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i sin fhuair esan ighinn gu tir. Agus cha robh aig a' bhe'ist ach na gnothaichean a bh'ann a thoirt leath' neo 'm fagail. Ach co-dhiubh bha iad a' coiseachd sios taobh na traghad agus bha iad cho toil? ichte le cheile mar a thachair agus gu d' thachair ach gura h-ise 'bha amach air an taoibh a b'fhaisge a dh'iomall na traghad agus thainig a' bheist anuas agus chaidh ise a shluigsinn leatha. Bha esau na bu mhiosa dhe na bha e riamh an uair sin, agus b'fheudar dha falbh a dh'fhai? cinn duine seolta air choireiginn feuch gu de ghabhadh deanamh. Chaidh e far an robh duine florfiosrach anns a' chelirn agus dh'inns' e dha mar a thachair. "An da," ors' esan, "cha'n eil an gnothach furasd' idir. Ma dh'fhaoidte," ors' esan, "gu'n gabhadh e deanamh. Ach cha'n eil ann ach ma dh'fhaoidte. Chaidh thusa ghealltainn'dha'n mhaighdean-mhara agus a reir na faidheadaireachd chaidh do ghealltainn dha'n mhaighdean-mhara agus dh'fheumte an gealltainn sin a chomh-llonadh. Cha'n eil ach aon d'Bigh," ors' esan, "air an gabh e seachnadh: 's e nam faigheadh tu anam na beisteadh agus cur as dhi." "'S gu de raar a ghabhas sin faotainn?" "An da," ors' esan, "cha'n eil sin fur-asda. Tha reithe fiadhaich gu h-'rd air mullach Beinn Sheilg, agus tha lach' 'am broinn a' reithe, agus tha'n t-ubh 'am broinn na lach' agus 's ann am broinn an ubh a tha anam na beist'. Agus gun sin fhaighinn," ors' esan, "cha'n fhaigh -thu cuibhteas i gu brach. Ach ma gheobh thu an t-ubh," ors' esan, "cuir an t-ubh air leac air oir a' chladaich agus do chas air a mhuin, agus bi a* leagadh chudthrom air an ubh. Anus 'nuair a thig a' bheist an airde 's a dh'e'igheas i dhuit, 'Fslg m'anam, fag m'anam,' can 'cha'n fhag mura leig thu dhomhs' fhaicinn na bheil os cionn a' chrios dhe'n bhana-chompanach.' Agus 'nuair a gheobh thu do bhana-chom? panach cuibhteas a' bheist spleuchdaidh tu an t-ubh agus bidh tu an uair sin sabhailte." Ach co-dhiubh dh'fhalbh esan dha'n bheinn ach cha mhor am feum a dheanadh sin dha. Bha an reithe fiadhaich cho luath 's 'nuair a biodh esan air an darna beinn bhiodh am beathach fiadhaich air a' bheinn eile. Ach smaointich e an seo nam biodh an Cu Ciar aige gu robh e luath gu le'br airson a bhi a' breith air a reithe. Agus cha bu luaith' a smaointich e air a' chu na thainig an Cu Ciar agus ghabh e as deoghaidh a' reithe agus cha robh e fada gus na rug e air. Cha bu luaith' a rug e air a' reithe na amach as a bheul a thai? nig an lach' agus thog i rithe. Bha e a nisd na bu mhiosa dhe na b'abhaist, ach smaointich e nam biodh an t-Seabhag Chrom. Liath an deo gu'm beireadh i air a' lach'. Smaointich e oirr' 's thainig i agus as deoghaidh na lach' a thug i agus cha robh i gle* fhada gus an d'fhuair i a h-lnean 1 a chur an sis anns a' lach'. Ach ma had occurred, and what'happened but that she was out on the side closest to the edge of the beach and the beast came again and she was swallowed by it. Iain was worse off then than ever, and he had to go and see some clever man to see what could be done. He went to a truly know? ledgeable man in the region and told him what had happened. "Well," he said, "that is no easy matter. Perhaps it could be done, but only per? haps. You were promised to the sea-maiden, according to my divinations you were pro? mised to her, and that promise must be fulfilled. There is only one means by which it can be avoided: if you should get the monster's soul and do away with it." "How can that be



obtained?" "Well," he said, "that is not easy. There is a wild ram high up on the summit of Ben Sheilg, and there is a wild duck in the ram's belly, and the egg is in the wild duck's belly and inside the egg is the monster's soul. And unless you get that," he said, "you'll never get her free. But if you get the egg, put it on a flat rock at the edge of the shore with your foot resting on top of it, and apply your weight on the egg. And when the monster rises up and calls to you, 'Spare my soul, spare my soul,' say, 'I will not, unless you let me see what is above the belt of your female companion.' And when you get her clear of the beast you can tramp on the egg and then you will be safe." So he departed for the mountain, but doing so was not much use to him. The wild ram was so fast that when Iain was on one mountain that wild animal would be on another. But he thought to himself then if only he had the Dusky Hound he would be swift enough to catch the ram. No sooner had he thought of the Hound than the Dusky Hound arrived. It took off after the ram and it was not long until it caught it. No sooner had it caught the ram than out of its mouth came the wild duck, and it took off. Now Iain was worse off than he used to be, but he thought if only the Grey, Hooked Hawk were here, that she could catch the wild duck. He thought of her and she came to him. Off after the wild duck she went, and it was not very long before she managed to fix her talons on the wild duck. But though she did, by then they were so close to the edge of the loch that when the egg went out of the wild duck, down into the water it went and straight to the bottom of the loch. Iain son of the Big Fisherman was as badly off as before, but he thought then if the Dun Otter were there, that it would find the egg for him. The Dun Otter came to him and asked him, "What help do you wish to have from me?" "I would like," he said, "for you to get the egg at the bottom of the loch."