

Seanchas Ìle

MACLAGAN MANUSCRIPTS

SUPERSTITIONS: Lucky/Unlucky

From Mary McLean, Lyrabus, Islay (anonymous)

6371-6374

Talking of things lucky and unlucky, an Islay woman, who is a decided believer in the subject said:

(Translated from Gaelic)

My brother Donald is very lucky to meet him, if a person were going on business. Say that you were going to seek the loan of any thing, or going to buy something, and you without money, and that you would need to ask the thing on credit: if you would meet Donald on the road, you might be sure that you would get what you wanted. He, himself knows that he is lucky, and if he should see any person whom he did not respect, when they would be on a journey, he would shun them.

My father was somewhat that way also, and people would be pleased him to be meeting them when they would be going on any particular business.

There are some who are more lucky than others. There to you, my uncle Calum: although he is a good man, he is unlucky to meet him. He has a narrow heart, and there is no man who has that lucky to meet him. People about here will be avoiding him, if they see him, when they are going any way particular.

And there is Neil Dallas, and Peter Bàn, they would put bad luck on any person they would meet. If people will give attention to the thing, it will not be long till they will see who is lucky to meet, and who is not. If I were on business, and that I would meet a person, and that the business would not go with me, I would say that that person put bad luck on me, and even after, I would avoid him if I were going on a journey.

From Mary McLean, Lyrabus, Islay (anonymous)

6376/8

(Translated from Gaelic)

There is nothing in existence that is more unlucky to give away than a brooding hen. If any person will give a brooding hen to another, the hen will take with her all the good luck that the person who gave her away would have for that year, and the good luck will go to whoever got her. I did not know that till I found it out in this way.

One time I had two or three brooding hens, and the birds came out well, and they were thining nicely: and a day that was there Mary Graham came in - she would lie often in our house, and she was exceedingly kind to me. It was she that told me about the brooding hen. She asked me how I was getting on with the birds, and I said, that I was, very well, and that I had a brooding hen there that Archie Macdonald's wife was asking. I thought she would strike me. She rose on her feet, and bending over me, with her fist clenched, she said, for the sake of all I had ever seen, not to give that hen away, or if I would give (her) all good luck would depart from me for that year. Well, I kept the hen that time. But in course of a year or two after that, a neighbour came seeking a brooding hen from me, and I was lazy to refuse her, and I gave her

to her.

Well, didn't she take with her every good luck from our house. There was luck of money, and luck of cattle, and luck of poultry, and every thing to them that got her, while there died on us two cows and two foals, and four young beasts.

And in that year also, Archie was unwell, and not a hen I had brought out a brood. Wasn't I the fool.

Ronald said to me, "You see now what you have done. Try whether any one will give you a brooding hen if you ask her."

About that time my Aunt came the way, and when we were talking, she asked if I had a brooding hen at all, and I said I had not - that they had gone wrong on me that year but that if she would give me one on loan, I would be obliged to her. But would she give (her). Not she, but was angry because I asked her.

From Mary MacLean, Lyrabus, Islay (anonymous) 6378
(Translated from Gaelic)

It is an unlucky thing not to have a light lit in the room where a couple sleep on the night of their marriage. When M.G. was married, they had not a light in the room, and the fire itself went out, and see yourself what happened. They should have had a light the whole night. And more than that, they say that she fell asleep before the bridegroom went to his bed.

From Mary MacLean, Lyrabus, Islay (anonymous) 6379
(Translated from Gaelic)

It is counted an unlucky thing if a marriage company and a funeral company should meet each other. If that happens, the marriage party may say, Amen.

From Mary McLean, Lyrabus, Islay (anonymous) 6379
(Translated from Gaelic)

When people flit to a new house, they ought to put something under their head for the first night - a Bannoch, or the tongs. the tongs is totter, for there is always good luck in the iron.

From Hugh MacLella, Portcharlotte, Islay (anonymous) 6382

The Breac-an-t-sil (Wagtail) is considered to be a lucky bird about a house. An Islay man says that there are two of them attached to every village, or township, but never any more, and they are always favourites because people believe that they are lucky.