

CORRIEVREKIN, a narrow strait and a dangerous whirlpool between the island of Scarba and the north point of Jura, Argyleshire. The whirlpool is occasioned partly by the rapidity of the tidal current through the narrow, irregular strait, and partly by the resistance to it of a pyramidal rock which shoots up to within 15 fathoms of the surface from a depth of about 100 fathoms. The vicinity of this rock is carefully shunned by small craft; but it is only during high and strong tides, or violent gales, that it is at all formidable to large vessels. The name, we are informed by Campbell in his notes to 'Gertrude of Wyoming,' signifies 'the whirlpool of the Prince of Denmark.'

And there is a tradition that a Danish prince once undertook for a wager to cast anchor in it. He is said to have used woollen instead of hempen ropes for greater strength, but perished in the attempt. "on the shores of Argyleshire," the poet adds, "I have often listened with great delight to the sound of this vortex, at the distance of many leagues. When the weather is calm, and the adjacent sea scarcely heard on these picturesque shores, its sound- which is like the sound of innumerable chariots- creates magnificent and fine effect" The lines in Campbell's noble poem in which allusion is made to this whirlpool are as follows:

*"But who is he, that yet a dearer land
Remembers, over hills and far away?
Green Albyn! What though he no more survey
Thy ships at anchor on the quiet shore;
Thy pellochs rolling from the mountain-bay;
Thy lone sepulchral cairn upon the moor;
And distant isles that hear the loud Corbrechtan roar!"*

The superstition of the islanders has tenanted the shelves and eddies of this whirlpool with all the fabulous monsters and demons of the ocean. Among these, according to a universal tradition, the mermaid is the most remarkable;

and there is a Gaelic legend – versified by Leydon, in the "Border Minstrelsy" – which relates how Macphail of Colonsay while passing the Corrievreckin, was carried off by one of these sea-maidens, and detained for several years in a pleasant kind of captivity, in a grotto beneath the sea. Therefore, mariners,

*"As you pass through Jura's sound
bend your course by Scarba's shore,
Shun, O Shun! The gulf profound
Where Corrievrekin's surges roar"*

So sings the poet; couching his advice, however in somewhat ambiguous language, for the sea generally exhibits a state of greater turbulence on the Scarba than on the Jura side of the Gulf.