Maraich, "'s measa tha na shaoil mi," thuirt e. "Bha mi 'n dùil," thuirt e, "gun dèanadh thu rud ris. *Well, well*," thuirt am Maraich, "bidh sinn a' dol air ais ma-thà."

Agus thuirt e ris a' bhalach a bha seo air a robh nathair timchioll air amhaich, "Ruith mach ma-thà," thuirt e, "agus thoir a staigh dà pheil uisg bhios againn air a' bhàt." Dh'fholbh e 's thug e 'n dà pheil 's char e mach. 'S dar fhuaireas am balach a mach air tìr thog am Maraiche a shiùil 's thionndain e 'm bàt' air ais 's ghabh e air ais dhachaidh.

'S dar a thàinig am balach sheall e 's bha 'n dà pheil uisg aig' 's bha 'm bàt' air folbh. Ach thilg e sin na peileachan bhuaithe 's thàinig e air ais 's bha lios mhór aig a' bhoirionnach a bha a Loch Leug. Bha móran measan ann, ubhlan 's rudan dhe'n t-seòrsa sin. Bha e 'g ithe sin — air tao' mach na leas a bha iad, a mach. Bha e 'g ith' pàirt dhiubh ach thàinig nighean a' bhoirionnaich a bha seo. Thug i sùil's chunnaig i e, 's thuirt i ris:

"O," thuirt i, "thig a staigh do'n lios. Thig a staigh, thig a staigh," thuirt i, "'s ith na measan."

"O, cha téid," thuirt am balach. "Cha téid mis' staigh," thuirt e. "Well, tha mis'," thuirt e, "'na mo bheothach fiadhaich," thuirt e,

They went down to the boat then and they tried to get her out into the sea, but, oh, they couldn't do..... they couldn't move her. They came back then and told him that they could do nothing with the boat, they couldn't push her out.

"Oh well," said the Maraiche to them, "see if you can see my trousers."

They brought him his trousers then and he got into his trousers and he put on his clothes and they took him down to the boat. And when they had got him down to the boat: "Now," said he, "get my shoulder against her prow." They set his shoulder against her prow and he gave her one shove and he sent her three times her own length out to sea. And they set out then, making for the summit of the Island of Loch Leug. And when the woman saw [them]: "Oh well," said she, "let him come from below or from above, but there's the mast-top of the Maraiche Mairneal's ship coming one more time."

And she went out then and she gave the Maraiche a great welcome.

"What cargo," said she to him, "have you got this time?"

"Oh," said he, "I've got a cargo this time the like of which I've never had before. Here it is," said he. He brought the lad up on deck and she had no sooner set eyes on him than: "The sooner you take yourself off," said she, "you and your boat, out of this island..... and may you..... may you never....." said she. "I'll send you and your boat to the bottom if you bring this fellow ashore here."

"Ach well," said the Maraiche, "it's even worse than I thought," said he. "I hoped," said he, "that you could do something for him. Well, well," said the Maraiche, "we'll just go home then."

But he said to this lad who had the snake round his neck: "Run out then," said he, "and bring aboard two pails of water for us to have in the boat." And when he had got the lad ashore, the Maraiche hoisted his sails and put the boat about and he headed back home.

And when the lad came back he looked around, and he had the two pails of water, and the boat was gone. But he threw the pails away then and turned back, and the woman of Loch Leug had a great garden. There was lots of fruit there — apples and the like. He was eating these — they were outside the wall, hanging over. He was eating some of them and the daughter of this woman came along. She looked and saw him and she said to him:

"Oh," said she, "come into the garden. Come in, come in," said she, "and eat the fruit."

"Oh no," said the lad, "I won't go in," said he. "Well," said he, "I'm just like a wild beast," said he, "terrifying everyone," said he, "with this thing that's round me here. And I'm afraid," said he, "to go near anyone."

“cur feagal air na h-uile gin,” thuirt e, “leis a’ rud a th’orm a seo. Agus tha feagal orm,” thuirt e, “dhol faisg air creutair.”

“O thig thus’ a staigh,” thuirt i. Ach ruith i a staigh do’n taigh ’s thuirt i ri màthair: “O,” thuirt i ri màthair, “tha gille mach a sin,” thuirt i, “’s chan fhaca mi gille riamh as brèagha na e. Nach toir tu staigh do’n lios e?”

“O, can ris a thighinn a staigh do’n lios.” Thàinig e sin, ’s thàinig a sin a’ bhean eile a mach, a màthair. Thug i sùil air:

“Trobhad,” thuirt i. “Thig a staigh,” thuirt i.

“Tha e colach gu’n do dh’fholbh..... dh’fhàg iad mis’ as an eilean,” thuirt e.

“Well, bho’n a dh’fhàg iad thu,” thuirt i, “thig a staigh,” thuirt i. Thug i sin staigh e. Agus, ó, ghabh nighean a’ bhoirionnaich a bha seo — thuit i bhàn air a’ bhalach ’s cha bhiodh i beò mur fhaigheadh i e. Ach thuirt a sin a màthair rithe: “An cailleadh thu ’chas air a shon?”

“Chailleadh.”

“An cailleadh thu ’n gaoirdean air a shon?”

“Chailleadh.”

“An cailleadh thu ’m broilleach air a shon?”

“Chailleadh.”

“Well, well ma-thà,” thuirt i, “chì sinn dé nì sin dar thig a’ mhaduinn.”

’S bha triùir mhic aic’, a’ bhean a bha seo. Bha ’chail’ agus..... Bha aon chail’ agus triùir mhic aic’. Agus thuirt i ri aon de na balaich: “Ruith a mach,” thuirt i, “’s faigheabh greim ’s marbhaibh a’ mult as raimhre gheibh sibh ’s thoir a staigh dhomh e.”

Thàinig a sin a’ latha ’s char na balaich a mach don a’ mhon’ ’s fhuair iad ’mult mór a bha seo ’s mharbh iad e ’s dh’fheann iad e ’s thug iad staigh e ’s thug iad dha màthair e. Fhuair i *frying-pan* mór, mór ’s chuir i air an tein’ e. Agus chuir i chail’ ’na suidhe mu choinneamh a’ bhalaich. Bha iad ’suidh an coinneachainn a chéil. Agus dar chuir i is’ ’na suidhe thug i oirre ’m broilleach aic’ fhosgladh. Agus bha i ’tionndan a’ rud bha seo, ’n fheòil bh’air a’ phan ’s bha ’m beothach a bha seo, bha ’n t-acras oirr’ ’s bha i ’g iarraidh seo ith. Ach chuir i car dhith ’s chuir i sin an ath char dhith. Ach dol dhèanamh sgeulachd ghoirid dheth, thug i (? — — ? char i) bhàn ’s leum i dha’n a’ phan — a’ *frying pan*. Bha nis am pan teth’s loisgeadh e i. ’S thug i sin leum a rithistich, agus an àit dhi dhol air ais air amhaich a’ bhalaich, rug i air broilleach a’ chaileag. ’S ó, bha ’bhean deis air a son ’s bha sgian mhór aic’ ’s dar a bha i air broilleach a’ chaileag thug i sgud air ’s gheàrr i ’m broilleach dhith ’s thuit i air an ùrlar ’s chuir i mias oirr’ ’s chuir i ’cas air uachdar a’ mhias. ’S thug i sin a’ chail leis ’s char a dotaireachd ’s bha i — thàinig

“Oh, just you come in,” said she. And she ran into the house and she said to her mother: “Oh,” said she to her mother, “there’s a boy out there,” said she, “and I’ve never seen a boy better-looking than him. Won’t you invite him into the garden?”

“Oh, tell him to come into the garden.” He came in then, and the other woman came out then — her mother. She looked at him:

“Come on,” said she. “Come in,” said she.

“It seems that they’ve gone..... They’ve left me in the island,” said he.

“Well, since they’ve left you,” said she, “come in,” said she. She brought him in then. And, oh, this woman’s daughter — she really fell for the lad and she couldn’t live if she didn’t get him. But her mother said to her: “Would you lose a leg for him?”

“Yes.”

“Would you lose an arm for him?”

“Yes.”

“Would you lose a breast for him?”

“Yes.”

“Well, well then,” said she, “we’ll see what we can do when the morning comes.”

And she had three sons, this woman — she had the girl and..... she had one daughter and three sons. And she said to one of the boys: “Run out,” said she, “and catch and kill the fattest wether you can find and bring it in for me.”

Day came then and the lads went out to the hill and they found this big wether and they killed it and skinned it and brought it in and gave it to their mother. She got a great big frying-pan and put it on the fire and she got the girl to sit facing the boy. They were sitting facing each other. And when she had her sitting down, she got her to expose her breast. And she kept turning this thing — the meat that was in the pan — and this brute, it was hungry and it wanted to eat this. And it loosed one coil and then it loosed another. But to make a short story of it, it gave (? — — and came) down and sprang into the pan — the frying-pan. Now the pan was hot enough to burn it. And it gave another spring but instead of going back round the boy’s neck it fastened on to the girl’s breast. And, oh, the woman was ready for it and she had a big knife and when it was on the girl’s breast she slashed at it and cut off her breast and it fell to the floor and she put a basin over it and put her foot on top of the basin. And she took the girl away then and her wound was dressed and she was — she recovered all right. She was healed. The lad was now a lad just as he ought to be. The creature was off him and he was a fine-looking boy. He had got rid of the snake.

i ceart gu leòr. Leighis ise. Bha 'm balach 'na bhalach mar bu chòir dha bhith. Cha robh 'm beothach air 's bha e 'na bhalach brèagh. Fhuair e clìor as a' nathair.

"Nis," thuirt i ris.... dar a thog i 'mhias dhe 'n ùrlar bha 'lèin ann a shin a rithistich cho brèagh 's a chunnaig thu.

"Shin agad," thuirt i, "'m prèasant a thug a' leas-mhàthair agad dhut."

'S chuir i 'san tein' i. 'S rinn a' lèin aon urchair dar chuir i 'san tein' i 's thug i leis leth an t-simileir cuide rith'.

Well, bha nis am balach ann a shin cuide ris a' bhean 's phòs iad. Agus bha e sin cuide ris an t-sluagh a bha seo air an eilean — e fhéin 's a' bhean aig' 's a bhràithrean-céil, 's a mhàthair-chéil. 'S bha Cailleach nan Cearc aca-s cuideachd agus a mac. Nis bhiodh a' mac Cailleach nan Cearc agus am balach a bha seo, bhiodh iad gu math tric cuideachd — glé thrì cuideachd. Agus bhiodh a sin a' mhàthair, bhiodh i sealltainn as deaghaidh a' chaileag a bha seo. 'S bha fhios aice air na h-uile dad ma dheidhinn na caileag. 'S thuirt Cailleach nan Cearc ri 'mac fhéin: "Nam biodh thus *clever*," thuirt i ris, "dh'fhaodadh thus' bhith as an àite aig-es."

"Och," thuirt es', "ciamar a bhithinn-s' as an àit' aige..... aig a' bhalach?"

"O math gu leòr. Dh'fhaodadh thus' ghràdh ris gu 'm beil fhios agad air a' bhean aige. Agus dh'fhoighnich e (*sic*): 'Ciamar tha fhios agad-s' air a' bhean agam-as?' 'Innsidh mi dhut'..... Inns e: 'Well, tha cìr òir aice, air son a bhith cìreadh a falt.' 'Och, dh'fhaodadh tu sin fhaicinn.' 'S an ath rud innseas thu dha: 'Mur a creid thu mi, innsidh mi rud eile dhut. Tha ceann òir air a' bhroilleach aice.' Agus cuiridh mi geall dar a chluinneas es' sin gabhas an t-iadach e agus chì thu gun dean e (?——) agus gu fàg e agus gheibh thus' an t-àit aige-es."

Ach 'se seo a bh'ann a nis. Bha e mach 's: "Well," thuirt e ris a' bhalach, "tha bean bhrèagh agad."

"O tha," thuirt am balach. "Tha fhios agam air sin, agus bean bhrèagh is bean mhath a th'agam."

"O tha," thuirt e, "ma tha i cho math sin, chunna' mis' i 's chunna' mi 'cìreadh a ceann i. Tha fhiosam dé seòrsa cìr a th'aic'."

"Och, dh'fhaodadh thu 'faicinn a' cìreadh a ceann."

"'S chunna mi na's mutha na sin. Tha ceann òir air a' bhroilleach aice."

"O mhic na fear ud!" thuirt e ris agus thug e buill' air. 'S leum e sin 's char e dhachaidh 's rug e air a' bhean aige fhéin 's thug e gréidheadh cianail dhi. 'S bhreab e i 's thog e sin air 's dh'fhàg e. 'S dh'fholbh e 'na bhodach-baigeir. Thog e phoc 's dh'fholbh e 'na bhodach-baigeir. Bha e

"Now," said she to him..... when she lifted the basin off the floor, the shirt was there again, as beautiful as ever you saw.

"There," said she, "is the present your stepmother gave you."

And she put it in the fire. And the shirt went off with a bang when she put it in the fire and it blew off half the fireplace.

Well, the lad was there now along with the woman and they got married. And he was there along with these people in the island — himself and his wife and his brothers-in-law and his mother-in-law. And they had a Hen-wife too, and her son. Now the son of the Hen-wife and this lad, they were quite often together — very often together. And then the mother, she used to look after this girl. And she knew everything about the girl. And the Hen-wife said to her own son: "If you were smart," said she, "you could be in his place."

"Och," said he, "how could I be in his place..... the lad's place?"

"Oh, quite easily. You could say to him that you have had knowledge of his wife. And he asked [*sic*]: 'What knowledge have you of my wife?' 'I'll tell you.' Tell him: 'Well, she has a golden comb for combing her hair.' 'Och, you might just have seen that.' And the next thing you'll tell him: 'If you don't beleive me, I'll tell you something else. She has a gold tip on her breast.' And I'll bet when he hears that he'll be consumed with jealousy and you'll see that he'll do (? — —) and and that he'll go away and you'll get his place."

And this was what happened then. He was outside [*? one day*] and: "Well," said he to the lad, "you've got a beautiful wife."

"Oh yes," said the lad, "I know that — I have a beautiful wife and a good wife."

"Oh yes," said he, "though she's as good as all that, I've seen her, and I've seen her combing her hair. I know what sort of comb she has."

"Och, you might have seen her combing her hair."

"And I saw more than that. She's got a gold tip on her breast."

"Oh you son of the Devil!" said he, and he struck him. And he jumped up then and went home and he seized his wife and gave her a terrible thrashing. And he kicked her. And then he set out and went away. And he went away as a beggar-man. He took up his bundle and went away as a beggar-man. He was wandering from place to place. And one day he was going through a wood. There was a path there and he was going through a wood and he heard cries coming from the wood. He listened, and then he heard the cry again. And he went towards it and here was a man lying on the ground and he was very ill.

"Ho, what's the matter?" said he.

dol o àite gu àit. Agus bha e 'dol throimh choill latha. Bha rathad ann 's bha e 'dol throimh choille 's chual e glaothaich a's a' choille. Dh'éisnich e 's chual e sin an glaoth a rithistich. 'S char e far a robh e agus 'se seo duin' 's bha e 'na laighe air an talamh 's bha e glé thinn.

"Hó, dé th' ort?" thuirt e.

"O tha tinneas orm," ors e, "ach tha fuaran ann a sin 's na faighinn-as deoch as an fhuaran sin bhithinn-as cho math 's a bha mi roimhe."

"'S nach fhaigh thu deoch as an fhuaran," thuirt am balach, "nach eil e cho..... nach fhaigh.....?"

"O," thuirt e, "tha a' fuaran air a gheardaichteadh le beothaichean fiadhaich," 's thuirt e: "Tha 'n dràdaich," thuirt e, "tha leóghann ann, 's tha cuach aig a' leóghann 'na spòg. 'S ma gheibh thusa 'chuach sin a spòg a' leóghann..... tha e'n dràdaich," thuirt e, "tha iad 'nan cadal. 'S ma théid thus' agus ma gheibh thu sin dhomh-s, agus deoch, bidh mise gu math," thuirt e, "agus bios comann an t-saoghail agad-as as a' chuach."

"Well," thuirt am balach, "chì mi dé nì mi."

'S mar a thubhairt e, bha a' leóghann 'na shuidh aig an fhuaran 's a' chuach a bha seo 'na spòg. Thainig am balach gu fhèathail 's thug e, dar bha e gu bhith aige, thug e leum 's spìon e 'chuach a spòg a' leóghann. 'S a nise dhùisg iad 's thuirt e ris a' leóghann e clìoraigeadh air folbh o'n fhuaran. Och, cho luath's a fhuair e 'chuach a bha seo dh'fholbh na h-uile beothach a bh'aig an fhuaran — theich iad. 'S thug e sin deoch as dha'n duin', 's dar thug e dhà'n deoch, 'n ceann greiseag an déidh sin, dh'éirich an duin' go chasan agus:

"O," thuirt an duin', "tha móran taing agad. Tha mis'," thuirt e, "nis cho math 's a bha mi roimhe. 'S a nis," thuirt e, "tha cuach agad-as ann a sin agus deoch 'sam bith a dh' iarras thu, na àit' 'sam bith dhe'n t-saoghal a dh'iarras thu bhith, bios thu ann," thuirt e, "dìreach ann a' *flash*. Agus," thuirt e, "ceòl 'sam bith a th'ann, tha h-uile dad agad as a' chuach."

Ach a sin, smuainich am balach air fhéin 's:

"Ach ma-tha," thuirt e ris, "fàlbhaidh mi 'n dràdaich air ais ann an Eilean Loch Leug."

'S bha e sin air ais aig oighreachd a mhàthair-chéil 's aig a' bhean aige. Agus bha e nis, bha e 'na bhodach-baigeir. 'S thainig e staigh 's, ó, cha d'aithnich *one* diubh e. Bha e cho fad air folbh 's char e a aithn' orra leis an fheusag 's a' falt 's na h-uile dad a bh'air. Bha e 'dèanamh ceòl dhaibh. 'S cha do dh'éirich a' bhean aige fhéi', a' chail', a' bhean a phòs e, cha do dh'éirich i dhe leabaidh bho'n a' latha dh' fholbh e gus an oidhche thainig es' air ais leis a' cheòl. 'S leis a' cheòl a

"Oh, I've got an illness," said he, "but there's a spring there and if I could get a drink from that spring I'd be as well as I ever was."

"And can't you get a drink from the spring?" said the lad. "Isn't it as..... can't you get.....?"

"Oh," said he, "the spring is guarded by wild animals," and he said: "Just now," said he, "there's a lion there and the lion has a cup under its paw. And if you can get that cup away from the lion's paw..... Just now," said he, "they're asleep, and if you go and if you can get that for me, with a drink, I'll get well," said he, "and you'll have command of the whole world with that cup."

"Well," said the lad, "I'll see what I can do."

And, as he had said, the lion was sitting by the spring with this cup under its paw. The lad came up quietly and then, when he was almost upon it, he gave a leap and snatched the cup from the lion's paw. And they woke up with that, and he told the lion to clear out and leave the spring. Oh, as soon as he had this cup, every beast that was at the spring left — they fled. And he got a drink from it for the man then, and when he gave him the drink, a little while later the man rose to his feet and:

"Oh," said the man, "I'm very grateful to you. Now," said he, "I'm just as well as I ever was. And now," said he, "you've got a cup there, and any drink you wish for [you shall have], or any place in the world that you wish to be in, you'll be there," said he, "just in a flash. And," said he, "any kind of music there is, you've got it all with the cup."

And then the lad thought about himself and: "Well then," said he to him, "I'll go back now to the Island of Loch Leug."

And there he was, back at the estate of his mother-in-law and his wife. And now he was a beggar-man. And he came in and, oh, not one of them recognised him. He had been so long away and he was changed beyond recognition with his beard and hair and everything else about him. He was making music for them. And his own wife had not been up, the girl, the wife he had married, she had not risen from her bed from the day he had left till the night he came back with the music. And at the sound of his music, she raised herself up on her elbow and she was listening to the music. They went then..... Bedtime came and they went to bed, and when they had gone to bed the girl got up and came through to her brother, her youngest brother, and she said to him, "What would you do now if my husband came back? What would you do to him?"

"Oh," said he, "if he came here," said he, "I'd break every bone in his body." And she left him then and she went to the middle one and she said the very same thing to him: if her husband came what would he do to him?

"Oh," said he, "I'd put him" said he, "on the (? — — —)."

bh'aig dh'éirich is' gu h-uilinn 's bha i 'g éisneachd ris a' cheòl. Char a sin..... Thàinig thìde dhol a laighe 's char iad a laighe, agus dar chaidh iad a laighe dh'éirich a' chaile 's thàinig i gu 'bràthair, am bràthair a b'òige, 's thuirt i ris: "Dé dhèanadh thu 'n dràdaich nan tigeadh an duin' agam-s' air ais? Dé dhèanadh thu ris?"

"O," thuirt esan, "nan tigeadh e seo," thuirt e, "phronnainn na h-uile cnàimh tha 'sa' bhodhaig aige." Agus dh'fhàg i sin e 's char i sin gus a' fear meadhonach 's thuirt i 'n dearbh rud ris: nan tigeadh an duin' aic' dé dhèanadh es' ris?

"O," thuirt e, "chuirinn-as," thuirt e, "air a' (?———)" Ach char e (sic) sin gus am bràthair bu shine. Agus thuirt e ris (sic), dar chaidh i staigh do'n rùm aige 's ghnog i 's:

"Dhia gléidh mi," thuirt es' rithe, "ciamar a dh'éirich thus'?" thuirt e. "Tha bliadhnachan o nach robh thus' air do chas. Ciamar a dh'éirich thu?"

"O, chan eil fhios agam-s," thuirt i, "ach fhuair mi neart a nochd," thuirt i, "'s dh'éirich mi 's tha mi air mo chas. Ach tha mi 'dol a dh' fhoighneach seo dhiot," thuirt i: "nan tigeadh an duin' agam-as air ais, dé dhèanadh thusa ris? Am biodh thu gu dona dha?" Agus:

"O," thuirt es', "cha bhitheadh mis' gu dona dha. 'S e 'n fhoill char a dhèanamh air fhéin, agus breugan chaidh a dhèanamh dha agus 'se sin," thuirt e, "a rinn sin."

'S dar chunnaig i sin gu robh 'm bràthair a bu shin', gun deach i leatha: "Well, ma-thà," thuirt i, "shiod agad e. Thàinig e nochd," thuirt i. "Ged nach d'aithnich gin agaibh-s' e, dh'aithnich mis' e." Agus:

"Och well," thuirt es', "a' fear a lot 'se a leighis."

Agus thàinig a sin a' mhaduinn agus dar a thàinig a' mhaduinn dh'innis i sin dha màthair. Agus dh'innis i sin dha'n a h-uile gin gur é bh'ann, 's och well, char a sin a h-uile dad ceart gu leòr. Bha is' air a cas 's bha i na b'fheàrr.

Agus char beirsinn air Cailleach nan Cearc agus air a mac agus char an cur ann am barailt tèarr 's paraffin a dhòrtadh orr agus maids a chur 'nan tein'.

Sin ceann na stòraidh sin. Dh'fhuirich e fhéin 's is' air an oighreachd ann a sin 's chan eil fhios agam-as nach eil iad a sin fhathastaich.

But then he (sic) went to the eldest brother. And he said to him (sic) when she went in to his room and knocked and:

"God save us," said he to her, "how have you managed to get up?" said he. "It's years since you were last on your feet. How did you get up?"

"Oh, I don't know," said she, "but I found the strength tonight," said she, "and I've got up and I'm on my feet. But I'm going to ask you this," said she. "If my husband came back, what would you do to him? Would you treat him badly?" And:

"Oh," said he, "I wouldn't treat him badly. He was treacherously deceived himself, and lied to, and it was that," said he, "that led to that."

And when she saw then that her eldest brother, that he agreed with her: "Well then," said she, "that's him over there. He came tonight," said she. "Though none of you recognised him, I knew him." And:

"Oh well," said he, "the one who made the wound has healed it."

And then the morning came and when the morning came she told this to her mother. And then she told everyone that it was he, and, och well, everything ended all right then. She was up again and she was better.

And the Hen-wife was seized then, and her son, and they were put in a barrel of tar and paraffin was poured over them and they were set alight with a match.

That's the end of that story. He stayed with her on the estate there and for all I know they may still be there.

SA 1974/26 B. Recorded from Alasdair Stewart by D.A. MacDonald and Alan Bruford: learned from the same sources.

This remarkable story, a variant of AT 433B, "King Lindorm", usually about a prince turned into a snake, seems only to be known to the Sutherland and Ross-shire Stewarts. The Hen-wife in Gaelic and Scots stories may be wise and helpful or evil and envious: here there is one of each sort. The episode of the "calumniated wife" does not normally follow in international versions, but is beautifully linked by the golden breast necessitated by the means of getting rid of the snake (usually told of a snake or "demon of hunger" enticed out of someone's throat, cf. AT 285B*)