
The Highland Widow

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Source: *The Celtic Review*, Vol. 9, No. 33 (Aug., 1913), pp. 34-35

Published by:

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30070274>

Accessed: 14-03-2016 21:51 UTC

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THE HIGHLAND WIDOW

DONALD A. MACKENZIE

- A LONELY wife is Mary Beg—
 Old Mary of the Moor ;
 ‘ I ’m stopping here myself,’ she said,
 ‘ Yes, maybe I ’ll be poor—
 My house it wasna empty
 In days that are gone by—
 John, my man, he took me here,
 It ’s here myself will die.
- ‘ Oh, few come nigh to see me now—
 There ’s few I ’ll ken aright ;
 But the fairies of the moorland come—
 The fairies of the night ;
 They ’ll bring me tidings sad and glad
 From many a distant shore ;
 And when there ’s some one hastening here
 They ’ll hasten on before.
- ‘ Long ere a friend will reach my house
 With news across the moor,
 I ’ll hear the sound of footsteps, ah !
 I ’ll think it ’s some one sure :
 I ’ll hear a knocking, knocking . . .
 A voice I ken will call—
 I ’ll rise and open wide the door
 When no one ’s there at all.
- ‘ Oh, many a night when by the fire
 I ’m spinning all alone,
 I ’ll hear their laughter on the wind—
 Maybe I ’ll hear them moan.
 They ’ll flit away like shadows,
 Or shine the death-come light—
 The fairies of the moorland,
 The fairies of the night.
- ‘ They cried aloud yon wild Yuletide
 When John was drowned at sea ;
 Of my fine lads in foreign lands
 They ’re whispering aye to me—

Oh, never a joy my heart knew,
 And never a sorrow drear,
 But the fairies of the moorland
 Were first to bring it here.'

THE ROMANI IN THE *EXCIDIVM BRITTANIAE*

REV. A. W. WADE-EVANS

THE kings of the Romani, says the author of the *Excidium Britanniae*¹ in chapter v., had acquired the empire of the world, and by their conquests had secured in the East their *prima Parthorum pax*, their first peace with the Parthians. This we know was in B.C. 20. Wars ceased in almost every land.

In the west, however, the advance of the Romani could not be checked even by the ocean. Crossing the channel they subjugated the whole island of Britain (what is now Scotland as well as England and Wales), meeting with no resistance owing to the unwarlike character of the Brittani, who inhabited it. This can only refer to the well-known Roman conquest of southern Britain, which was taken in hand during the reign of Claudius Cæsar in A.D. 43. After subduing the whole island, not with swords but with threats, the Romani returned to Rome owing, as they said, to *inopia cespitis*, the poverty of the soil, leaving behind *rectores*,

¹ The work commonly attributed to Gildas and now divided into a hundred and ten chapters comprises, in my opinion, two distinct books whose present connection is as follows :—

<i>Epistola Gildae.</i>	<i>Excidium Britanniae.</i>
(Written about A.D. 500).	(Written about A.D. 700).
Ch. 1. Prefatory remarks.	Ch. 2. Table of Contents.
Chs. 27-63. Denunciation of princes.	Chs. 3-26. How the Brittani lost the
Chs. 64-110. Denunciation of clergy.	island of Britain till God granted
	them victories and peace.

The 'Table of Contents' of the latter work has been ingeniously inwoven with the preface of the former, whilst its typical formal ending has been blurred in order to make it read smoothly into the opening of the Epistle. I have changed my old view that chapter i. belonged to the *Excidium Britanniae*.