

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Wha Sains the Hoose the Nicht?

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Wha sains the hoose the nicht?
They that sains it ilka nicht--
Saint Bryde an her brat,
Saint Colme an his hat,
Saint Michael an his spear,
Keep this hoose frae the weir,
Frae rinnin thief,
Frae burnin thief,
An frae a ill rea
That by the gate can gae,
An frae an ill wicht
That by the gate can licht.

Bough II (1959), 24 [quoting George Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered* (1685; repr. 1789)], who glosses brat as "mantle" [from Gaelic] and rea as "evil spirit" [cf. ree "crazy", etc.].

The Bride referred to is "St. Bride of the Isles", venerated in the Highlands and Islands as Muime Chroisd, the foster-mother of Christ. Bride, Columba and Michael are often found together in spells of this nature: cf. MacNeill, *ibid.*, quoting Alexander Stewart, "Twixt Ben Nevis and Glencoe" (1885). Cf. ODNR 303 (no. 346), note to the charm "Matthew, Mark, Luke and John".

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