

Page 42 - Dan Angus Beaton: "Colainn gun Cheann" ISSUE : <u>Issue 45</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1987/6/1

when the people saw what he had, they a- bout went crazy. It was dark. And in those days it was candles--you understand me? "Now," he said, "we're taking you into the house, so everybody can see you." "I'll do anything in this world, and promise any? thing in this world, but don't take me in the house. Anything in this world you ask, but don't take me in the house." And every? body was around listening. "Well," he said, "in that case then, okay. I'll let you go. But you have to go to the foot of this mountain into this awful marsh, at the foot of this mountain, where you'll stay in this meadow forever, where you'll bother no one as long as there'll be life. And so you can go. But you'll bother no one no more." And she left, walking about three feet a-bove the ground. And he said, "You'll re? turn to the cave no more." And when she was going, the tune--they play it till to? day- -was: fhada bhuam fhein tha bonn Beinn Eadalainn 'S fhada bhuam fhein tha Bealach a Bhocain 'S fhada bhuam fhein tha bonn Beinn Eadalainn 'S fhada gun teagamh tha Bealach a Bhocain. And she left, lamenting and mourning that she never could return to her cave no more. She never was seen or heard after. And that's how he stopped her. That's that story for you now. END The Headless Woman and How She Got That Way When the story told here by Dan Angus Beaton begins, the Headless Woman has already lost her head. We are given no explanation as to how she became a killer in a cave. Fortunately, in a recent issue of Tocher (a magazine from the archives of the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh, Scotland) there is another story about the Headless Woman. It gives us some history and makes her actions more understandable. It was re? corded by Calum Maclean from Donald MacDonald of Arisaig, Scotland, in May 1954. Well, mar a chuala mise 'naidheachd sin 's ann mar seo, gu rogh boirionnach le paisde a' tamh ann an aite ris an can iad Achai- tilleasaig. Tha e ann a Morair a Deas. Ag? us bha i ann a fior bhochdainn a' togail a' phaisde agus tha e colta rium gun do leag a' fear leis am bu leis a' fearann a bha timchioll air a' bhothan a bh'aice, leag e amharus oirre am an fhoghair, gu robh i piocadh a' choirce mar a bha e fas air son biadh dhi fhein agus dhan phaisde. Agus oidhche dhe na h-oidhcheannan chuir e freiceadan air an aite agus fhuair e 'm boirionnach bochd a' tighinn a thoirt straibh dhen choirce leatha air son gun deanadh e rudeigineach dhi fhein 's dhan phaisde. Agus de 'n t-armachd a bh'aige ach corran agus tharrainn e 'n corran oir? re agus bhuail e'n cul a' chinn i agus bha iad ag radhainn gu robh 'n ceann aice an crochadh air a broilleach. Chan eil fhios? am a nise ciamar a dh'eirich a mach an deaghaidh sin--co-dhiubh chaidh an duine a thoirt gu ceartas agus fheuchainn agus a pheanasachadh air son a' rud a rinn e, chan urrainn mi a ghradhainn. Ach cha Well, the way I heard that story it went like this--that there was a woman with a child living in a place they call Achai-tilleasaig. It is in South Morar. And she was bringing up the child in terrible pov? erty and it seems that the man who owned the land around the hovel that she had be? gan to suspect at harvest time that she was plucking the oats as they ripened



for food for herself and the child. And one of these nights he kept watch over the place and he caught the poor woman coming to take a few of the oats to make something of them for herself and the child. And the only weapon he had with him was a sickle and he took a swing at her with the sickle and struck her about the back of her head, and they say that her head was hanging down over her breast. I don't know now what happened as a result of that--whether the man was brought to justice and tried and punished for what he had done I cannot say.

But they got very little peace for years and years--it may even have been for centuries--so they said, from the ghost of the woman who had been so horribly mur- Fully Licensed cfiow Van f00 Restaurant OPEN DAILY 11 A.M. to 1 A.M. FRI. and SAT. till 2 A.M. SUN. till MIDNIGHT Major Credit Cards Accepted Gift Certificates * Ample Parking Oriental and Canadian Cuisine in a relaxed and elegant dining atmosphere Daily Luncheon Specials Banquet Facilities Available Take Out .Orders Delivered s'M60 Grand Lake Rd,, Sydney 562-0088 or 539-2825 (42) Lounge OPEN 11 A.M.tOI A.M. OPEN TILL 2 A.M. FRIDAY & SATURDAY