CHAPTER II CURES AND CHARMS

1. The "Cancer Cure."

A BRIEF mention of this was made in the Second Scrapbook, page 188, among Magical Cures. There is, however, nothing of the supernatural about it, merely the mystery surrounding secret remedies in general. Further enquiry has enabled me to fill in the outline previously given of the Andreas blacksmith's method of treatment, and to correct two of my statements there. The operator's name was William Mylrea, not Mulroy, and the secret has not been lost.

Specific instances of cures worked by Mylrea are well remembered in the North of the Island. His remedy extracted entire the superficial "cancer" or epithelioma, which in most cases grew on the lower lip, and may sometimes, I think, have been caused by smoking the old-fashioned clay pipe which has now gone out of use. A description of one typical cure will suffice.

A Liverpool policeman named Crennell, a native of Bride, consulted the Liverpool Infirmary doctors about a growth of this kind on the left side of his lower lip. They said it must be cut out at once. He refused to have it cut, and told them he would ask for leave, go to the Isle of Man, and have it taken out by Mylrea. They replied, "If this man is successful, will you put the growth in spirit and bring it back for us to examine?" He promised to do so. When he reached the Island he went straight to Mylrea. Mylrea laid him on his back and took a long look at the cancer. At last he said, "Well, Crennell, I wish you had come a fortnight sooner. I believe I can draw it out for you even now, but it will take longer and cost you a lot more pain." He then made a "patch"—a small poultice or plaster—and gave it to Crennell with instructions to wear it for two weeks. During that period he was to lie at night on his right side only, with the end of a lead pencil, or anything similar, in his mouth to run off the saliva; and he was to be careful not to let himself sink into a deep sleep lest he should swallow the "patch." In the daytime he was seen, by one of my informants, walking up and down on the shore with his head wrapped in a shawl, half mad with pain. At the end of the fortnight Mylrea pulled the cancer right out. The same informant, H—of Ballagbenny, who saw it afterwards, describes it as resembling a leek, with little threadlike roots.

Mylrea had inherited the secret from his father and grandfather, and he passed it on to his son; but the son was reluctant to use it because of its risky nature, the chief ingredient being arsenic, i.e. trioxide of arsenic, or its sublimation.

About the time I was hearing of these things on the spot where they had happened, an article appeared in the Liverpool Daily Post of 10th September, 1932, which gave a detailed account, save for the names of the ingredients, of a secret cure possessed by a Lleyn (Carnarvonshire) family for the dafad wyllt, "wild wart," otherwise epithelioma. The ointment used was a potion distilled from locally-grown herbs. Its exact composition was a secret which had remained in the family for over 100 years. To the efficacy of this ointment the present representative of the family held, he stated, over ten thousand testimonials. A petition was then about to be presented to the local Member of Parliament to safeguard the remedy, through legal channels, against any charge of quackery or illegal practices.

From an English friend I hear of a retired druggist living in a Flintshire village who has often used a poultice made of the ordinary garden carrot for the same purpose and with the same result as the Manx blacksmith. The famous Welsh medical family called the Physicians of Myddfai used a decoction made from the foxglove. Rhys, Celtic Folklore, page 31, relates that the water of a spring known as Tui Bach, near Llanberis, benefited, if it did not entirely cure, the dafad wyllt.

In the Scottish Highlands such excrescences, and skin-diseases in general, were relieved with two herbs. One was lus-an-rőis, otherwise named lus-an-eallain, "cancer-wort", the other was Herb Robert, Geranium Robertum. (A. M. Macfarlane, Trans. of Gaelic Soc. of Inverness, vol. xxxiii.) Curran-craidiirth, hemlock, the effect of which is so vividly described by Carmichael in Carmina Gadelica, ii. 266, is not mentioned in this connexion by the Rev. Mr. Macfarlane. In Ireland the herb hound's-tongue, Cynoglossum, was used, also the patient's own urine. (Wood-Martin, Elder Faiths, ii, 181, 185-6.)

2. The Teares of Ballawhane.

Memories of Charles Teare's wonderful powers seem inexhaustible. It may be that he is sometimes credited with the achievements of other men, in the family or outside it; but there can be no question of the natural skill in medicines, both human and animal, enjoyed by the Teare family for several generations. Charles's descendants carried on the tradition after his death. All this demands an explanation, and folk-lore has supplied one which satisfies its retailers. In my Second Scrapbook, page 179, will be found a tradition that the Teares possessed a mysterious book of charms and remedies, a volume which had been handed down the family for an unknown length of time. Since writing that paragraph I have learned more about this fabulous collection of recipes or prescriptions. As is the way of Manx stories, this one is briefer and more prosaic, on the surface, than those attached to certain Scottish and Welsh families in which medicinal learning was, for a much longer period, hereditary.
The Manx story is that on a dark and stormy night long ago a French ship was wrecked at Rue Point on the coast of Andreas. The men of the Teare family of Ballawhane, or wherever they lived then, rescued some of the crew at great personal risk, and the Teare women-folk gave them shelter, food and clothing until they had sufficiently recovered to depart. Among the rescued men was the captain of the ship, and he, when quitting the Teares, left them as a mark of his gratitude a manuscript volume of a medical nature. It is said that he gave it to the celebrated Charles Teare's father, but it seems likely that the family skill is to be dated back to an earlier generation than that. At any rate, the man in whom the family genius flowered most brightly died over sixty years ago. He was then aged and bent, but clear-minded and in full possession of his powers, I have been told by one or two people who remember him. Here are a few more stories about him which have been handed down. In these the boundary-line, if there is one, between ill-health and supposed bewitchment cannot always be drawn.

An informant's elder brother — they were farming together in Maughold — had a remarkably fine and valuable sow which he was keeping in his cart-house, as she was near to farrowing. She had been warmly praised by a Manx-American who had returned from Illinois on a visit, and in consequence of his envious feelings, it was believed, she " went mad " the same evening, refused to eat, broke out into the fields at the back of the house, and disappeared. My friend and his brother lit the stable lantern and went out with two men to look for her. At last they found her in the mill-ditch, in a fair way to be drowned or smothered. With great difficulty they got her out and back into the cart-house, but she was still very queer and wild, and would not eat. They thought she was going to die, and decided to send word to Ballawhane, a distance of eight miles. Teare said to the messenger, " Sit down and wait awhile, and I'll give you something." After a time he went out to his garden and cut a herb here and a herb there, and came back with a bunch which he handed to the messenger with instructions for its use. When the man got back to Ballasloe they boiled the herbs to a broth. Then they slung up the sow (for by that time she could not or would not stand), with ropes made fast to the roof; my friend, though but a youth, lending what help he could in the awkward business. His brother put a stick between her teeth, the way she couldn't bite him, and poured the broth down her throat out of a beer-bottle. Then they all went in to their suppers. When they looked at her again after supper she was as right as the mail, and came running for her food when they called her.

Besides possessing the power of stopping the flow of blood in man or beast, Teare could cure the " fairy stroke." A man named Tom Kermode woke up one morning with his mouth all twisted to one side. Teare got herbs together to make a drink, and sent them to the man's wife. She boiled or simmered them and gave them to him, and he was cured completely.

A boy, a lumpers of about 12 years old, who fell asleep among some gooseberry bushes in the garden of a Maughold farmhouse was taken ill immediately afterwards, and nothing could be done with him. His father was advised to send for Teare. He refused, for he did not believe in him. A neighbour, seeing how bad the boy was, set off to Ballawhane on his own account. Teare said to him, " The boy has been lying where he should not." He gave the man some herbs out of his garden and sent him back, with a warning to the parents never to let the boy lie there again. The liquor from the herbs was given to him on the sly by his mother, but he was a long time getting better.

The father of the boy may have had a religious objection to Teare's methods. But it is acknowledged that the " doctor " had not everyone's confidence. One evening he was drinking in a public house in Andreas with three other men. (It is not impossible that this was really his son Charley Chalse, i.e. Charley, son of Charles.) When he hinted that it was now their turn to stand treat they began to abuse him, accusing him of " blindfolding " (hoodwinking) people and taking their money under false pretences. For Teare always expected a half-crown, or two if he could get them, for doing a cure. At their words he got up to go out. As he walked to the door he looked at the men over his shoulder and said: " There's more than one of you fellows won't get home to-night." After leaving the inn one of them fell into a hole and broke his neck. The other two got strayed and fell asleep by the roadside, and when they woke up next morning they were in the wrong direction from their homes.

That, as I have said, may have been one of Teare's sons. The kudos enjoyed by the father was immense, and is strikingly shown by what happened when he accidentally left his purse in a fishing-boat he had been " doctoring." The purse, appropriately a net purse, was a tempting fetish of which the crew at once availed themselves. Any money there may have been in it was, I have no doubt, put by to send to its owner. But the purse itself was cut by the skipper into as many pieces as there were men in the crew, and shared round. They were boiled with the tea in the boat's teapot, the liquor drunk, and the residue of tea-leaves and bits of purse thrown over the nets. This was at Peel. (See LaMothe, Manx Yarns, page 176.)

The " doctoring " of the boat probably consisted of sprinkling it and the nets with broth from herbs supplied by Teare from his celebrated garden, and perhaps dosing the skipper with the dregs. A Northside man and his wife whom I know remember Teare giving a big bunch of cushags to the crew of a Ramsey boat that was going to Kinsale, " for luck at the fishing." One of the same couple mentioned of his own accord the incident described in A Second Manx Scrapbook, pages 180-1, where a cow was cured by Teare. This informant turned out to be the younger brother in the story. The cow's trouble was not due to " buitching," but to a piece of turnip that had not been chopped small enough and had stuck in her throat.

3. Remarks on Some Manx Herbs.

The place of herbs in the insular system of cures and magic is a subject that would need a chapter to itself, and at present both space and time are lacking. But a word may be said of the technical rules governing their use by practitioners both professional and amateur. Some plants were most efficacious if " lifted between the lights "; that is to say, gathered (fasting) just before sunrise; others, when the morning sun first shone on them; others again could be gathered at any time. The degree of resistance by the roots, if pulled, or by the stems to the knife, if cut, signified the degree of seriousness in the malady or wound they were intended to cure;
or, if they were to be employed in magic, the strength of the opposed influences. An insect on the herb when gathered, or unusual markings, were unfavourable omens. A bunch of mixed herbs was best collected from three or nine different spots. If an inward sense of darkness or weakness was felt while lifting, it proceeded from the powers opposing the cure or charm, and had to be conquered by an effort of the will. A steady concentration of the mind was all-important, as in the employment of a spoken charm. If the herbs were mixed in a broth, they were stirred with the sun's motion for a cure; against it, and with the left hand, for black or destructive magic.

The herb sent by Charles Teare for the boy who had "been lying where he should not" was probably **lus-ny-moyl-mooarey**, the marsh-mallow (also the Manx name for the common mallow, according to Cregeen), which was used both internally and externally to remove the results of walking or lying on "bad ground"—that is to say, ground affected (in two senses) by the fairies. The Manx name has been said to mean "herb of the big lumps, or knobs"; but it may be remarked that the Irish name of the common mallow is given by Dinneen as **lus-na-miel-mor**, "herb of the big insect."

Two plants are pre-eminent in Manx folk-medicine and white magic. One is the vervain, known as "varvine." The other is the mugwort, **Artemisia vulgaris**, which has three names in Manx: **bollan vane**, "white plant," **bollan fealait Eoin**, "plant of (St.) John's festival," and **lus theehah**, "gray herb." This used to be worn on **Tynwald Day**, and contests with the cushag or ragweed the honour of being the national floral emblem. A song and a dance tune bear its name. More to my present purpose, it was, and otherwise utilised, as a protection against, and a deliverance from, every kind of supernatural danger and evil wish. For this there is ancient authority. In a papyrus of the Gnostic ritual discovered by James Bruce and preserved in the Bodleian Library, which illustrates the mystical religion of Egypt in the centuries immediately succeeding the Incarnation, both the vervain and the bollan vane are conspicuous:

"When Jesus had performed this mystery, all his disciples stood clothed in garments of linen, crowned with morsyne, a branch of the Cretan cynocephalus upon their mouths, and mugwort in their two hands. And it came about that Jesus disposed the perfumes in the manner necessary for the performance of the mystery of the deliverance of his disciples from the evil desires of the Arkhons...he clothed his disciples in garments of linen, he crowned them with mugwort." For the Baptism of Fire he crowned them with the vervain of Osiris, and he put in their mouths the herb called cynocephalus. "If you perform these mysteries the Arkhons of the Eons cannot resist them or torture you." (S.S.D.D., Egyptian Magic.)

Long before Gnosticism flourished, vervain was used by the Greek arch-sorceress Medea in her rites of rejuvenation. To-day in China an annual "houseguard charm" consists of mugwort, accompanied by a pictorial emblem, set conspicuously in the house or shop to be protected from bad influences.

"If you could ever dig up the whole root of a dandelion without breaking it or leaving the end in the ground, it would cure anything. But there is a little milky bit at the very end of it you can never get; it breaks off, or the Devil bites it off, they say, the way people won't get the cure." So said old Mrs. Doris of Glen Aldyn to me at her fireside some 35 years ago, and as an amateur gardener I fully believe her. The dandelion's Manx name, **lus-y-minniag**, "herb of the pinch, nip," is perhaps explained by this habit of the Devil.


Somewhere about 3,000 years ago it was written, or recited to a stringed instrument, that the sons of Autolycus, when they doctored Odysseus' wound, sang a charm over it to staunch the bleeding (Odyssey, xix. 457). We need not doubt that even then it was an immemorial practice. That certain persons possess the power to do this is still widely believed.

I have known men who claimed it, men who had benefited by it, and men who had seen others benefited. Patients and eye-witnesses have told me that the flow of blood stops without the patient being touched or taking any active part in the cure. His faith is deemed helpful, but not indispensable. In one case a celebrated practitioner was so drunk that he had to be held up while he pronounced the charm; but it worked. In another the man relieved of haemorrhage was unconscious. A retired Ramsey business-man has told me that he happened once to be crossing to the Island in the same boat as a Peel man named Gawne. During the trip a seaman or stoker hurt himself and bled profusely. A medical passenger said he would soon bleed to death, but Gawne saved his life without touching him, merely using a spoken formula.

Gawne's powers were generally recognised, and I believe his gift was inherited. Another celebrated blood-charmer was Jack Corlett of Ramsey, commonly known as "Jack-o'-me-onny," a nickname which I may have misspelt because I have no idea of its meaning. Jack was especially efficient with animals. In ordinary veterinary operations, such as opening a vein in a horse's neck, the bleeding can be stopped by the operator, who is often a blacksmith. But unless he possesses more than the normal ability to check haemorrhage he will not rely on himself alone. A friend of mine when about 11 years old watched a farrier cut a tumour out of the vaginal passage of a neighbour's cow near Leodas in Andreas. It was a serious operation, and the farrier refused to begin it until Jack Corlett came. As soon as the growth was cut out Corlett muttered his charm, and the bleeding ceased. This my friend saw, he says, with his own eyes.

Some of the more or less professional castrators of animals use a charm to stop the consequent loss of blood. An instance of failure comes, at second-hand only, from a former tenant of an inn at Ramsey Bridge, named N. K. His wife's grandfather occupied his leisure with farriery. One day he "cut" a bull at Ballasai, and was perhaps a bit careless, for the bleeding began again after he had left the farm. The farmer sent a message to him at Cornaa, and he tried to work the charm from his own house, but without success.
His wife, who also had the power, was attending a confinement not far away. Although she was rather drunk at the time she was able to use the charm, and the bleeding, over a mile away, stopped at the exact time, of which a note was taken.

Perhaps the most celebrated of modern Northside blood-charmers was Jim Crellin of Baldromma in Maughold — not of Ballaberna, as stated on page 292 of A Second Manx Scrapbook. Crellin was a Primitive Methodist preacher who had come to Maughold from the parish of German. He was considered to be somewhat simple or "innocent"; for example, he never used strong language, however provoking the circumstances might be. Many stories are told of his powers. When a new pumping-wheel was about to be erected at the North Laxey Mine, one of the men, in helping to get it through a gateway, cut an artery in his shoulder against some projecting piece of metal. Crellin was immediately sent for. When he arrived the man lay in a semi-conscious state through loss of blood. The only words Crellin was heard to say were, "Stand up and hold your hands above your head." He did not put a finger on him, but the bleeding stopped in less than five minutes. (How far this result was due to any super-normal influence may be open to discussion.) A man at Smeale damaged a bull by his clumsiness in "cutting" it. The blood could be heard pouring down on the straw, and the bull was dying. A message was sent to Crellin at Baldromma, and from there he stopped the bleeding with his charm. The distance between the two places is about six miles in a straight line. Crellin had other gifts; how he could pacify a rebellious horse is told further on. In "The charmer and the stallion." Blood-charming should not be paid for in coin, but something ought to be given to the charmer, 'baccy or other desideratum'. If such a charm is taught to one who disbelieves in it or makes improper use of it, his instructor cannot use it again effectually. Crellin is said to have sold his secret to a certain local clergyman, who wrote it down and took it away to England with him. After that Crellin lost his power. Several charms against bleeding have nevertheless been imparted to collectors of Manx folk-lore, and appear in their books.

Of men living in 1935 who were credited with the power of blood-stopping may be mentioned a farm-labourer at Ballamodda, Malew; a man at the Jalloo, Maughold; a painter living in College Street, Ramsey; a man employed in the coal-trade at Ramsey; and J. G., a farmer at Ballabeg, Andreas. The last tells me that he has also the power of immediately easing the pain and inflammation consequent upon burns and scalds.

So much for the pros of the question. Personally, I have not been fortunate enough to see the thing done except once in a very small way which might not be thought to have any weight as evidence. One cannot arrange a bad accident for the purpose, nor have I gone the length of opening a vein by way of experiment. Nevertheless my skepticism is less sturdy, in the face of some of the stories, than it used to be. When scientific investigators exploded Mesmerism, Second Sight, Thought Transference, Water Divining and other "superstitions," they were left with a substantial residue of fact.

The cons of the matter are obvious, and naturally have not been overlooked by the medical profession. Dr. Clague in his Manx Reminiscences was careful to mention two failures; but he found it necessary to propound a theory that the relieving of a patient's anxiety might stop the flow of blood by slowing the heart's action. According to what I have been told, the flow in most cases ceases instantly; when from the nose, "like the turning off of a tap," in the words of Blanche Nelson's MSS.

5. Holy Wells.

St. Maughold's Well. Whatever else they may cure, most of the holy wells are "good for the eyes," but the famous one at Kirk Maughold is pre-eminent in this respect, as in others. The principal days on which it was visited for any purpose were Easter Day and the second Sunday in August. Coins, and little crosses made of two bits of straw, were thrown into the water, within the memory of local people still living. The formalities were observed at the moment when the sun was rising out of the sea.

J. K., an elderly native of the parish, says that once, when he was crossing from Liverpool to Ramsey, a woman came up to one of the deck-hands as they steamed into Ramsey Bay, and asked where was St. Patrick's Well. He replied that it was high up yonder, on the cliff above them, and pointed to the spot, but she was unable to make it out. He asked her what she wanted to know for. She replied that her sight was very bad, and she had been told that if she bathed her eyes in the water of that well her sight would get strongly again. The sailor afterwards told my informant that some days later she came up to him as the steamer was leaving Ramsey, and asked him if it was not himself she had been speaking to before about the well. He said it was. She told him, "I have done what I came to do, and now I can see the well from here as plainly as, you can." I enquired of John whether she was a Manxwoman. His answer amused me. "She used to be, but she'd gone to live in Liverpool."

Many Maughold people call this spring "St. Patrick's well," and in other parts of the Island I have heard it termed "St. Patrick's well at Maughold," not "St. Maughold's well." A widely-diffused legend also connects it with Patrick, as in the case of the well on Peel Head. His horse and himself took a flying leap from the sea up the cliff, and where they "let" the water gushed out for them both to drink of after their journey. It is pointed out that the well has the shape of a horse-shoe, with the imprint of the frog of the hoof in the middle. Neglect has now obliterated the frog, I find, even though the eyes are laved with the water; and the water is mere ooz.

Mr. Robert Looney remembers that when he was a boy his mother used to provide beds and a good supper in their barn at Magher-y-Kew for people who came from Laxey and Douglas to get the benefit of the well. It was always on the Saturday before the second Sunday in August that they came. They slept at Magher-y-Kew, and went on to Kirk Maughold in the small hours of Sunday to wait near the well-side. As the sun rose, or just before, each patient "teemed" the water from the little basin three times with his right hand, and bathed his eyes or his sores. Most of the visitors were Roman Catholics.
Some, perhaps most, of these Catholic visitors were cured of their ailments, but so were many Protestants; for St. Maughold, or St. Patrick, or the well-fairly, was quick to reward genuine faith of whatever denomination. A Dissenter who found in early middle age that his hair was fast leaving him bathed his head in the water and left a rag on the bush. Five years ago he was walking about Ramsey with a good head of hair at the age of 75.

A note may be added from an article in the Manx Quarterly, No. 17, by the Rev. Herbert Pitts. The well was said to have been "dressed," within living memory, on every 12th August. Its water not only cured various physical ailments but was a charm against fairies and evil spirits. Even then (1918) it was overgrown and neglected in appearance. (Only once before have I heard of "well-dressing " in the Isle of Man. Pieces of cloth were ranged round Chibber-y-Chiarn at the top of Glen Dhoo, Ballaugh, on Old Midsummer Day-A Manx Scrapbook, page 27.)

A Kirk Bride well-charm. In the rugged matrix of George Quarrie's uncollected verses lurks a rite used in connexion with a well on Kionlough. As neither Quarrie nor I can claim to be a Manx Theocritus I will condense it into prose.

A young man has been found lying unconscious, and cannot be restored to his senses. At last old Betty from Shellig climbs to the Clagh Vedn (a white boulder on a tumulus near the sea-cliffs), when the moon is at its highest. With the crystal-clear water of a well that never sees the sunlight she fills her cup to the brim, and turns away to empty it on the ground. This she does three times, muttering to herself each time she fills it the charms for cadley jiargan or "sleep of the blood." Then she refills the vessel for the last time, signs a cross over it with her right thumb, and lays lus-ny-chiolg on the water. She brings the cup to the young man, pours a few drops of the charmed liquid between his lips, and the cure is accomplished.

The name of the well I cannot give, for I know of none on the Clagh Vedn. There is a bushy and boggy hollow lower down, a few drops of the charmed liquid between his lips, and the cure is accomplished.

The name of the well I cannot give, for I know of none on the Clagh Vedn. There is a bushy and boggy hollow lower down, a hundred yards North East of the tumulus, which is fed by water percolating from the hillside.

Water from Chibber-y-Noe. Of another Northside well, Chibber-y-Noe or Knowle, near the burial-mound called Cronk-y-Knowle not far from Ramsey, Mr. William Cubbon of Douglas tells an anecdote which corresponds in motive to ideas about other Manx wells.

A woman of the district who was very ill and confined to her bed begged for a cupful of this water to drink. It was brought to her. Next day she asked for another. To save trouble she was given water from the more convenient domestic well or pump. She took one taste and exclaimed indignantly, "This isn't Chibber-y-Noe water at all! Bring me the right stuff." So they had to go and get it.

The desideratum in such cases seems to be, not any physically medicinal properties of the water, but its spiritual protection or sanctification during the journey that has to be performed after death.

6. Other Cures and Charms.

The Eyes. A cure for "scale" (cataract ?) on a child's eye is lump-sugar crushed extremely fine and poured into the eye. Both eyes are then shut and the lid of the affected one gently rubbed with the tip of the operator's finger. The next time the doctor sees the patient he asks in amazement, "However did you get the scale off?" Similarly, a sea-shell called brain-finolley or braein-olley was powdered and blown into eyes human, equine and bovine.

A Cure for Consumption. A Maughold man was cured of consumption by taking a wise woman's advice to get out of bed at midnight and go crown to the shore, and there eat as many "sea-snails" (whelks) as he could swallow. Next morning he was found fast asleep on the shore, and his health kept improving from that time on.

The Dungeheap and the Swelling. Kitty C-- of Caidle Vooar cured, many years ago, a man I knew who was troubled with a swelling under the great toe which hindered him in walking. She went with him to the farm "midden" (dunghill) at Rhenab, Maughold, and directed him to thrust his bare foot into it while she repeated a charm sotto voce. The cure worked.

The Cross of Soot. R. L., a Kirk Maughold farmer, strained his wrist badly while stacking and could not use it at all. He had it charmed by a man he knew, but got no benefit. He then went to the man's brother, who made L-- kneel at the hearth, took hold of his wrist, put a cross of soot or ash on it with his forefinger, and stroked it lightly, muttering some words under his breath. On his way home L-- tested the wrist and found it as strong as it had ever been, and no pain from it. (From R. L. himself.)

The Dead Hand. "A poor woman in a neighbouring parish having a child suffering from some strumous affection took the little one to the churchyard, and sprinkled it with earth from a new-made grave. This, however, not proving a perfect cure, she next took the child to a house where a man was 'laid out' preparatory to his being put into the coffin, and she drew the hand of the corpse over the features of the child two or three times, with what effect we are not told.

"A woman in this parish (from whom one might have expected somewhat more of commonsense), a short time ago took a child of her sister's, who had a trilling blemish or birthmark somewhere on the face, to three different houses where she had heard of a corpse, and had the mark stroked with the dead hand, expecting the operation to be effectual in removing the blemish." (Parochialia, MS. by the Rev. W. Kermode when Rector of Ballaugh, 19th cent. Per P. W. Caine.)

A Toothache Charm. A relative (well-known to me) of the man who was cured of a swelling by the wise woman of Cardle-see
above — was given a written charm for toothache by a man named Joughin of Rhenab, a member of a "skilled" family. This he was to wear as an amulet. Its formula is common all over the British Isles: "Peter stood at the gate, and Christ came passing by. Christ said to Peter, 'Why are you so down-hearted?' Because my teeth ache, Lord.' I'll give you power over the toothache for ever." The beneficiary has told me that she was never troubled with toothache while she kept the charm, nor — it must be admitted — after she parted with it to a member of her family.

A Headache Charm. Another friend of mine uses a charm to relieve her daughter's headaches. This is accompanied by pressure of the hands at the front and back of the head simultaneously. It is said to alleviate the pain. Pressure of even the sufferer's own hands is, I believe, found beneficial in such cases, without any charm being spoken. In fact, the hand flies naturally to a painful spot.

The Egg Charm, a cure for a bewitched cow. Get the right herbs from a wise person, and nine eggs from a long way off so that they will be "clean of butcheragh." At midnight and with the doors fastened put a third part of the herbs and three of the eggs in a pot with some well-water, and let them boil for exactly three minutes. Do this for three nights running, and the same with the other two-thirds of the material. (Abridged from Blanche Nelson's MSS.) Nothing is said about giving the mess to the cow, but probably that was done.

Fairy-holes. The virtues of "fairy-holes"-spots where three quarterland-boundaries meet-have already been described in A Manx Scrapbook, page 315. To the places there particularised may be added two more; one at the junction of Ballavastyn, Leodas and Kiondroghad, in Andreas, and another on the Eairy, in the lane going down to Straledn, at Port Mooar, Maughold. Soil from the latter was used to throw over a sick animal so recently as five years ago, according to what I then heard on the spot.

Giving away the luck. A man who was landing his catch of fish on Peel Quay was approached by another fisherman of the same fleet, who said, "That's a grand catch that's at you this morning, John! There's not pot-luck itself at us, not enough herring to make a breakfast for me and the men." The first man said to his mate, "Give him half a basket." After he had gone off with it the mate said, "You fool! We'll get no more herring this season." "Why not then?"

"Haven't you given away our luck? And you never put any salt on it either." Sure enough they could do no good afterwards. At last the skipper went to Nan Wade and told her about it, and asked her could she help him. "I can," she said, "a lot better than you can help yourself, I'm thinking, for you've acted like a fool." And she gave him a bundle of herbs. These he took home and boiled. The crew drank some of the broth, and the remainder was sprinkled over the nets and boat. When Nan was giving the skipper the herbs she told him not to shoot his nets till it was dark,* and at daybreak the man who had robbed him of his luck would come to him, but he was to be given nothing. These instructions were obeyed. In the second watch the fish were heard lashing about in the nets, so after some discussion they started to haul in. As the sun rose and they were getting in the last piece, the man bore down on them, calling out, "A good shot, Johnny!" But this time he was given no herring, and the luck returned to the boat from that day on.

* Thirty or forty years ago the nets were frequently shot before sundown.

The Charmer and the Stallion. The man who told me this was watching a party of men trying to get a stallion across the gangway of a steamer lying in Ramsey Harbour. The poor beast was determined not to go on board, and after a long spell of chivying and shouting its mood was a mixture of viciousness and panic. At last a man named Crellin, who also was looking on, stepped forward and told them to leave the job to him. He went quietly up to the horse, which made no attempt to evade him, and stroked its neck and nose. At the same time he said something to it — in Manx, my friend thought; at any rate it was not in English. Crellin then walked across the gangway, and the horse walked after him.

"Horse-whispering" is an art or gift about which Borrow and others have related strange things. Two charms of the kind, in use in the 15th century, are given in Folk-lore de France, iii. 110. One of them had the virtue of persuading a horse which refused to enter a vessel, or was otherwise stubborn. Similar charms were used for cows.

The Golden Pig. "Anyone fasting from dawn to dark on the eve of the Little Christmas, and then eating a whole barley-cake and a slice of bacon with a drink of well-water, will see the Golden Pig with the jewel buried in its skull, which brings luck and fortune to the beholder." (From Miss Mona Douglas.)

7. Witches and their Craft.

How to Become a Witch. From a Southside source, anonymous by desire, I learn that a woman who was ambitious to succeed in bespelling and charming, and all the other branches of witchcraft, would give herself to the Devil by means of the following rite. She would go at midnight to a bridge that spanned a stream of uncontaminated water, and get beneath the archway (Freemasons please note). There she threw on the water the sacramental bread that she had secreted at Holy Communion.* She then undressed and washed herself, saying as the water flowed over her that she wished every trace of God and godliness to be washed away from her, and go down with the flowing water as the bread had done.

This is evidently the same ceremony as that noted from a Peel source in A Second Manx Scrapbook, page 162. As regards the Northside, a small bridge near Magher-y-Kew in Maughold has been pointed out to me as one which "women used to get under when they were learning to be witches." A domestic form of initiation described by A. W. Moore (Antiquary, xxxi. 294) also consisted largely of ablution, performed in that case by the aspirant's mother.
Howe. The whole affair was well-known to the local people in 1899, and the woman's death was unequivocally ascribed to the spell.

This exercise in black magic was described to Blanche Nelson by the son of a man who worked it upon a newly-married woman. She

shaking of soil on the box at the words "dust to dust and ashes to ashes." The "grave" was then covered up and all traces removed.

and taken at midnight by the principal and two confederates to a cemetery. There a hole was dug and the box put in it. The entire

sacramental bread out of the minister's hand into her mouth and took it out again and kept it in her hand, to what intend she did yt God knoweth ; we cannot tell "(Jnl. of the Manx Museum, No. 28, p. 27). The childlike innocence of wardens when giving evidence in a Court, or information to a Commission of Enquiry, is frequently noticeable.

The Spell of the Buried Heart

With the "doctor's" advice may be compared a sentence in the confession of a Lonan woman to an Ecclesiastical Court in 1712

"The said Alice Knakell cut a piece out of her (the complainant's) petticoat and burnt it to powder, which she drank with a design, as she confessed, to recover her health and procure sleep." This woman seems to have been exercising a counter-spell against another woman who had bewitched her. Belief in the impregnation of clothing with the wearer's psychic emanations exists also outside the Island. The theory may underlie the practice of leaving bits of garments at well-sides.

A Charm against Jealousy.

Newly-married women were sometimes "buitched" (bewitched) by the jealousy of men who had wanted to marry them and had been disappointed. One result of this was a sort of smothering sensation in bed. To put an end to it, a beevie's heart was stuck all over with pins and boiled at midnight with all doors tightly shut. By this means the guilty person was drawn willy-nilly to the house, and could then be dealt with. (Abridged from Blanche Nelson's MSS.)

Half-choked in Bed.

A Rushen woman married a wealthy widow-man who had an unmarried sister. On several occasions the wife was half-choked while asleep in bed, as though by a hand squeezing her throat. A "wise person" told her that if she could find out who was doing it, and warn her in the presence of two witnesses "never to do the like of that again to her no more as long as the two of them would be living, it would stop her at it." The next time it happened she woke as the witch was vanishing, and caught a little glint of her dress, by which she knew it was her husband's sister. Next day this woman was unable to deny her guilt. She admitted that she was "mad" because the money would go to the new wife. (Blanche Nelson's MSS., dated Sept., 1899.)

A Burnt Sacrifice.

M-- of Crowcreen in Maughold was a man who had bad luck in everything he touched. Nothing prospered with him in any branch of his farming, although he believed in following the old ways and customs. His ewes wouldn't lamb, his horses and beasts went wrong; and when one of his cows dropped a dead calf "it was what they call the last straw to." So he resolved to put an end to his misfortunes if he anyway could. William G-- the miller advised him to burn the dead calf at the nearest cross-roads (which would be on the way up to Rhuilkenny-Quakeren). So he kicked a cartload of gorse at the spot, poured some oil on it, put the calf's body on top, and set fire to the pile, till the calf was burnt to a cinder. The miller had spread the news, and a small crowd turned up to watch the proceedings. It was generally believed, and there was some expectation of the sort in this case, that when the smoke began to rise the witch who had caused the bad luck would be irresistibly attracted to the scene, and could then be compelled to withdraw her ill-will. Nothing of the kind occurred, however, nor did M--'s affairs improve thereafter. The man who told me the story said that he had no knowledge of any witch-doctor on the Island. The theory may underlie the practice of leaving bits of garments at well-sides.

The Maughold Men and the Witch.

Two men were walking from Ballajora to Ramsey to catch the coach for Peel, where they were to join their boat for the herring-fishing. Soon after leaving home they met a woman they knew, who lived close by. She asked them where they were going, and they had to tell her. "Aw, my gillya bogh," she said to one of them, "don't forget me! Bring me a few herring when you come back." After leaving her this man observed to his companion, "We'll not do much good this week, for that one can harm yer." She was a witch. Well, after two or three nights' fishing and nothing taken, the skipper said to the crew, "Did any of you meet with a woman on your way to the boat?" "Yes," said the Maughold men. "And what did she say to you?" They told him what had passed. The skipper then said they must go to a certain witch-doctor at Keeillthustag in Bride, give him half-a-crown, and tell him the whole story. They went, and the doctor said to them, "Yes; I'll give you better luck next week." Ille handed them some herbs to be used in the right way. On top of that he told them, "Let one of you, when you go back to Ballajora, take a scissors and cut a bit off the end of her skirt or her shawl when she's not looking, and have it stitched into your own clothes, and she'll never be able to do you any more harm while it's there." They did it, and got plenty of fish from that out. (From a friend of the two men, in his own words.)

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The Spell of the Buried Heart. To compass an enemy's death a beevie's (bullock's) heart was placed in a box as though in a coffin, and taken at midnight by the principal and two confederates to a cemetery. There a hole was dug and the box put in it. The entire burial-service was then read aloud, with the name of the intended victim in its proper place, and with special care not to omit the shaking of soil on the box at the words "dust to dust and ashes to ashes." The "grave" was then covered up and all traces removed. This exercise in black magic was described to Blanche Nelson by the son of a man who worked it upon a newly-married woman. She soon began to waste away, and died. The man himself, after his own death, used to be seen walking about Corvalley farm on the Howe. The whole affair was well-known to the local people in 1899, and the woman's death was unhesitatingly ascribed to the spell.
Knots for Wind. The magic knots that were bought by sailors and fishermen down to quite recent times to give them favourable winds were usually tied on a belt woven of flax, which was to be worn continuously. Sometimes a handkerchief was used, as Rhys was told (*Celtic Folklore*, page 331). There was a special way of untying the knots which was almost as important as the wise woman's ritual in tying them. Such knots did not go out of favour until Manx fishermen ceased to make the long voyages to Lerwick and Kinsale.

Bespelled knots were prized by European seafarers at a very early period. Was the idea derived from the knots presumably necessary on the bags supposed to contain the winds of heaven? These bags were doubtless ancient folk-lore when they were mentioned in the *Odyssey*.

The Familiar Bees. The Q--s of St. John's, one at least of whom was prominent in the annals of Manx witchcraft, used, some 40 years ago, to keep a number of bees whose docility aroused suspicion. The suspicion seems to have been that they were employed as "familiars."

How to Kill a Witch. The commonest of witchstories has found a home at Crowcreen in Maughold, as well as at other places in the Island. An unusually big hare was several times seen walking about the farm "street," as impudent as sin; that is to say, in as self-possessed a manner as if it were a pet animal. None of the dogs could be persuaded to attack it. They seemed to take no more notice of it than they did of the pig. At last the farmer put a sixpenny piece into his gun and took a shot at the creature. He must have hit it, for it vanished with the bang of the gun, and a certain old woman was found shortly afterwards "lying in bed hurted."

A Charm against Bewitchment. The following formula is useful when there is any suspicion of the evil eye or ill-wishing: - "God bless thy eyesight! May the harm thou art wishing for me fall on thyself."