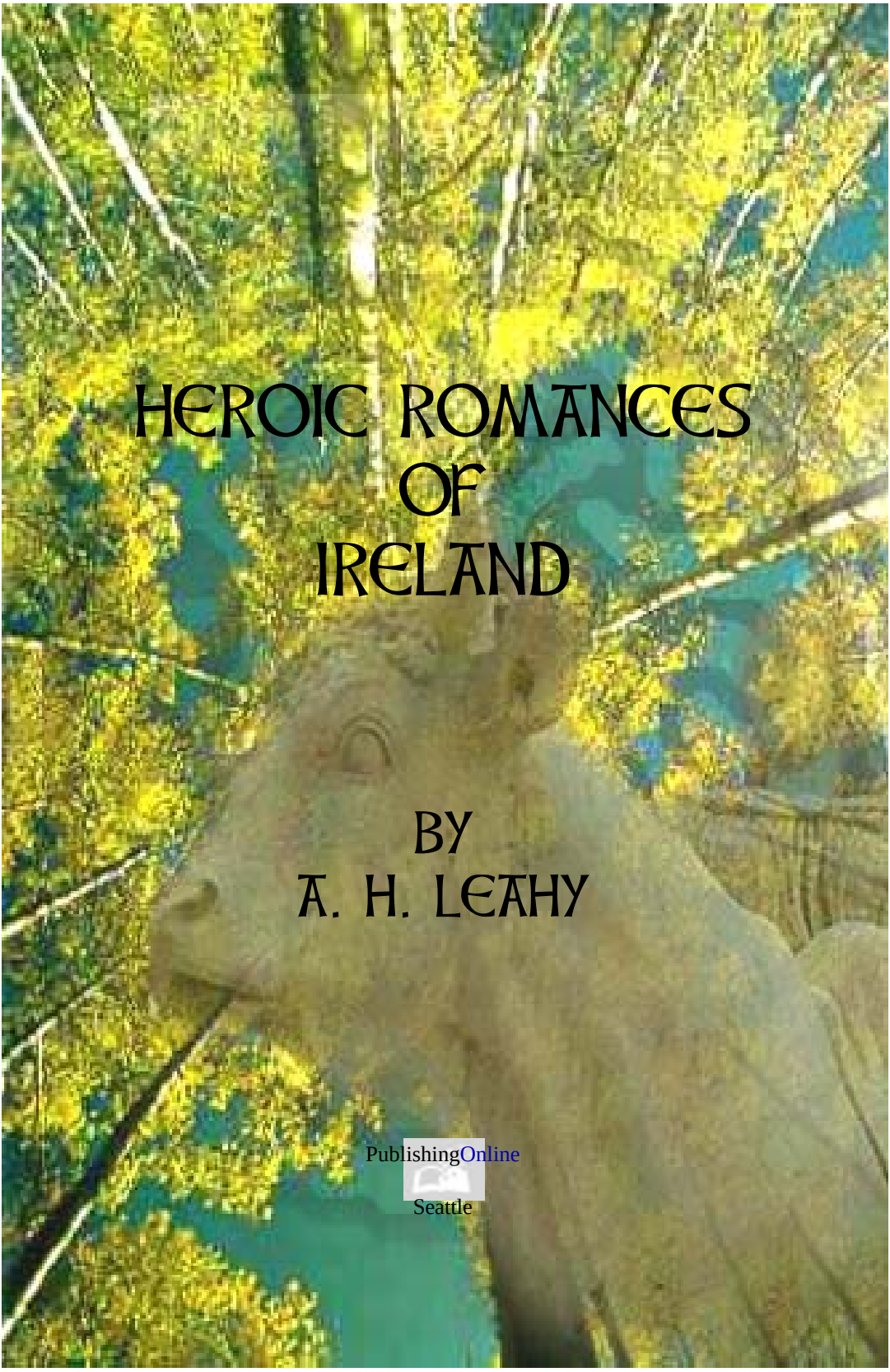
HEROIC ROMANCES
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BY
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HEROIC ROMANCES OF IRELAND

BY
A H LEAHY

IN TWO VOLUMES

1905 AND 1906

These two books are scholarly translations of Irish legends. Although many of the stories in these books center around cattle raids, they have numerous supernatural incidents and remnants of pre-Christian religious beliefs.

Volume I (1905)

The first volume contains five separate stories, the "Courtship of Etain," the "Boar of Mac Datho," the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain," the "Death of the Sons of Usnach" (Book of Leinster version), and the "Combat at the Ford" out of the Book of Leinster version of the "Tain bo Cuailnge." Two versions are given of the "Courtship of Etain "; and the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain".

Volume II (1906)

This part includes the five "Tains" or Cattle-Forays of Fraech (Tain bo Fraich), Dartaid (The Raid for Dartaid's Cattle), Regamon (The Raid for the Cattle of Regamon), Flidais (The Driving of the Cattle of Flidais), and Regamna (The Apparition of The Great Queen to Cuchulain); They are all expressly named as "fore-tales," remscéla, or preludes to the story of the great war of Cualnge, which is the central event in the Ulster heroic cycle. As an appendix, this book includes the Irish text and literal translation of an incident of the Courtship of Etain, which is translated in the first volume.

The original book of Volume II. had literal and verse translations on facing pages. We have maintained the page order in the etext, and have left the page number markers so that the two translations can be distinguished.

HEROIC ROMANCES OF IRELAND

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE AND VERSE WITH PREFACE SPECIAL INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES BY

A H LEAHY

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL I

(1905)

PREFACE

AT a time like the present, when in the opinion of many the great literatures of Greece and Rome are ceasing to hold the influence that they have so long exerted upon human thought, and when the study of the greatest works of the ancient world is derided as "useless," it may be too sanguine to hope that any attention can be paid to a literature that is quite as useless as the Greek; which deals with a time, which, if not actually as far removed from ours as are classical times, is yet further removed in ideas; a literature which is known to few and has yet to win its way to favour, while the far superior literature of Greece finds it hard to defend the position that it long ago won. It may be that reasons like these have weighed with those scholars who have opened up for us the long-hidden treasures of Celtic literature; despairing of the effort to obtain for that literature its rightful crown, and the homage due to it from those who can appreciate literary work for itself, they have been contented to ask for the support of that smaller body who from philological, antiquarian, or, strange as it may appear, from political reasons, are prepared to take a modified interest in what should be universally regarded as in its way one of the most interesting literatures of the world.

The literary aspect of the ancient literature of Ireland has not indeed been altogether neglected. It has been used to furnish themes on which modern poems can be written; ancient authority has been found in it for what is essentially modern thought: modern English and Irish poets have claimed the old Irish romances as inspirers, but the romances themselves have been left to the scholars and the antiquarians.

This is not the position that Irish literature ought to fill. It does undoubtedly tell us much of the most ancient legends of modern Europe which could not have been known without it; but this is not its sole, or even its chief claim to be heard. It is itself the connecting-link between the Old World and the New, written, so far as can be ascertained, at the time when the literary energies of the ancient world were dead, when the literatures of modern Europe had not been born,[1] in a country that had no share in the ancient civilisation of Rome, among a people which still retained many legends and possibly a rudimentary literature drawn from ancient Celtic sources, and was producing the men who were the earliest classical scholars of the modern world.

The exact extent of the direct influence of Irish literature upon the development of other nations is hard to trace, chiefly because the influence of Ireland upon the Continent was at its height at the time when none of the languages of modern

Europe except Welsh and Anglo-Saxon had reached a stage at which they might be used for literary purposes, and a Continental literature on which the Irish one might have influence simply did not exist. Its subsequent influence, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, upon Welsh, and through Welsh upon the early Breton literature (now lost) appears to be established; it is usually supposed that its action upon the earliest French compositions was only through the medium of these languages, but it is at least possible that its influence in this case also was more direct. In Merovingian and early Carlovingian times, when French songs were composed, which are now lost but must have preceded the extant *chansons de geste*, the Irish schools were attracting scholars from the neighbouring countries of Europe; Ireland was sending out a steady stream of "learned men" to France, Germany, and Italy; and it is at least possible that some who knew the Irish teachers realized the merit of the literary works with which some of these teachers must have been familiar. The form of the twelfth-century French romance. "Aucassin and Nicolete," is that of the chief Irish romances, and may well have been suggested by them; whilst the variety of the rhythm and the elaborate laws of the earliest French poetry, which, both in its Northern and Southern form, dates from the first half of the twelfth century, almost imply a pre-existing model; and such a model is more easily traced in Irish than in any other vernacular literature that was then available. It is indeed nearly as hard to suppose that the beautiful literature of Ireland had absolutely no influence upon nations known to be in contact with it, as it would be to hold to the belief that the ancient Cretan civilisation had no effect upon the literary development that culminated in the poems of Homer.

[1. The only possible exceptions to this, assuming the latest possible date for the Irish work, and the earliest date for others, are the kindred Welsh literature and that of the Anglo-Saxon invaders of Britain.]

Before speaking of what the Irish literature was, it may be well to say what it was not. The incidents related in it date back, according to the "antiquaries" of the ninth to the twelfth centuries, some to the Christian era, some to a period long anterior to it; but occasional allusions to events that were unknown in Ireland before the introduction of Christianity, and a few to classical personages, show that the form of the present romances can hardly be pre-Christian, or even close translations into Old or Middle Irish of Druidic tales. It has therefore been the fashion to speak of the romances as inaccurate survivals of pre-Christian works, which have been added to by successive generations of "bards," a mode of viewing our versions of the romances which of course puts them out of the category of original literature and hands them over to the antiquarians; but before they suffer

this fate, it is reasonable to ask that their own literary merit should be considered in a more serious manner than has yet been attempted.

The idea that our versions of the romances are inaccurate reproductions of Druidic tales is not at all borne out by a study of the romances themselves; for each of these, except for a few very manifestly late insertions, has a style and character of its own. There were, undoubtedly, old traditions, known to the men who in the sixth and seventh centuries may have written the tales that we have, known even to men who in the tenth and eleventh centuries copied them and commented upon them; but the romances as they now stand do not look like pieces of patchwork, but like the works of men who had ideas to convey; and to me at least they seem to bear approximately the same relation to the Druid legends as the works of the Attic tragedians bear to the archaic Greek legends on which their tragedies were based. In more than one case, as in the "Courtship of Etain," which is more fully discussed below, there are two versions of the same tale, the framework being the same in both, while the treatment of the incidents and the view of the characters of the actors is essentially different; and when the story is treated from the antiquarian point of view, that which regards both versions as resting upon a common prehistoric model, the question arises, which of the two more nearly represents the "true" version? There is, I would submit, in such cases, no true version. The old Druidic story, if it could be found, would in all probability contain only a very small part of either of our two versions; it would be bald, half-savage in tone, like one of the more ancient Greek myths, and producing no literary effect; the literary effect of both the versions that we have, being added by men who lived in Christian times, were influenced by Christian ideals, and probably were, like many of their contemporaries, familiar with the literary bequests of the ancient world.[1]

[1. It seems to be uncertain whether or not the writers of the Irish romances shared in the classical learning for which Ireland was noted in their time. The course of study at the schools established for the training of the fili in the tenth and eleventh centuries was certainly, as has been pointed out, very different from that of the ecclesiastical schools (see Joyce, vol. i. p. 430). No classical instruction was included in this training, but it is not certain that this separation of studies was so complete before what is called the "antiquarian age" set in. Cormac mac Cuninan, for example, was a classical scholar, and at the same time skilled in the learning of the fili. It should also be observed that the course at the ecclesiastical schools, as handed down to us, hardly seems to be classical enough to have produced a Columbanus or an Erigena; the studies that produced these men must have been of a different kind, and the lay schools as originally established by Sanchan Torpest may have included much that afterwards gave place to a more purely Irish training.

The tale of Troy seems to have been known to the fili, and there are in their works allusions to Greek heroes, to Hercules and Hector, but it has been pointed out by Mr. Nutt that there is little if any evidence of influence produced by Latin or Greek literature on the actual matter or thought of the older Irish work. On this point reference may be made to a note on "Mae Datho's Boar" in this volume (p. 173), but even if this absence of classical influence is established (and it is hard to say what will not be found in Irish literature), it is just possible that the same literary feeling which made Irish writers of comparatively late tales keep the bronze weapons and chariots of an earlier date in their accounts of ancient wars, while they described arms of the period when speaking of battles of their own time, affected them in this instance also; and that they had enough restraint to refrain from introducing classical and Christian ideas when speaking of times in which they knew these ideas would have been unfamiliar.]

It may be, and often is, assumed that the appearance of grotesque or savage passages in a romance is an indication of high antiquity, and that these passages at least are faithful reproductions of Druidic originals, but this does not seem to be quite certain. Some of these passages, especially in the case of romances preserved in the Leabhar na h-Uidhri (The Book of the Dun Cow), look like insertions made by scribes of an antiquarian turn of mind,[1] and are probably of very ancient date; in other cases, as for example in the "Boar of Mac Datho," where Conall dashes Anluan's head into Ket's face, the savagery is quite in 'keeping with the character of the story, and way have been deliberately invented by an author living in Christian times, to add a flavour to his tale, although in doing so he probably imitated a similar incident in some other legend. To take a classical parallel, the barbarity shown by Æneas in Æneid x. 518-520, in sacrificing four youths on the funeral pyre of Pallas, an act which would have been regarded with horror in Virgil's own day, does not prove that there was any ancient tale of the death of Pallas in which these victims were sacrificed, nor even that such victims were sacrificed in ancient Latium in Pallas' day; but it does show that Virgil was familiar with the fact that such victims used in some places to be sacrificed on funeral pyres; for, in a sense, he could not have actually invented the incident.

Thus the appearance of an archaic element in an Irish romance is in itself no proof of the Druidic origin of that form of the romance, nor even of the existence of that element in the romance's earliest form: upon such a principle the archaic character of the *motif* of the "Œdipus Coloneus" would prove it to be the oldest of the Greek tragedies, while as a matter of fact it seems to be doubtful whether the introduction of this *motif* into the story of Œdipus was not due to Sophocles himself, although

of course he drew the idea of it, if not from the original legend of Œdipus, from some other early legend.

[1. See the exhibition of the tips of tongues in the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain," page 57.]

The most satisfactory test of the authorship of an Irish romance, and one of the most satisfactory tests of its date, is its literary character; and if we look at the literary character of the best of the Irish romances, there is one point that is immediately apparent, the blending of prose and verse. One, the most common, explanation of this, is that the verse was added to the original tale, another that the verse is the older part, the prose being added to make a framework for the verse, but a general view of some of the original romances appears to lead to a very different conclusion. It seems much more probable that the Irish authors deliberately chose a method of making their work at once literary and suited to please a popular audience; they told their stories in plain prose, adding to them verse, possibly chanted by the reciters of the stories, so that while the prose told the story in simple language, the emotions of pity, martial ardour, and the like were awakened by the verse. They did not use the epic form, although their knowledge of classical literature must have made them familiar with it; the Irish epic form is Romance. They had, besides the prose and what may be called the "regular" verse, a third form, that of rose, or as it is sometimes called rhetoric, which is a very irregular form of verse. Sometimes it rhymes, but more often not; the lines are of varying lengths, and to scan them is often very difficult, an alliteration taking the place of scansion in many cases. The rhetoric does not in general develop the story nor take the form of description, it usually consists of songs of triumph, challenges, prophecies, and exhortations, though it is sometimes used for other purposes. It does not conform to strict grammatical rules like the more regular verse and the prose, and many of the literal translations which Irish scholars have made for us of the romances omit this *rhetoric* entirely, owing to the difficulty in rendering it accurately, and because it does not develop the plots of the stories. Notable examples of such omissions are in Miss Faraday's translation of the Leabhar na h-Uidhri version of the "Great Tain," and in Whitley Stokes' translation of the "Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel." With all respect to these scholars, and with the full consciousness of the difficulty of the task that has naturally been felt by one who has vainly attempted to make sense of what their greater skill has omitted, it may be suggested that the total omission of such passages injures the literary effect of a romance in a manner similar to the effect of omitting all the choric pieces in a Greek tragedy: the *rhetoric* indeed, on account of its irregularity, its occasional strophic correspondence, its general independence of the action of the tale, and its

difficulty as compared with the other passages, may be compared very closely to a Greek "chorus." Few of the romances written in prose and verse are entirely without *rhetoric*; but some contain very little of it; all the six romances of this character given in the present volume (counting as two the two versions of "Etain") contain some *rhetoric*, but there are only twenty-one such passages in the collection altogether, ten of which are in one romance, the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain."

The present collection is an attempt to give to English readers some of the oldest romances in English literary forms that seem to correspond to the literary forms which were used in Irish to produce the same effect, and has been divided into two parts. The first part contains five separate stories, all of which are told in the characteristic form of prose and verse: they are the "Courtship of Etain," the "Boar of Mac Datho," the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain," the "Death of the Sons of Usnach" (Book of Leinster version), and the "Combat at the Ford" out of the Book of Leinster version of the "Tain bo Cuailnge." Two versions are given of the "Courtship of Etain "; and the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain," as is pointed out in the special preface prefixed to it, really consists of two independent versions. It was at first intended to add the better-known version of the "Death of the Sons of Usnach" known as that of the Glenn Masain MS., but the full translation of this has been omitted, partly to avoid making the volume too bulky, partly because this version is readily attainable in a literal form; an extract from it has, however, been added to the Book of Leinster version for the purpose of comparison. In the renderings given of these romances the translation of the prose is nearly literal, but no attempt has been made to follow the Irish idiom where this idiom sounds harsh in English; actives have been altered to passive forms and the reverse, adjectives are sometimes replaced by short sentences which give the image better in English, pronouns, in which Irish is very rich, are often replaced by the persons or things indicated, and common words, like *iarom*, *iarsin*, *iartain*, *immorro*, and the like (meaning thereafter, moreover, &c.), have been replaced by short sentences that refer back to the events indicated by the words. Nothing has been added to the Irish, except in the Leabhar na h-Uidhri version of "Etain," where there is a lacuna to be filled up, and there are no omissions. The translations of the verse and of the rhetoric are, so far as is possible, made upon similar lines; it was at first intended to add literal renderings of all the verse passages, but it was found that to do so would make the volume of an unmanageable size for its purpose. Literal renderings of all the verse passages in "Etain," the first of the tales in volume i., are given in the notes to that story; the literal renderings of Deirdre's lament in the "Sons of Usnach," and of two poems in "The Combat at the Ford," are also given in full as specimens, but in the case of most of the poems reference is made to easily available literal translations

either in English or German: where the literal rendering adopted differs from that referred to, or where the poem in question has not before been translated, the literal rendering has been given in the notes. These examples will, it is believed, give a fair indication of the relation between my verse translations and the originals, the deviations from which have been made as small as possible. The form of four-line verse divided into stanzas has generally been used to render the passages in four-lined verse in the Irish, the only exception to this rule being in the verses at the end of the "Boar of Mac Datho": these are in the nature of a ballad version of the whole story, and have been rendered in a ballad metre that does not conform to the arrangement in verses of the original.

The metre of all the Irish four-lined verses in this volume is, except in two short pieces, a seven-syllabled line, the first two lines usually rhyming with each other, and the last two similarly rhyming,[1] in a few cases in the "Boar of Mac Datho" these rhymes are alternate, and in the extract from the Glenn Masain version of the "Sons of Usnach" there is a more complicated rhyme system. It has not been thought necessary to reproduce this metre in all cases, as to do so would sound too monotonous in English; the metre is, however, reproduced once at least in each tale except in that of the "Death of the Sons of Usnach." The eight-lined metre that occurs in five of the verse passages in the "Combat at the Ford" has in one case been reproduced exactly, and in another case nearly exactly, but with one syllable added to each line; the two passages in this romance that are in five-syllabled lines have been reproduced exactly in the Irish metre, in one case with the rhyme-system of the original. With the *rhetoric* greater liberty has been used; sometimes the original metre has been followed, but more often not; and an occasional attempt has been made to bring out the strophic correspondence in the Irish.

[1. An example of this metre is as follows:—

All the elves of Troom seem dead,
All their mighty deeds are fled;
For their Hound, who hounds surpassed,
Elves have bound in slumber fast.]

In the first volume of the collection the presentation has then been made as near as may be to the form and matter of the Irish; in the second volume, called "Versified Romances," there is a considerable divergence from the Irish form but not from its sense. This part includes the five "Tains" or Cattle-Forays of Fraech, Dartaid, Regamon, Flidais, and Regamna; which in the originals differ from the five tales in volume i. in that they include no verse, except for a few lines in Regamna, most of which are untranslatable. The last four of these are short pieces written in a prose extremely rapid in its action, and crowded with incident. They are all expressly

named as "fore-tales," *remscéla*, or preludes to the story of the great war of Cualnge, which is the central event in the Ulster heroic cycle, and appear suited for rapid prose recitations, which were apparently as much a feature in ancient as they are in modern Irish. Such pieces can hardly be reproduced in English prose so as to bring out their character; they are represented in English by the narrative ballad, and they have been here rendered in this way. Literal translations in prose are printed upon the opposite page to the verse, these translations being much more exact than the translations in the first volume, as the object in this case is to show the literal Irish form, not its literal English equivalent, which is in this case the verse. The "Tain bo Fraich" is also, in a sense, a "fore-tale" to the Great Raid, but is of a different character to the others. It consists of two parts, the second of which is not unlike the four that have just been mentioned, but the first part is of a much higher order, containing brilliant descriptions, and at least one highly poetic passage although its Irish form is prose. Fraech has been treated like the other fore-tales, and rendered in verse with literal prose opposite to the verse for the purpose of comparison. The notes to all the five *Tana* in the second volume accompany the text; in the first volume all the notes to the different romances are collected together, and placed at the end of the volume. The second volume also includes a transcript from the facsimile of that part of the Irish text of the tale of Etain which has not before been published, together with an interlinear literal translation. It is hoped that this arrangement may assist some who are not Middle Irish scholars to realise what the original romances are.

The manuscript authorities for the eleven different romances (counting as two the two versions of "Etain") are all old; seven are either in the Leabhar na h-Uidhri, an eleventh-century manuscript, or in the Book of Leinster, a twelfth-century one; three of the others are in the fourteenth-century Yellow Book of Lecan, which is often, in the case of texts preserved both in it and the Leabhar na h-Uidhri, regarded as the better authority of the two; and the remaining one, the second version of "Etain," is in the fifteenth-century manuscript known as Egerton, 1782, which gives in an accurate form so many texts preserved in the older manuscripts that it is very nearly as good an authority as they. The sources used in making the translations are also stated in the special introductions, but it may be mentioned as a summary that the four "Preludes," the *Tana* of Dartaid, Regamon, Flidais, and Regamna, are taken from the text printed with accompanying German translations by Windisch in *Irische Texte*, vol. ii.; Windisch's renderings being followed in those portions of the text that he translates; for the "Tain bo Fraich" and the "Combat at the Ford" the Irish as given by O'Beirne Crowe and by O'Curry, with not very trustworthy English translations, has been followed; in the case of the fragment of

the Glenn Masain version of "Deirdre" little reference has been made to the Irish, the literal translation followed being that given by Whitley Stokes. The remaining five romances, the "Boar of Mac Datho," the Leinster version of "Deirdre," the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain," the Egerton version of "Etain," and the greater part of the Leabbar na h-Uidhri version of the same, are taken from the Irish text printed without translation in *Irische Texte*, vol. i., the end of the Leabhar na h-Uidhri version omitted by Windisch being taken from the facsimile of the manuscript published by the Royal Irish Academy.

I have to acknowledge with gratitude many corrections to O'Beirne Crowe's translation of the "Tain bo Fraich" kindly given me by Professor Kuno Meyer; in the case of O'Curry's translation of the "Combat at the Ford," similar help kindly given me by Mr. E. J. Quiggin; and in the case of the two versions of "Etain," more especially for the part taken direct from the facsimile, I have to express gratitude for the kind and ready help given to me by Professor Strachan. Professor Strachan has not only revised my transcript from the facsimile, and supplied me with translations of the many difficult passages in this of which I could make no sense, but has revised all the translation which was made by the help of Windisch's glossary to the *Irische Texte* of both the versions of "Etain," so that the translations given of these two romances should be especially reliable, although of course I may have made some errors which have escaped Professor Strachan's notice. The three other romances which have been translated from the Irish in *Irische Texte* have not been similarly revised, but all passages about which there appeared to be doubt have been referred to in the notes to the individual romances.

It remains to add some remarks upon the general character of the tales, which, as may be seen after a very cursory examination, are very different both in tone and merit, as might indeed be expected if we remember that we are probably dealing with the works of men who were separated from each other by a gap of hundreds of years. Those who have read the actual works of the ancient writers of the Irish romances will not readily indulge in the generalisations about them used by those to whom the romances are only known by abstracts or a compilation. Perhaps the least meritorious of those in this collection are the "Tains" of Dartaid, Regamon, and Flidais, but the tones of these three stories are very different. Dartaid is a tale of fairy vengeance for a breach of faith; Flidais is a direct and simple story of a raid like a Border raid, reminding us of the "riding ballads" of the Scottish Border, and does not seem to trouble itself much about questions of right or wrong; Regamon is a merry tale of a foray by boys and girls; it troubles itself with the rights of the matter even less than Flidais if possible, and is an example of an Irish tale with what is called in modern times a "good ending." It may be noted that these last two

tales have no trace of the supernatural element which some suppose that the Irish writers were unable to dispense with. The "Tain bo Regamna," the shortest piece in the collection, is a grotesque presentation of the supernatural, and is more closely associated with the Great Tain than any of the other fore-tales to it, the series of prophecies with which it closes exactly following the action of the part of the Tain. to which it refers. Some of the grotesque character of Regamna appears in the "Boar of Mac Datho," which, however, like Regamon and Flidais, has no supernatural element; its whole tone is archaic and savage, relieved by touches of humour, but the style of the composition is much superior to that of the first three stories. A romance far superior to "Mae Datho" is the Leinster version of the well-known Deirdre story, the "Death of the Sons of Usnach." The opening of the story is savage, the subsequent action of the prose is very rapid, while the splendid lament at the end, one of the best sustained laments in the language, and the restraint shown in its account of the tragic death of Deirdre, place this version of the story in a high position. As has been already mentioned, parts of the fifteenth-century version of the story have been added to this version for purposes of comparison: the character of the Deirdre of the Leinster version would not have been in keeping with the sentiment of the lament given to her in the later account.

The remaining five romances (treating as two the two versions of "Etain") all show great beauty in different ways. Three of the four tales given in them have "good endings," and the feeling expressed in them is less primitive than that shown in the other stories, although it is an open question whether any of them rises quite so high as Deirdre's lament. "Fraech" has, as has been mentioned before, two quite separate parts; the second part is of inferior quality, showing, however, an unusual amount of knowledge of countries lying outside Celtdom, but the first is a most graceful romance; although the hero is a demi-god, and the fairies play a considerable part in it, the interest is essentially human; and the plot is more involved than is the case in most of the romances. It abounds in brilliant descriptions; the description of the Connaught palace is of antiquarian interest; and one of the most beautiful pieces of Celtic mythology, the parentage of the three fairy harpers, is included in it.

The "Sick-bed of Cuchulain" and the Leabhar na h-Uidhri version of the "Courtship of Etain" seem to have had their literary effect injured by the personality of the compiler of the manuscript from which the Leabhar na h-Uidhri was copied. Seemingly an antiquarian, interested in the remains of the old Celtic religion and in old ceremonies, he has inserted pieces of antiquarian information into several of the romances that he has preserved for us, and though these are often of great interest in themselves, they spoil the literary effect of the romances in which they

appear. It is possible that both the Leabhar na h-Uidhri version of "Etain" and the "Sick-bed" might be improved by a little judicious editing; they have, however, been left just as they stand in the manuscript. The "Sick-bed," as is pointed out in the special introduction to it, consists of two separate versions; the first has plainly some of the compiler's comments added to it, but the second and longer part seems not to have been meddled with; and, although a fragment, it makes a stately romance, full of human interest although dealing with supernatural beings; and its conclusion is especially remarkable in early literature on account of the importance of the action of the two women who are the heroines of this part of the tale. The action of Fand in resigning her lover to the weaker mortal woman who has a better claim upon him is quite modern in its tone.

The nearest parallel to the longer version of the "Sick-bed" is the Egerton version of "Etain," which is a complete one, and makes a stately romance. It is full of human interest, love being its keynote; it keeps the supernatural element which is an essential to the original legend in the background, and is of quite a different character to the earlier Leabhar na h-Uidhri version, although there is no reason to assume that the latter is really the more ancient in date. In the Leabbar na h-Uidhri version of "Etain," all that relates to the love-story is told in the baldest manner, the part which deals with the supernatural being highly descriptive and poetic. I am inclined to believe that the antiquarian compiler of the manuscript did here what he certainly did in the case of the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain," and pieced together two romances founded upon the same legend by different authors. The opening of the story in Fairyland and the concluding part where Mider again appears are alike both in style and feeling, while the part that comes between is a highly condensed version of the love-story of the Egerton manuscript, and suggests the idea of an abstract of the Egerton version inserted into the story as originally composed, the effect being similar to that which would be produced upon us if we had got Æschylus' "Choaphorae" handed down to us with a condensed version of the dialogue between Electra and Chrysothemis out of Sophocles' "Electra" inserted by a conscientious antiquarian who thought that some mention of Chrysothemis was necessary. This version of the legend, however, with its strong supernatural flavour, its insistence on the idea of re-birth, its observation of nature, and especially the fine poem in which Mider invites Etain to Fairyland, is a most valuable addition to the literature, and we have to lament the gap in it owing to the loss of a column in that part of the Leabhar na h-Uidhri manuscript which has been preserved.

The last piece to be mentioned is the extract from the "Tain be Cuailnge" known as the "Combat at the Ford." This seems to me the finest specimen of old Irish work that has been preserved for us; the brilliance of its descriptions, the appropriate

changes in its metres, the chivalry of its sentiments, and the rapidity of its action should, even if there were nothing to stand beside it in Irish literature, give that literature a claim to be heard: as an account of a struggle between two friends, it is probably the finest in any literature. It has been stated recently, no doubt upon sound authority, that the grammatical forms of this episode show it to be late, possibly dating only to the eleventh century. The manuscript in which it appears, however, is of the earlier part of the twelfth century; no literary modem work other than Irish can precede it in time; and if it is the work of an eleventh-century author, it does seem strange that his name or the name of some one of that date who could have written it has not been recorded, as MacLiag's name has been as the traditional author of the eleventh-century "Wars of the Gaedhill and the Gaill," for the names of several Irish authors of that period axe well known, and the Early Middle Irish texts of that period are markedly of inferior quality. Compare for example the Boromaean Tribute which Stokes considers to take high rank among texts of that period (*Revue Celtique*, xiii. p. 32). One would certainly like to believe that this episode of the "Combat at the Ford" belongs to the best literary period, with which upon literary grounds it seems to be most closely connected.

But, whether this comparative lateness of the "Combat at the Ford" be true or not, it, together with all the varied work contained in this collection, with the possible exception of the short extract from the Glenn Masain "Deirdre," is in the actual form that we have it, older than the Norman Conquest of Ireland, older than the Norse Sagas. Its manuscript authority is older than that of the Volsunga Saga; its present form precedes the birth of Chrétien de Troyes, the first considerable name in French literature, and, in a form not much unlike that in which we have it, it is probably centuries older than its actual manuscript date. The whole thing stands at the very beginning of the literature of Modern Europe, and compares by no means unfavourably with that which came after, and may, in part, have been inspired by it. Surely it deserves to be raised from its present position as a study known only to a few specialists, and to form part of the mental equipment of every man who is for its own sake interested in and a lover of literature.

INTRODUCTION IN VERSE

'Tis hard an audience now to win
For lore that Ireland's tales can teach;
And faintly, 'mid the modern din,
Is heard the old heroic speech.
For long the tales in silence slept;
The ancient tomes by few were read;
E'en those who still its knowledge kept
Have thought the living music dead.
And some, to save the lore from death,
With modern arts each tale would deck,
Inflate its rhymes with magic breath,
As if to buoy a sinking wreck.
They graft new morbid magic dreams
On tales where beating life is felt:
In each romance find mystic gleams,
And traces of the "moody Celt."
Yet, though with awe the grassy mound
That fairies haunt, is marked to-day;
And though in ancient tales are found
Dim forms of gods, long passed away;
Though later men to magic turned,
Inserting many a Druid spell;
And ill the masters' craft had learned
Who told the tales, and told them well;
No tale should need a magic dress
Or modern art, its life to give:
Each for itself, or great, or less,
Should speak, if it deserves to live.
Think not a dull, a scribal pen
Dead legends wrote, half-known, and feared:
In lettered lands to poet men
Romance, who lives to-day, appeared.
For when, in fear of warrior bands,
Had Learning fled the western world,

And, raised once more by Irish hands,
Her banner stood again unfurled;
'Twas there, where men her laws revered,
That Learning aided Art's advance;
And Ireland bore, and Ireland reared
These Eldest Children of Romance.
Her poets knew the Druid creeds;
Yet not on these their thoughts would rest:
They sang of love, of heroes' deeds,
Of kingly pomp, of cheerful jest.
Not as in Greece aspired their thought,
They joyed in battles wild and stern;
Yet pity once to men they taught
From whom a fiercer age could learn.
Their frequent theme was war: they sang
The praise of chiefs of courage high;
Yet, from their harps the accents rang
That taught to knighthood chivalry.
Their heroes praise a conquered foe,
Oppose their friends for honour's sake,
To weaker chieftains mercy show,
And strength of cruel tyrants break.
Their nobles, loving fame, rejoice
In glory, got from bards, to shine;
Yet thus ascends Cuchulain's voice:
"No skill indeed to boast is mine!"
They sang, to please a warlike age,
Of wars, and women's wild lament,
Yet oft, restraining warriors' rage,
Their harps to other themes were bent.
They loved on peaceful pomp to dwell,
Rejoiced in music's magic strains,.
All Nature's smiling face loved well,
And "glowing hues of flowery plains."
Though oft of Fairy Land they spoke,
No eerie beings dwelled therein,
'Twas filled throughout with joyous folk
Like men, though freed from death and sin.

And sure those bards were truest knights
Whose thoughts of women high were set,
Nor deemed them prizes, won in fights,
But minds like men's, and women yet.
With skilful touch they paint us each,
Etain, whose beauty's type for all;
Scathach, whose warriors skill could teach
Emer, whose words in wisdom fall;
Deirdre the seer, by love made keen;
Flidais, whose bounty armies feeds
The prudent Mugain, Conor's queen;
Crund's wife, more swift than Conor's steeds;
Finnabar, death for love who dared;
Revengeful Ferb, who died of grief
Fand, who a vanquished rival spared;
Queen Maev, who Connaught led, its chief.
Not for the creeds their lines preserve
Should Irelands hero tales be known
Their pictured pages praise deserve
From all, not learned men alone.
Their works are here; though flawed by time,
To all the living verses speak
Of men who taught to Europe rhyme,
Who knew no masters, save the Greek.
In forms like those men loved of old,
Naught added, nothing torn away,
The ancient tales again are told,
Can none their own true magic sway?

PRONUNCIATION OF PROPER NAMES

THE following list of suggested pronunciations does not claim to be complete or to be necessarily correct in all cases. Some words like Ferdia and Conchobar (Conor) have an established English pronunciation that is strictly speaking wrong; some, like Murthemne are doubtful; the suggestions given here are those adopted by the editor for such information as is at his disposal. It seems to be unnecessary to give all the names, as the list would be too long; this list contains those names in the first volume as are of frequent occurrence; names that occur less commonly, and some of those in the following list, have a pronunciation indicated in foot-notes. The most important names are in small capitals.

LIST OF NAMES

Aife (Ee-fa), pp. 117, 129, 1342 141, 148, an instructress of Cuchulain, Ferdia, and others in the art of war.

Cathbad (Cah-ba), pp. 91, 92, 93, 95, a Druid.

CUALGNE (Kell-ny), mentioned in the Preface, Introductions, the "Combat" and elsewhere; a district corresponding to County Louth.

CUCHULAIN (Cu-hoo-lin), the hero of the "Sick-bed" and the "Combat," and of the Ulster Heroic cycle in general.

DEIRDRE (Dire-dree), the heroine of the "Exile of the Sons of Usnach."

Dubhtach (Doov-ta), pp. 48, 97, 98, 107, an Ulster hero.

Eochaid Airem (Yeo-hay Arrem), the king in the "Courtship of Etain."

Eochaid Juil (Yeo-hay Yool), pp. 63, 70, 76, 79, a fairy king killed by Cuchulain.

Eogan mac Durthacht (Yeogan mac Door-ha), pp. 43, 48, 93, 97, 101, 107; an Ulster hero, the slayer of the sons of Usnach.

ETAIN (Et-oyn), the heroine of the "Courtship of Etain."

FERDIA (Fer-dee-a), Cuchulain's opponent in the "Combat at the Ford." The true pronunciation is probably Fer-deed.

Fuamnach (Foom-na), pp. 79 9, 10, 19, 26, a sorceress.
Laeg (Layg), son of Riangabra (Reen-gabra), the charioteer and friend of Cuchulain, frequently mentioned in the "Sick-bed" and the "Combat at the Ford."
Laegaire (Leary), pp. 42, 46, 67, an Ulster hero.
Leabhar na h-Uidhri (Lyow-er na hoorie), frequently mentioned, the oldest Irish manuscript of romance. It means the "Book of the Dun Cow," sometimes referred to as L.U.
MAC DATHO (Mac Da-ho), king of Leinster in the "Boar of Mac Datho," the word means "son of two mutes."
Murthemne (Moor-temmy), pp. 57, 59, 61, 73, 77, 78, a district in Ulster, with which Cuchulain is connected in the "Sick-bed" (in the "Combat" he is "Cuchulain of Cualgne").
NAISI (Nay-see), the hero of the "Exile of the Sons of Usnach."
Scathach (Ska-ha), pp. 117, 129) 131, 134, 141, 149, 151 a sorceress in the Isle of Skye, instructress of Cuchulain in war.
Uathach (Oo-ha), pp. 117, 129, 134; 141) 149, daughter of Scathach.
Other prominent characters, in the pronunciation of whose names as given in the text no special assistance is required, are:
AILILL mac Mata (Al-ill), king of Connaught.
Ailill Anglonnach, lover of Etain, in the "Courtship of Etain."
Conall Cernach, Conall the Victorious, second champion of Ulster after Cuchulain.
CONOR (properly spelt Conchobar and pronounced Con-ower), king of Ulster.
Emer, wife of Cuchulain, appears often in the "Sick-bed." This name is by some pronounced A-vair, probably from a different spelling.
Fand, the fairy princess, in love with Cuchulain, in the "Sick-bed."
FERGUS, son of Róg, prominent in the "Exile of the Sons of Usnach," and in "Combat"; step-father to King Conor, he appears in most of the romances.
Ket (spelt Cet), son of Mata, the Connaught champion, appears in the "Boar of Mac Datho."
MAEV (spelt Medb), the great Queen of Connaught.
Mider, Etain's fairy lover, in the "Courtship of Etain."

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

THE date which tradition assigns to the events related in the tale of the "Courtship of Etain" is about B.C. 100, two or, according to some accounts, three generations before the king Conaire Mor, or Conary, whose death is told in the tale called the "Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel." This king is generally spoken of as a contemporary of the chief personages of what is called more especially the "Heroic Age" of Ireland; and the two versions of the "Courtship of Etain" given in this volume at once introduce a difficulty; for the sub-kings who were tributary to Eochaid, Etain's husband, are in both versions stated to be Conor, Ailill mac Mata, Mesgegra, and Curoi, all of whom are well-known figures in the tales of the Heroic Age. As Conary is related to have ruled sixty years, and several of the characters of the Heroic Age survived him, according to the tale that describes his death, the appearance of the names of Conor and Ailill in a tale about his grandfather (or according to the Egerton version his great-grandfather) introduces an obvious discrepancy.

It appears to be quite impossible to reconcile the dates given to the actors in the tales of the Heroic and preceding age. They seem to have been given in the "antiquarian age" of the tenth and eleventh centuries; not only do they differ according to different chronologers by upwards of a hundred years, but the succession of kings in the accounts given by the same chronologer is often impossible in view of their mutual relationships. The real state of things appears to be that the "Courtship of Etain," together with the story of Conary, the lost tale of the destruction of the Fairy Hill of Nennta,[1] and the tale of the Bull-Feast and election of Lugaid Red-Stripes as king of Ireland, forms a short cycle of romance based upon ancient legends that had originally no connection at all with those on which the romances of the Heroic Age were built. The whole government of the country is essentially different in the two cycles; in the Etain cycle the idea is that of a land practically governed by one king, the vassal kings being of quite small importance; in the tales of the Heroic Age proper, the picture we get is of two, if not of four, practically independent kingdoms, the allusions to any over-king being very few, and in great part late. But when the stories of Etain and of Conary assumed their present forms, when the writers of our romances formed them out of the traditions which descended to them from pro-Christian sources, both cycles of tradition were pretty well known; and there was a natural tendency to introduce personages from one cycle into the other, although these personages occupy a

subordinate position in the cycle to which they do not properly belong. Even Conall Cernach, who is a fairly prominent figure in the tale of the death of Conary, has little importance given to him compared with the people who really belong to the cycle, and the other warriors of the Heroic Age mentioned in the tale are little but lay figures compared with Conary, Ingcel, and Mac Cecht. A wish to connect the two cycles probably accounts for the connection of Lugaid Red-Stripes with Cuchulain, the introduction of Conor and Ailill into the story of Etain may be due to the same cause, and there is no need to suppose that the authors of our versions felt themselves bound by what other men had introduced into the tale of Conary. The practice of introducing heroes from one cycle into another was by no means uncommon, or confined to Ireland; Greek heroes' names sometimes appear in the Irish tales; Cuchulain, in much later times, comes into the tales of Finn; and in Greece itself, characters who really belong to the time of the Trojan War appear in tales of the Argonauts.

[1. A short account of this is in the story of King Dathi (O'Curry Lectures, p. 286). The tale seems to be alluded to in the quatrain on p. 10 of this volume.]

There axe very few corresponding allusions to personages from the small Etain cycle found in the great cycle of romances that belong to the Heroic Age, but MacCecht's name appears in a fifteenth-century manuscript which gives a version of the tale of Flidais; and I suspect an allusion to the Etain story in a verse in the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain" (see note, p. 184). It may be observed that the introduction of Conor and his contemporaries into the story of Conary's grandparents is an additional piece of evidence that our form of the story of Etain precedes the "antiquarian age"; for at that time the version which we have of the story of Conary must have been classical and the connection of Conor's warriors with Conary well-known. A keen eye was at that time kept on departures from the recognised historical order (compare a note by Mr. Nutt in the "Voyage of Bran," vol. ii. p. 61); and the introduction of Conor into our version of the tale of Etain must have been at an earlier date.

The two versions of the "Courtship of Etain," the Egerton one, and that in the Leabhar na h-Uidhri, have been compared in the general preface to the volume, and little more need be said on this point; it may, however, be noted that eight pages of the Egerton version (pp. 11 to 18) are compressed into two pages in L.U. (pp. 23 and 24). References to the Etain story are found in different copies of the "Dindshenchas," under the headings of Rath Esa, Rath Croghan, and Bri Leith; the principal manuscript authorities, besides the two translated here, are the Yellow Book of Lecan, pp. 91 to 104, and the Book of Leinster, 163*b* (facsimile). These do not add much to our versions; there are, however, one or two new points in a

hitherto untranslated manuscript source mentioned by O'Curry (" Manners and Customs," vol. ii. p 192 to 194).

The Leabhar na h-Uidhri version is defective both at the beginning and at the end; there is also a complete column torn from the manuscript, making the description of the chess match defective. These three gaps have been filled up by short passages enclosed in square brackets, at the commencement of the Prologue, On p. 28, and at the end of the L.U. version. The two first of these insertions contain no matter that cannot be found by allusions in the version itself; the conclusion of the tale is drawn, partly from the "Dindshenchas" of Rath Esa, partly from the passage in O'Curry's "Manners and Customs."

The only alteration that has been made is that, following a suggestion in Windisch (*Irische Texte*, i. p. 132), the poem on page 26 has been placed four pages earlier than the point at which it occurs in the manuscript. Three very difficult lines (Leabhar na h-Uidhri, 132*a*, lines 12 to 14) have not been attempted; there are no other omissions, and no insertions except the three noted above. The Prologue out of the L.U. version has been placed first, as it is essential to the understanding of any version, then follows the Egerton version as the longer of the two, then the L.U. version of the Courtship, properly so called.

PROLOGUE IN FAIRYLAND FROM THE LEABHAR NA H-UIDHRI

ETAIN of the Horses, the daughter of Ailill, was the wife of Mider, the Fairy Dweller in Bri Leith.[1] Now Mider had also another wife named Fuamnach[2] who was filled with jealousy against Etain, and sought to drive her from her husband's house. And Fuamnach sought out Bressal Etarlam the Druid and besought his aid; and by the spells of the Druid, and the sorcery of Fuamnach, Etain was changed into the shape of a butterfly that finds its delight among flowers. And when Etain was in this shape she was seized by a great wind that was raised by Fuamnach's spells; and she was borne from her husband's house by that wind for seven years till she came to the palace of Angus Mac O'c who was son to the Dagda, the chief god of the men of ancient Erin. Mac O'c had been fostered by Mider, but he was at enmity with his foster-father, and he recognised Etain, although in her transformed shape, as she was borne towards him by the force] of the wind. And he made a bower for Etain with clear windows for it through which she might pass, and a veil of purple was laid upon her; and that bower was carried about by Mac O'c wherever he went. And there each night she slept beside him by a means that he devised, so that she became well-nourished and fair of form; for that bower was filled with marvellously sweet-scented shrubs, and it was upon these that she thrived, upon the odour and blossom of the best of precious herbs.

[1. Pronounced Bree Lay.

2. Pronounced Foom-na.]

Now to Fuamnach came tidings of the love and the worship that Etain had from Mac O'c, and she came to Mider, and "Let thy foster-son," said she, "be summoned to visit thee, that I may make peace between you

two, and may then go to seek for news of Etain." And the messenger from Mider went to Mac O'c, and Mac O'c went to Mider to greet him; but Fuamnach for a long time wandered from land to land till she was in that very mansion where Etain was; and then she blew beneath her with the same blast as aforetime, so that the blast carried her out of her bower, and she was blown before it, as she had been before for seven years through all the land of Erin, and she was driven by the wind of that blast to weakness and woe. And the wind carried her over the roof of a house where the men of Ulster sat at their ale, so that she fell through the roof into

a cup of gold that stood near the wife of Etar the Warrior, whose dwelling-place was near to the Bay of Cichmany in the province that was ruled over by Conor. And the woman swallowed Etain together with the milk that was in the cup, and she bare her in her womb, till the time came that she was born thereafter as in earthly maid, and the name of Etain, the daughter of Etar, was given to her. And it was one thousand and twelve years since the time of the first begetting of Etain by Ailill to the time when she was born the second time as the daughter of Etar.

Now Etain was nurtured at Inver Cichmany in the house of Etar, with fifty maidens about her of the daughters of the chiefs of the land; and it was Etar himself who still nurtured and clothed them, that they might be companions to his daughter Etain. And upon a certain day, when those maidens were all at the river-mouth to bathe there, they saw a horseman on the plain who came to the water towards them. A horse he rode that was brown, curvetting, and prancing, with a broad forehead and a curly mane and tail. Green, long, and flowing was the cloak that was about him, his shirt was embroidered with embroidery of red gold, and a great brooch of gold in his cloak reached to his shoulder on either side. Upon the back of that man was a silver shield with a golden rim; the handle for the shield was silver, and a golden boss was in the midst of the shield: he held in his hand a five-pointed spear with rings of gold about it from the haft to the head. The hair that was above his forehead was yellow and fair; and upon his brow was a circlet of gold, which confined the hair so that it fell not about his face. He stood for a while upon the shore of the bay; and he gazed upon the maidens, who were all filled with love for him, and then he sang this song:

West of Alba, near the Mound[1]
Where the Fair-Haired Women play,
There, ‘mid little children found,
Etain dwells, by Cichmain’s Bay.
She hath healed a monarch’s eye
By the well of Loch-da-lee;
Yea, and Etar’s wife, when dry,
Drank her: heavy draught was she!
Chased by king for Etain’s sake,
Birds their flight from Teffa wing:
’Tis for her Da-Arbre’s lake
Drowns the coursers of the king.
Echaid, who in Meath shall reign,
Many a war for thee shall wage;
He shall bring on fairies bane,

Thousands rouse to battle's rage.
Etain here to harm was brought,
Etain's form is Beauty's test;
Etain's king in love she sought:
Etain with our folk shall rest!

And after that he had spoken thus, the young warrior went away from the place where the maidens were; and they knew not whence it was that he had come, nor whither he departed afterwards.

[1. The metre of these verses is that of the Irish.]

Moreover it is told of Mac O'c, that after the disappearance of Etain he came to the meeting appointed between him and Mider; and when he found that Fuamnach was away: "'Tis deceit," said Mider, "that this woman hath practised upon us; and if Etain shall be seen by her to be in Ireland, she will work evil upon Etain." "And indeed," said Mac O'c, "it seemeth to me that thy guess may be true. For Etain hath long since been in my own house, even in the palace where I dwell; moreover she is now in that shape into which that woman transformed her; and 'tis most likely that it is upon her that Fuamnach hath rushed." Then Mac O'c went back to his palace, and he found his bower of glass empty, for Etain was not there. And Mac O'c turned him, and he went upon the track of Fuamnach, and he overtook her at Oenach Bodbgnai, in the house of Bressal Etarlam the Druid. And Mac O'c attacked her, and he struck off her head, and he carried the head with him till he came to within his own borders.

Yet a different tale hath been told of the end of Fuamnach, for it hath been said that by the aid of Manannan both Fuamnach and Mider were slain in Bri Leith, and it is of that slaying that men have told when they said:

Think on Sigmall, and Bri with its forest:
Little wit silly Fuamnach had learned;
Mider's wife found her need was the sorest,
When Bri Leith by Manannan was burned.

The Courtship of Etain
Egerton Version

ONCE there was a glorious and stately king who held the supreme lordship over all the land of Ireland. The name of the king was Eochaid Airemm, and he was the son of Finn, who was the son of Finntan; who was the son of Rogan the Red; who was the son of Essamain; who was the son of Blathecht; who was the son of Beothecht; who was the son of Labraid the Tracker; who was the son of Enna the Swift; who was the son of Angus of Tara, called the Shamefaced; who was the son of Eochaid the Broad-jointed; who was the son of Ailill of the Twisted Teeth; who was the son of Connla the Fair; who was the son of Irer; who was the son of Melghe the Praiseworthy; who was the son of Cobhtach the Slender from the plain of Breg; who was the son of Ugaine the Great; who was the son of Eochaid the Victorious.

Now all the five provinces of Ireland were obedient to the rule of Eochaid Airemm: for Conor the son of Ness, the king of Ulster, was vassal to Eochaid; and Messgegra the king of Leinster was his vassal; and so was Curoi, the son of Daré, king of the land of Munster; and so were Ailill and Maev, who ruled over the land of Connaught. Two great strongholds were in the hands of Eochaid: they were the strongholds of Frémain in Meath, and of Frémain in Tethba; and the stronghold that he had in Tethba was more pleasing to him than any of those that he possessed.

Less than a year had passed since Eochaid first assumed the sovereignty over Erin, when the news was proclaimed at once throughout all the land that the Festival of Tara should be held, that all the men of Ireland should come into the presence of their king, and that he desired full knowledge of the tributes due from, and the customs proper to each. And the one answer that all of the men of Ireland made to his call was: “That they would not attend the Festival of Tara during such time, whether it be long or short, that the king of Ireland remained without a wife that was worthy of him;” for there is no noble who is a wifeless man among the men of Ireland; nor can there be any king without a queen; nor does any man go to the Festival of Tara without his wife; nor does any wife go thither without her husband. Thereupon Eochaid sent out from him his horsemen, and his wizards, and his officers who had the care of the roads, and his couriers of the boundaries throughout all Ireland; and they searched all Ireland as they sought for a wife that should be worthy of the king, in her form, and her grace, and her countenance, and her birth.

And in addition to all this there yet remained one condition: that the king would take as his wife none who had been before as a wife to any other man before him. And after that they had received these commands, his horsemen, and his wizards, and his officers who had the care of the roads, and the couriers of the boundaries went out; and they searched all Ireland south and north; and near to the Bay of Cichmany they found a wife worthy of the king; and her name was Etain the daughter of Etar, who was the king of Echrad. And his messengers returned to Eochaid, and they told him of the maiden, of her form, and her grace, and her countenance. And Eochaid came to that place to take the maiden thence, and this was the way that he took; for as he crossed over the ground where men hold the assembly of Bri Leith, he saw the maiden at the brink of the spring. A clear comb of silver was held in her hand, the comb was adorned with gold; and near her, as for washing, was a bason of silver whereon four birds had been chased, and there were little bright gems of carbuncle on the rims of the bason. A bright purple mantle waved round her; and beneath it was another mantle, ornamented with silver fringes: the outer mantle was clasped over her bosom with a golden brooch. A tunic she wore, with a long hood that might cover her head attached to it; it was stiff and glossy with green silk beneath red embroidery of gold, and was clasped over her breasts with marvellously wrought clasps of silver and gold; so that men saw the bright gold and the green silk flashing against the sun. On her head were two tresses of golden hair, and each tress had been plaited into four strands; at the end of each strand was a little ball of gold. And there was that maiden, undoing her hair that she might wash it, her two arms out through the armholes of her smock. Each of her two arms was as white as the snow of a single night, and each of her cheeks was as rosy as the foxglove. Even and small were the teeth in her head, and they shone like pearls. Her eyes were as blue as a hyacinth, her lips delicate and crimson; very high, soft, and white were her shoulders. Tender, polished, and white were her wrists; her fingers long, and of great whiteness; her nails were beautiful and pink. White as the snow, or as the foam of the wave, was her side; long was it, slender, and as soft as silk. Smooth and white were her thighs; her knees were round and firm and white; her ankles were as straight as the rule of a carpenter. Her feet were slim, and as white as the ocean's foam; evenly set were her eyes; her eyebrows were of a bluish black, such as ye see upon the shell of a beetle. Never a maid fairer than she, or more worthy of love, was till then seen by the eyes of men; and it seemed to them that she must be one of those who have come from the fairy mounds: it is of this maiden that men have spoken when it hath been said: "All that's graceful must be tested by Etain; all that's lovely by the standard of Etain." Grace with Etain's grace compare!

Etain's face shall test what's fair!

And desire of her seized upon the king; and he sent a man of his people in front of him to go to her kindred, in order that she might abide to await his coming. And afterwards the king came to the maiden, and he sought speech from her: "Whence art thou sprung, O maiden?" says Eochaid, "and whence is it that thou hast come?" "It is easy to answer thee," said the maiden: "Etain is my name, the daughter of the king of Echrad; 'out of the fairy mound' am I" "Shall an hour of dalliance with thee be granted to me?" said Eochaid. "'Tis for that I have come hither under thy safeguard," said she. "And indeed twenty years have I lived in this place, ever since I was born in the mound where the fairies dwell, and the men who dwell in the elf-mounds, their kings and their nobles, have been a-wooing me: yet to never a one of them was granted sleep with me, for I have loved thee, and have set my love and affection upon thee; and that ever since I was a little child, and had first the gift of speech. It was for the high tales of thee, and of thy splendour, that I have loved thee thus; and though I have never seen thee before, I knew thee at once by reason of the report of thee that I had heard; it is thou, I know, to whom we have attained." "It is no evil-minded lover who now inviteth thee," says Eochaid. "Thou shalt be welcomed by me, and I will leave all women for thy sake, and thine alone will I be so long as it is pleasing to thee." "Let the bride-price that befits me be paid," said the maiden, "and after that let my desire be fulfilled." "It shall be as thou hast said," the king answered her; and he gave the value of seven cumals to be her brideprice; and after that he brought her to Tara, whereon a fair and hearty welcome was made to her.

Now there were three brothers of the one blood, all sons of Finn, namely, Eochaid Airem, and Eochaid, and Ailill Anglonnach, or Ailill of the Single Stain, because the only stain that was upon him was the love that he had for his brother's wife. And at that time came all the men of Ireland to hold the festival of Tara; they were there for fourteen days before Samhain, the day when the summer endeth, and for fourteen days after that day. It was at the feast of Tara that love for Etain the daughter of Etar came upon Ailill Anglonnach; and ever so long as they were at the Tara Feast, so long he gazed upon the maid. And it was there that the wife of Ailill spoke to him; she who was the daughter of Luchta of the Red Hand, who came from the province of Leinster: "Ailill," said she, "why dost thou gaze at her from afar? for long gazing is a token of love." And Ailill gave blame to himself for this thing, and after that he looked not upon the maid.

Now it followed that after that the Feast of Tara had been consumed, the men of Ireland parted from one another, and then it was that Ailill became filled with the pangs of envy and of desire; and he brought upon himself the choking misery of a

sore sickness, and was borne to the stronghold of Frémain in Tethba after that he had fallen into that woe. There also, until a whole year had ended, sickness long brooded over Ailill, and for long was he in distress, yet he allowed none to know of his sickness. And there Eochaid came to learn of his brother's state, and he came near to his brother, and laid his hand upon his chest; and Ailill heaved a sigh. "Why," said Eochaid, "surely this sickness of thine is not such as to cause thee to lament; how fares it with thee?" "By my word," said Ailill, "'tis no easier that I grow; but it is worse each day, and each night." "Why, what ails thee?" said Eochaid, "By my word of truth," said Ailill, "I know not." "Bring one of my folk hither," said Eochaid, "one who can find out the cause of this illness."

Then Fachtna, the chief physician of Eochaid, was summoned to give aid to Ailill, and he laid his hand upon his chest, and Ailill heaved a sigh. "Ah," said Fachtna, "there is no need for lament in this matter, for I know the cause of thy sickness; one or other of these two evils oppresseth thee, the pangs of envy, or the pangs of love: nor hast thou been aided to escape from them until now." And Ailill was full of shame, and he refused to confess to Fachtna the cause of his illness, and the physician left him.

Now, after all this, king Eochaid went in person to make a royal progress throughout the realm of Ireland, and he left Etain behind him in his fortress; and "Lady," said he, "deal thou gently with Ailill so long as he is yet alive; and, should he die," said he, "do thou see that his burial mound be heaped for him; and that a standing-stone be set up in memory of him; and let his name be written upon it in letters of Ogham." Then the king went away for the space of a year, to make his royal progress throughout the realm of Ireland, and Ailill was left behind, in the stronghold of Frémain of Tethba; there to pass away and to die.

Now upon a certain day that followed, the lady Etain came to the house where Ailill lay in his sickness, and thus she spoke to him: "What is it," she said, "that ails thee? thy sickness is great, and if we but knew anything that would content thee, thou shouldest have it." It was thus that at that time she spoke, and she sang a verse of a song, and Ailill in song made answer to her:

Etain

Young man, of the strong step and splendid,
What hath bound thee? what ill dost thou bear?
Thou hast long been on sick-bed extended,
Though around thee the sunshine was fair.

Ailill

There is reason indeed for my sighing,
I joy naught at my harp's pleasant sound;

Milk untasted beside me is lying;
And by this in disease am I bound.
Etain
Tell me all, thou poor man, of thine ailing;
For a maiden am I that is wise;
Is there naught, that to heal thee availing,
Thou couldst win by mine aid, and arise
Ailill
If I told thee, thou beautiful maiden,
My words, as I formed them, would choke,
For with fire can eyes' curtains be laden:
Woman-secrets are evil, if woke.
Etain
It is ill woman-secrets to waken;
Yet with Love, its remembrance is long;
And its part by itself may be taken,
Nor a thought shall remain of the wrong.
Ailill
I adore thee, white lady, as grateful;
Yet thy bounty deserve I but ill:
To my soul is my longing but hateful,
For my body doth strive with me still.
Eocho Fedlech,[1] his bride to him taking,
Made thee queen; and from thence is my woe:
For my head and my body are aching,
And all Ireland my weakness must know.
Etain
If, among the white women who near me abide,
There is one who is vexing, whose love thou dost hide;
To thy side will I bring her, if thus I may please;
And in love thou shalt win her, thy sickness to ease.
Ah lady! said Ailill, "easily could the cure of my sickness be wrought by the aid of thee, and great gain should there come from the deed, but thus it is with me until that be accomplished:
Long ago did my passion begin,
A full year it exceeds in its length;
And it holds me, more near than my skin,
And it rules over wrath in its strength.

And the earth into four it can shake,
Can reach up to the heights of the sky
And a neck with its might it can break,
Nor from fight with a spectre would fly.
In vain race up to heaven 'tis urged;
It is chilled, as with water, and drowned:
'Tis a weapon, in ocean submerged;
'Tis desire for an echo, a sound.
'Tis thus my love, my passion seem; 'tis thus I strive in vain
To win the heart of her whose love I long so much to gain.

[1. Pronounced Yeo-ho Fayllya, see note, p. 166.]

And the lady stood there in that place, and she looked upon Ailill, and the sickness in which he lay was perceived by her; and she was grieved on account of it: so that upon a certain day came the lady to Ailill, and "Young man," she said, "arouse thyself quickly, for in very truth thou shalt have all that thou desirest; and thereon did she make this lay:

Now arouse thyself, Ailill the royal:
Let thy heart, and thy courage rise high;
Every longing thou hast shall be sated,
For before thee, to heal thee, am I.
Is my neck and its beauty so pleasing?
'Tis around it thine arms thou shalt place;
And 'tis known as a courtship's beginning
When a man and a woman embrace.
And if this cometh not to content thee,
O thou man, that art son to a king!
I will dare to do crime for thy healing,
And my body to please thee will bring.
There were steeds, with their bridles, one hundred,
When the price for my wedding was told;
And one hundred of gay-coloured garments,
And of cattle, and ounces of gold.
Of each beast that men know, came one hundred;
And king Eocho to grant them was swift:
When a king gave such dowry to gain me,
Is't not wondrous to win me, as gift?

Now each day the lady came to Ailill to tend him, and to divide for him the portion of food that was allotted to him; and she wrought a great healing upon him: for it

grieved her that he should perish for her sake. And one day the lady spoke to Ailill: "Come thou to-morrow," said she, "to tryst with me at the break of day, in the house which lieth outside, and is beyond the fort, and there shalt thou have granted thy request and thy desire." On that night Ailill lay without sleep until the coming of the morning; and when the time had come that was appointed for his tryst, his sleep lay heavily upon him; so that till the hour of his rising he lay deep in his sleep. And Etain went to the tryst, nor had she long to wait ere she saw a man coming towards her in the likeness of Ailill, weary and feeble; but she knew that he was not Ailill, and she continued there waiting for Ailill. And the lady came back from her tryst, and Ailill awoke, and thought that he would rather die than live; and he went in great sadness and grief. And the lady came to speak with him, and when he told her what had befallen him: "Thou shalt come," said she, "to the same place, to meet with me upon the morrow." And upon the morrow it was the same as upon the first day; each day came that man to her tryst. And she came again upon the last day that was appointed for the tryst, and the same man met her. "'Tis not with thee that I trysted," said she, "why dost thou come to meet me? and for him whom I would have met here; neither from desire of his love nor for fear of danger from him had I appointed to meet him, but only to heal him, and to cure him from the sickness which had come upon him for his love of me." "It were more fitting for thee to come to tryst with me," says the man, "for when thou wast Etain of the Horses, and when thou wast the daughter of Ailill, I myself was thy husband. "Why," said she, "what name hast thou in the land? that is what I would demand of thee." "It is not hard to answer thee," he said; "Mider of Bri Leith is my name." "And what made thee to part from me, if we were as thou sayest?" said Etain. "Easy again is the answer," said Mider; "it was the sorcery of Fuamnach and the spells of Bressal Etarlam that put us apart." And Mider said to Etain: "Wilt thou come with me?"

"Nay," answered Etain, "I will not exchange the king of all Ireland for thee; for a man whose kindred and whose lineage is unknown." "It was I myself indeed," said Mider, "who filled all the mind of Ailill with love for thee: it was I also who prevented his coming to the tryst with thee, and allowed him not thine honour to spoil it."

After all this the lady went back to her house, and she came to speech with Ailill, and she greeted him. "It hath happened well for us both," said Ailill, "that the man met thee there: for I am cured for ever from my illness, thou also art unhurt in thine honour, and may a blessing rest upon thee!" "Thanks be to our gods," said Etain, "that both of us do indeed deem that all this hath chanced so well." And after that Eochaid came back from his royal progress, and he asked at once for his brother;

and the tale was told to him from the beginning to the end, and the king was grateful to Etain, in that she had been gracious to Ailill; and, "What hath been related in this tale," said Eochaid, "is well-pleasing to ourselves."

And, for the after history of Eochaid and Etain, it is told that once when Eochaid was in Frémain, at such time as the people had prepared for themselves a great gathering and certain horse-races; thither also to that assembly came Etain, that she might see the sight. Thither also came Mider, and he searched through that assembly to find out where Etain might be; and he found Etain, and her women around her, and he bore her away with him, also one of her handmaidens, called Crochen the Ruddy: hideous was the form in which Mider approached them. And the wives of the men of Ireland raised cries of woe, as the queen was carried off from among them; and the horses of Ireland were loosed to pursue Mider, for they knew not whether it was into the air or into the earth he had gone. But, as for Mider, the course that he had taken was the road to the west, even to the plain of Croghan; and as he came thither, "How shall it profit us," said Crochen the Ruddy, "this journey of ours to this plain?" "For evermore," said Mider, "shall thy name be over all this plain:" and hence cometh the name of the plain of Croghan, and of the Fort of Croghan. Then Mider came to the Fairy Mound of Croghan; for the dwellers in that mound were allied to him, and his friends; and for nine days they lingered there, banqueting and feasting; so that "Is this the place where thou makest thy home?" said Crochen to Mider. "Eastwards from this is my dwelling," Mider answered her; "nearer to the rising-place of the sun;" and Mider, taking Etain with him, departed, and came to Bri Leith, where the son of Celthar had his palace.

Now just at the time when they came to this palace, king Eochaid sent out from him the horsemen of Ireland, also his wizards, and his officers who had the care of the roads, and the couriers of the boundaries, that they might search through Ireland, and find out where his wife might be; and Eochaid himself wandered throughout Ireland to seek for his wife; and for a year from that day until the same day upon the year that followed he searched, and he found nothing to profit him.

Then, at the last, king Eochaid sent for his Druid, and he set to him the task to seek for Etain; now the name of the Druid was Dalan. And Dalan came before him upon that day; and he went westwards, until he came to the mountain that was after that known as Slieve Dalan; and he remained there upon that night. And the Druid deemed it a grievous thing that Etain should be hidden from him for the space of one year, and thereupon he made three wands of yew; and upon the wands he wrote an ogham; and by the keys of wisdom that he had, and by the ogham, it was revealed to him that Etain was in the fairy mound of Bri Leith, and that Mider had borne her thither.

Then Dalan the Druid turned him, and went back to the east; and he came to the stronghold of Frémain, even to the place where the king of Ireland was; and Eochaid asked from the Druid his news. Thither also came the horsemen, and the wizards, and the officers who had the care of the roads, and the couriers of the boundaries, to the king of Ireland, and he asked them what tidings they had, and whether they had found news of Mider and Etain. And they said that they had found nothing at all; until at the last said his Druid to him: "A great evil hath smitten thee, also shame, and misfortune, on account of the loss of thy wife. Do thou assemble the warriors of Ireland, and depart to Bri Leith, where is the palace of the son of Celthar; let that palace be destroyed by thy hand, and there thou shalt find thy wife: by persuasion or by force do thou take her thence."

Then Eochaid and the men of Ireland marched to Bri Leith, and they set themselves to destroy that fairy dwelling, and to demand that Etain be brought to them, and they brought her not. Then they ruined that fairy dwelling, and they brought Etain out from it; and she returned to Frémain, and there she had all the worship that a king of Ireland can bestow, fair wedded love and affection, such as was her due from Eochaid Airemm. This is that Eochaid who ruled over Ireland for twelve years, until the fire burned him in Frémain; and this tale is known by the name of the "Sick-bed of Ailill," also as "The Courtship of Etain." Etain bore no children to Eochaid Airemm, save one daughter only; and the name of her mother was given to her, and she is known by the name of Etain, the daughter of Eochaid Airemm. And it was her daughter Messbuachalla who was the mother of king Conary the Great, the son of Eterscel, and it was for this cause that the fairy host of Mag Breg and Mider of Bri Leith violated the tabus of king Conary, and devastated the plain of Breg, and out off Conary's life; on account of the capture of that fairy dwelling, and on account of the recovery of Etain, when she was carried away by violence, even by the might of Eochaid Airemm.

THE COURTSHIP OF ETAIN
LEABHAR NA HUIDHRI VERSION

EOCHAID AIREMON took the sovereignty over Erin, and the five provinces of Ireland were obedient to him, for the king of each province was his vassal. Now these were they who were the kings of the provinces at that time, even Conor the son of Ness, and Messgegra, and Tigernach Tetbannach, and Curoi, and Ailill the son of Mata of Muresc. And the royal forts that belonged to Eochaid were the stronghold of Frémain in Meath, and the stronghold of Frémain in Tethba; moreover the stronghold of Frémain in Tethba was more pleasing to him than any other of the forts of Erin.

Now a year after that Eochaid had obtained the sovereignty, he sent out his commands to the men of Ireland that they should come to Tara to hold festival therein, in order that there should be adjusted the taxes and the imposts that should be set upon them, so that these might be settled for a period of five years. And the one answer that the men of Ireland made to Eochaid was that they would not make for the king that assembly which is the Festival of Tara until he found for himself a queen, for there was no queen to stand by the king's side when Eochaid first assumed the kingdom.

Then Eochaid sent out the messengers of each of the five provinces to go through the land of Ireland to seek for that woman or girl who was the fairest to be found in Erin; and he bade them to note that no woman should be to him as a wife, unless she had never before been as a wife to any one of the men of the land. And at the Bay of Cichmany a wife was found for him, and her name was Etain, the daughter of Etar; and Eochaid brought her thereafter to his palace, for she was a wife meet for him, by reason of her form, and her beauty, and her descent, and her brilliancy, and her youth, and her renown.

Now Finn the son of Findloga had three sons, all sons of a queen, even Eochaid Fedlech, and Eochaid Airemm, and Ailill Anguba. And Ailill Anguba was seized with love for Etain at the Festival of Tara, after that she had been wedded to Eochaid; since he for a long time gazed upon her, and, since such gazing is a token of love, Ailill gave much blame to himself for the deed that he was doing, yet it helped him not. For his longing was too strong for his endurance, and for this cause he fell into a sickness; and, that there might be no stain upon his honour, his sickness was concealed by him from all, neither did he speak of it to the lady herself. Then

Fachtna, the chief physician of Eochaid, was brought to look upon Ailill, when it was understood that his death might be near, and thus the physician spoke to him: "One of the two pangs that slay a man, and for which there is no healing by leechcraft, is upon thee; either the pangs of envy or the pangs of love. And Ailill refused to confess the cause of his illness to the physician, for he was withheld by shame and he was left behind in Frémain of Tethba to die; and Eochaid went upon his royal progress throughout all Erin, and he left Etain behind him to be near Ailill, in order that the last rites of Ailill might be done by her; that she might cause his grave to be dug, and that the keen might be raised for him, and that his cattle should be slain for him as victims. And to the house where Ailill lay in his sickness went Etain each day to converse with him, and his sickness was eased by her presence; and, so long as Etain was in that place where he was, so long was he accustomed to gaze at her.

Now Etain observed all this, and she bent her mind to discover the cause, and one day when they were in the house together, Etain asked of Ailill what was the cause of his sickness. "My sickness," said Ailill, "comes from my love for thee." "'Tis pity," said she, "that thou hast so long kept silence, for thou couldest have been healed long since, had we but known of its cause." "And even now could I be healed," said Ailill, "did I but find favour in thy sight." "Thou shalt find favour," she said. Each day after they had spoken thus with each other, she came to him for the fomenting of his head, and for the giving of the portion of food that was required by him, and for the pouring of water over his hands; and three weeks after that, Ailill was whole. Then he said to Etain: "Yet is the completion of my cure at thy hands lacking to me; when may it be that I shall have it?" "'Tis to-morrow it shall be," she answered him, "but it shall not be in the abode of the lawful monarch of the land that this felony shall be done. Thou shalt come," she said, "on the morrow to yonder hill that riseth beyond the fort: there shall be the tryst that thou desirest."

Now Ailill lay awake all that night, and he fell into a sleep at the hour when he should have kept his tryst, and he woke not from his sleep until the third hour of the day. And Etain went to her tryst, and she saw a man before her; like was his form to the form of Ailill, he lamented the weakness that his sickness had caused him, and he gave to her such answers as it was fitting that Ailill should give. But at the third hour of the day, Ailill himself awoke: and he had for a long time remained in sorrow when Etain came into the house where he was; and as she approached him, "What maketh thee so sorrowful?" said Etain. "'Tis because thou wert sent to tryst with me," said Ailill, "and I came not to thy presence, and sleep fell upon me, so that I have but now awakened from it; and surely my chance of being healed hath now gone from me." "Not so, indeed," answered Etain, "for there is a morrow

to follow to-day." And upon that night he took his watch with a great fire before him, and with water beside him to put upon his eyes.

At the hour that was appointed for the tryst, Etain came for her meeting with Ailill; and she saw the same man, like unto Ailill, whom she had seen before; and Etain went to the house, and saw Ailill still lamenting. And Etain came three times, and yet Ailill kept not his tryst, and she found that same man there every time. "'Tis not for thee," she said, "that I came to this tryst: why comest thou to meet me? And as for him whom I would have met, it was for no sin or evil desire that I came to meet him; but it was fitting for the wife of the king of Ireland to rescue the man from the sickness under which he hath so long been oppressed." "It were more fitting for thee to tryst with me myself," said the man, "for when thou wert Etain of the Horses, the daughter of Ailill, it was I who was thy husband. And when thou camest to be wife to me, thou didst leave a great price behind thee; even a marriage price of the chief plains and waters of Ireland, and as much of gold and of silver as might match thee in value." "Why," said she, "what is thy name?" "'Tis easy to say," he answered; "Mider of Bri Leith is my name." "Truly," said she; "and what was the cause that parted us?" "That also is easy," he said; "it was the sorcery of Fuamnach, and the spells of Bressal Etarlam. And then Mider said to Etain:

Wilt thou come to my home, fair-haired lady? to dwell
In the marvellous land of the musical spell,
Where the crowns of all heads are, as primroses, bright,
And from head to the heel all men's bodies snow-white.
In that land of no "mine" nor of "thine" is there speech,
But there teeth flashing white and dark eyebrows hath each;
In all eyes shine our hosts, as reflected they swarm,
And each cheek with the pink of the foxglove is warm.
With the heather's rich tint every blushing neck glows,
In our eyes are all shapes that the blackbird's egg shows;
And the plains of thine Erin, though pleasing to see,
When the Great Plain is sighted, as deserts shall be.
Though ye think the ale strong in this Island of Fate,
Yet they drink it more strong in the Land of the Great;
Of a country where marvel abounds have I told,
Where no young man in rashness thrusts backward the old.
There are streams smooth and luscious that flow through that land,
And of mead and of wine is the best at each hand;
And of crime there is naught the whole country within,
There are men without blemish, and love without sin.

Through the world of mankind, seeing all, can we float,
And yet none, though we see them, their see-ers can note;
For the sin of their sire is a mist on them flung,
None may count up our host who from Adam is sprung.
Lady, come to that folk; to that strong folk of mine;
And with gold on thy head thy fair tresses shall shine:
'Tis on pork the most dainty that then thou shalt feed,
And for drink have thy choice of new milk and of mead.

"I will not come with thee," answered Etain, "I will not give up the king of Ireland for thee, a man who knows not his own clan nor his kindred." "It was indeed myself," said Mider, "who long ago put beneath the mind of Ailill the love that he hath felt for thee, so that his blood ceased to run, and his flesh fell away from him: it was I also who have taken away his desire, so that there might be no hurt to thine honour. But wilt thou come with me to my land," said Mider, "in case Eochaid should ask it of thee?" "I would come in such case," answered to him Etain.

After all this Etain departed to the house. "It hath indeed been good, this our tryst," said Ailill, "for I have been cured of my sickness; moreover, in no way has thine honour been stained." "'Tis glorious that it hath fallen out so," answered Etain. And afterwards Eochaid came back from his royal progress, and he was grateful for that his brother's life had been preserved, and he gave all thanks to Etain for the great deed she had done while he was away from his palace.

Now upon another time it chanced that Eochaid Airemm, the king of Tara, arose upon a. certain fair day in the time of summer; and he ascended the high ground of Tara to behold the plain of Breg; beautiful was the colour of that plain, and there was upon it excellent blossom, glowing with all hues that are known. And, as the aforesaid Eochaid looked about and around him, he saw a young strange warrior upon the high ground at his side. The tunic that the warrior wore was purple in colour, his hair was of a golden yellow, and of such length that it reached to the edge of his shoulders. The eyes of the young warrior were lustrous and grey; in the one hand he held a five-pointed spear, in the other a shield with a white central boss, and with gems of gold upon it. And Eochaid held his peace, for he knew that none such had been in Tara on the night before, and the gate that led into the *Liss* had not at that hour been thrown open.

The warrior came, and placed himself under the protection of Eochaid; and "Welcome do I give," said Eochaid, "to the hero who is yet unknown."

"Thy reception is such as I expected when I came," said the warrior.

"We know thee not," answered Eochaid.

"Yet thee in truth I know well!" he replied.

"What is the name by which thou art called?" said Eochaid.
"My name is not known to renown," said the warrior; "I am Mider of Bri Leith."
"And for what purpose art thou come?" said Eochaid.
"I have come that I may play a game at the chess with thee," answered Mider.
"Truly," said Eochaid, "I myself am skilful at the chess-play."
"Let us test that skill! said Mider.
"Nay," said Eochaid, the queen is even now in her sleep; and hers is the palace in which the chessboard lies."
"I have here with me," said Mider, "a chessboard which is not inferior to thine." It was even as he said, for that chessboard was silver, and the men to play with were gold; and upon that board were costly stones, casting their light on every side, and the bag that held the men was of woven chains of brass.
Mider then set out the chessboard, and he called upon Eochaid to play. "I will not play," said Eochaid, "unless we play for a stake."
"What stake shall we have upon the game then?" said Mider.
"It is indifferent to me," said Eochaid.
"Then," said Mider, "if thou dost obtain the forfeit of my stake, I will bestow on thee fifty steeds of a dark grey, their heads of a blood-red colour, but dappled; their ears pricked high, and their chests broad; their nostrils wide, and their hoofs slender; great is their strength, and they are keen like a whetted edge; eager are they, high-standing, and spirited, yet easily stopped in their course."
[Many games were played between Eochaid and Mider; and, since Mider did not put forth his whole strength, the victory on all occasions rested with Eochaid. But instead of the gifts which Mider had offered, Eochaid demanded that Mider and his folk should perform for him services which should be of benefit to his realm; that he should clear away the rocks and stones from the plains of Meath, should remove the rushes which made the land barren around his favourite fort of Tethba, should cut down the forest of Breg, and finally should build a causeway across the moor or bog of Lamrach that men might pass freely across it. All these things Mider agreed to do, and Eochaid sent his steward to see how that work was done. And when it came to the time after sunset, the steward looked, and he saw that Mider and his fairy host, together with fairy oxen, were labouring at the causeway over the bog;] and thereupon much of earth and of gravel and of stones was poured into it. Now it had, before that time, always been the custom of the men of Ireland to harness their oxen with a strap over their foreheads, so that the pull might be against the foreheads of the oxen; and this custom lasted up to that very night, when it was seen that the fairy-folk had placed the yoke upon the shoulders of the oxen, so that the pull might be there; and in this way were the yokes of the oxen

afterwards placed by Eochaid, and thence cometh the name by which he is known; even Eochaid Airemm, or Eochaid the Ploughman, for he was the first of all the men of Ireland to put the yokes on the necks of the oxen, and thus it became the custom for all the land of Ireland. And this is the song that the host of the fairies sang, as they laboured at the making of the road:

Thrust it in hand! force it in hand!
Nobles this night, as an ox-troop, stand:
Hard is the task that is asked, and who
From the bridging of Lamrach shall gain, or rue?

Not in all the world could a road have been found that should be better than the road that they made, had it not been that the fairy folk were observed as they worked upon it; but for that cause a breach hath been made in that causeway. And the steward of Eochaid thereafter came to him; and he described to him that great labouring band that had come before his eyes, and he said that there was not over the chariot-pole of life a power that could withstand its might. And, as they spake thus with each other, they saw Mider standing before them; high was he girt, and ill-favoured was the face that he showed; and Eochaid arose, and he gave welcome to him. “Thy welcome is such as I expected when I came,” said Mider. “Cruel and senseless hast thou been in thy treatment of me, and much of hardship and suffering hast thou given me. All things that seemed good in thy sight have I got for thee, but now anger against thee hath filled my mind!” “I return not anger for anger,” answered Eochaid; “what thou wishest shall be done.” “Let it be as thou wishest,” said Mider; “shall we play at the chess?” said he. “What stake shall we set upon the game?” said Eochaid. “Even such stake as the winner of it shall demand,” said Mider. And in that very place Eochaid was defeated, and he forfeited his stake.

“My stake is forfeit to thee,” said Eochaid.

“Had I wished it, it had been forfeit long ago,” said Mider.

“What is it that thou desirest me to grant?” said Eochaid.

“That I may hold Etain in my arms, and obtain a kiss from her!” answered Mider.

Eochaid was silent for a while and then he said: “One month from this day thou shalt come, and the very thing that thou hast asked for shall be given to thee.” Now for a year before that Mider first came to Eochaid for the chess-play, had he been at the wooing of Etain, and he obtained her not; and the name which he gave to Etain was Béfind, or Fair-haired Woman, so it was that he said:

Wilt thou come to my home, fair-haired lady?

as has before been recited. And it was at that time that Etain said: “If thou obtainest me from him who is the master of my house, I will go; but if thou art not able to obtain me from him, then I will not go.” And thereon Mider came to Eochaid, and

allowed him at the first to win the victory over him, in order that Eochaid should stand in his debt; and therefore it was that he paid the great stakes to which he had agreed; and therefore also was it that he had demanded of him that he should play that game in ignorance of what was staked. And when Mider and his folk were paying those agreed-on stakes, which were paid upon that night; to wit, the making of the road, and the clearing of the stones from Meath, the rushes from around Tethba, and of the forest that is over Breg, it was thus that he spoke, as it is written in the Book of Drom Snechta:

Pile on the soil; thrust on the soil:
Red are the oxen around who toil:
Heavy the troops that my words obey;
Heavy they seem, and yet men are they.
Strongly, as piles, are the tree-trunks placed
Red are the wattles above them laced:
Tired are your hands, and your glances slant;
One woman's winning this toil may grant!
Oxen ye are, but revenge shall see;
Men who are white shall your servants be:
Rushes from Teffa are cleared away:
Grief is the price that the man shall pay:
Stones have been cleared from the rough Meath ground;
Whose shall the gain or the harm be found?

Now Mider appointed a day at the end of the month when he was to meet Eochaid, and Eochaid called the armies of the heroes of Ireland together, so that they came to Tara; and all the best of the champions of Ireland, ring within ring, were about Tara, and they were in the midst of Tara itself, and they guarded it, both without and within; and the king and the queen were in the midst of the palace, and the outer court thereof was shut and locked, for they knew that the great might of men would come upon them. And upon the appointed night Etain was dispensing the banquet to the kings, for it was her duty to pour out the wine, when in the midst of their talk they saw Mider standing before them in the centre of the palace. He was always fair, yet fairer than he ever was seemed Mider to be upon that night. And he brought to amazement all the hosts on which he gazed, and all thereon were silent, and the king gave a welcome to him.

"Thy reception is such as I expected when I came," said Mider; "let that now be given to me that hath been promised. 'Tis a debt that is due when a promise hath been made; and I for my part have given to thee all that was promised by me."

"I have not yet considered the matter," said Eochaid.

"Thou hast promised Etain's very self to me," said Mider; "that is what hath come from thee." Etain blushed for shame when she heard that word.

"Blush not," said Mider to Etain, "for in nowise hath thy wedding-feast been disgraced. I have been seeking thee for a year with the fairest jewels and treasures that can be found in Ireland, and I have not taken thee until the time came when Eochaid might permit it. 'Tis not through any will of thine that I have won thee."

"I myself told thee," said Etain, "that until Eochaid should resign me to thee I would grant thee nothing. Take me then for my part, if Eochaid is willing to resign me to thee."

"But I will not resign thee!" said Eochaid; "nevertheless he shall take thee in his arms upon the floor of this house as thou art."

"It shall be done!" said Mider.

He took his weapons into his left hand and the woman beneath his right shoulder; and he carried her off through the skylight of the house. And the hosts rose up around the king, for they felt that they had been disgraced, and they saw two swans circling round Tara, and the way that they took was the way to the elf-mound of Femun. And Eochaid with an army of the men of Ireland went to the elf-mound of Femun, which men call the mound of the Fair-haired-Women. And he followed the counsel of the men of Ireland, and he dug up each of the elf-mounds that he might take his wife from thence. [And Mider and his host opposed them and the war between them was long: again and again the trenches made by Eochaid were destroyed, for nine years as some say lasted the strife of the men of Ireland to enter into the fairy palace. And when at last the armies of Eochaid came by digging to the borders of the fairy mansion, Mider sent to the side of the palace sixty women all in the shape of Etain, and so like to her that none could tell which was the queen. And Eochaid himself was deceived, and he chose, instead of Etain, her daughter Messbuachalla (or as some say Esa.) But when he found that he had been deceived, he returned again to sack Bri Leith, and this time Etain made herself known to Eochaid, by proofs that he could not mistake, and he bore her away in triumph to Tara, and there she abode with the king.]

MAC DATHO'S BOAR

INTRODUCTION

THE tale of "Mac Datho's Boar" seems to deal with events that precede the principal events of the Heroic Period; most of the characters named in it appear as the chief actors in other romances; Conor and Ailill are as usual the leaders of Ulster and Connaught, but the king of Leinster is Mesroda Mac Datho, not his brother Mesgegra, who appears in the "Siege of Howth" (see Hull, Cuchullin Saga, p. 87), and the Ulster champion is not Cuchulain, but his elder comrade, Conall Cernach.

The text followed is that of the Book of Leinster as printed by Windisch in *Irische Texte*, vol. i.; the later Harleian manuscript's readings given by Windisch have been taken in a few cases where the Leinster text seems untranslatable. There is a slightly different version, given by Kuno Meyer in the *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, taken from Rawlinson, B. 512, a fifteenth-century manuscript, but the text is substantially that of the Leinster version, and does not give, as in the case of the tale of Etain, a different view of the story. The verse passages differ in the two versions; two verse passages on pages 37 and 46 have been inserted from the Rawlinson manuscript, otherwise the rendering follows the Leinster text.

The style of the tale is more barbaric than that of the other romances, but is relieved by touches of humour; the only supernatural touch occurs in one of the variations of the Rawlinson manuscript. Some of the chief variations en in this manuscript are pointed out in the notes; the respectful men on of Curoi mac Dari, who seems to have been a Munster hero, overshadowed in the accepted versions by the superior glory of Ulster, may be noted; also the remark that Ferloga did not get his *cepoc*, which seems to have been inserted by a later band of a critic who disapproved of the frivolity of the original author, or was jealous for the honour of the Ulster ladies.

Mac Datho's Boar

From the Book of Leinster (Twelfth-Century MS.)

With some Additions from Rawlinson, B. 512, written about 1560

A glorious king once hold rule over the men of Leinster; his name was Mesroda Mac Datho. Now Mac Datho had among his possessions a hound which was the guardian of all Leinster; the name of the hound was Ailbe, and all of the land of Leinster was filled with reports of the fame of it, and of that hound hath it been sung:

Mesroda, son of Datho,
Was he the boar who reared;
And his the hound called Ailbe;
No lie the tale appeared!
The splendid hound of wisdom,
The hound that far is famed,
The hound from whom Moynalvy
For evermore is named.

By King Ailill and Queen Maev were sent folk to the son of Datho to demand that hound, and at that very hour came heralds from Conor the son of Ness to demand him; and to all of these a welcome was bid by the people of Mac Datho, and they were brought to speak with Mac Datho in his palace.

At the time that we speak of, this palace was a hostelry that was the sixth of the hostelries of Ireland.; there were beside it the hostelry of Da Derga in the land of Cualan in Leinster; also the hostelry of Forgall the Wily, which is beside Lusk; and the hostelry of Da Reo in Breffny; and the hostelry of Da Choca in the west of Meath; and the hostelry of the landholder Blai in the country of the men of Ulster. There were seven doors to that palace, and seven passages ran through it; also there stood within it seven cauldrons, and in every one of the cauldrons was seething the flesh of oxen and the salted flesh of swine. Every traveller who came into the house after a journey would thrust a fork into a cauldron, and whatsoever he brought out at the first thrust, that had he to eat: if he got nothing at the first thrust, no second attempt was allowed him.

They brought the heralds before Mac Datho as he sat upon his throne, that he might learn of their requests before they made their meal, and in this manner they made known their message. “We have come,” said the men who were sent from Connaught, “that we might ask for thy hound; ’tis by Ailill and Maev we are sent. Thou shalt have in payment for him six thousand milch cows, also a two-horsed chariot with its horses, the best to be had in Connaught, and at the end of a year as much again shall be thine.” “We also,” said the heralds from Ulster, “have come to ask for thy hound; we have been sent by Conor, and Conor is a friend who is of no less value than these. He also will give to thee treasures and cattle, and the same amount at the end of a year, and he will be a stout friend to thee.”

Now after he had received this message Mac Datho sank into a deep silence, he ate nothing, neither did he sleep, but tossed about from one side to another, and then said his wife to him: “For a long time hast thou fasted; food is before thee, yet thou eatest not; what is it that ails thee?

and Mac Datho made her no answer, whereupon she said:

The Wife[1]

Gone is King Mac Datho’s sleep,
Restless cares his home invade;
Though his thoughts from all he keep,
Problems deep his mind hath weighed.
He, my sight avoiding, turns
Towards the wall, that hero grim;
Well his prudent wife discerns
Sleep hath passed away from him.

Mac Datho

Crimthann saith, Nar’s sister’s son,
“Secrets none to women tell.
Woman’s secret soon is won;
Never thrall kept jewel well.”

The Wife

Why against a woman speak
Till ye test, and find she fails?
When thy mind to plan is weak,
Oft another’s wit avails.

Mac Datho

At ill season indeed came those heralds
Who his hound from Mac Datho would take;
In more wars than by thought can be counted

Fair-haired champions shall fall for its sake.
If to Conor I dare to deny him,
He shall deem it the deed of a churl
Nor shall cattle or country be left me
By the hosts he against me can hurl.
If refusal to Ailill I venture,
With all Ireland my folk shall he sack;
From our kingdom Mac Mata shall drive us,
And our ashes may tell of his track.

The Wife

Here a counsel I find to deliver,
And in woe shall our land have no share;
Of that hound to them both be thou giver,
And who dies for it little we care.

Mac Datho

Ah! the grief that I had is all ended,
I have joy for this speech from thy tongue
Surely Ailbe from heaven descended,
There is none who can say whence he sprung.

[1. The Irish metre is followed in the first four verses.]

After these words the son of Datho rose up, and he shook himself, and May this fall out well for us," said he, "and well for our guests who come here to seek for him." His guests abode three days and three nights in his house, and when that time was ended, he bade that the heralds from Connaught be called to confer with him apart, and he spoke thus: "I have been," he said, "in great vexation of spirit, and for long have I hesitated before I made a decision what to do. But now have I decided to give the hound to Ailill and Maev, let them come with splendour to bear it away. They shall have plenty both to eat and to drink, and they shall have the hound to hold, and welcome shall they be." And the messengers from Connaught were well pleased with this answer that they had.

Then he went to where the heralds from Ulster were, and thus he addressed them: "After long hesitation," said he, "I have awarded the hound to Conor, and a proud man should he be. Let the armies of the nobles of Ulster come to bear him away; they shall have presents, and I will make them welcome;" and with this the messengers from Ulster were content.

Now Mac Datho had so planned it that both those armies, that from the East and that from the West, should arrive at his palace upon the selfsame day. Nor did they fail to keep their tryst; upon the same day those two provinces of Ireland came to

Mac Datho's palace, and Mac Datho himself went outside and greeted them: "For two armies at the same time we were not prepared; yet I bid welcome to you, ye men. Enter into the court of the house."

Then they went all of them into the palace; one half of the house received the Ulstermen, and the other half received the men of Connaught. For the house was no small one: it had seven doors and fifty couches between each two doors; and it was no meeting of friends that was then seen in that house, but the hosts that filled it were enemies to each other, for during the whole time of the three hundred years that preceded the birth of Christ there was war between Ulster and Connaught.

Then they slaughtered for them Mac Datho's Boar; for seven years had that boar been nurtured upon the milk of fifty cows, but surely venom must have entered into its nourishment, so many of the men of Ireland did it cause to die. They brought in the boar, and forty oxen as side-dishes to it, besides other kind of food; the son of Datho himself was steward to their feast: "Be ye welcome!" said he; "this beast before you hath not its match; and a goodly store of beeves and of swine may be found with the men of Leinster! And, if there be aught lacking to you, more shall be slain for you in the morning."

"It is a mighty Boar," said Conor.

"'Tis a mighty one indeed," said Ailill. "How shall it be divided, O Conor?" said he.

"How?" cried down Bricriu,[l] the son of Carbad, from above; "in the place where the warriors of Ireland are gathered together, there can be but the one test for the division of it, even the part that each man hath taken in warlike deeds and strife: surely each man of you hath struck the other a buffet on the nose ere now!"

"Thus then shall it be," said Ailill.

"'Tis a fair test," said Conor in assent; "we have here a plenty of lads in this house who have done battle on the borders."

"Thou shalt lose thy lads to-night, Conor," said Senlaech the charioteer, who came from rushy Conalad in the West; "often have they left a fat steer for me to harry, as they sprawled on their backs upon the road that leadeth to the rushes of Dedah."

"Fatter was the steer that thou hadst to leave to us," said Munremur,[2] the son of Gerrcind; "even thine own brother, Cruachniu, son of Ruadlam; and it was from Conalad of Cruachan that he came."

"He was no better," cried Lugaid the son of Curoi of Munster, "than Loth the Great, the son of Fergus Mac Lete; and Echbel the son of Dedad left him lying in Tara Luachra."[3]

[1. Pronounced Brik-roo.

2. Pronounced Moon-raymer.

3. Pronounced Looch-ra.]

"What sort of a man was he whom ye boast of?" cried Celtchar of Ulster. "I myself slew that horny-skinned son of Dedad, I cut the head from his shoulders."

At the last it fell out that one man raised himself above all the men of Ireland; he was Ket, the son of Mata, he came from the land of Connaught. He hung up his weapons at a greater height than the weapons of any one else who was there, he took a knife in his hand, and he placed himself at the side of the Boar.

"Find ye now," said he, "one man among the men of Ireland who can equal my renown, or else leave the division of the Boar to me."

All of the Ulstermen were thrown into amazement. "Seest thou that, O Laegaire?"[1] said Conor.

"Never shall it be," said Laegaire the Triumphant, "that Ket should have the division of this Boar in the face of us all."

[1. Pronounced Leary.]

"Softly now, O Laegaire!" said Ket; "let me hold speech with thee. With you men of Ulster it hath for long been a custom that each lad among you who takes the arms of a warrior should play first with us the game of war: thou, O Laegaire, like to the others didst come to the border, and we rode against one another. And thou didst leave thy charioteer, and thy chariot and thy horses behind thee, and thou didst fly pierced through with a spear. Not with such a record as that shalt thou obtain the Boar;" and Laegaire sat himself down.

"It shall never come to pass," said a great fair-haired warrior, stepping forward from the bench whereon he had sat, "that the division of the Boar shall be left to Ket before our very eyes."

"To whom then appertains it?" asked Ket.

"To one who is a better warrior than thou," he said, "even to Angus, the son of Lama Gabaid (Hand-in-danger) of the men of Ulster."

"Why namest thou thy father 'Hand-in-danger'?" said Ket.

"Why indeed, I know not," he said.

"Ah! but I know it!" said Ket. "Long ago I went upon a journey in the east, a war-cry was raised against me, all men attacked me, and Lama Gabaid was among them. He made a cast of a great spear against me, I hurled the same spear back upon him, and the spear cut his hand from him so that it lay upon the ground. How dares the son of that man to measure his renown with mine?" and Angus went back to his place.

"Come, and claim a renown to match mine," said Ket; "else let me divide this Boar."

"It shall never be thy part to be the first to divide it," said a great fair-haired warrior of the men of Ulster.

"Who then is this?" said Ket.

"'Tis Eogan, son of Durthacht,"[1] said they all; "Eogan, the lord of Fernmay."

"I have seen him upon an earlier day," said Ket.

"Where hast thou seen me?" said Eogan.

[1. Pronounced Yeogan, son of Doorha.]

"It was before thine own house," said Ket. "As I was driving away thy cattle, a cry of war was raised in the lands about me; and thou didst come out at that cry. Thou didst hurl thy spear against me, and it was fixed in my shield; but I hurled the same spear back against thee, and it tore out one of thy two eyes. All the men of Ireland can see that thou art one-eyed; here is the man that struck thine other eye out of thy head," and he also sat down.

"Make ye ready again for the strife for renown, O ye men of Ulster!" cried Ket.

"Thou hast not yet gained the right to divide the Boar," said Munremur, Gerrcind's son.

"Is that Munremur?" cried Ket; "I have but one short word for thee, O Munremur! Not yet hath the third day passed since I smote the heads off three warriors who came from your lands, and the midmost of the three was the head of thy firstborn son!" and Munremur also sat down.

"Come to the strife for renown!" cried Ket.

"That strife will I give to thee," said Mend the son of Salcholcam (the Sword-heeled).

"Who is this?" asked Ket.

"'Tis Mend," said all who were there.

"Hey there!" cried Ket. "The son of the man with the nickname comes to measure his renown with mine! Why, Mend, it was by me that the nickname of thy father came; 'twas I who cut the heel from him with my sword so that he hopped away from me upon one leg! How shall the son of that one-legged man measure his renown with mine?" and he also sat down.

"Come to the strife for renown!" cried Ket.

"That warfare shalt thou have from me!" said an Ulster warrior, tall, grey, and more terrible than the rest.

"Who is this?" asked Ket.

"'Tis Celtchar, the son of Uitechar," cried all.

"Pause thou a little, Celtchar," said Ket, "unless it be in thy mind to crush me in an instant. Once did I come to thy dwelling, O Celtchar, a cry was raised about me, and all men hurried up at that cry, and thou also camest beside them. It was in a

ravine that the combat between us was held; thou didst hurl thy spear against me, and against thee I also hurled my spear; and my spear pierced thee through the leg and through the groin, so that from that hour thou hast been diseased, nor hath son or daughter been born to thee. How canst thou strive in renown with me?" and he also sat down.

"Come to the strife for renown!" cried Ket.

"That strife shalt thou have," said Cuscrid the Stammerer, of Macha, king Conor's son.

"Who is this?" said Ket. "'Tis Cuscrid," said all; "he hath a form which is as the form of a king."

"Nor hath he aught to thank thee for," said the youth.

"Good!" said Ket. "It was against me that thou didst come on the day when thou didst first make trial of thy weapons, my lad: 'twas in the borderland that we met. And there thou didst leave the third part of thy folk behind thee, and thou didst fly with a spear-thrust through thy throat so that thou canst speak no word plainly, for the spear cut in sunder the sinews of thy neck; and from that hour thou hast been called Cuscrid the Stammerer." And in this fashion did Ket put to shame all the warriors of the province of Ulster.

But as he was exulting near to the Boar, with his knife in his hand, all saw Conall, the Victorious enter the palace; and Conall sprang into the midst of the house, and the men of Ulster hailed him with a shout; and Conor himself took his helmet from his head, and swung it on high to greet him.

"'Tis well that I wait for the portion that befalls me!" said Conall. Who is he who is the divider of the Boar for ye?"

"That office must be given to the man who stands there," said Conor, "even to Ket, the son of Mata."

"Is this true, O Ket?" said Conall. "Art thou the man to allot this Boar?" And then sang Ket:

Conall, all hail!
Hard stony spleen
Wild glowing flame!
Ice-glitter keen!
Blood in thy breast
Rageth and boils;
Oft didst thou wrest
Victory's spoils:
Thou scarred son of Finuchoem,[1] thou truly canst claim
To stand rival to me, and to match me in fame!

And Conall replied to him:
Hail to thee, Ket!
Well are we met!
Heart icy-cold,
Home for the bold!
Ender of grief!
Car-riding chief!
Sea's stormy wave!
Bull, fair and brave!
Ket! first of the children of Matach!
The proof shall be found when to combat we dart,
The proof shall be found when from combat we part;
He shall tell of that battle who guardeth the stirks,
He shall tell of that battle at handcraft who works;
And the heroes shall stride to the wild lion-fight,
For by men shall fall men in this palace to-night:
Welcome, Ket![2]

[1. Pronounced Finn-hoom.

2. The short lines of this rhetoric have the metre of the original Irish.]

"Rise thou, and depart from this Boar," said Conall.

"What claim wilt thou bring why I should do this?" said Ket.

"'Tis true indeed," said Conall, "thou art contending in renown with me. I will give thee one claim only, O Ket! I swear by the oath of my tribe that since the day that I first received a spear into my hand I have seldom slept without the head of a slain man of Connaught as my pillow; and I have not let pass a day or a night in which a man of Connaught hath not fallen by my hand."

"'Tis true indeed," said Ket, "thou art a better warrior than I. Were but Anluan here, he could battle with thee in another fashion; shame upon us that he is not in this house!"

"Aye, but Anluan is here! "cried Conall, and therewith he plucked Anluan's head from his belt. And he threw the head towards Ket, so that it smote him upon the chest, and a gulp of the blood was dashed over his lips. And Ket came away from the Boar, and Conall placed himself beside it.

"Now let men come to contend for renown with me!" cried Conall. But among the men of Connaught there was none who would challenge him, and they raised a wall of shields, like a great vat around him, for in that house was evil wrangling, and men in their malice would make cowardly casts at him. And Conall turned to divide the Boar, and he took the end of the tail in his mouth. And although the tail

was so great that it was a full load for nine men, yet he sucked it all into his mouth so that nothing of it was left; and of this hath been said:

Strong hands on a cart thrust him forward;
His great tail, though for nine men a load,
Was devoured by the brave Conall Cernach,
As the joints he so gaily bestowed.

Now to the men of Connaught Conall gave nothing except the two fore-legs of the Boar, and this share seemed to be but small to the men of Connaught, and thereon they sprang up, and the men of Ulster also sprang up, and they rushed at each other. They buffeted each other so that the heap of bodies inside the house rose as high as the side-walls of it; and streams of blood flowed under the doors.

The hosts brake out through the doors into the outer court, and great was the din that uprose; the blood upon the floor of the house might have driven a mill, so mightily did each man strike out at his fellow. And at that time Fergus plucked up by the roots a great oak-tree that stood in the outer court in the midst of it; and they all burst out of the court, and the battle went on outside.

Then came out Mac Datho, leading the hound by a leash in his hand, that he might let him loose between the two armies, to see to which side the sense of the hound would turn. And the hound joined himself with the men of Ulster, and he rushed on the defeated Connaughtmen, for these were in flight, And it is told that in the plain of Ailbe, the hound seized hold of the poles of the chariot in which Ailill and Maev rode: and there Fer-loga, charioteer to Ailill and Maev, fell upon him, so that he cast his body to one side, and his head was left upon the poles of the chariot. And they say that it is for that reason that the plain of Ailbe is so named, for from the hound Ailbe the name hath come.

The rout went on northwards, over Ballaghmoon, past Rurin Hill, over the Midbine Ford near to Mullaghmast, over Drum Criach Ridge which is opposite to what is Kildare to-day, over Rath Ingan which is in the forest of Gabla, then by Mac Lugna's Ford over the ridge of the two plains till they came to the Bridge of Carpre that is over the Boyne. And at the ford which is known as the Ford of the Hound's Head, which standeth in the west of Meath, the hound's head fell from the chariot.

And, as they went over the heather of Meath, Ferloga the charioteer of Ailill fell into the heather, and he sprang behind Conor who followed after them in his chariot, and he seized Conor by the head.

"I claim a boon from thee if I give thee thy life, O Conor!" said he.

"I choose freely to grant that boon," said Conor.

"'Tis no great matter," said Ferloga. "Take me with thee to Emain Macha, and at each ninth hour let the widows and the growing maidens of Ulster serenade me[1] with the song: 'Ferloga is my darling.'"

And the women were forced to do it; for they dared not to deny him, fearing the wrath of Conor; and at the end of a year Ferloga crossed by Athlone into Connaught, and he took with him two of Conor's horses bridled with golden reins.

[1. Literally, "sing me a cepoc," or a choral song.]

And concerning all this hath it been sung:

Hear truth, ye lads of Connaught;
No lies your griefs shall fill,
A youth the Boar divided;
The share you had was ill.
Of men thrice fifty fifties
Would win the Ailbe Hound;
In pride of war they struggled,
Small cause for strife they found.
Yet there came conquering Conor,
And Ailill's hosts, and Ket;
No law Cuchulain granted,
And brooding Bodb[1] was met.
Dark Durthacht's son, great Eogan,
Shall find that journey hard;
From east came Congal Aidni,
And Fiaman,[2] sailor bard;
Three sons of Nera, famous
For countless warlike fields;
Three lofty sons of Usnach,
With hard-set cruel shields.
From high Conalad Croghan
Wise Senlaech[3] drave his car;
And Dubhtach[4] came from Emain,
His fame is known afar;
And Illan came, whom glorious
For many a field they hail:
Loch Sail's grim chief, Munremur;
Berb Baither, smooth of tale;
And Celtchar, lord in Ulster;
And Conall's valour wild;

And Marcan came; and Lugaid
Of three great hounds the child.
Fergus, awaiting the glorious hound,
Spreadeth a cloak o'er his mighty shield,
Shaketh an oak he hath plucked from ground,
Red was the woe the red cloak concealed.
Yonder stood Cethern,[5] of Finntan son,
Holding them back; till six hours had flown
Connaughtmen's slaughter his hand hath done,
Pass of the ford he hath held alone.
Armies with Feidlim[6] the war sustain,
Laegaire the Triumpher rides on east,
Aed, son of Morna, ye hear complain,
Little his thought is to mourn that beast.
High are the nobles, their deeds show might,
Housefellows fair, and yet hard in fight;
Champions of strength upon clans bring doom,
Great are the captives, and vast the tomb.

[1. Pronounced Bobe, with sound of 'robe.'
2. Pronounced Feeman.
3. Pronounced Senlay, with the light final ch.
4. Pronounced Doov-ta.]
5. Pronounced Kay-hern.
6 Pronounced Fay-lim.]

THE SICK-BED OF CUCHULAIN

INTRODUCTION

THE romance called the "Sick-bed of Cuchulain," the latter part of which is also known as the "Jealousy of Emer," is preserved in two manuscripts, one of which is the eleventh-century Leabhar na h-Uidhri, the other a fifteenth century manuscript in the Trinity College Library. These two manuscripts give substantially the same account, and are obviously taken from the same source, but the later of the two is not a copy of the older manuscript, and sometimes preserves a better reading.

The eleventh-century manuscript definitely gives a yet older book, the Yellow Book of Slane, now lost, as its authority, and this may be the ultimate authority for the tale as we have it. But, although there is only one original version of the text, it is quite plain from internal evidence that the compiler of the Yellow Book of Slane, or of an earlier book, had two quite different forms of the story to draw from, and combined them in the version that we have. The first, which may be called the "Antiquarian" form, relates the cause of Cuchulain's illness, tells in detail of the journey of his servant Laeg to Fairyland, in order to test the truth of a message sent to Cuchulain that he can be healed by fairy help, and then breaks off. In both the Leabhar na h-Uidhri and in the fifteenth-century manuscript, follows a long passage which has absolutely nothing to do with the story, consisting of an account how Lugaid Red-Stripes was elected to be king over Ireland, and of the Bull Feast at which the coming of Lugaid is prophesied. Both manuscripts then give the counsel given by Cuchulain to Lugaid on his election (this passage being the only justification for the insertion, as Cuchulain is supposed to be on his sick-bed when the exhortation is given); and both then continue the story in a quite different form, which may be called the "Literary" form. The cause of the sickness is not given in the Literary form, which commences with the rousing of Cuchulain from his sick-bed, this rousing being due to different agency from that related in the Antiquarian form, for in the latter Cuchulain is roused by a son of the fairy king, in the former b his wife Emer. The journey of Laeg to Fairyland is then told in the literary form with different detail to that given in the Antiquarian one, and the full conclusion is then supplied in this form alone; so that we have, although in the

same manuscript version, two quite distinct forms of the original legend, the first defective at the end of the story, the other at its beginning.

Not only are the incidents of the two forms of the story different in many respects, but the styles are so absolutely different that it would seem impossible to attribute them to the same author. The first is a mere compilation by an antiquarian; it is difficult to imagine that it was ever recited in a royal court, although the author may have had access to a better version than his own. He inserts passages which do not develop the interest of the story; hints at incidents (the temporary absence of Fergus and Conall) which are not developed or alluded to afterwards, and is a notable early example of the way in which Irish literature can be spoiled by combining several different independent stories into one. There is only one gem, strictly so called, and that not of a high order; the only poetic touches occur in the *rhetoric*, and, although in this there is a weird supernatural flavour, that may have marked the original used by the compiler of this form ‘ the human interest seems to be exceptionally weak.

The second or Literary form is as different from the other as it is possible for two compositions on the same theme to be. The first few words strike the human note in Cuchulain’s message to his wife: “Tell her that it goeth better with me from hour to hour;” the poems are many, long, and of high quality; the *rhetoric* shows a strophic correspondence; the Greek principle of letting the messenger tell the story instead of relating the facts, in a narrative of events (the method followed in the Antiquarian version) is made full use of; the modest account given by Cuchulain of his own deeds contrasts well with the prose account of the same deeds; and the final relation of the voluntary action of the fairy lady who gives up her lover to her rival, and her motives, is a piece of literary work centuries in advance of any other literature of modern Europe.

Some modern accounts of this romance have combined the two forms, and have omitted the irrelevant incidents in the Antiquarian version; there are literary advantages in this course, for the disconnected character of the Antiquarian opening, which must stand first, as it alone gives the beginning of the story, affords little indication of the high quality of the better work of the Literary form that follows; but, in order to heighten the contrast, the two forms are given just as they occur in the manuscripts, the only omissions being the account of the election of Lugaid, and the exhortation of Cuchulain to the new king.

Thurneysen, in his *Sagen aus dem Alten Irland*, places the second description of Fairyland by Laeg with the Antiquarian form, and this may be justified not only by the allusion to Ethne, who does not appear elsewhere in the Literary form, but from the fact that there is a touch of rough humour in this poem, which appears in

the Antiquarian form, but not elsewhere in the Literary one, where the manuscripts place this poem. But on the other hand the poetry of this second description, and its vividness, come much closer to the Literary form, and it has been left in the place that the manuscript gives to it.

The whole has been translated direct from the Irish in Irische Texte, vol. i., with occasional reference to the facsimile of the Leabhar na h-Uidhri; the words marked as doubtful by Windisch in his glossary, which are rather numerous, being indicated by marks of interrogation in the notes, and, where Windisch goes not indicate a probable meaning, a special note is made on the word, unless it has been given in dictionaries subsequent to that of Windisch. Thurneysen's translation has sometimes been made use of, when there is no other guide; but he omits some passages, and Windisch has been followed in the rendering given in his glossary in cases where there would seem to be a difference, as Thurneysen often translates freely.

THE SICK-BED OF CUCHULAIN

TRANSCRIBED FROM THE LOST YELLOW BOOK OF SLANE

By Maelmuiri mac Ceileachair into the Leabhar na h-Uidhri in the Eleventh Century

EVERY year the men of Ulster were accustomed to hold festival together; and the time when they held it was for three days before Samhain, the Summer-End, and for three days after that day, and upon Samhain itself. And the time that is spoken of is that when the men of Ulster were in the Plain of Murthemne, and there they used to keep that festival every year; nor was there an thing in the world that they would do at that time except sports, and marketings, and splendours, and pomps, and feasting and eating; and it is from that custom of theirs that the Festival of the Samhain has descended, that is now held throughout the whole of Ireland.

Now once upon a time the men of Ulster held festival upon the Murthemne Plain, and the reason that this festival was held was that every man of them should then give account of the combats he had made and of his valour every Summer-End. It was their custom to hold that festival in order to give account of these combats, and the manner in which they gave that account was this: Each man used to cut off the tip of the tongue of a foe whom he had killed, and he bore it with him in a pouch. Moreover, in order to make more great the numbers of their contests, some used to bring with them the tips of the tongues of beasts, and each man publicly declared the fights he had fought, one man of them after the other. And they did this also—they laid their swords over their thighs when they declared the strifes, and their own swords used to turn against them when the strife that they declared was false; nor was this to be wondered at, for at that time it was customary for demon beings to scream from the weapons of men, so that for this cause their weapons might be the more able to guard them.

To that festival then came all the men of Ulster except two alone, and these two were Fergus the son of Róg, and Conall the Victorious. “Let the festival be held!” cried the men of Ulster. “Nay,” said Cuchulain, “it shall not be held until Conall and Fergus come,” and this he said because Fergus was the foster-father of

Cuchulain, and Conall was his comrade. Then said Sencha: "Let us for the present engage in games of chess; and let the Druids sing, and let the jugglers play their feats;" and it was done as he had said.

Now while they were thus employed a flock of birds came down and hovered over the lake; never was seen in Ireland more beautiful birds than these. And a longing that these birds should be given to them seized upon the women who were there; and each of them began to boast of the prowess of her husband at bird-catching. "How I wish," said Ethne Aitencaithrech, Conor's wife, "that I could have two of those birds, one of them upon each of my two shoulders." "It is what we all long for," said the women; and "If any should have this boon, I should be the first one to have it," said Ethne Inguba, the wife of Cuchulain.

"What are we to do now?" said the women. "'Tis easy to answer you," said Leborcham, the daughter of Oa and Adarc; "I will go now with a message from you, and will seek for Cuchulain." She then went to Cuchulain, and "The women of Ulster would be well pleased," she said, "if yonder birds were given to them by thy hand." And Cuchulain made for his sword to unsheathe it against her: "Cannot the lasses of Ulster find any other but us," he said, "to give them their bird-hunt to-day?" "'Tis not seemly for thee to rage thus against them," said Leborcham, "for it is on thy account that the women of Ulster have assumed one of their three blemishes, even the blemish of blindness." For there were three blemishes that the women of Ulster assumed, that of crookedness of gait, and that of a stammering in their speech, and that of blindness. Each of the women who loved Conall the Victorious had assumed a crookedness of gait; each woman who loved Cuscraid Mend, the Stammerer of Macha, Conor's son, stammered in her speech; each woman in like manner who loved Cuchulain had assumed a blindness of her eyes, in order to resemble Cuchulain; for he, when his mind was angry within him, was accustomed to draw in the one of his eyes so far that a crane could not reach it in his head, and would thrust out the other so that it was great as a cauldron in which a calf is cooked.

"Yoke for us the chariot, O Laeg!" said Cuchulain. And Laeg yoked the chariot at that, and Cuchulain went into the chariot, and he cast his sword at the birds with a cast like the cast of a boomerang, so that they with their claws and wings flapped against the water. And they seized upon all the birds, and they gave them and distributed them among the women; nor was there any one of the women, except Ethne alone, who had not a pair of those birds. Then Cuchulain returned to his wife; and "Thou art enraged," said he to her. "I am in no way enraged," answered Ethne, "for I deem it as being by me that the distribution was made. And thou hast done what was fitting," she said, "for there is not one of these woman but loves

thee; none in whom thou hast no share; but for myself none hath any share in me except thou alone." "Be not angry," said Cuchulain, "if in the future any birds come to the Plain of Murthemne or to the Boyne, the two birds that are the most beautiful among those that come shall be thine."

A little while after this they saw two birds flying over the lake, linked together by a chain of red gold. They sang a gentle song, and a sleep fell upon all the men who were there; and Cuchulain rose up to pursue the birds. "If thou wilt hearken to me," said Laeg, and so also said Ethne, "thou shalt not go against them; behind those birds is some especial power. Other birds may be taken by thee at some future day." "Is it possible that such claim as this should be made upon me?" said Cuchulain. "Place a stone in my sling, O Laeg!" Laeg thereon took a stone, and he placed it in the sling, and Cuchulain launched the stone at the birds, but the cast missed. "Alas!" said he. He took another stone, and he launched this also at the birds, but the stone flew past them. "Wretched that I am," he cried, "since the very first day that I assumed arms, I have never missed a cast until this day!" And he cast his spear at them, and the spear went through the shield of the wing of one of the birds, and the birds flew away, and went beneath the lake.

After this Cuchulain departed, and he rested his back against a stone pillar, and his soul was angry within him, and a sleep fell upon him. Then saw he two women come to him; the one of them had a green mantle upon her, and upon the other was a purple mantle folded in five folds. And the woman in the green mantle approached him, and she laughed a laugh at him, and she gave him a stroke with a horsewhip. And then the other approached him, and she also laughed at him, and she struck him in the like manner; and for a long time were they thus, each of them in turn coming to him and striking him until he was all but dead; and then they departed from him.

Now the men of Ulster perceived the state in which Cuchulain was in; and they cried out that he should be awakened; but "Nay," said Fergus, "ye shall not move him, for he seeth a vision;" and a little after that Cuchulain came from his sleep. "What hath happened to thee?" said the men of Ulster; but he had no power to bid greeting to them. "Let me be carried," he said, "to the sick-bed that is in Tete Brecc; neither to Dun Imrith, nor yet to Dun Delga." "Wilt thou not be carried to Dun Delga to seek for Emer?" said Laeg. "Nay," said he, "my word is for Tete Brecc;" and thereon they bore him from that place, and he was in Tete Brecc until the end of one year, and during all that time he had speech with no one.

Now upon a certain day before the next Summer-End, at the end of a year, when the men of Ulster were in the house where Cuchulain was, Fergus being at the side-wall, and Conall Cernach at his head, and Lugaid Red-Stripes at his pillow,

and Ethne Inguba at his feet; when they were there in this manner, a man came to them, and he seated himself near the entrance of the chamber in which Cuchulain lay. "What hath brought thee here?" said Conall the Victorious. "No hard question to answer," said the man. "If the man who lies yonder were in health, he would be a good protection to all of Ulster; in the weakness and the sickness in which he now is, so much the more great is the protection that they have from him. I have no fear of any of you," he said, "for it is to give to this man a greeting that I come." "Welcome to thee, then, and fear nothing," said the men of Ulster; and the man rose to his feet, and he sang them these staves:

Ah! Cuchulain, who art under sickness still,
Not long thou its cure shouldst need;
Soon would Aed Abra's daughters, to heal thine ill,
To thee, at thy bidding, speed.
Liban, she at swift Labra's right hand who sits,
Stood up on Cruach's[1] Plain, and cried:
"'Tis the wish of Fand's heart, she the tale permits,
To sleep at Cuchulain's side.
"'If Cuchulain would come to me,' Fand thus told,
'How goodly that day would shine!
Then on high would our silver be heaped, and gold,
Our revellers pour the wine.
"'And if now in my land, as my friend, had been
Cuchulain, of Sualtam[2] son,
The things that in visions he late hath seen
In peace would he safe have won.
"'In the Plains of Murthemne, to south that spread,
Shall Liban my word fulfil:
She shall seek him on Samhain, he naught need dread,
By her shall be cured his ill.'"

[1. Pronounced something like Croogh.
[2. Pronounced Sooltam.]

"Who art thou, then, thyself?" said the men of Ulster. I am Angus, the son of Aed Abra," he answered; and the man then left them, nor did any of them know whence it was he had come, nor whither he went.

Then Cuchulain sat up, and he spoke to them. "Fortunate indeed is this!" said the men of Ulster; "tell us what it is that hath happened to thee." "Upon Samhain night last year," he said, "I indeed saw a vision;" and he told them of all he had seen. "What should now be done, Father Conor?" said Cuchulain. "This hast thou to

do," answered Conor, "rise, and go until thou comest to the pillar where thou wert before."

Then Cuchulain went forth until he came to the pillar, and then saw he the woman in the green mantle come to him. "This is good, O Cuchulain!" said she. "'Tis no good thing in my thought," said Cuchulain. "Wherefore camest thou to me last year?" he said. "It was indeed to do no injury to thee that we came," said the woman, "but to seek for thy friendship. I have come to greet thee," she said, "from Fand, the daughter of Aed Abra; her husband, Manannan the Son of the Sea, hath released her, and she hath thereon set her love on thee. My own name is Liban, and I have brought to thee a message from my spouse, Labraid the Swift, the Sword-Wielder, that he will give thee the woman in exchange for one day's service to him in battle against Senach the Unearthly, and against Eochaid Juil,[1] and against Yeogan the Stream." "I am in no fit state," he said, "to contend with men to-day." "That will last but a little while," she said; "thou shalt be whole, and all that thou hast lost of thy strength shall be increased to thee. Labraid shall bestow on thee that boon, for he is the best of all warriors that are in the world."

"Where is it that Labraid dwelleth?" asked Cuchulain.

"In Mag Mell,[2] the Plain of Delight," said Liban; "and now I desire to go to another land," said she.

"Let Laeg go with thee," said Cuchulain, "that he may learn of the land from which thou hast come." "Let him come, then," said Liban.

[1. Pronounced, nearly, Yeo-hay Yool.

2. Pronounced Maw Mel].

They departed after that, and they went forward until they came to a place where Fand was. And Liban turned to seek for Laeg, and she set him upon her shoulder. "Thou wouldest never go hence, O Laeg!" said Liban, "wert thou not under a woman's protection." "'Tis not a thing that I have most been accustomed to up to this time," said Laeg, "to be under a woman's guard." "Shame, and everlasting shame," said Liban, "that Cuchulain is not where thou art." "It were well for me," answered Laeg, "if it were indeed he who is here."

They passed on then, and went forward until they came opposite to the shore of an island, and there they saw a skiff of bronze lying upon the lake before them. They entered into the skiff, and they crossed over to the island, and came to the palace door, and there they saw the man, and he came towards them. And thus spoke Liban to the man whom they saw there:

Say where He, the Hand-on-Sword,
Labra swift, abideth?
He who, of the triumphs lord,

In strong chariot rideth.
When victorious troops are led,
Labra hath the leading;
He it is, when spears are red,
Sets the points a-bleeding.
And the man replied to her, and spoke thus:
Labra, who of speed is son,
Comes, and comes not slowly;
Crowded hosts together run,
Bent on warfare wholly.
Soon upon the Forest Plain
Shall be set the killing;
For the hour when men are slain
Fidga's[1] Fields are filling![2]

They entered then into the palace, and they saw there thrice fifty couches within the palace, and three times fifty women upon the couches, and the women all bade Laeg welcome, and it was in these words that they addressed him:

Hail! for the guide,
Laeg! of thy quest:
Laeg we beside
Hail, as our guest!

[1. Pronounced, nearly, Feega.
2. Irish metre approximately imitated in these stanzas.]

"What wilt thou do now?" said Liban; "wilt thou go on without a delay, and hold speech with Fand?"

"I will go," he answered, "if I may know the place where she is."

"That is no hard matter to tell thee," she answered; "she is in her chamber apart."

They went therein, and they greeted Fand, and she welcomed Laeg in the same fashion as the others had done.

Fand is the daughter of Aed Abra; Aed means fire, and he is the fire of the eye: that is, of the eye's pupil: Fand moreover is the name of the tear that runs from the eye; it was on account of the clearness of her beauty that she was so named, for there is nothing else in the world except a tear to which her beauty could be likened.

Now, while they were thus in that place, they heard the rattle of Labraid's chariot as he approached the island. "The spirit of Labraid is gloomy to-day," said Liban, "I will go and greet him." And she went out, and she bade welcome to Labraid, and she spoke as follows:

Hail! the man who holdeth sword, the swift in fight!

Heir of little armies, armed with javelins light;
Spears he drives in splinters; bucklers bursts in twain;
Limbs of men are wounded; nobles by him slain.
He for error searcheth, streweth gifts not small,
Hosts of men destroyeth; fairer he than all!
Heroes whom he findeth feel his fierce attack;
Labra! swiftest Sword-Hand! welcome to us back!
Labraid made no reply to her, and the lady spoke again thus:
Welcome! swift Labra,
Hand to sword set!
All win thy bounty,
Praise thou shalt get;
Warfare thou seekest,
Wounds seam thy side;
Wisely thou speakest,
Law canst decide;
Kindly thou rulest,
Wars fightest well;
Wrong-doers schoolest,
Hosts shalt repel.
Labraid still made no answer, and she sang another lay thus:
Labra! all hail!
Sword-wielder, swift:
War can he wage,
Warriors can sift;
Valiant is he,
Fighters excels;
More than in sea
Pride in him swells;
Down in the dust
Strength doth he beat;
They who him trust
Rise to their feet
Weak ones he'll raise,
Humble the strong;
Labra! thy praise
Peals loud and long!
Thou speakest not rightly, O lady," said Labraid; and he then spoke to her thus:

O my wife! naught of boasting or pride is in me;
No renown would I claim, and no falsehood shall be:
Lamentation alone stirs my mind, for hard spears
Rise in numbers against me: dread contest appears:
The right arms of their heroes red broadswords shall swing;
Many hosts Eochaid Juil holds to heart as their king:
Let no pride then be ours; no high words let there be;
Pride and arrogance far should be, lady, from me!

"Let now thy mind be appeased," said the lady Liban to him. "Laeg, the charioteer of Cuchulain, is here; and Cuchulain hath sent word to thee that he will come to join thy hosts."

Then Labraid bade welcome to Laeg, and he said to him: "Welcome, O Laeg! for the sake of the lady with whom thou comest, and for the sake of him from whom thou hast come. Do thou now go to thine own land, O Laeg!" said Labraid, "and Liban shall accompany thee."

Then Laeg returned to Emain, and he gave news of what he had seen to Cuchulain, and to all others beside; and Cuchulain rose up, and he passed his hand over his face, and he greeted Laeg brightly, and his mind was strengthened within him for the news that the lad had brought him.

[At this point occurs the break in the story indicated in the preface, and the description of the Bull-Feast at which Lugaid Red-Stripes is elected king over all Ireland; also the exhortation that Cuchulain, supposed to be lying on his sick-bed, gives to Lugaid as to the duties of a king. After this insertion, which has no real connection with the story, the story itself proceeds, but from another point, for the thread is taken up at the place where Cuchulain has indeed awaked from his trance, but is still on his sick-bed; the message of Angus appears to have been given, but Cuchulain does not seem to have met Liban for the second time, nor to have sent Laeg to inquire. Ethne has disappeared as an actor from the scene; her place is taken by Emer, Cuchulain's real wife; and the whole style of the romance so alters for the better that, even if it were not for the want of agreement of the two versions, we could see that we have here two tales founded upon the same legend but by two different hands, the end of the first and the beginning of the second alike missing, and the gap filled in by the story of the election of Lugaid.]

Now as to Cuchulain it has to be related thus: He called upon Laeg to come to him; and "Do thou go, O Laeg!" said Cuchulain, "to the place where Emer is; and say to her that women of the fairies have come upon me, and that they have destroyed my strength; and say also to her that it goeth better with me from hour to hour, and bid

her to come and seek me;" and the young man Laeg then spoke these words in order to hearten the mind of Cuchulain:

It fits not heroes lying
On sick-bed in a sickly sleep to dream:
Witches before thee flying
Of Trogach's fiery Plain the dwellers seem:
They have beat down thy strength,
Made thee captive at length,
And in womanish folly away have they driven thee far.
Arise! no more be sickly!
Shake off the weakness by those fairies sent:
For from thee parteth quickly
Thy strength that for the chariot-chiefs was meant:
Thou crouchest, like a youth!
Art thou subdued, in truth?
Have they shaken thy prowess and deeds that were meet for the war
Yet Labra's power hath sent his message plain:
Rise, thou that crouchest: and be great again.

And Laeg, after that heartening, departed; and he went on until he came to the place where Emer was; and he told her of the state of Cuchulain: "Ill hath it been what thou hast done, O youth!" she said; "for although thou art known as one who dost wander in the lands where the fairies dwell; yet no virtue of healing hast thou found there and brought for the cure of thy lord. Shame upon the men of Ulster!" she said, "for they have not sought to do a great deed, and to heal him. Yet, had Conor thus been fettered; had it been Fergus who had lost his sleep, had it been Conall the Victorious to whom wounds had been dealt, Cuchulain would have saved them." And she then sang a song, and in this fashion she sang it:

Laeg! who oft the fairy hill[1]
Searchest, slack I find thee still;
Lovely Dechtire's son shouldst thou
By thy zeal have healed ere now.
Ulster, though for bounties famed,
Foster-sire and friends are shamed:
None hath deemed Cuchulain worth
One full journey through the earth.
Yet, if sleep on Fergus fell,
Such that magic arts dispel,
Dechtire's son had restless rode

Till a Druid raised that load.
Aye, had Conall come from wars,
Weak with wounds and recent scars;
All the world our Hound would scour
Till he found a healing power.
Were it Laegaire[2] war had pressed,
Erin's meads would know no rest,
Till, made whole from wounds, he won
Mach's grandchild, Conna's son.
Had thus crafty Celthar slept,
Long, like him, by sickness kept;
Through the elf-mounds, night and day,
Would our Hound, to heal him, stray.
Furbaid, girt by heroes strong,
Were it he had lain thus long;
Ah! our Hound would rescue bear
Though through solid earth he fare.
[1. The metre of these verses is that of the Irish.
2. Pronounced Leary.]
All the elves of Troom[3] seem dead;
All their mighty deeds have fled;
For their Hound, who hounds surpassed,
Elves have bound in slumber fast.
Ah! on me thy sickness swerves,
Hound of Smith who Conor serves!
Sore my heart, my flesh must be:
May thy cure be wrought by me.
Ah! 'tis blood my heart that stains,
Sick for him who rode the plains:
Though his land be decked for feast,
He to seek its plain hath ceased.
He in Emain still delays;
'Tis those Shapes the bar that raise:
Weak my voice is, dead its tone,
He in evil form is shown.
Month-long, year-long watch I keep;
Seasons pass, I know not sleep:
Men's sweet speech strikes not mine ear;

Naught, Riangabra's[4] son, I hear.

[1. The metre of these verses is that of the Irish.

2. Pronounced Leary.

3. Spelt Truim.

4 Pronounced Reen-gabra.]

And, after that she had sung that song, Emer went forward to Emain that she might seek for Cuchulain; and she seated herself in the chamber where Cuchulain was, and thus she addressed him: "Shame upon thee!" she said, "to lie thus prostrate for a woman's love! well may this long sickbed of thine cause thee to ail!" And it was in this fashion that she addressed him, and she chanted this lay:

Stand up, O thou hero of Ulster!
Wake from sleep! rise up, joyful and sound!
Look on Conor the king! on my beauty,
Will that loose not those slumbers profound?
See the Ulstermen's clear shining shoulders!
Hear their trumpets that call to the fight!
See their war-cars that sweep through the valleys,
As in hero-chess, leaping each knight.
See their chiefs, and the strength that adorns them,
Their tall maidens, so stately with grace;
The swift kings, springing on to the battle,
The great queens of the Ulstermen's race!
The clear winter but now is beginning;
Lo! the wonder of cold that hangs there!
'Tis a sight that should warn thee; how chilly!
Of what length 1 yet of colour how bare!
This long slumber is ill; it decays thee:
'Tis like "milk for the full" the saw saith
Hard is war with fatigue; deadly weakness
Is a Prince who stands second to Death.
Wake! 'tis joy for the sodden, this slumber;
Throw it off with a great glowing heat:
Sweet-voiced friends for thee wait in great number:
Ulster's champion! stand up on thy feet!

And Cuchulain at her word stood up; and he passed his hand over his face, and he cast all his heaviness and his weariness away from him, and then he arose, and went on his way before him until he came to the enclosure that he sought; and in that enclosure Liban appeared to him. And Liban spoke to him, and she strove to

lead him into the fairy hill; but "What place is that in which Labraid dwelleth?" said Cuchulain. It is easy for me to tell thee!" she said:

Labra's home's a pure lake, whither
Troops of women come and go;
Easy paths shall lead thee thither,
Where thou shalt swift Labra know.
Hundreds his skilled arm repelleth;
Wise be they his deeds who speak:
Look where rosy beauty dwelleth;
Like to that think Labra's cheek.
Head of wolf, for gore that thirsteth,
Near his thin red falchion shakes;
Shields that cloak the chiefs he bursteth,
Arms of foolish foes he breaks.
Trust of friend he aye requiteth,
Scarred his skin, like bloodshot eye;
First of fairy men he fighteth;
Thousands, by him smitten, die.
Chiefs at Echaid[1] Juil's name tremble;
Yet his land-strange tale-he sought,
He whose locks gold threads resemble,
With whose breath wine-scents are brought.
More than all strife-seekers noted,
Fiercely to far lands he rides;
Steeds have trampled, skiffs have floated
Near the isle where he abides.
Labra, swift Sword-Wielder, gaineth
Fame for actions over sea;
Sleep for all his watch sustaineth!
Sure no coward hound is he.
The chains on the necks of the coursers he rides,
And their bridles are ruddy with gold:
He hath columns of crystal and silver besides,
The roof of his house to uphold.

[1. Pronounced, apparently, Ech-ay, the ch like the sound in "loch."]

"I will not go thither at a woman's call," said Cuchulain. "Let Laeg then go," said the lady, "and let him bring to thee tidings of all that is there." "Let him depart, then," said Cuchulain; and Laeg rose up and departed with Liban, and they came

to the Plain of Speech, and to the Tree of Triumphs, and over the festal plain of Emain, and over the festal plain of Fidga, and in that place was Aed Abra, and with him his daughters.

Then Fand bade welcome to Laeg, and "How is it," said she, "that Cuchulain hath not come with thee?" "It pleased him not," said Laeg, "to come at a woman's call; moreover, he desired to know whether it was indeed from thee that had come the message, and to have full knowledge of everything." "It was indeed from me that the message was sent," she said; "and let now Cuchulain come swiftly to seek us, for it is for to-day that the strife is set." Then Laeg went back to the place where he had left Cuchulain, and Liban with him; and "How appeareth this quest to thee, O Laeg?" said Cuchulain. And Laeg answering said, "In a happy hour shalt thou go," said he, "for the battle is set for to-day;" and it was in this manner that he spake, and he recited thus:

I went gaily through regions,
Though strange, seen before:
By his cairn found I Labra,
A cairn for a score.
There sat yellow-haired Labra,
His spears round him rolled;
His long bright locks well gathered
Round apple of gold.
On my five-folded purple
His glance at length fell,
And he said, "Come and enter
Where Failbe doth dwell."
In one house dwells white Failbe,
With Labra, his friend;
And retainers thrice fifty
Each monarch attend.
On the right, couches fifty,
Where fifty men rest;
On the left, fifty couches
By men's weight oppressed.
For each couch copper frontings,
Posts golden, and white;
And a rich flashing jewel
As torch, gives them light.
Near that house, to the westward,

Where sunlight sinks down,
Stand grey steeds, with manes dappled
And steeds purple-brown.
On its east side are standing
Three bright purple trees
Whence the birds' songs, oft ringing
The king's children please.
From a tree in the fore-court
Sweet harmony streams;
It stands silver, yet sunlit
With gold's glitter gleams.
Sixty trees' swaying summits
Now meet, now swing wide;
Rindless food for thrice hundred
Each drops at its side.
Near a well by that palace
Gay cloaks spread out lie,
Each with splendid gold fastening
Well hooked through its eye.
They who dwell there, find flowing
A vat of glad ale:
'Tis ordained that for ever
That vat shall not fail.
From the hall steps a lady
Well gifted, and fair:
None is like her in Erin;
Like gold is her hair.
And so sweet, and so wondrous
Her words from her fall,
That with love and with longing
She breaks hearts of all.
"Who art thou?" said that lady,
"For strange thou art here;
But if Him of Murthemne
Thou servest, draw near."
Slowly, slowly I neared her;
I feared for my fame:
And she said, "Comes he hither,

Of Dechtire who came?”
Ah! long since, for thy healing,
Thou there shouldst have gone,
And have viewed that great palace
Before me that shone.
Though I ruled all of Erin
And yellow Breg’s hill,
I’d give all, no small trial,
To know that land still.
“The quest then is a good one?” said Cuchulain. “It is goodly indeed,” said Laeg, “and it is right that thou shouldest go to attain it, and all things in that land are good.” And thus further also spoke Laeg, as he told of the loveliness of the fairy dwelling:
I saw a land of noble form and splendid,
Where dwells naught evil; none can speak a lie:
There stands the king, by all his hosts attended,
Brown Labra, swift to sword his hand can fly.
We crossed the Plain of Speech, our steps arrested
Near to that Tree, whose branches triumphs bear;
At length upon the hill-crowned plain we rested,
And saw the Double-Headed Serpent’s lair.
Then Liban said, as we that mount sat under:
“Would I could see—’twould be a marvel strange—
Yet, if I saw it, dear would be that wonder,
if to Cuchulain’s form thy form could change.”
Great is the beauty of Aed Abra’s daughters,
Unfettered men before them conquered fall;
Fand’s beauty stuns, like sound of rushing waters,
Before her splendour kings and queens seem small.
Though I confess, as from the wise ones hearing,
That Adam’s race was once unstained by sin; -
Yet did I swear, when Fand was there appearing,
None in past ages could such beauty win.
I saw the champions stand with arms for slaying,
Right splendid was the garb those heroes bore;
Gay coloured garments, meet for their arraying,
’Twas not the vesture of rude churls they wore.
Women of music at the feast were sitting,

A brilliant maiden bevy near them stood;
And forms of noble youths were upwards flitting
Through the recesses of the mountain wood.
I saw the folk of song; their strains rang sweetly,
As for the lady in that house they played;
Had I not I fled away from thence, and fleetly,
Hurt by that music, I had weak been made.
I know the hill where Ethne took her station,
And Ethne Inguba's a lovely maid;
But none can drive from sense a warlike nation
Save she alone, in beauty then displayed.

And Cuchulain, when he had heard that report, went on with Liban to that land, and he took his chariot with him. And they came to the Island of Labraid, and there Labraid and all the women that were there bade them welcome; and Fand gave an especial welcome to Cuchulain. "What is there now set for us to do?" said Cuchulain. "No hard matter to answer," said Labraid; "we must go forth and make a circuit about the army." They went out then, and they came to the army, and they let their eyes wander over it; and the host seemed to them to be innumerable. "Do thou arise, and go hence for the present," said Cuchulain to Labraid; and Labraid departed, and Cuchulain remained confronting the army. And there were two ravens there, who spake, and revealed Druid secrets, but the armies who heard them laughed. "It must surely be the madman from Ireland who is there," said the army; "it is he whom the ravens would make known to us;" and the armies chased them away so that they found no resting-place in that land.

Now at early morn Eochaid Juil went out in order to bathe his hands in the spring, and Cuchulain saw his shoulder through the hood of his tunic, and he hurled his spear at him, and he pierced him. And he by himself slew thirty-and-three of them, and then Senach the Unearthly assailed him, and a great fight was fought between them, and Cuchulain slew him; and after that Labraid approached, and he brake before him those armies.

Then Labraid entreated Cuchulain to stay his hand from the slaying; and "I fear now," said Laeg, "that the man will turn his wrath upon us; for he hath not found a war to suffice him. Go now," said Laeg, "and let there be brought three vats of cold water to cool his heat. The first vat into which he goeth shall boil over; after he hath gone into the second vat, none shall be able to bear the heat of it: after he hath gone into the third vat, its water shall have but a moderate heat."

And when the women saw Cuchulain's return, Fand sang thus:

Fidga's[1] plain, where the feast assembles,

Shakes this eve, as his car he guides;
All the land at the trampling trembles;
Young and beardless, in state he rides.
Blood-red canopies o'er him swinging
Chant, but not as the fairies cry;
Deeper bass from the car is singing,
Deeply droning, its wheels reply.
Steeds are bounding beneath the traces,
None to match them my thought can find;
Wait a while! I would note their graces:
On they sweep, like the spring's swift wind.
High in air, in his breath suspended,
Float a fifty of golden balls;
Kings may grace in their sports have blended,
None his equal my mind recalls.
[1. Pronounced, nearly, Fee-ga.]
Dimples four on each cheek are glowing,
One seems green, one is tinged with blue,
One dyed red, as if blood were flowing,
One is purple, of lightest hue.
Sevenfold light from his eyeballs flashes,
None may speak him as blind, in scorn;
Proud his glances, and dark eyelashes
Black as beetle, his eyes adorn.
Well his excellence fame confesses,
All through Erin his praise is sung;
Three the hues of his high-piled tresses;
Beardless yet, and a stripling young.
Red his blade, it hath late been blooded;
Shines above it its silver hilt;
Golden bosses his shield have studded,
Round its rim the white bronze is spilt.
O'er the slain in each slaughter striding,
War he seeketh, at risk would snatch:
Heroes keen in your ranks are riding,
None of these is Cuchulain's match.
From Murthemne he comes, we greet him,
Young Cuchulain, the champion strong;

We, compelled from afar to meet him,
Daughters all of Aed Abra, throng.
Every tree, as a lordly token,
Stands all stained with the red blood rain
War that demons might wage is woken,
Wails peal high as he raves again.
Liban moreover bade a welcome to Cuchulain, and she chanted as follows:
Hail to Cuchulain!
Lord, who canst aid;
Murthemne ruling,
Mind undismayed;
Hero-like, glorious,
Heart great and still
Battle-victorious,
Firm rock of skill;
Redly he rageth,
Foemen would face;
Battle he wageth
Meet for his race!
Brilliant his splendour, like maidens' eyes,
Praises we render: praise shall arise!
"Tell us now of the deeds thou hast done, O Cuchulain! cried Liban, and Cuchulain in this manner replied to her:
From my hand flew a dart, as I made my cast,
Through the host of Stream-Yeogan the javelin passed;
Not at all did I know, though great fame was won,
Who my victim had been, or what deed was done.
Whether greater or less was his might than mine
I have found not at all, nor can right divine;
In a mist was he hid whom my spear would slay,
Yet I know that he went not with life away.
A great host on me closed, and on every side
Rose around me in hordes the red steeds they ride;
From Manannan, the Son of the Sea, came foes,
From Stream-Yeogan to call them a roar arose.
And I went to the battle with all at length,
When my weakness had passed, and I gat full strength;
And alone with three thousands the fight I fought,

Till death to the foes whom I faced was brought.
I heard Echaid Juil's groan, as he neared his end,
The sound came to mine ears as from lips of friend;
Yet, if truth must be told, 'twas no valiant deed,
That cast that I threw, if 'twas thrown indeed.

Now, after all these things had passed, Cuchulain slept with the lady, and he abode for a month in her company, and at the end of the month he came to bid her farewell. "Tell me," she said, "to what place I may go for our tryst, and I will be there;" and they made tryst at the strand that is known as the Strand of the Yew-Tree's Head. Now word was brought to Emer of that tryst, and knives were whetted by Emer to slay the lady; and she came to the place of the tryst, and fifty women were with her. And there she found, Cuchulain and Laeg, and they were engaged in the chess-play, so that they perceived not the women's approach. But Fand marked it, and she cried out to Laeg: "Look now, O Laeg!" she said, "and mark that sight that I see." "What sight is that of which thou speakest?" said Laeg, and he looked and saw it, and thus it was that the lady, even Fand, addressed him:

Laeg! look behind thee!
Close to thine ear
Wise, well-ranked women
Press on us near;
Bright on each bosom
Shines the gold clasp;
Knives, with green edges
Whetted, they grasp:
As for the slaughter chariot chiefs race,
Comes Forgall's daughter; changed is her face.

"Have no fear," said Cuchulain, "no foe shalt thou meet;
Enter thou my strong car, with its sunny bright seat:
I will set thee before me, will guard thee from harm
Against women, from Ulster's four quarters that swarm:
Though the daughter of Forgall the war with thee vows,
Though her dear foster-sisters against thee she rouse,
No deed of destruction bold Emer will dare,
Though she rageth against thee, for I will be there."

Moreover to Emer he said:

I avoid thee, O lady, as heroes
Avoid to meet friends in a strife;
The hard spear thy hand shakes cannot injure,

Nor the blade of thy thin gleaming knife;
For the wrath pent within thee that rageth
Is but weak, nor can cause mine affright:
It were hard if the war my might wageth
Must be quenched by a weak woman's might!
"Speak! and tell me, Cuchulain," cried Emer,
"Why this shame on my head thou wouldst lay?
Before women of Ulster dishonoured I stand,
And all women who dwell in the wide Irish land,
And all folk who love honour beside:
Though I came on thee, secretly creeping,
Though oppressed by thy might I remain,
And though great is thy pride in the battle,
If thou leavest me, naught is thy gain:
Why, dear youth, such attempt dost thou make?
"Speak thou, Emer, and say," said Cuchulain,
"Should I not with this lady delay?
For this lady is fair, pare and bright, and well skilled,
A fit mate for a monarch, in beauty fulfilled,
And the billows of ocean can ride:
She is lovely in countenance, lofty in race,
And with handicraft skilled can fine needlework trace,
Hath a mind that with firmness can guide:
And in steeds hath she wealth, and much cattle
Doth she own; there is naught under sky
A dear wife for a spouse should be keeping
But that gift with this lady have I:
Though the vow that I made thee I break,
Thou shalt ne'er find champion
Rich, like me, in scars;
Ne'er such worth, such brilliance,
None who wins my wars."

"In good sooth," answered Emer, "the lady to whom thou dost cling is in no way better than am I myself! Yet fair seems all that's red; seems white what's new alone; and bright what's set o'erhead; and sour are things well known! Men worship what they lack; and what they have seems weak; in truth thou hast all the wisdom of the time! O youth!" she said, "once we dwelled in honour together, and we would so dwell again, if only I could find favour in thy sight!" and her grief weighed

heavily upon her. “By my word,” said Cuchulain, “thou dost find favour, and thou shalt find it so long as I am in life.”

“Desert me, then!” cried Fand. “Nay,” said Emer, “it is more fitting that I should be the deserted one.” “Not so, indeed,” said Fand. “It is I who must go, and danger rusheth upon me from afar.” And an eagerness for lamentation seized upon Fand, and her soul was great within her, for it was shame to her to be deserted and straightway to return to her home; moreover the mighty love that she bare to Cuchulain was tumultuous in her, and in this fashion she lamented, and lamenting sang this song:

Mighty need compels me,
I must go my way;
Fame for others waiteth,
Would I here could stay!
Sweeter were it resting
Guarded by thy power,
Than to find the marvels
In Aed Abra’s bower.
Emer! noble lady!
Take thy man to thee:
Though my arms resign him,
Longing lives in me.
Oft in shelters hidden
Men to seek me came;
None could win my trysting,
I myself was flame.
Ah! no maid her longing
On a man should set
Till a love full equal
To her own she get.
Fifty women hither,
Emer! thou hast brought
Thou wouldst Fand make captive,
Hast on murder thought.
Till the day I need them
Waits, my home within;
Thrice thy host! fair virgins,
These my war shall win.

Now upon this it was discerned by Manannan that Fand the daughter of Aed Abra was engaged in unequal warfare with the women of Ulster, and that she was like to be left by Cuchulain. And thereon Manannan came from the east to seek for the lady, and he was perceived by her, nor was there any other conscious of his presence saving Fand alone. And, when she saw Manannan, the lady was seized by great bitterness of mind and by grief, and being thus, she made this song:

Lo! the Son of the Sea-Folk from plains draws near
Whence Yeogan, the Stream, is poured;
'Tis Manannan, of old he to me was dear,
And above the fair world we soared.
Yet to-day, although excellent sounds his cry,
No love fills my noble heart,
For the pathways of love may be bent awry,
Its knowledge in vain depart.
When I dwelt in the bower of the Yeogan Stream,
At the Son of the Ocean's side,
Of a life there unending was then our dream,
Naught seemed could our love divide.
When the comely Manannan to wed me came,
To me, as a spouse, full meet;
Not in shame was I sold, in no chessmen's game
The price of a foe's defeat.
When the comely Manannan my lord was made,
When I was his equal spouse,
This armlet of gold that I bear he paid
As price for my marriage vows.
Through the heather came bride-maids, in garments brave
Of all colours, two score and ten;
And beside all the maidens my bounty gave
To my husband a fifty men.
Four times fifty our host; for no frenzied strife
In our palace was pent that throng,
Where a hundred strong men led a gladsome life,
One hundred fair dames and strong.
Manannan draws near: over ocean he speeds,
From all notice of fools is he free;
As a horseman he comes, for no vessel he needs
Who rides the maned waves of the sea.

He hath passed near us now, though his visage to view
Is to all, save to fairies, forbid;
Every troop of mankind his keen sight searcheth through,
Though small, and in secret though hid.
But for me, this resolve in my spirit shall dwell,
Since weak, being woman's, my mind;
Since from him whom so dearly I loved, and so well,
Only danger and insult I find.
I will go! in mine honour unsullied depart,
Fair Cuchulain! I bid thee good-bye;
I have gained not the wish that was dear to my heart,
High justice compels me to fly.
It is flight, this alone that befitteth my state,
Though to some shall this parting be hard:
O thou son of Riangabra! the insult was great:
Not by Laeg shall my going be barred.
I depart to my spouse; ne'er to strife with a foe
Shall Manannan his consort expose;
And, that none may complain that in secret I go,
Behold him! his form I disclose!

Then that lady rose behind Manannan as he passed, and Manannan greeted her: "O lady!" he said, "which wilt thou do? wilt thou depart with me, or abide here until Cuchulain comes to thee?" "By my troth," answered Fand, "either of the two of ye were a fitting spouse to adhere to; and neither of you two is better than the other; yet, Manannan, it is with thee that I go, nor will I wait for Cuchulain, for he hath betrayed me; and there is another matter, moreover, that weigheth with me, O thou noble prince!" said she, "and that is that thou hast no consort who is of worth equal to thine, but such a one hath Cuchulain already."

And Cuchulain saw the lady as she went from him to Manannan, and he cried out to Laeg: "What meaneth this that I see?" "'Tis no hard matter to answer thee," said Laeg. "Fand goeth away with Manannan the Son of the Sea, since she hath not been pleasing in thy sight!"

Then Cuchulain bounded three times high into the air, and he made three great leaps towards the south, and thus he came to Tara Luachra,[l] and there he abode for a long time, having no meat and no drink, dwelling upon the mountains, and sleeping upon the high-road that runneth through the midst of Luachra.

Then Emer went on to Emain, and there she sought out king Conor, and she told Conor of Cuchulain's state, and Conor sent out his learned men and the people of

skill, and the Druids of Ulster, that they might seek for Cuchulain, and might bind him fast, and bring him with them to Emain. And Cuchulain strove to slay the people of skill, but they chanted wizard and fairy songs against him, and they bound fast his feet and his hands until he came a little to his senses. Then he begged for a drink at their hands, and the Druids gave him a drink of forgetfulness, so that afterwards he had no more remembrance of Fand nor of anything else that he had then done; and they also gave a drink of forgetfulness to Emer that she might forget her jealousy, for her state was in no way better than the state of Cuchulain. And Manannan shook his cloak between Cuchulain and Fand, so that they might never meet together again throughout eternity.

[1. Pronounced Looch-ra: Tara Luachra is on the borders of Limerick and Kerry.]

THE EXILE OF THE SONS OF USNACH

INTRODUCTION

THE version given in the following pages of the well-known tale of Deirdre has been translated from the Irish text of the Book of Leinster version as printed by Windisch in *Irische Texte*, vol. i. Readings from the two parallel texts of the Book of Lecan, and Egerton, 1782, have been used where the Leinster text is deficient or doubtful, but the older MS. has in the main been followed, the chief alterations being indicated in the notes. The only English translation hitherto given of this version is the unreliable one in *Atlantis*, vol. iii. There is a German translation in Thurneysen's *Sagen aus dem alten Irland* which may be consulted for literal renderings of most of the verse portions, which, however, are sometimes nearer the original than Thurneysen's renderings.

It was at first intended to place beside this version the much better known version of the tale given by the Glenn Masain manuscript and its variants; but, as this version is otherwise available in English,[1] it has been thought better to omit most of it: a verse translation of Deirdre's final lament in this version has, however, been added for the purpose of comparing it with the corresponding lament in the Leinster text. These two poems are nearly of the same length, but have no other point in common; the lament in the Leinster version strikes the more personal note, and it has been suggested that it shows internal evidence that it must have been written by a woman. The idea of Deirdre as a seer, which is so prominent in the Glenn Masain version of the tale, does not appear in the older Leinster text; the supernatural Druidic mist, which even in the Glenn Masain version only appears in the late manuscript which continues the story after the fifteenth-century manuscript breaks off, does not appear in the Book of Leinster; and the later version introduces several literary artifices that do not appear in the earlier one. That portion of the Glenn Masain version immediately following after Deirdre's lament is given as an instance of one of these, the common artifice of increase of horror at a catastrophe by the introduction of irrelevant matter, the tragedy of Deirdre's death being immediately followed by a cheerful account of the relationships of the chief heroes of the Heroic Period; a still better example of this practice in the old Irish literature is the almost comic relief that is introduced at the most tragic part of the tale of the murder of the son of Ronan.

[1. See Irische Texte, vol. ii., and the Celtic Review, vol. i. 1904-1905.]

THE EXILE OF THE SONS OF USNACH
BOOK OF LEINSTER VERSION

IN the house of Feidlimid,[1] the son of Dall, even he who was the narrator of stories to Conor the king, the men of Ulster sat at their ale; and before the men, in order to attend upon them, stood the wife of Feidlimid, and she was great with child. Round about the board went drinking-horns, and portions of food; and the revellers shouted in their drunken mirth. And when the men desired to lay themselves down to sleep, the woman also went to her couch; and, as she passed through the midst of the house, the child cried out in her womb, so that its shriek was heard throughout the whole house, and throughout the outer court that lay about it. And upon that shriek, all the men sprang up; and, head closely packed by head, they thronged together in the house, whereupon Sencha, the son of Ailill, rebuked them: "Let none of you stir!" cried he, "and let the woman be brought before us, that we may learn what is the meaning of that cry." Then they brought the woman before them, and thus spoke to her Feidlimid, her spouse:

What is that, of all cries far the fiercest,
In thy womb raging loudly and long?
Through all ears with that clamour thou piercest;
With that scream, from Bides swollen and strong:
Of great woe, for that cry, is foreboding my heart;
That is torn through with terror, and sore with the smart.

Then the woman turned her, and she approached Cathbad[2] the Druid, for he was a man of knowledge, and thus she spoke to him:

Give thou ear to me, Cathbad, thou fair one of face,
Thou great crown of our honour, and royal in race;
Let the man so exalted still higher be set,
Let the Druid draw knowledge, that Druids can get.
For I want words of wisdom, and none can I fetch;
Nor to Felim a torch of sure knowledge can stretch:
As no wit of a woman can wot what she bears,
I know naught of that cry from within me that tears.

And then said Cathbad:

'Tis a maid who screamed wildly so lately,
Fair and curling shall locks round her flow,

And her eyes be blue-centred and stately;
And her cheeks, like the foxglove, shall glow.
For the tint of her skin, we commend her,
In its whiteness, like snow newly shed;
And her teeth are all faultless in splendour
And her lips, like to coral, are red:
A fair woman is she, for whom heroes,
that fight In their chariots for Ulster, to death shall be dight.
'Tis a woman that shriek who hath given,
Golden-haired, with long tresses, and tall;
For whose love many chiefs shall have striven,
And great kings for her favours shall call.
To the west she shall hasten, beguiling
A great host, that from Ulster shall steal:
Red as coral, her lips shall be smiling,
As her teeth, white as pearls, they reveal:
Aye, that woman is fair, and great queens shall be fain
Of her form, that is faultless, unflawed by a stain.

[1. Pronounced Feylimid.
2. Pronounced Cah-ba.]

Then Cathbad laid his hand upon the body of the woman; and the little child moved beneath his hand: "Aye, indeed," he said, "it is a woman child who is here: Deirdre shall be her name, and evil woe shall be upon her."

Now some days after that came the girl child into the world; and then thus sang Cathbad:

O Deirdre! of ruin great cause thou art;
Though famous, and fair, and pale:
Ere that Félim's hid daughter from life shall part,
All Ulster her deeds shall wail.
Aye, mischief shall come, in the after-time,
Thou fair shining maid, for thee;
Hear ye this: Usna's sons, the three chiefs sublime,
To banishment forced shall be.
While thou art in life, shall a fierce wild deed
In Emain, though late, be done:
Later yet, it shall mourn it refused to heed
The guard of Róg's powerful son.
O lady of worth! It is to thee we owe

That Fergus to exile flies;
That a son of king Conor we hail in woe,
When Fiachna[1] is hurt, and dies.
O lady of worth! It is all thine the guilt!
Gerrc, Illadan's son, is slain;
And when Eogan mac Doorha's great life is spilt,
Not less shall be found our pain.
Grim deed shalt thou do, and in wrath shalt rave
Against glorious Ulster's king:
In that spot shall men dig thee thy tiny grave;
Of Deirdre they long shall sing.

[1. Pronounced Feena.]

"Let that maiden be slain!" cried out the young men of Ulster; but "Not so!" said Conor; "she shall in the morning be brought to me, and shall be reared according to my will, and she shall be my wife, and in my companionship shall she dwell." The men of Ulster were not so hardy as to turn him from his purpose, and thus it was done. The maiden was reared in a house that belonged to Conor, and she grew up to be the fairest maid in all Ireland. She was brought up at a distance from the king's court; so that none of the men of Ulster might see her till the time came when she was to share the royal couch: none of mankind was permitted to enter the house where she was reared, save only her foster-father, and her foster-mother; and in addition to these Levorcham, to whom naught could any refuse, for she was a witch.

Now once it chanced upon a certain day in the time of winter that the foster-father of Deirdre had employed himself in skinning a calf upon the snow, in order to prepare a roast for her, and the blood of the calf lay upon the snow, and she saw a black raven who came down to drink it. And "Levorcham," said Deirdre, "that man only will I love, who hath the three colours that I see here, his hair as black as the raven, his cheeks red like the blood, and his body as white as the snow." "Dignity and good fortune to thee!" said Levorcham; "that man is not far away. Yonder is he in the burg which is nigh; and the name of him is Naisi, the son of Usnach." "I shall never be in good health again," said Deirdre, "until the time come when I may see him."

It befell that Naisi was upon a certain day alone upon the rampart of the burg of Emain, and he sent his warrior-cry with music abroad: well did the musical cry ring out that was raised by the sons of Usnach. Each cow and every beast that heard them, gave of milk two-thirds more than its wont; and each man by whom that cry was heard deemed it to be fully joyous, and a dear pleasure to him. Goodly

moreover was the play that these men made with their weapons; if the whole province of Ulster had been assembled together against them in one place, and they three only had been able to set their backs against one another, the men of Ulster would not have borne away victory from those three: so well were they skilled in parry and defence. And they were swift of foot when they hunted the game, and with them it was the custom to chase the quarry to its death.

Now when this Naisi found himself alone on the plain, Deirdre also soon escaped outside her house to him, and she ran past him, and at first he know not who she might be.

"Fair is the young heifer that springs past me!" he cried.

"Well may the young heifers be great," she said, "in a place where none may find a bull."

"Thou hast, as thy bull," said he, "the bull of the whole province of Ulster, even Conor the king of Ulster."

"I would choose between you two," she said, "and I would take for myself a younger bull, even such as thou art."

"Not so indeed," said Naisi, "for I fear the prophecy of Cathbad."

"Sayest thou this, as meaning to refuse me?" said she.

"Yea indeed," he said; and she sprang upon him, and she seized him by his two ears. "Two ears of shame and of mockery shalt thou have," she cried, "if thou take me not with thee." Release me, O my wife!" said he.

"That will I."

Then Naisi raised his musical warrior-cry, and the men of Ulster heard it, and each of them one after another sprang up: and the sons of Usnach hurried out in order to hold back their brother.

"What is it," they said, "that thou dost? let it not be by any fault of thine that war is stirred up between us and the men of Ulster."

Then he told them all that had been done; and "There shall evil come on thee from this," said they; "moreover thou shalt lie under the reproach of shame so long as thou dost live; and we will go with her into another land, for there is no king in all Ireland who will refuse us welcome if we come to him."

Then they took counsel together, and that same night they departed, three times fifty warriors, and the same number of women, and dogs, and servants, and Deirdre went with them. And for a long time they wandered about Ireland, in homage to this man or that; and often Conor sought to slay them, either by ambuscade or by treachery; from round about Assaroe, near to Ballyshannon in the west, they journeyed, and they turned them back to Benn Etar, in the north-east, which men to-day call the Mountain of Howth. Nevertheless the men of Ulster drave them

from the land, and they came to the land of Alba, and in its wildernesses they dwelled. And when the chase of the wild beasts of the mountains failed them, they made foray upon the cattle of the men of Alba, and took them for themselves; and the men of Alba gathered themselves together with intent to destroy them. Then they took shelter with the king of Alba, and the king took them into his following, and they served him in war. And they made for themselves houses of their own in the meadows by the king's burg: it was on account of Deirdre that these houses were made, for they feared that men might see her, and that on her account they might be slain.

Now one day the high-steward of the king went out in the early morning, and he made a cast about Naisi's house, and saw those two sleeping therein, and he hurried back to the king, and awaked him: "We have," said he, "up to this day found no wife for thee of like dignity to thyself. Naisi the son of Usnach hath a wife of worth sufficient for the emperor of the western world! Let Naisi be slain, and let his wife share thy couch."

"Not so!" said the king, "but do thou prepare thyself to go each day to her house, and woo her for me secretly."

Thus was it done; but Deirdre, whatsoever the steward told her, was accustomed straightway to recount it each even to her spouse; and since nothing was obtained from her, the sons of Usnach were sent into dangers, and into wars, and into strifes that thereby they might be overcome. Nevertheless they showed themselves to be stout in every strife, so that no advantage did the king gain from them by such attempts as these.

The men of Alba were gathered together to destroy the sons of Usnach, and this also was told to Deirdre. And she told her news to Naisi: "Depart hence!" said she, "for if ye depart not this night, upon the morrow ye shall he slain!" And they marched away that night, and they betook themselves to an island of the sea.

Now the news of what had passed was brought to the men of Ulster. "'Tis pity, O Conor!" said they, "that the sons of Usnach should die in the land of foes, for the sake of an evil woman. It is better that they should come under thy protection,[1] and that the (fated) slaying should be done here, and that they should come into their own land, rather than that they should fall at the hands of foes." "Let them come to us then," said Conor, "and let men go as securities to them." The news was brought to them.

[1. Literally, "It is better their protection, and their slaying, and coming for them to their own land, &c." If this reading is right (and three MSS. agree), the extended words of the text seem to give the intention: it is, however, possible that the reading should be, "It is better their protection than their slaying" (oldaas for ocus), which

would make sense at once. The idea of the text seems to be that the sons of Usnach were, owing to Cathbad's prophecy, thought of as fated men; and it was only a question where they should be put to death.]

"This is welcome news for us," they said; "we will indeed come, and let Fergus come as our surety, and Dubhtach, and Cormac the son of Conor." These then went to them, and they moved them to pass over the sea.

But at the contrivance of Conor, Fergus was pressed to join in an ale-feast, while the sons of Usnach were pledged to eat no food in Erin, until they had eaten the food of Conor. So Fergus tarried behind with Dubhtach and Cormac; and the sons of Usnach went on, accompanied by Fiacha, Fergus' son; until they came to the meadows around Emain.

Now at that time Eogan the son of Durthacht had come to Emain to make his peace with Conor, for they had for a long time been at enmity; and to him, and to the warmen of Conor, the charge was given that they should slay the sons of Usnach, in order that they should not come before the king. The sons of Usnach stood upon the level part of. the meadows, and the women sat upon the ramparts of Emain. And Eogan came with his warriors across the meadow, and the son of Fergus took his place by Naisi's side. And Eogan greeted them with a mighty thrust of his spear, and the spear brake Naisi's back in sunder, and passed through it. The son of Fergus made a spring, and he threw both arms around Naisi, and he brought him beneath himself to shelter him, while he threw himself down above him; and it was thus that Naisi was slain, through the body of the son of Fergus. Then there began a murder throughout the meadow, so that none escaped who did not fall by the points of the spears, or the edge of the sword, and Deirdre was brought to Conor to be in his power, and her arms were bound behind her back.

Now the sureties who had remained behind, heard what had been done, even Fergus and Dubhtach, and Cormac. And thereon they hastened forward, and they forthwith performed great deeds. Dubhtach slew, with the one thrust of his spear, Mane a son of Conor, and Fiachna the son of Feidelm, Conor's daughter; and Fergus struck down Traigthren, the son of Traiglethan, and his brother. And Conor was wrath at this, and he came to the fight with them; so that upon that day three hundred of the men of Ulster fell And Dubhtach slew the women of Ulster; and, ere the day dawned, Fergus set Emain on fire. Then they went away into exile, and betook them to the land of Connaught to find shelter with Ailill and Maev, for they knew that that royal pair would give them good entertainment. To the men of Ulster the exiles showed no love: three thousand stout men went with them; and for sixteen years

never did they allow cries of lamentation and of fear among the Ulstermen to cease: each night their vengeful forays caused men to quake, and to wail.

Deirdre lived on for a year in the household of Conor; and during all that time she smiled no smile of laughter; she satisfied not herself with food or with sleep, and she raised not her head from her knee. And if any one brought before her people of mirth, she used to speak thus:

Though eager troops, and fair to see,[1]
May home return, though these ye wait:
When Usna's sons came home to me,
They came with more heroic state.
With hazel mead, my Naisi stood:
And near our fire his bath I'd pour;
On Aindle's stately back the wood;
On Ardan's ox, or goodly boar.
Though sweet that goodly mead ye think
That warlike Conor drinks in hall,
I oft have known a sweeter drink,
Where leaps in foam the waterfall:
Our board was spread beneath the tree,
And Naisi raised the cooking flame:
More sweet than honey-sauced to me
Was meat, prepared from Naisi's game.
Though well your horns may music blow,
Though sweet each month your pipes may sound,
I fearless say, that well I know
A sweeter strain I oft have found.
Though horns and pipes be sounding clear,
Though Conor's mind in these rejoice,
More magic strain, more sweet, more dear
Was Usna's Children's noble voice.
Like sound of wave, rolled Naisi's bass;
We'd hear him long, so sweet he sang:
And Ardan's voice took middle place;
And clearly Aindle's tenor rang.
Now Naisi lies within his tomb:
A sorry guard his friends supplied;
His kindred poured his cup of doom,
That poisoned cup, by which he died.

Ah! Berthan dear! thy lands are fair;
Thy men are proud, though hills be stern:
Alas! to-day I rise not there
To wait for Usna's sons' return.
That firm, just mind, so loved, alas!
The dear shy youth, with touch of scorn,
I loved with him through woods to pass,
And girding in the early morn.
When bent on foes, they boded ill,
Those dear grey eyes, that maids adored;
When, spent with toil, his troops lay still,
Through Irish woods his tenor soared.
For this it is, no more I sleep;
No more my nails with pink I stain:
No joy can break the watch I keep;
For Usna's sons come not again.
For half the night no sleep I find;
No couch can me to rest beguile:
'Mid crowds of thoughts still strays my mind;
I find no time to eat or smile.
In eastern Emain's proud array
No time to joy is left for me;
For gorgeous house, and garments gay,
Nor peace, nor joy, nor rest can be.
And when Conor sought to soothe her; thus Deirdre would answer him:
Ah Conor! what of thee! I naught can do!
Lament and sorrow on my life have passed:
The ill you fashioned lives my whole life through;
A little time your love for me would last.
The man to me most fair beneath the sky,
The man I loved, in death away you tore:
The crime you did was great; for, till I die,
That face I loved I never shall see more.
That he is gone is all my sorrow still;
Before me looms the shape of Usna's son;
Though o'er his body white is yon dark hill,
There's much I'd lavish, if but him I won.
I see his cheeks, with meadow's blush they glow;

Black as a beetle, runs his eyebrows' line;
His lips are red; and, white as noble snow
I see his teeth, like pearls they seem to shine.
Well have I known the splendid garb he bears,
Oft among Alba's warriors seen of old:
A crimson mantle, such as courtier wears,
And edged with border wrought of ruddy gold.
Of silk his tunic; great its costly price;
For full one hundred pearls thereon are sewn;
Stitched with *findruine*,[2] bright with strange device,
Full fifty ounces weighed those threads alone.
Gold-hilted in his hand I see his sword;
Two spears he holds, with spear-heads grim and green;
Around his shield the yellow gold is poured,
And in its midst a silver boss is seen.
Fair Fergus ruin on us all hath brought!
We crossed the ocean, and to him gave heed:
His honour by a cup of ale was bought;
From him hath passed the fame of each high deed.
If Ulster on this plain were gathered here
Before king Conor; and those troops he'd give,
I'd lose them all, nor think the bargain dear,
If I with Naisi, Usna's son, could live.
Break not, O king, my heart to-day in me;
For soon, though young, I come my grave unto:
My grief is stronger than the strength of sea;
Thou, Conor, knowest well my word is true.

"Whom dost thou hate the most," said Conor, "of these whom thou now seest?"

"Thee thyself," she answered, "and with thee Eogan the son of Durthacht."

[1. A literal rendering of this poem will be found in the notes, p. 187.

2. Pronounced find-roony; usually translated "white bronze."]

"Then," said Conor, "thou shalt dwell with Eogan for a year;" and he gave Deirdre over into Eogan's hand.

Now upon the morrow they went away over the festal plain of Macha, and Deirdre sat behind Eogan in the chariot; and the two who were with her were the two men whom she would never willingly have seen together upon the earth, and as she looked upon them, "Ha, Deirdre," said Conor, "it is the same glance that a ewe gives when between two rams that thou sharest now between me and Eogan!"

Now there was a great rock of stone in front of them, and Deirdre struck her head upon that stone, and she shattered her head, and so she died.
This then is the tale of the exile of the sons of Usnach, and of the Exile of Fergus, and of the death of Deirdre.

THE LAMENT OF DEIRDRE OVER THE SONS OF USNACH ACCORDING TO THE GLENN MASAIN VERSION

ALSO THE CONCLUSION OF THE TALE FROM THE SAME VERSION

I GRIEVED not, Usna's sons beside;
But long, without them, lags the day:
Their royal sire no guest denied;
Three lions from Cave Hill were they.
Three dragons bred in Mona's fort
Are dead: to them from life I go;
Three chiefs who graced the Red Branch Court,
Three rocks, who broke the rush of foe.
O loved by many a British maid!
O swift as hawks round Gullion's peak!
True sons of king, who warriors swayed,
To whom bent chiefs in homage meek.
No vassal look those champions wore;
Full grief is mine that such should die!
Those sons, whom Cathbad's daughter bore;
Those props, who Cualgne's[1] war held high.
Three bears of might, to war they came;
From Oona's walls, like lions, burst;
Three hero-chiefs, who loved their fame;
Three sons, on Ulster's bosom nursed.
Twas Aife[2] reared them; 'neath her yoke
A kingdom bowed, and tribute brought;
They propped the war, when armies broke,

Those foster-sons, whom Scathach[3] taught.
The Three, who once from Bohvan's skill
All feats have learned that heroes know;
King Usna's glorious sons! 'tis ill
That these afar from me should go.
That I should live, with Naisi dead,
Let none such shame believe of me;
When Ardan's life, when Ainnle's fled,
But short my life I knew would be.
Great Ulster's king my hand had won;
I left him, Naisi's love to find;
Till Naisi's funeral rites be done,
I wait a little while behind.
This widowed life no more I'll bear;
The Three rejoiced, when toil they faced;
Where'er 'twas found, the war they'd dare,
And proffered fight with joy embraced.
A curse on Cathbad's wizard spell!
'Twas Naisi's death! and I the cause!
None came to aid that king, who well
To all the world might grant his laws.
O man, who diggest low the grave,
And from my sight my love would hide,
Make wide the tomb; its room I crave,
I come to seek my hero's side.
Great load of hardship I'd endure with joy,
If yet those heroes my companions were;
No lack of house or fire could then annoy,
No gloom I'd know with them, nor aught of care.
Ah! many a time each shield and guardian spear
To make my couch have piled those noble Three:
O labouring man, their grave who diggest here,
Their hardened swords above well set should be.
The hounds of all the Three their masters lack,
Their hawks no quarry leave, nor hear their call;
The three are dead, who battle's line held back
Who learned their skill in Conall Cernach's hall!
Their hounds I view; from out my heart that sight

Hath struck a groan; behind their leashes trail,
'Twas mine to hold them once, and keep them tight;,
Now slack they lie, and cause me thus to wail.
Oft in the desert I and they have strayed,
Yet never lonely was that desert known
For all the Three a grave to-day is made,
And here I sit, and feel indeed alone.
I gazed on Naisi's grave, and now am blind,
For naught remains to see; the worst is spent;
My soul must leave me soon, no help I find,
And they are gone, the folk of my lament.
'Twas guile that crushed them: they would save my life
And died therefor; themselves three billows strong:
Ere Usna's children fell in cruel strife,
Would I had died, and earth had held me long!
To Red-Branch Hall we made our mournful way;
Deceitful Fergus led; our lives he stole;
A soft sweet speech indeed he'd learned to say,
For me, for them was ruin near that goal.
All Ulster's pleasures now are nothing worth
I shun them all, each chief, each ancient friend;
Alone I sit, as left behind on earth,
And soon my lonely life in death shall end.
I am Deirdre, the joyless,
For short time alive,
Though to end life be evil,
'Tis worse to survive.

[1. Pronounced Kell-ny.
2. Pronounced Eefa.
3. Pronounced Ská-ha.]

And, after she had made this lament, Deirdre seated herself in the tomb, and she gave three kisses to Naisi before that he was laid in his grave; and with heaviness and grief Cuchulain went on to Dun Delga. And Cathbad the Druid laid a curse upon Emain Macha to take vengeance for that great evil, and he said that, since that treachery had been done, neither king Conor nor any other of his race should hold that burg.

And as for Fergus, the son of Rossa the Red, he came to Emain Macha on the morrow after the sons of Usnach had been slain. And, when he found that they had

been slain, and that his pledge had been dishonoured, he himself, and Cormac the Partner of Exile, king Conor's own son, also Dubhtach, the Beetle of Ulster, and the armies they had with them, gave battle to the household of Conor; and they slew Maine the son of Conor, and three hundred of Conor's people besides. And Emain Macha was destroyed, and burned by them, and Conor's women were slain, and they collected their adherents on every side; the number of their host was three thousand warriors. And they went away to the land of Connaught, even to Ailill the Great, who was the king of Connaught at that time, and to Maev of Croghan, and with them they found a welcome and support. Moreover Fergus and Cormac the Partner of Exile and their warriors, after that they had come to the land of Connaught, never let pass one single night wherein reavers went not forth from them to harry and burn the land of Ulster, so that the district which men to-day call the land of Cualgne was subdued by them; and from that in the after-time came between the two kingdoms much of trouble and theft; and in this fashion they spent seven years, or, as some say, ten years; nor was there any truce between them, no, not for one single hour.

And while those deeds were doing, Deirdre abode by Conor in his household for a whole year after the sons of Usnach had been slain. And, though it might have seemed but a small thing for her to raise her head, or to let laughter flow over her lips, yet she never did these things during all that time. And when Conor saw that neither sport nor kindness could hold her; and that neither jesting nor pleasing honour could raise her spirits, he sent word to Eogan the son of Durthacht, the lord of Fernmay;[1] as some tell the story, it was this Eogan who had slain Naisi in Emain Macha. And after that Eogan had come to the place where Conor was, Conor gave command to Deirdre that, since he himself had failed to turn her heart from her grief, she must depart to Eogan, and spend another space of time with him. And with that she was placed behind Eogan in his chariot, and Conor went also in the chariot in order to deliver Deirdre into Eogan's hand. And as they went on their way, she cast a fierce glance at Eogan in front of her, and another at Conor behind her; for there was nothing in all the world that she hated more than those two men. And when Conor saw this, as he looked at her and at Eogan, he said: "Ah Deirdre! it is the glance of a ewe when set between two rams that thou castest on me and on Eogan!" And when Deirdre heard that, she sprang up, and she made a leap out of the chariot, and she struck her head against the stony rocks that were in front of her, and she shattered her head so that the brains leapt out, and thus came to Deirdre her death.

[1. The Irish is Fernmag; written Fearnmhuidh in the late manuscript of this part of the tale.]

This is the Tree of their race, and an account of the kinships of some of the Champions of the Red Branch, which is given here before we proceed to speak of the Deeds of Cuchulain:

'Twas Cathbad first won Magach's love, and arms around her threw;
From Maelchro's loins, the Battle Chief, his princely source he drew;
Two, more in love she knew, of these the wrath was long and dread,
Fierce Rossa, named the Ruddy-Faced, and Carbre, thatched with red.
To all the three were children born, and all with beauty graced,
To Cathbad, and to Carbre Red, and Rossa Ruddy-faced;
A gracious three indeed were they to whom she gave her love,
Fair Magach, brown the lashes were that slept her eyes above.
Three sons to Rossa Ruddy-faced as children Magach bore;
To Carbre sons again she gave, the count of these was four;
And three white shoots of grace were hers, on these no shame shall fall;
To Cathbad children three she bare, and these were daughters all.
To Cathbad, who in wizard lore and all its arts had might,
Three daughters lovely Magach bore, each clothed in beauty white;
All maids who then for grace were famed in grace those maids surpassed,
And Finuchoem,[1] Ailbhe twain he named, and Deithchim named the last.
To Finnchoem, wizard Cathbad's child, was born a glorious son,
And well she nursed him, Conall wild, who every field hath won;
And Ailbhe glorious children bare in whom no fear had place,
These Ardan, Ainnle, Naisi were, who came of Usnach's race.
A son to Deithchim fair was born, a bright-cheeked mother she;
She bore but one: Cuchulain of Dun Delga's hold was he:
Of those whom Cathbad's daughters reared the names full well ye know,
And none of these a wound hath feared, or therefore shunned a foe.
The sons of Usnach, who like shields their friends protected well,
By might of hosts on battle-field to death were borne, and fell;
And each was white of skin, and each his friends in love would hold,
Now naught remains for song to teach, the Third of Griefs is told.

[1. Pronounced Finn-hoom, Ail-vy, and Die-himm.]

THE COMBAT AT THE FORD

INTRODUCTION

THIS version of the "Combat at the Ford," the best-known episode of the Irish romance or romantic epic, the "War of Cualnge," will hardly be, by Irish scholars, considered to want a reference. It is given in the Book of Leinster, which cannot have been written later than 1150 A.D., and differs in many respects from the version in the fourteenth-century Book of Lecan, which is, for the purposes of this text, at least equal in authority to the Leabbar na h-Uidhri, which must have been written before 1100 A.D. Mr. Alfred Nutt has kindly contributed a note on the comparison of the two versions, which has) been placed as a special note at the end of the translation of the "Combat." To this note may be added the remark that the whole of the Leabhar na h-Uidhri version of the "War of Cualnge" seems, to be subject to the same criticisms that have to be passed on the "Sickbed" and the "Courtship of Etain" in the same volume, viz. that it is a compilation from two or three different versions of the same story, and is not a connected and consistent romance, which the version in the Book of Leinster appears to be. As an illustration of this, the appearance of Conall Cernach as on the side of Connaught in the early part of the L.U. version may be mentioned; he is never so represented in other versions of the "War." In the description of the array of Ulster at the end of L.U., he is noted as being expected to be with the Ulster army but as absent (following in this the Book of Leinster, but not a later manuscript which agrees with the Book of Leinster in the main); then at the end of the L.U. version Conall again appears in the Connaught army and saves Conor from Fergus, taking the place of Cormac in the Book of Leinster version. Miss Faraday, in her version of the "War" as given in L.U., notes the change of style at page 82 of her book. Several difficulties similar to that of the position of Conall could be mentioned; and on the whole it seems as if the compiler of the manuscript from which both the Leabhar na h-Uidhri and the Yellow Book of Lecan were copied, combined into one several different descriptions of the "War," one of which is represented by the Book of Leinster version.

This version shows no signs of patchwork, at any rate in the story of the "Combat at the Ford;" which has, ever since it was reintroduced to the world by O'Curry, been renowned for the chivalry of its action. It forms one of the books of Aubrey de Vere's "Foray of Queen Meave," and is there well reproduced, although with several additions; perhaps sufficient attention has not. been paid to the lofty position

of the character, as distinguished from the prowess, that this version gives to Cuchulain. The first verse, put in Cuchulain's mouth, strikes a new note, contrasting alike with the muddle-headed bargaining of Ferdia and Maev, and the somewhat fussy anxiety of Fergus. The contrast between the way in which Cuchulain receives Fergus's report of the valour of Ferdia, and that in which Ferdia receives the praises of Cuchulain from his charioteer, is well worked out; Cuchulain, conscious of his own strength, accepts all Fergus's praises of his opponent and adds to them; Ferdia cannot bear to hear of Cuchulain's valour, and charges his servant with taking a bribe from his enemy in order to frighten him. Ferdia boasts loudly of what he will do, Cuchulain apologises for his own confidence in the issue of the combat, and gently banters Fergus, who is a bit of a boaster himself, on the care he had taken to choose the time for the war when king Conor was away, with a modest implication that he himself was a poor substitute for the king. Cuchulain's first two stanzas in the opening dialogue between himself and Ferdia show a spirit quite as truculent as that of his opponent; the reason of this being, as indicated in the first of these stanzas and more explicitly stated in the preceding prose, that his anxiety for his country is outweighing his feeling for his friend; but in the third stanza he resumes the attitude of conscious strength that marks all his answers to Fergus; and this, added to a feeling of pity for his friend's inevitable fate, is maintained up to the end of the tale. In the fourth stanza, which is an answer to a most insulting speech from Ferdia, he makes the first of those appeals to his former friend to abandon his purpose that come from him throughout the first three days of the fight; even in the fatal battle of the fourth day, he will not at first put forward all his strength, and only uses the irresistible Gae-Bulg when driven to it by his foe. The number of Cuchulain's laments after the battle—there are five of these (one in prose), besides his answers to Laeg—has been adversely criticised; and it is just possible that one or more of these come from some other version, and have been incorporated by a later hand than that of the author; but the only one that seems to me not to develop the interest is the "brooch of gold," which it may be noticed is very like the only lament which is preserved in the Book of Lecan text of the L.U. version. Cuchulain's allusion to Aife's only son in the first verse lament is especially noticeable (see note, p. 196).

Ferdia's character, although everywhere inferior to that of his victor, is also a heroic one; he is represented at the commencement of the episode as undertaking the fight for fear of disgrace if he refused; and this does appear to be represented throughout as the true reason; his early boasts and taunts are obviously intended to conquer a secret uneasiness, and the *motif* of a passion for Finnabar with which Cuchulain charges him hardly appears outside Cuchulain's speeches, and has not

the importance given to it in the Leabhar na h-Uidhri version. The *motif* of resentment against Cuchulain for a fancied insult, invented by Maev, which is given in the L.U. version as the determining cause, does not appear in the Leinster version at all; and that of race enmity of the Firbolg against the Celt, given to him by Aubrey de Vere, is quite a. modern idea and is in none of the old versions. His dialogue with Maev suggests that, as stated in the text, he was then slightly intoxicated; his savage language to his servant gives the idea of a man who feels himself in the wrong and makes himself out to be worse than he is by attributing to himself the worst motives, the hope of pay; but as the battle proceeds he shows himself equal to Cuchulain in generosity, and in the dialogue at the beginning of the third day's fight his higher character comes out, for while his old boastfulness appears in one passage of it, and is immediately repressed, the language of both heroes in this dialogue is noticeable for a true spirit of chivalry. The mutual compliments, "thy kingly might," "fair graceful Hound" "gently ruling Hound" recall the French "Beausire"; it may be also noted that these compliments are paid even when Ferdia is protesting against Cuchulain's reproaches; similar language is used elsewhere, as "much thine arms excel" (page 122), and "Cuchulain for beautiful feats renowned" (page 134). It may be considered that these passages are an indication that the episode is late, but it should be noticed that the very latest date that can possibly be assigned to it, the eleventh century, precedes that of all other known romances of chivalry by at least a hundred years. To this later attitude of Ferdia, and to that maintained by Cuchulain throughout the whole episode, nothing in French or Welsh romance of approximately so early a date can be compared. Is it not possible that the chivalric tone of the later Welsh romances, like the "Lady of the Fountain," which is generally supposed to have come from France, really came from an Irish model? and that this tone, together with the Arthurian Saga, passed to the Continent?

A great contrast to both the two heroes is afforded by the introduction of Laeg with his cries of exultation, which come between the dying groans of Ferdia and the fine prose lament of Cuchulain, increasing the effect of both. Laeg seems quite unable to see his master's point of view, and he serves as a foil for Ferdia, just as the latter's inferiority increases the character of Cuchulain. The consistency of the whole, and the way in which our sympathy is awakened for Ferdia contrast with the somewhat disconnected character of the L.U. version, which as it stands gives a

poor idea of the defeated champion; although, as Mr. Nutt suggests, the lost part may have improved this idea, and the version has beauties of its own.

For the convenience of those readers who may be unacquainted with the story of the war, the following short introduction is given:—

At a time given by the oldest Irish annalists as A.D. 29, the War of Cualnge was undertaken by Maev, queen of Connaught, against the kingdom or province of Ulster. Gathering together men from all the other four provinces of Ireland, Maev marched against Ulster, the leaders of her army being herself, her husband Ailill, and Fergus the son of Róg, an exile from Ulster, and formerly, according to one account, king of that province. Not only had Maev great superiority in force, but the time she Ed chosen for the war was when Conor, king of Ulster, and with him nearly all his principal warriors, were on their sick-bed in accordance with a curse that had fallen on them in return for a cruel deed that he and his people had done. One hero however, Cuchulain, the greatest of the Ulster heroes, was unaffected by this curse; and he, with only a few followers, but with supernatural aid from demi-gods of whose race he came, had caused much loss to the queen and her army, so that Maev finally made this compact: she was each day to provide a champion to oppose Cuchulain, and was to be permitted to advance so long as that combat lasted; if her champion was killed, she was to halt her army until the next morning. Before the Combat at the Ford between Cuchulain and Ferdia, Cuchulain had killed many of Maev's champions in duel, and the epic romance of the "War of Cualnge" gives the full story of these combats and of the end of the war. The episode given in the following pages commences at the camp of Queen Maev, where her chiefs are discussing who is to be their champion against Cuchulain on the following day.

THE COMBAT AT THE FORD

AN EPISODE OF THE CATTLE SPOIL OF CUALNGE IN THE BOOK OF LEINSTER VERSION

AT that time debate was held among the men of Ireland who should be the man to go early in the morning of the following day to make combat and fight with Cuchulain. And all agreed that Ferdia, the son of Daman, the son of Dire, was the man who should go; even the great and valiant champion of the men of Irross Donnand, for the manner in which he fought and did battle was like to the manner of Cuchulain. They had got their skill in arms, and valour, and bravery from the same teachers, from Scáthach, from Uathach, and from Aife[1]; nor had either of them advantage over the other except that Cuchulain alone could perform the feat of the Gae-bulg. Yet Ferdia was fenced by a horny skin-protecting armour, and this should guard him when he faced a hero in battle and combat at the Ford. So to Ferdia were sent messengers and heralds; but Ferdia denied the heralds, and he refused to depart with them, for well he knew why it was he was called; even to fight against his own friend, his comrade and fellow-pupil Cuchulain; and for that cause he came not with the heralds who were sent.

[1. Pronounced Scáha, Ooha, and Eefa: Scáha and Ooha end with a slight guttural like the ch in the Scotch lock, difficult to express in English.]

And then did Maev send to Ferdia Druids, and satirists and revilers, in order that against him should be made three crushing reproaches, and three satires; that the stains of shame, and of blemish, and of disgrace should be raised on his face; so that even if he died not at once, death should be his within the space of nine days if he went with them not. And for the sake of his honour, Ferdia came at their call; for to him it was better to fall before the shafts of valour, of bravery, and of daring than by the stings of satire, of abuse, and of reproach. And he, when he arrived, was received with all worship and service, and was served with pleasant, sweet intoxicating liquor, so that his brain reeled, and he became gently merry. And these were the great rewards that were promised to him if he consented to make that combat and fight: a chariot of the value of four times seven cumals, and the equipment of twelve men with garments of all colours, and the length and breadth

of his own territory on the choice part of the plains of Maw Ay; free of tribute, without purchase, free from the incidents of attendance at courts and of military service, that therein his son, and his grandson, and all his descendants might dwell in safety to the end of life and time; also Finnabar the daughter of Maev as his wedded wife, and the golden brooch which was in the cloak of Queen Maev in addition to all this. And thus ran the speech of Maev, and she spake these words, and thus did Ferdia reply:

Maev

Of rings great treasure sending,[1]
Wide plains and woodlands bending
I grant: till time hath ending
I free thy tribe and kin.
O thou who oft o'ercamest!
'Tis thine what gift thou namest!
Why hold'st thou back, nor claimest
A boon that all would win?

Ferdia

A bond must hold thee tightly,
No force I lend thee lightly;
Dread strife 'twill be; for rightly
He bears that name of "Hound."
For sharp spear-combat breaketh
That morn; hard toil it waketh
The war Cuchulain maketh
Shall fearless war be found.

Maev

Our chiefs, with oaths the gravest,
Shall give the pledge thou cravest;
For thee, of all men bravest,
Brave bridled steeds shall stand.
From tax my word hath freed thee,
To hostings none shall lead thee,
As bosom friend I need thee,
As first in all the land.

Ferdia

Mere words are naught availing
If oaths to bind be failing;
That wondrous Ford-Fight hailing,

All time its tale shall greet:
Though sun, moon, sea for ever
And earth from me I sever;
Though death I win—yet never,
Unpledged, that war I'll meet.
Maev
These kings and chiefs behind me
Their oaths shall pledge to bind me:
With boundless wealth thou'lt find me,
With wealth too great to pay.
'Tis thou who oaths delayest;
'Tis done whate'er thou sayest;
For well I know thou slayest
The foe who comes to slay.
Ferdia
Ere thou to slaughter lure me,
Six champions' oaths procure me;
Till these rewards assure me
I meet, for thee, no foe:
If six thou grant as gages,
I'll face the war he wages,
And where Cuchulain rages,
A lesser chief, I go.
Maev
In chariots Donnal raceth,
Fierce strife wild Neeman faceth,
Their halls the bards' song graceth,
Yet these in troth I bind.
Firm pledge Morand is making,
None Carpri Min knew breaking
His troth: thine oath he's taking;
Two sons to pledge I find.
Ferdia
Much poison, Maev, inflameth
Thy heart; no smile thee tameth
But well the land thee nameth
Proud queen of Croghan's hold;
Thy power no man can measure;

'Tis I will do thy pleasure;
Now send thy silken treasure,
Thy silver gifts, and gold.
Maev
This brooch, as champion's token,
I give of troth unbroken;
All words my lips have spoken
Performed shall Sunday see.
Thou glorious chief, who darest
This fight, I give thee rarest
Of gifts on earth, and fairest,
Yea greater meed shall be.
For Findabar my daughter;
All Elgga's chiefs have sought her;
When thou that Hound shalt slaughter,
I give in love to thee.

[1. The metre of this dialogue and rhyme-system are taken from the Irish but one syllable has been added to each line. The exact Irish metre is that given on page 129.]

And then did Maev bind Ferdia in an easy task; that on the next day he was to come to combat and fight with six of her champions, or to make duel against Cuchulain; whichever of the two he should think the easier. And Ferdia on his side bound her by a condition that seemed to him easy for her to fulfil: even that she should lay it upon those same six champions to see to it that all those things she had promised to him should be fulfilled, in case Cuchulain should meet death at Ferdia's hand.

Thereupon Fergus caused men to harness for him his horses, and his chariot was yoked, and he went to that place where Cuchulain was that he might tell him what had passed, and Cuchulain bade him welcome. I am rejoiced at your coming, O my good friend Fergus," said Cuchulain. And I gladly accept thy welcome, O my pupil," said Fergus. But I have now come hither in order to tell thee who that man is who comes to combat and fight with thee early on the morning of the day which is at hand." "We shall give all heed to thy words," said Cuchulain. "'Tis thine own friend," said Fergus, "thy companion, and thy fellow pupil; thine equal in feats and in deeds and in valour: even Ferdia, the son of Daman, the son of Daré, the great and valiant champion of the men of Irross Donnan." "Truly," said Cuchulain, "I make mine oath to thee that I am sorry that my friend should come to such a duel." "Therefore," said Fergus, "it behoves thee to be wary and prepared, for

unlike to all those men who have come to combat and fight with thee upon the Tain be Cuailgne is Ferdia, the son of Daman, the son of Daré." "I have stood here," said Cuchulain, "detaining and delaying the men of the four great provinces of Ireland since the first Monday in Samhain (November) till the beginning of the spring, and not one foot have I gone back before any one man during all that time, nor shall I, as I trust, yield before him." And in this manner did Fergus continue to put him on his guard, and these were the words that he spoke, and thus did Cuchulain reply:

Fergus

Rise, Cuchulain! foes are near,[1]
All their covenant is clear;
Daman's ruddy son in rage
Comes the war with thee to wage.

Cuchulain

Here I stand, whose valiant toil
Erin's bands held back from spoil;
Never a foot of ground they won,
Never a foe they found me shun.

Fergus

Fierce is he in rage; his trust
In his blade's deep searching thrust:
Plates of horn protect his side,
Pierced by none his strength who tried.

Cuchulain

Fergus, much thine arms excel;
Cease, this tale no longer tell
Land is none, nor battle-field
Where to his my strength must yield.

Fergus

He is fierce, with scores can fight,
Spear nor sword can on him bite;
From that strength, a hundred's match,
Hard 'twill be the prize to snatch.

Cuchulain

Yea! Ferdia's power I know;
How from foughten field we go;
How was fought our piercing war,
Bards shall tell to ages far.

Fergus
Loss of much I'd little mourn
Could I hear how, eastward borne,
Great Cuchulain's bloody blade
Proud Ferdia's spoils displayed.
Cuchulain
Though in boasts I count me weak,
Hear me now as braggart speak:
Daman's son, of Darry's race,
Soon shall I, his victor, face.
Fergus
Brought by me, hosts eastward came,
Ulster sought to hurt my fame;
Here have come, to ease my grief,
Many a champion, many a chief.
Cuchulain
Sickness Conor's might withheld,
Else his sight thy host had quelled;
Less the shouts of joy had been,
Raised by Maev, Maw Scayl's high queen.
Fergus
Greater deeds than done by me
O Cuchulain! thine shall be:
Daman's son thy battle nears;
Hear thy friend! keep hard thy spears.

[1. The metre is that of the Irish; a literal rendering of the whole dialogue is given in the notes, p. 191.]

Then Fergus returned to where the army was encamped: Ferdia, also went from Maev and came to his own tent; and there he found his followers, and he told them how he had been bound to Maev as in an easy task, that he was on the morrow to combat and fight with six of her champions, or to make duel with Cuchulain, whichever of the two he might think the easier. Also he told them how she had been bound by a condition that was easy for her to grant: that she should lay it on these same six champions to see that her promises to him of rewards should be fulfilled in case Cuchulain met his death at Ferdia's hand.

There was no cheerfulness, or happiness, or even melancholy pleasure among the inmates of Ferdia's camp that night: they were all cheerless, and sorrowful, and low in spirit; for they knew that whenever those two champions, those two slayers

of hundreds met, one of the two must fall in that place, or that both of them should fall: and if one only was to fall they were sure that that one would be their own master; for it was not easy for any man to combat and fight with Cuchulain on the Tain bo Cuailnge.

Now the first part of that night Ferdia slept very heavily, and when the middle of the night had come his sleep had left him, and the dizziness of his brain has passed away, and care for the combat and the fight pressed heavily upon him. Then he called for his charioteer to harness his horses, and to yoke his chariot; and the charioteer began to rebuke him, if haply he might turn him from his purpose. "It would be better for thee to stay!" said the charioteer. "Be thou silent, O my servant!" said Ferdia, and he then spoke the words that follow, and thus did his servant reply to him:—

Ferdia

'Tis a challenge provoking
To war, and I go
Where the ravens' hoarse croaking
Shall rise for my foe:
With Cuchulain still seeking
The strife at yon ford;
Till his strong body, reeking,
Be pierced by my sword!

Servant

Nay, thy threats show no meekness;
Yet here thou should'st stay;
For on thee shall come weakness,
Woe waits on thy way:
For by Ulster's Rock broken
This battle may be,
And it long shall be spoken
How ill 'twas to thee.

Ferdia

An ill word art thou saying;
It fits not our race
That a champion, delaying
From fight, should thee grace.
Then thy speech, my friend, fetter,
No foe will we fear;
But, since valour is better,

His challenge we near.

Then Ferdia's horses were harnessed for him, and his chariot was yoked, and he came forward to the ford of battle; but when he had come there he found that the full light of the day had not yet dawned, and "O my servant!" said Ferdia, "spread out for me the cushions and skins that are upon my chariot, that I may rest upon them till I take the deep repose of refreshing sleep, for during the latter part of this night have I taken no rest, on account of the care that I had for this combat and fight." And the servant unharnessed his horses, and he placed together the cushions and the skins that were upon the chariot, so that Ferdia might rest upon them, and he sank into the deep repose of refreshing sleep.

Now in this place I will tell of the acts of Cuchulain. He rose not at all from his couch until the full light of the day; and this he did in order that the men of Ireland should not be able to say that it was from fear or from dread that he rose, if it had been early that he had arisen. And when the full daylight had come, he commanded his charioteer to harness for him his horses, and to yoke his chariot: "O my servant!" said Cuchulain, "harness for us our horses, and put the yoke to our chariot, for early rises the champion who cometh to meet us this day: even Ferdia, the son of Daman, the son of Daré." "The horses are harnessed," said the charioteer, "and the chariot is yoked; step thou into it, for it will bring no shame on thy valour." Then did Cuchulain, the fighter of battles, the skilful in feats, the winner of victory, that red-sworded hero, the son of Sualtam, leap into his chariot. All around him screamed the Bocánachs, and the Banánachs, and the wild people of the glens, and the demons of the air; for it was the custom of the people of the wizard race of Danu to raise their cries about him in every battle, on every stricken field, in every duel, and in every fight to which he went, that thereby in such fight the hatred, and the fear, and the avoidance, and the terror that men felt for him should be increased. In no short time the charioteer of Ferdia heard the roar of Cuchulain's approach; the clamour, and the hissing, and the tramp; and the thunder, and the clatter, and the buzz: for he heard the shields that were used as missiles clank together as they touched; and he heard the spears hiss, and the swords clash, and the helmet tinkle, and the armour ring; and the arms sawed one against the other, and the javelins swung, and the ropes strained, and the wheels of the chariot clattered, and the chariot creaked, and the hoofs of the horses trampled on the ground as that warrior and champion came forward in triumph to the ford, and approached him.

Then that servant of Ferdia arose, and he placed his hand upon his lord: "Arise now, O Ferdia!" said the servant, "for here they come towards thee, even to the Ford;" and this was the speech of the driver of the chariot of Ferdia as he stood before him:

Lo! a chariot yoked with silver, creaking loud, draws nigh;[1]
O'er the chariot-wheels a man his perfect form rears high:
The warlike car
Rolls on from far
Braeg Ross, from Braina's bounds;
Past that burg they ride whose wooded side the roadway rounds;
For its triumphs high in triumph cry its song resounds.
Urged by hero-Hound, and yoked by charioteer's hand true,
Flies the war-car southward ever; nobler hawk ne'er flew
Than he who speeds
His rushing steeds,
That chief of stubborn might;
Soon the blood to flow from slaughtered foe shall meet his sight;
Sure for us 'tis ill, for soon with skill he gives us fight.
Woe to him who here on hillock stands, that Hound to wait;
Emain Macha's perfect Hound is he, foretold by fate:
Last year I cried
That him I spied
Who guards his land from foe:
That battle-Hound, on whom are found all hues to glow:
'Twas then from far I heard that car: its sound I know.

[1. For a literal translation of the above poem and another rendering, see the notes.]

"O my servant!" said Ferdia, "wherefore is it: that thou hast continued in thy praise of this man ever since the time that I left my tent? surely it must be a reward that thou seekest at his hand, so greatly dost thou extol him; yet Ailill and Maev have foretold that it is by me he shall fall. Certain it is that for sake of the fee I shall gain he shall be slain quickly; and 'tis full time that the relief that we wait for should come." Thus then it was that in that place he spoke these words, and thus did his servant reply:

Ferdia

'Tis time that I grant my assistance!
Be still: let thy praise of him sink:
Peer not, like a seer, at the distance;
Wilt fail me on battle-field's brink?
Though Cualgne's proud champion, displaying
His gambols and pride thou dost see;
Full soon shalt thou witness his slaying

For price to be paid down to me.
Servant
If he who this glory is showing
Be champion of Cualgne indeed;
'Tis not in retreat he is going;
To meet us he cometh with speed:
He comes, nor 'tis slowly he blunders,
Like wind his swift journey he makes;
As stream, from the cliff-top that thunders;
As bolt, from the storm-cloud that breaks.
Ferdia
'Tis pay at his hand thou hast taken,
So loudly resoundeth thy praise;
Else why, since our tent was forsaken,
Hast sung with such frequence thy lays?
Men, like thou, who, when foes are appearing,
Would to chant the foe's praises begin,
Will attack not, when battle is nearing,
But the name of base cowards shall win.

Now the charioteer of Ferdia was not long in that place before he saw a marvellous sight; for before his eyes came the beautiful five-pointed, four-peaked chariot, skilfully driven with swiftness and power. A canopy of green overspread it; thin and well-seasoned was the body of it; lofty and long were the spears that adorned it; well was it fashioned for war. Under the yokes of that chariot sped forward with great bounds two great-eared, savage, and prancing steeds; bellies had they like whales, broad were their chests, and quick-panting their hearts; their flanks were high, and their hoofs wide; their pasterns fine, their loins broad, and their spirits untamable. The horse under one of the yokes was grey, with a long mane and with broad hind quarters; swiftly he galloped, and his leaps were great; the horse beneath the other yoke was black, his mane was in tufts, his back was broad, and eager was his pace. As a hawk, on a day when the wind bloweth hard, darts up from the furrow; as the gusts of the wind in spring sweep forward over a smooth plain upon a day in March; swift as a going stag at the beginning of the chase, after he hath been roused by the cry of the hounds; such was the pace of the two steeds that bore forward Cuchulain and his chariot, touching upon the soil as rapidly as if the stones that they trod on were hot with the fire, so that the whole earth trembled and shook at the violence of their going. And Cuchulain reached the ford, and Ferdia

awaited him on the south side of it, and Cuchulain halted his horses upon the north.

Then did Ferdia bid welcome to Cuchulain: “O Cuchulain!” said Ferdia, I rejoice to see thine approach.” “Thy welcome would have been received by me upon an earlier day,” said Cuchulain, “but this day I cannot receive it as one from a friend. And Ferdia,” said he, “it were more suitable that it was I who bade welcome to thee rather than that thou shouldest welcome me; for out in flight before thee are my women, and my children; my youths, and my steeds, and my mares; my flocks, and my herds, and my cattle.” “Ah, Cuchulain!” said Ferdia, “how hast thou been persuaded to come to this fight and this battle at all? For when we were with Scáthach, with Uathach, and with Aife, thou wert mine attendant; thine was the office to whet my spears, and to make ready my couch.” “’Tis true indeed,” said Cuchulain, “but it was then as thy younger in years and in standing that it was my custom to perform this office for thee; and that is not my quality to-day; for now there is not in all the world any champion with whom I would refuse to fight.” And then each of them reproached the other bitterly with breach of friendship, and there Ferdia spoke the words which here follow, and thus did Cuchulain reply:

Ferdia

Hound! why hither faring,[1]
Strife with strong ones daring?
As if home were flaring,
Woe shall come on thee!
Blood from out thee draining
Shall thy steeds be staining;
Thou, thy home if gaining,
Wounded sore shalt be.

Cuchulain

Hot with indignation,
Take I battle-station,
Face yon warrior nation,
Round their warlike king:
They shall see me meet thee,
Count the strifes that greet thee,
Watch, as down I beat thee,
Drowning, suffering.

Ferdia

Here is one to shame thee;
How ’twas I o’ercame thee,

They who champion name thee
Long the tale shall tell.
Ulster, near thee lying,
Soon shall see thee dying;
All shall say, with sighing,
Theirs the chief who fell.
Cuchulain
Thine shall be the choosing;
Say, what warfare using
Hosts shall see thee losing
At the Ford this fight?
Swords dost choose, hard-clashing
Cars, in conflict crashing?
Spears, thy life-blood splashing?
'Tis thy death in sight.
Ferdia
Ere the twilight gleameth,
Red thy life-blood streameth:
Small thy stature seemeth,
Like a cliff thy foe.
Ulster's hosts who prated,
And thy pride inflated;
Through them feel thy hated
Spectre sadly go.
Cuchulain
Down a chasm appalling
Thou to death art falling;
One thy foe: yet galling
Weapons press thee sore.
Proud thou wert but lately,
Strife shall change thee greatly,
Thee as champion stately
Earth shall know no more.
Ferdia
Cease this endless vaunting,
Speech for ever flaunting,
Thou a chief! a taunting,
Giggling child thou art.

None would pay, or fee thee,
I as coward see thee;
Strength hast none to free thee,
Caged bird! quaking heart!
Cuchulain
Ah! in bygone story
We, as peers in glory,
Sports and combats gory
Shared when Scáha taught:
Thou, of all who nearest
To my soul appearest!
Clansman! kinsman dearest!
Woe thy fate hath brought!
Ferdia
Naught this strife avails thee,
Glory fades, and fails thee;
Cock-crow loudly hails thee,
High on stake thy head!
Cualgne's[2] Hound, Cuchulain!
Faults thy soul bear rule in:
Thee to bitter schooling
Frantic grief hath led.

"O my friend Ferdia!" said Cuchulain, "it was not right for thee to have come to the combat and the fight with me, at the instigation and the meddling of Ailill and Maev: none of those who came before thee have gained for themselves victory or success, and they all fell at my hand; neither shalt thou win victory or success from this battle, by me shalt thou fall." And it was in this manner that he was speaking, and he recited these words, and Ferdia hearkened to him:

Come not near, thou powerful man![3]
O Ferdia mac Daman:
Worst of woe on thee is hurled,
Though thy fate shall grieve the world.
Come not near, nor right forget
In my hand thy fate is set:
Those recall, whom late I fought,
Hath their fall no wisdom taught?
Thou for gifts wert passed in sale,
Purple sash, firm coat of mail;

Never maid, O Daman's son!
In this war of thine is won.
Findabar, Maev's lovely child,
With her form thy sense beguiled:
Brightly though her beauty glows,
She no love on thee bestows.
Wouldst thou win the prize they bring,
Findabar, the child of king?
Many ere now that maid could cheat
Here, like thee, their wounds to meet.
Thou hast sworn, and plighted. troth,
Ne'er to fight me: keep thine oath:
Friendship's tie thee firm should hold,
Come not nigh me, champion bold.
Fifty chiefs, who sought that maid,
Fought me, fell, in earth are laid;
Well I know that tempting bait,
All have found, and earned their fate.
Ferbay fell, though bold his boast,
Him obeyed a valiant host;
Quickly here his rage I stilled;
Cast my spear but once, and killed.
Cruel fate Srub Darry slew,
Tales of hundred dames he knew;
Great his fame in days of yore;
Silver none, 'twas gold he wore.
Though that maid, whom Erin's best
Hope to gain, my heart would charm;
South and north, and east and west
I would keep thee safe from harm.

[1. The metre is that of the Irish.

2. Pronounced Kell-ny.

3. The metre is that of the Irish.]

"And, O my friend Ferdia!" said Cuchulain "this is the cause why it was not thy part to come here to the combat and the fight with me. It is because that when with Scáthach, with Uathach, and with Aife we abode, it was the custom with us that together we should go to every battle, and to every field of battle; to every fight and to every skirmish; to every forest and to all wildernesses; to all things dark and

difficult." These were the words of his speech, and it was in that place that he recited these staves:

Tuned our hearts were beating,
We, where chiefs were meeting,
Brotherly went: when slumbering
One was our couch: we sought
Fierce fights, and fought.
Oft in woods that are far away
Joined we stood in our skilful play;
Scáthach our feats had taught.

And Ferdia replied to him thus:

O Cuchulain! for beautiful feats renowned,
Though together we learned our skill;
Though thou tellest of friendship that once we found,
From me shall come first thine ill;
Ah, recall not the time of our friendship's day:
It shall profit thee nothing, O Hound, I say.

"For too long now have we thus waited," said Ferdia; "tell me now O Cuchulain! to what weapons shall we resort?" "Thou hast the choice of the weapons till the night," said Cuchulain, "because thou wert the first to reach the Ford." "Hast thou any remembrance," said Ferdia, "of the weapons for casting, that we were accustomed to practise the use of when we were with Scáthach, with Uathach, and with Aife?" "I do indeed remember them," said Cuchulain." "If thou rememberest them, let us resort to them now," said Ferdia. Then they resorted to their weapons used for the casting. They took up two shields for defence, with devices emblazoned upon them, and their eight shields with sharp edges such that they could hurl, and their eight javelins, and their eight ivory-hilted dirks, and their eight little darts for the fight. To and fro from one to the other, like bees upon a sunny day, flew the weapons, and there was no cast that they threw that did not hit. Each of them then continued to shoot at the other with their weapons for casting, from the dawn of the morning to the full middle of the day, until all of their weapons had been blunted against the faces and the bosses of their shields; and although their casting was most excellent, yet so good was the defence that neither of them wounded the other nor drew the other's blood during all that time. "Cease now from these feats, O Cuchulain!" said Ferdia, "for it is not by means of these that the struggle between us shall come." "Let us cease indeed," said Cuchulain, "if the time for ceasing hath arrived." And they ceased from their casting, and they threw the weapons they had used for it into the hands of their charioteers.

"To what weapons shall we next resort, O Cuchulain?" said Ferdia,
"Thou hast the choice of weapons until the night," said Cuchulain, "because thou wert the first to reach the Ford." "Then," said Ferdia, "let us turn to our straight, well-trimmed, hard, and polished casting-spears with tough cords of flax upon them." "Let us do so indeed," said Cuchulain. Then they took two stout shields of defence, and they turned to their straight, well-trimmed, hard, and polished casting-spears with the tough cords of flax upon them, and each of them continued to hurl his spears at the other from the middle of midday until the ninth hour of the evening: and though the defence was most excellent that each of them made, yet so good was the casting of the spears that each of them wounded the other at that time, and drew red blood from him. "Let us desist from this now, O Cuchulain!" said Ferdia. "Let us desist indeed," said Cuchulain, "if the time has come."
They ceased, and they threw away their weapons into their charioteers' hands; and each of them at the end of that fight sought the other, and each threw his arms about the other's neck, and gave him three kisses. Their horses were in the same paddock that night, the men who had driven their chariots sat by the same fire, moreover the charioteers of both those warriors spread couches of fresh rushes for the two, and supplied them with such pillows as are needed by wounded men. And such folk as can heal and cure came to heal and to cure them, and they applied soothing and salving herbs and plants to their bruises, and their cuts, and their gashes, and to all their many wounds. And of every soothing and salving herb and plant that was brought for the bruises, the cuts, and the gashes, and all the wounds of Cuchulain, he used to send an equal portion westward across the ford to Ferdia, so that in case Ferdia fell at his hand the men of Ireland should not be able to say that it was owing to superiority in leech-craft that he had done it. And of each kind of food, and of pleasant, palatable, intoxicating drink that the men of Ireland brought to Ferdia, he would send a fair half northward across the ford to Cuchulain; for the men who provided food for Ferdia were more in number than they who provided food for Cuchulain. All the army of the men of Ireland helped to provide Ferdia with food, because he was their champion to defend them against Cuchulain; yet to Cuchulain also food was brought by the people who dwell in the Breg. And it was the custom with these that they came to converse with him at the dusk of each night.
Thus they remained that night, but early in the morning they arose, and repaired to the Ford of Combat. "What weapons shall we turn to to-day, O Ferdia?" said Cuchulain. "Thou hast the choice of weapons until the night," answered Ferdia, "because it is I who had my choice of them in the day that is past." "Let us then," said Cuchulain, "resort to our great, broad-bladed, heavy spears this day, for nearer

shall we be to our battle by the thrusting of our spears this day than we were by the throwing weapons of yesterday: let our horses be harnessed for us, and our chariots yoked, that upon this day from our chariots and our horses we may fight." "Let us turn to these indeed," said Ferdia. They then took to them two exceedingly stout, broad shields, and they resorted to their great, broad-bladed, heavy spears that day. And each of them continued to thrust at, and to pierce through, and to redden, and to tear the body of the other from the dawn of the morning until the ninth hour of the evening; and if it were the custom for birds in their flight to pass through the bodies of men, they could have passed through the bodies of those warriors that day, carrying with them pieces of their flesh from their wounds into the clouds and to the sky around them. So when the ninth hour of the evening was come, the horses were weary, and the charioteers were weak; and they themselves, champions and heroes of valour as they were, had themselves become weary; and "Let us cease now from this, O Ferdia!" said Cuchulain, "for our horses are weary, and our charioteers are weak; and now that these are weary, why should not we be weary too?" and then it was that he sang this stave:

Not like Fomorians, men of the sea,
Stubborn, unending our struggle should be;
Now that the clamour of combat must cease,
Quarrels forget, and between us be peace.

Let us cease now indeed," said Ferdia, "if the time for it hath come." They ceased, and they threw away their weapons into their charioteers' hands, and each of them at the end of that fight sought the other, and each threw his arms about the other's neck, and gave him three kisses. Their horses were in the same paddock that night, the men who had driven their chariots sat by the same fire, moreover the charioteers of both those warriors spread couches of fresh rushes for the two, and supplied them with such pillows as are needed by wounded men. And such folk as can heal and cure came to examine into their wounds and to tend them that night, for they could do nothing more for them, so severe and so deadly were the stabs and the thrusts, and the gashes of the many wounds that they had, than to apply to them spells and incantations and charms, in order to staunch their blood, and their bleeding mortal wounds. And for every spell and incantation and charm that was applied to the stabs and the wounds of Cuchulain, he sent a full half westward across the ford to Ferdia; and of each kind of food, and of pleasant, palatable, intoxicating drink that the men of Ireland brought to Ferdia, he sent a half across the ford to Cuchulain, in the north. For the men who brought food to Ferdia were more in number than they who brought food to Cuchulain, for all the army of the men of Ireland helped to provide Ferdia with food, because he was their champion to defend them against

Cuchulain; yet to Cuchulain also food was brought by the people who dwell in the Breg. And it was the custom with these that they came to converse with him at the dusk of each night.

Thus they rested that night: but early in the morning they arose, and repaired to the Ford of Combat; and Cuchulain saw that an evil look and a lowering cloud was on the face of Ferdia that day. “Ill dost thou appear to me to-day, O Ferdia!” said Cuchulain. “Thy hair hath been darkened to-day, and thine eye hath been dimmed, and the form and the features and the visage that thou art wont to have are gone from thee.” “’Tis from no fear or from terror of thee that I am what I am to-day,” said Ferdia, “for there is not in Ireland to-day a champion that I am not able to subdue.” And Cuchulain complained and lamented, and he spoke the words that follow, and thus did Ferdia reply:

Cuchulain

Is’t indeed Ferdia’s face?[1]
Sure his meed is dire disgrace;
He, to war by woman led,
Comes his comrade’s blood to shed.

Ferdia

Thou who warrior art indeed,
Champion tried! who wounds dost breed,
I am forced the sod to see
Where my final grave shall be.

Cuchulain

Maev her daughter, Findabar,
Who all maids excelleth far,
Gave thee, not at love’s behest,
She thy kingly might would test.

Ferdia

Gently ruling Hound, I know
That was tested long ago;
None so great is known to fame,
None, till now, to match it came.

Cuchulain

All that’s chanced from thee hath sprung,
Darry’s grandchild, Daman’s son;
Woman’s hest hath brought thee here
Swords to test with comrade dear.

Ferdia

Comrade! had I fled, nor found
Fight with thee, fair graceful Hound,
Maev my word could broken call;
Croghan hold my fame but small.
Cuchulain
None put meat his lips between,
None to king or stainless queen
Yet was born, whose praise I'd gain,
None whose scorn would win thy pain.
Ferdia
Thou who deep in wars dost wade,
'Twas not thou, 'twas Maev betrayed:
Back with conquest shalt thou ride,
Fault hast none thy fame to hide.
Cuchulain
Clots of blood my faithful heart
Choke; my soul is like to part:
'Tis with little force my arm
Strikes, to do Ferdia harm!
[1. The metre is that of the Irish.]

"Greatly although thou makest complaint against me to-day," said Ferdia, "tell me to what arms shall we resort?" Thine is the choice of weapons until the night," said Cuchulain, "because it was I who had the choice in the day that is past." "Then," said Ferdia, "let us this day take to our heavy hard-smiting swords; for sooner shall we attain to the end of our strife by the edge of the sword this day than we did by the thrusts of our spears in the day that is gone." "Let us do so indeed," said Cuchulain. That day they took upon them two long and exceedingly great shields, and they resorted to their heavy and hard-striking swords. And each of them began to hew, and to cut, and to slaughter, and to destroy till larger than the head of a month-old child were the masses and the gobbets of flesh which each of them cut from the shoulders and the thighs and the shoulder-blades of his foe.

After this fashion did each of them hew at each other from the dawn of the day until the ninth hour of the even, and then Ferdia said, "Let us desist from this now, O Cuchulain!" "Let us cease indeed," said Cuchulain, "if the time has come."

They ceased from their strife, and they threw from them their arms into the hands of their charioteers. Pleasant and cheerful and joyous was the meeting of the two: mournfully, and sorrowfully, and unhappily did they part from each other that

night. Their horses were not in the same paddock, their charioteers were not at the same fire, and there they stayed for that night.

It was early in the morning when Ferdia arose, and he advanced alone towards the Ford of Combat. Well did he know that the battle and the conflict would be decided that day; that upon that day and in that place one of the two would fall or that both would fall. And then, before Cuchulain could come, Ferdia put on the armour that he was to use for that battle in the conflict and fight. And this was the battle armour that he used for that conflict and fight; he put a kilt of striped silk, bordered with spangles of gold, next to his white skin, and over that he put his well-sewn apron of brown leather to protect the lower part of his body. Upon his belly he put a great stone as large as a millstone, and over that great stone as large as a millstone he put his firm deep apron of purified iron, on account of the fear and the dread that he had of the Gae-Bulg that day. And his crested helmet that he used for battle and conflict and fight he put upon his head: there were upon it four jewels of carbuncle, each one of them fit to adorn it: also it was studded with enamels, with crystals, with carbuncles, and with blazing rubies that had come from the East. Into his right hand he took his death-dealing sharp-pointed strong spear; upon his left side he hung his curved sword of battle with its golden hilt and its pommels of red gold: upon the slope of his back he took his great and magnificent shield with great bosses upon it: fifty was the number of the bosses, and upon each of them could be supported a full-grown hog: moreover in the centre of the shield was a great boss of red gold. Upon that day Ferdia displayed many noble, rapidly changing, wonderful feats of arms on high; feats which he had never learned from any other, either from his nurse or his tutor, or from Scáthach, or from Uathach, or from Aife, but which he himself invented that day for his battle with Cuchulain. And Cuchulain approached the ford, and he saw the many, rapidly changing, wonderful feats that Ferdia displayed on high; and "O my friend Laeg!" said Cuchulain, "I mark those noble, rapidly changing, wonderful feats which Ferdia displays, and I know that all of those feats will in turn be tried upon me; and for this reason if it be I who begin to go backwards this day, let it be thy part to rouse me by reproaches, and by evil speech, so that my rage and my wrath may be kindled, and increase. And if it be I that shall prevail, then do thou give to me praise and approval; and speak good words tome, that my courage may be the greater." "This indeed will I do, O Cuchulain!" said Laeg.

Then did Cuchulain put on his battle armour that he used for the combat and fight. And that day he displayed noble, many-changing, wonderful, and many feats that he had learned from none: neither from Scáthach, from Uathach, or from Aife.

And Ferdia marked those feats, and he know that each in turn would be tried upon him.

"O Ferdia!" said Cuchulain, "tell me to what arms we shall resort?

"Thine is the choice of weapons until the night," said Ferdia. "Then," said Cuchulain, "let us try the Feat of the Ford."[1] "Let us do so indeed," said Ferdia; but although he thus spoke, it was with sorrow that he consented, for he knew that Cuchulain had ever destroyed every hero and champion who had contended with him at the Feat of the Ford.

[1. i.e. in which all weapons were allowed.]

Mighty were the deeds that were done upon that day at the ford by those two heroes, the champions of the west of Europe; by those two hands which in the north-west of the world were those that best bestowed bounty, and pay, and reward; those twin loved pillars of valour of the Gael; those two keys of the bravery of the Gaels, brought to fight from afar, owing to the urging and the intermeddling of Ailill and Maev. From the dawn till the middle of the day, each began to shoot at the other with his massive weapons; and when midday had come, the wrath of the two men became more furious, and each drew nearer to the other. And then upon a time Cuchulain sprang from the shore of the ford, and he lit upon the boss of the shield of Ferdia the son of Daman, the son of Daré, to strike at his head from above, over the rim of his shield. And then it was that Ferdia gave the shield a blow of his left elbow, and he cast Cuchulain from him like a bird, till he came down again, upon the shore of the ford. And again Cuchulain sprang from the shore of the ford, till he lit upon the boss of the shield of Ferdia the son of Daman, the son of Daré, to strike his head from above, over the rim of the shield. And Ferdia, gave the shield a stroke of his left knee, and he cast Cuchulain from him like a little child, till he came down on the shore of the ford.

Laeg saw what had been done. "Ah!" said Laeg, "the warrior who is against thee, casts thee away as a loose woman casts her child; he flings thee as high as the river flings its foam; he grinds thee even as a mill would grind fresh malt; pierces thee as the axe would pierce the oak that it fells; binds thee as the woodbine binds the tree; darts upon thee even as the hawk darts upon little birds, so that never until time and life shall end, shalt thou have a call, or right, or claim for prowess or for valour: thou little fairy phantom!" said Laeg. Up sprang Cuchulain, swift as the wind; quick as the swallow; fiery as the dragon; powerful as the lion; and he bounded into the air for the third time into the troubled clouds of it, until he lit upon the boss of the shield of Ferdia, the son of Daman, striving to strike his head from above, over the rim of the shield. And the warrior shook his shield, and he

threw Cuchulain from him, into the middle of the ford, just as if he had never been cast off at all.

And then for the first time the countenance of Cuchulain was changed, and he rose in his full might, as if the air had entered into him, till he towered as a terrible and wonderful giant, with the hero-light playing about his head; rising as a wild man of the sea; that great and valiant champion, till he overtopped Ferdia. And now so closely were they locked in the fight, that their heads met above them, and their feet below them; and in their middles met their arms over the rims and the bosses of their shields. So closely were they locked in the fight, that they turned and bent, and shivered their spears from the points to the hafts; and cleft and loosened their shields from the centres to the rims. So closely were they locked, that the Bocánachs, and the Banánachs, and the wild people of the glens, and the demons of the air screamed from the rims of their shields, and from the hilts of their swords, and from the hafts of their spears. And so closely did they fight, that they cast the river from its bed and its course, so that there might have been a couch fit for a king and a queen to he in, there in the midst of the ford, for there was no drop of water left in it, except such as fell therein from off those two heroes and champions, as they trampled and hewed at each other in the midst of the ford. And so fierce was their fight, that the horses of the Gaels, in fear and in terror, rushed away wildly and madly, bursting their chains, and their yokes, and their tethers, and their traces; and the women, and the common folk, and the followers of the camp, fled south-westwards out of the camp.

All this time they fought with the edges of their swords. And then it was that Ferdia found Cuchulain for a moment off his guard, and he struck him with the straight edge of his sword, so that it sank into his body, till the blood streamed to his girdle, and the soil of the ford was crimson with the blood that fell from the body of that warrior so valiant in fight. And Cuchulain's endurance was at an end, for Ferdia continually struck at him, not attempting to guard, and his downright blows, and quick thrusts, and crushing strokes fell constantly upon him, till Cuchulain demanded of Laeg the son of Riangabra to deliver to him the Gae-Bulg. Now the manner of using the Gae-Bulg was this: it was set with its end pointing down a stream, and was cast from beneath the toes of the foot: it made the wound of one spear on entering a person's body; but it had thirty barbs to open behind, and it could not be drawn out from a man's body until he was cut open. And when Ferdia heard mention of the Gae-Bulg, he made a stroke of his shield downwards to guard the lower part of his body. And Cuchulain thrust his unerring thorny spear off the centre of his palm over the rim of the shield, and through his breast covered by horny defensive plates of armour, so that its further half was visible behind him

after piercing the heart in his chest. Ferdia gave an upward stroke of his shield to guard the upper part of his body, though too late came that help, when the danger was past. And the servant set the Gae-Bulg down the stream, and Cuchulain caught it between the toes of his foot, and he threw it with an unerring cast against Ferdia, and it broke through the firm deep apron of wrought iron, and it burst the great stone that was as large as a millstone into three parts, and it passed through the protection of his body into him, so that every crevice and cavity in him was filled with its barbs. "'Tis enough now," said Ferdia. "I have my death of that; and I have but breath enough to say that thou hast done an ill deed against me. It was not right that thy hand should be that by which I should fall." And thus did he cry, as he gasped out these words:

Hound, of feats so fair![1]
Death from thee is ill:
Thou the blame must bear,
Thou my blood dost spill.
Help no wretch hath found
Down this chasm of woe:
Sick mine accents sound,
As a ghost, I go.
Torn my ribs, and burst,
Gore my heart hath filled:
This of fights is worst,
Hound! thou hast me killed.

[1. The metre is that of the Irish.]

And after those words, Cuchulain ran towards him, and with his arms and armour about him, carried him northwards across the ford, in order that the slain man might be on the north side of the ford, and not upon the western side together with the men of Erin. Then Cuchulain laid Ferdia down, and there it was that a trance and a faint and a weakness came upon Cuchulain when he saw the body of Ferdia, Laeg saw his weakness, and the men of Ireland all arose to come upon him. "Rise up now, O Cuchulain!" said Laeg, "for the men of Erin are coming towards us, and no single combat will they give to us, since Ferdia the son of Daman, the son of Daré, has fallen by thy hand."

"How shall I be the better for arising, O my servant!" said he, "now that he who lieth here hath fallen by me?" And it was in this manner that his servant spoke to him, and he recited these words, and thus did Cuchulain reply:

Laeg

Now arise, Battle-Hound of Emania!

It is joy and not grief should be sought;
For the leader of armies, Ferdia,
Thou hast slain, and hard battle hast fought.
Cuchulain
What availeth me triumph or boasting?
For, frantic with grief for my deed,
I am driven to mourn for that body
That my sword made so sorely to bleed.
Laeg
'Tis not thou shouldst lament for his dying,
Rejoicing should spring to thy tongue;
For in malice, sharp javelins, flying
For thy wounding and bleeding he flung.
Cuchulain
I would mourn, if my leg he had severed,
Had he hewn through this arm that remains,
That he mounts not his steeds; and for ever
In life, immortality gains.
Laeg
To the dames of Red Branch thou art giving
More pleasure that thus he should fall:
They will mourn for him dead, for thee living,
Nor shall count of thy victims be small.
Great Queen Maev thou hast chased, and hast fought her
Since the day when first Cualgne was left;
She shall mourn for her folk, and their slaughter,
By thy hand of her champions bereft.
Neither sleep nor repose hast thou taken,
But thy herd, her great plunder, hast chased,
Though by all but a remnant forsaken,
Oft at dawn to the fight thou didst haste.

Now it was in that place that Cuchulain commenced his lament and his moan for Ferdia, and thus it was that he spoke:

"O my friend Ferdia! unhappy was it for thee that thou didst make no inquiry from any of the heroes who knew of the valorous deeds I had done before thou camest to meet me in that battle that was too hard for thee! Unhappy was it for thee that thou didst not inquire from Laeg, the son of Riangabra[1] about what was due from thee to a comrade. Unhappy was it for thee that thou didst not ask for the

honest and sincere counsel of Fergus. Unhappy it was for thee that thou hast not sought counsel from the comely, the fresh-coloured, the cheery, the victorious Conall about what was due from thee to a comrade. Well do these men know, that never, till life and time come to an end, shall be born in the land of Connaught one who shall do deeds equal to those which have been done by thee. And if thou hadst made inquiry from these men concerning the habitations, the gatherings, the promises, and the broken faith of the fair-haired ladies of Connaught; hadst thou asked them concerning spear-play and sword-play; concerning skill in backgammon and chess; concerning feats with horses, and chariots of war; they would have said that never had been found the arm of a champion who could wound a hero's flesh like the arm of Ferdia; he whose colour matched the tints of the clouds: none who like thee could excite the croak of the bloody-mouthed vulture, as she calls her friends to the feast of the many-coloured flocks; none who shall fight for Croghan or be the equal of thee to the end of life and time, O thou ruddy-cheeked son of Daman!" said Cuchulain. And then Cuchulain stood over Ferdia. "Ah! Ferdia," said Cuchulain, "great was the treachery and desertion that the men of Ireland had wrought upon thee, when they brought thee to combat and fight with me. For it was no light matter to combat and fight with me on the occasion of the Tain bo Cuailnge."

[1. Pronounced Reen-gabra.]

And thus it was that he spoke, and he then recited these words:

'Twas guile to woe that brought thee;
'Tis I that moan thy fate;
For aye thy doom hath caught thee,
And here, alone, I wait.
To Scáthach, glorious mother,
Our words, when boys, we passed;
No harm for each from other
Should come while time should last.
Alas! I loved thee dearly,
Thy speech; thy ruddy face;
Thy gray-blue eyes, so clearly
That shone; thy faultless grace.
In wrath for strife advances
No chief; none shield can rear
To piercing storm of lances
Of Daman's son the peer.
Since he whom Aife[1] bore me

By me was slain in fight,
No champion stood before me
Who matched Ferdia's might.
He came to fight, thus trusting
Might Findabar be won;
Such hopes have madmen, thrusting
With spears at sand or sun.

Still Cuchulain continued to gaze upon Ferdia. And now, O my friend Laeg!" said Cuchulain, "strip for me the body of Ferdia, and take from him his armour and his garments, that I may see the brooch for the sake of which he undertook this combat and fight." Then Laeg arose, and he stripped Ferdia; he took his armour and his garments from him, and Cuchulain saw the brooch, and he began to lament and to mourn for him, and he spake these words:

Ah! that brooch of gold![2]
Bards Ferdia knew:
Valiantly on foes
With hard blows he flew.
Curling golden hair,
Fair as gems it shone;
Leaflike sash, on side
Tied, till life had gone.
Comrade, dear esteemed!
Bright thy glances beamed:
Chess play thine, worth gold:
Gold from shield rim gleamed.
None of friend had deemed
Could such tale be told!
Cruel end it seemed:
Ah! that brooch of gold!

[1. Pronounced Eefa. See note on this line.
2. The metre and the rhyme-system is that of the Irish. See notes, p. 196.]

"And now, O my friend Laeg!" said Cuchulain, "open the body of Ferdia, and take the Gae-Bulg out of him, for I cannot afford to be without my weapon." Laeg came, and he opened Ferdia's body, and he drew the Gae-Bulg out of him, and Cuchulain saw his weapon all bloody and red by the side of Ferdia, and then he spake these words:

[1. Pronounced Ooha and Scáha.]
Ferdia, I mourn for thy dying,

Thou art pale, although purple with gore:
Unwashed is my weapon still lying,
And the blood-streams from out of thee pour.
Our friends in the East who have seen us,
When with Uathach and Scáthach [1] we dwelled,
Can bear witness, no quarrel between us
Or with words or with weapons was held.
Scáthach came; and to conflict inciting
Were her accents that smote on mine ear;
“Go ye all, where a swift battle fighting,
German wields his green terrible spear!
To Ferdia, I flew with the story,
To the son of fair Baitan I sped,
And to Lugaid, whose gifts win him glory,
“Come ye all to fight German,” I said.
Where the land by Loch Formay lies hollowed
Had we come, fit for fight was the place;
And beside us four hundred men followed;
From the Athisech Isles was their race.
As beside me Ferdia contended
Against German, at door of his *dun*;
I slew Rind, who from Niul[1] was descended,
I slew Rood, of Finnool was he son.
’Twas Ferdia slew Blá by the water,
Son of Cathbad red-sworded was he:
And from Lugaid Mugarne gat slaughter,
The grim lord of the Torrian sea.
Four times fifty men, stubborn in battle,
By my hand in that gateway were slain;
To Ferdia, of grim mountain cattle
Fell a bull, and a bull from the plain.
Then his hold to the plunderers giving,
Over ocean waves spangled with foam,
Did we German the wily, still living,
To the broad-shielded Scáthach bring home.
There an oath our great mistress devising,
Both our valours with friendship she bound;
That no anger betwixt us uprising

Should ‘mid Erin’s fair nations be found.
Much of woe with that Tuesday was dawning,
When Ferdia’s great might met its end;
Though red blood-drink I served him that morning:
Yet I loved, though I slew him, my friend.
If afar thou hadst perished when striving
With the bravest of heroes of Greece,
’Tis not I would thy loss be surviving;
With thy death should the life of me cease.
Ah! that deed which we wrought won us sorrow,
Who, as pupils, by Scáthach were trained:
Thou wilt drive not thy chariot to-morrow;
I am weak, with red blood from me drained.
Ah! that deed which we wrought won us anguish,
Who, as pupils, by Scáthach were taught:
Rough with gore, and all wounded, I languish;
Thou to death altogether art brought.
Ah! that deed that we wrought there was cruel
For us pupils, from Scáthach who learned:
I am strong; thou art slain in the duel,
In that conflict, with anger we burned.

[1. Pronounced Nyool.]

“Come now, Cuchulain,” said Laeg, “and let us quit this ford, for too long have we been here.” “Now indeed will we depart, O my friend Laeg!” said Cuchulain, “but every other combat and fight that I have made hath been only a game and a light matter to me compared with this combat and fight with Ferdia.” Thus it was that he spoke; and in this fashion he recited:

Wars were gay, and but light was fray[1]
Ere at the Ford his steeds made stay:
Like had we both been taught,
Both one kind mistress swayed;
Like the rewards we sought,
Like was the praise she paid.
Wars were gay, and but light was fray
Ere at the Ford his steeds made stay:
Like were our fights, oft fought,
Like were our haunts in play;
Scáthach to each of us brought

A shield one day.
Wars were gay, and but light was fray
Ere at the Ford his steeds made stay:
Pillar of gold, loved well,
Low at the Ford's side laid;
He, when on troops he fell,
Valour unmatched displayed.
Wars were gay, and but light was fray
Ere at the Ford his steeds made stay:
Lionlike, on he sped;
High, in his wrath, he blazed;
Rose, as a wave of dread;
Ruin his onset raised.
Wars were gay, and but light was fray
Ere at the Ford his steeds made stay:
Never, till hour of doom,
Ferdia's form shall fade;
High as a cliff it loomed,
Now is but left his shade.
Three great armies went this Raid,[2]
All the price of death have paid;
Choicest cattle, men, and steeds
Lie in heaps, to tell my deeds.
Widely spread their battle-line,
Less than half their host was mine;
Though to war stout Croghan came,
All I slew, for me a game!
None the battle neared like thee,
None of all whom Banba nursed
Passed thy fame; on land, on sea,
Thou, of sons of kings, art first!

[1. Metre and rhyme-system of the Irish imitated, but not exactly reproduced.]
2. The metre is that of the Irish.]

SPECIAL NOTE ON THE "COMBAT AT THE FORD"

THE episode translated in the foregoing pages is not only one of the famous examples on which Irish literature can fairly rest its claim to universal recognition,

but it also affords an excellent instance of the problems involved when it comes to be studied critically. These problems, upon the solution of which must to some extent depend our estimate of the place of Irish in the general development of European literature) axe briefly dealt with in Mr. Leahy's Preface, as well as in his special Introduction (supra, pp. 114, 115), but may perhaps be thought worthy of somewhat more detailed examination.

The existence of two markedly different versions of the "Táin bó Cuailnge," one, obviously older, represented by the eleventh-century MS. Leabhar na h-Uidhri (L.U.), and the fourteenth-century MS. Yellow Book of Lecan (Y.B.L.); the other, obviously younger, by the twelfth-century Book of Leinster (L.L.), was pointed out by Professor Heinrich Zimmer twenty-seven years ago in his study of the L.U. heroic saga texts (*Keltische Studien V.: Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, vol. xxviii.). The conclusion that he drew from the fact, as also from the peculiarities disclosed by his analysis of the L.U. texts, is substantially that stated by Mr. Leahy: "On the whole it seems as if the compiler of the manuscript from which both the Leabhar na h-Uidhri and the Yellow Book of Lecan were copied, combined into one several different descriptions of the 'War,' one of which is represented by the Book of Leinster version." He furthermore emphasised a particular aspect of this compiler's activity to which Mr. Leahy also draws repeated attention; he (the compiler) was a man interested in the historical and antiquarian rather than in the literary side of the texts he harmonised and arranged: hence his preference for versions that retain archaic and emphasise mythical elements; hence his frequent interpolation of scraps of historical and antiquarian learning; hence his indifference to consistency in the conduct of the story, and to its artistic finish. Professor Zimmer urged that the "compiler" was no other than Flann, Abbot of Monasterboice, who died in 1047, and was regarded as the most famous representative of Irish learning in his day. There has come down to us under his name a considerable mass of chronological and historical writing, partly in prose, partly in verse, and it seems certain that he was one of the chief artisans in framing that pragmatic redaction of Irish myth, heroic legend, and historical tradition most fully represented by the two great compilations of the seventeenth century: the Annals of the Four Masters, emphasising its antiquarian, historical side; Keating's History, emphasising its romantic, legendary side.

Whilst Professor Zimmer's conclusion as to the personality of the L.U. compiler has been challenged, his main thesis has remained unshaken. *On the whole*, it can be asserted positively that the common source of L.U. and Y.B.L. goes back to the early eleventh century; *on the whole*, that this common source itself utilised texts similar to those contained in the Book of Leinster. Moreover, the progress of

linguistic analysis during the past quarter-century has strengthened the contention that some of the elements used by Flann (or another) in compiling his eleventh-century harmony are as old, in point of language, as any existing remains of Irish outside the Ogham inscriptions; in other words, being as old as the earliest glosses, they may date back to the eighth or even seventh century. In particular the L.U.-Y.B.L. version of the "Táin bó Cuailnge" contains a large proportion of such elements and may, *in the main*, be treated as an eighth-century text.

It must, however, be pointed out, and for this reason I have italicised the qualifying "on the whole," "in the main," that this conclusion does not enable us to declare dogmatically (1) that all portions of the L.U.-Y.B.L. version must go back to the eighth century; (2) that all portions of the Book of Leinster version must precede the compilation of the common source of L.U. and Y.B.L. For as regards (1), not only must the definitely ascertained activity of the eleventh-century compiler be taken into account, but also the possible activity of later scribes. If we possessed the complete text of the L.U.-Y.B.L. redaction in both MSS., we could at least be sure concerning the possible variations introduced during the two centuries that elapsed between the writing of the Yellow Book (early fourteenth century) and that of L.U. (late eleventh century). But most unfortunately both MSS. are imperfect, the Yellow Book at the opening, L.U. at the close of our tale. Thus of the special episode under consideration, the "Combat at the Ford," the older redaction is only extant in the fourteenth-century MS., and it is always open to impugners of its archaic character to say that it has been introduced there from the rival Leinster version. Again, as regards (2), whilst it is practically certain that the great mass of the Leinster version was in existence before the time of the source whence both L.U. and Y.B.L. are derived, and must therefore date back to the early eleventh century, it is by no means certain that this version was not considerably altered and enlarged before it came to be written down in the Book of Leinster some time before.

The older version of the "Táin bó Cuailnge" has been translated by Miss Winifred Faraday (Grimm Library, No. xvi. 1904). In her Introduction (p. xvii.) Miss Faraday argues against the assumption "that L.L. preserves an old version of the episode," and questions "whether the whole Fer Diad[1] episode may not be late." The truth of this one contention would by no means involve that of the other; and again, both might be true without invalidating any of the conclusions drawn by Mr. Leahy (*supra*, p. 115). If the episode as we have it first took shape in the tenth century, it would be late as compared with much of the rest of the "Táin," and yet it would be the earliest example in post-classic European literature of the sentiments and emotions to which it gives such fine and sympathetic expression. In comparing the

two versions, the following fact is at once noticeable. The Y.B.L. text occupies pp. 100-112 of Miss Faraday's translation, in round figures, 320 lines of 8 words to the line, or some 2600 words; the Leinster version, omitting the verse, fills some 500 lines of 14 words, or 7000 words. Up to a certain point, however, the actual meeting of the two champions, there is no difference between the versions in length; the prose of both runs to about 2200 words. But the whole of the actual fight (*supra*, pp. 129-153 in the Leinster version) is compressed into a page and a half in the older redaction, some 800 words as against over 4000. Obviously this cannot represent the original state of things; it would be psychologically impossible for any story-teller to carry on his narrative up to a given stage with the dramatic vigour, point, and artistically chosen detail displayed in the first portion of the Y.B.L. version of the combat, and then to treat the culmination of the tale in such a huddled, hasty, scamped manner. The most likely explanation is that the original from which the Y.B.L. scribe was copying was imperfect, and that the lacuna was supplied from memory, and from a very faulty memory. No conclusion can thus, I think, be drawn from the fact that the details of the actual combat are so bald and meagre in the only extant text of the older redaction.

[1. This is the spelling in Y. B. L. In L.L. the name appears as one word, "Ferdiad"; usually scanned as a dissyllable—though occasionally as a trisyllable. The spelling Ferdia is the conventional one sanctioned by the usage of Ferguson, Aubrey de Vere, and others; the scansion of the word as a trisyllable is on the same authority.]

If the two versions be compared where they are really comparable, i.e. in that portion which both narrate at approximately the same length, the older redaction will be found fuller of incident, the characters drawn with a bolder, more realistic touch, the presentment more vigorous and dramatic. Ferdiad is unwilling to go against Cuchulain not, apparently, solely for prudential reasons, and he has to be goaded and taunted into action by Medb, who displays to the full her wonted magnificently resourceful unscrupulousness, regardless of any and every consideration, so long as she can achieve her purpose. The action of Fergus is far more fully dwelt upon, and the scones between him and his charioteer, as also between him and Cuchulain, are given with far greater spirit. The hero is indignant that Fergus should think it necessary to warn him against a single opponent, and says roundly that it is lucky no one else came on such an errand. The tone of the older redaction is as a whole rough, animated, individualistic as compared with the smoother, more generalised, less accentuated presentment of the Leinster version. But to conclude from this fact that the older redaction of the actual combat, if we had it in its original fulness instead of in a bald and fragmentary summary, would not have dwelt upon the details of the fighting, would not have insisted

upon the courteous and chivalrous bearing of the two champions, would not have emphasised the inherent pathos of the situation, seems to me altogether unwarranted. On the contrary the older redaction, by touches of strong, vivid, archaic beauty lacking in the Leinster version leads up to and prepares for just such a situation as the latter describes so finely. One of these touches must be quoted. Cuchulain's charioteer asks him what he will do the night before the struggle, and then continues, "It is thus Fer Diad will come to seek you, with new beauty of plaiting and haircutting and washing and bathing.... It would please me if you went to the place where you will got the same adorning for yourself, to the place where is Emer of the Beautiful Hair.... So Cuchulain went thither that night, and spent the night with his own wife." There is indeed the old Irish hero faring forth to battle as a lover to the love tryst! How natural, how inevitable with warriors of such absurd and magnificent susceptibility, such boyish love of swagger, how natural, I say, the free and generous emotion combined with an overmastering sense of personal honour, and a determination to win at all costs, which are so prominent in the Leinster version of the fight.[1]

[1. The trait must not be put down as a piece of story-teller's fancy. In another text of the Ulster cycle, Cath ruis na Rig, Conchobor's warriors adorn and beautify themselves in this way before the battle. The Aryan Celt behaved as did the Aryan Hellene. All readers of Herodotus will recall how the comrades of Leonidas prepared for battle by engaging in games and combing out their hair, and how Demaretus, the counsellor of Xerxes, explained to the king "that it is a custom with these men that when they shall prepare to imperil their lives; that is the time when they adorn their heads" ({Greek e'pea`n me'llwsi kindunu'ein thj^ psuxhj^, to'te ta`s kefala`s kosme'ontai}, Herodotus vii. 209.)]

The contention that the older redaction, if we had it complete, would resemble the younger one in its insistence upon the chivalrous bearing of the two opponents, may also be urged on historical grounds. The sentiment which gives reality and power to the situation is based upon the strength of the tie of blood-brotherhood; so strong is this that it almost balances the most potent element in the ideal of old Irish heroism—the sense of personal honour and pre-eminence in all that befits a warrior. The tie itself and the sentiment based upon it certainly belong to pre-Christian times, and must have been losing rather than gaining in strength during the historic period, say from the fourth century onwards. The episode of Cuchulain's combat with Ferdiad must have existed in the older redaction of the "Tain" for the simple reason that a tenth and eleventh century story-teller would have found nothing in the feelings, customs, or literary conventions of his own day to suggest to him such a situation and such a manner of working it out. But—and this

consideration may afford a ground of conciliation with Miss Faraday and the scholars who hold by the lateness of the episode—the intrinsic beauty and pathos of the situation, the fact of its constituting an artistic climax, would naturally tempt the more gifted of the story-telling class. There would be a tendency to elaborate, to adorn in the newest fashion, hence to modernise, and it is not only conceivable but most probable that the original form should be farther departed from than in the case of much else in the epic.

ALFRED NUTT

General Notes

The Courtship of Etain

THE translation of both versions of this romance has been revised by Professor Strachan, and the linguistic notes are due to him, unless otherwise stated. The rendering given in the text is noted as "doubtful," in cases where Professor Strachan does not assent.

PAGE 7

Line 17. "By a means that he devised," *do airec memman*, lit. "by a device of mind." Compare *airecc memman áith* (Meyer, *Hib. Minora*, p. 28).

Line 17. "So that she became well-nourished, &c.," lit. "till there came to her fatness and form;" *sult* probably means "fatness," and *feth* "form."

PAGE 8

Line 25. "Curvetting and prancing," *tuagmar, foran*. These are guesses by O'Curry: curvetting may be right, but there is little authority for rendering *foran* as "prancing "; this word is doubtful. "With a broad forehead," *forlethan*, lit. "broad above," O'Curry renders "broad-rumped."

Line 34. "Upon the shore of the bay," *forsin purt*. Windisch's rendering of *port* is "bank, harbour"; but it is doubtful whether the word means more than "place."

PAGE 9

The literal rendering adopted for the poem runs thus:

Etain is here thus
at the elf-mound of the Fair-Haired Women west of Alba
among little children to her
on the shore of the Bay of Cichmaine.
It is she who cured the eye of the king
from the Well of Loch da lig,
it is she who was drunk in a draught
by the wife of Etar in a heavy draught.
Through war for her the king will chase
the birds from Tethba,
and will drown his two horses
in the lake da Airbrech.
There shall be abundant and many wars

through the war for thee on Echaid of Meath,
destruction shall be on the elf-mounds,
and war upon many thousands.
It is she who was hurt in the land (?),
it is she who strove to win the king,
it is she as compared to whom men men speak of fair women,
it is she, our Etain afterwards.

Line 2. "West of Alba" is literally "behind Alba," *iar n-Albai*: *iar* is, however, also used in the sense of "west of."

Line 14 is given by Windisch "through the war over Meath rich in horses"; this is impossible.

The translation of line 17 is not quite certain; the literal translation of the MS. seems to be "it is she who was hurt *and* the land." *Da Airbrech* in line 12 may mean "of two chariots."

PAGE 10

Literal translation of the quatrain:
Ignorant was Fuamnach, the wife of Mider,
Sigmall and Bri with its trees
in Bri Leth: it was a full trial
were burned by means of Manannan.

PAGE 11

Line 5. "Labraid the Tracker." This is a very doubtful rendering, the text gives *Labradae Luircc*.

Line 25. "That he desired full knowledge of." There seems to be something with the Irish here; the word is *co fessta* which could only be third singular subj. pass. "that it might be known," which does not make grammar. It should be *co fessed* or *co festais*, "that he (or they) might know."

PAGE 12

Line 9. "His officers who had the care of the roads." A very doubtful rendering; the Irish is *tarraluing sligeth*.

Line 29. "A bright purple mantle waved round her," lit. "a bright purple curling (?) mantle," but the sense of *caslechta* as "curling" is not certain.

Line 30. "Another mantle." The word for mantle here is *folai*, in the former line it was *brat*.

PAGE 13

Line 3. "As white as the snow." *ba gilighuir mechto*: not "whiter than the snow," as Windisch's Dict. gives it.

Line 17. “All that’s graceful, &c.,” *cach cruth co hEtain, coem cach co hEtain*. Compare *conid chucum bagthir cach n-delb*. (L.U., 124b, 17, “Courtship of Emer “), and *Ir. Text.*, iii. p. 356, 1. 4, from which it may be seen that the meaning is that Etain is the test to which all beauty must be compared.

PAGE 14

Line 19. “So long as they were,” not “so long as he was.” The Irish is *cein ropas*, and *ropas* is the impersonal preterite passive.

Line 29. “The choking misery, &c.,” lit. “he let come to him the *slaodán* of a heavy sickness:” *slaodán* is the cough of consumption.

PAGE 15

Line 2. Lit. “worse and worse,” *messa a cach*.

Line 18. “His burial mound,” *a fert fodbuigh*. Compare Zimmer, Kuhn’s Zeitschrift, xxx. 9, for *fotbuig*.

Literal rendering of the dialogue:

B. What hath happened to thee, O young man?
long is thy bed of sickness,
prostrate is thy full and splendid pace,
however fair the weather may be.

A. There is cause for my sighs;
the music of my harp contents me not;
neither does any milk please me,
it is this that brings me into a pitiful state.

E. Tell me what ails thee, O man,
for I am a maiden who is wise;
tell me of anything which may be of benefit to thee
that thy healing may be wrought by me.

A. To speak of it is not possible for me
(lit. “finds not room in me”),
O maiden, lovely is thy form,
there is fire of some one behind her eyes (?)
nor are the secrets of women good.

B. Though the secrets of women are bad,
yet, if it is love, the remembrance remains for long;
from the time when the matter is taken into hand
this thing is not deserving of its (?) recognition.

A. A blessing on thee, O white maiden,
I am not worthy of this speech to me;
neither am I grateful to my own mind,

my body is in opposition to me.
Wretched indeed is this, O wife of the King,
Eochaid Fedlech in very truth,
my body and my head are sick,
it is reported in Ireland.
E. If there is among the troops of white women
any one who is vexing thee,
she shall come here, if it is pleasing to thee,
there shall be made by my help her courtship.

In verse 3, line 2, inniss *dam gach dal*, *dal* means no more than thing it is not an accusative from *dál*, a meeting.

Verse 4, line 3. Meaning doubtful.

Verse 7, line 2. The confusion between Eochaid Airemm, the king in this story, and his brother Eochaid Fedlech is obvious. It may, as Windisch thinks, be an indication that the poem is not part of the romance as originally composed, but other explanations are possible.

Line 4. "It is reported." Not quite certain; Irish is *issed berair*.

PAGE 17

Line 11. "And great gain, &c." Text defective, and meaning uncertain.

Line 13. *Rhetoric*; the literal translation seems to be as follows, but some words are uncertain:

It is love that was longer enduring (?) than a year my love,
it is like being under the skin,
it is the kingdom of strength over destruction.
It is the dividing into quarters of the earth,
it is summit (7) of heaven,
it is breaking of the neck,
it is a battle against a spectre.
It is drowning with cold (or ? water),
it is a race up heaven,
it is a weapon under the ocean,
it is affection for an echo;
(so is) my affection and my love and my desire of the one on whom I have set (my love).

PAGE 18

Line 2. The translation given is Windisch's, "it is sorrow under the skin is Strachan's rendering.

Line 5. Translation uncertain. Irish is *dichend nime*.

Line 8. *Is combath fri huacht* (I read *husce*).
Literal rendering of the poem:
Arise, O glorious Ailill,
great bravery is more proper to thee than anything;
since thou shalt find here what was wished by thee,
thy healing shall be done by me.
If it should please thee in thy wise mind,
place hand about my neck;
a beginning of courtship, beautiful its colour,
woman and man kissing each other.
But, if this is not enough for thee, O good man,
O son of a king, O royal prince,
I will give for thy healing, O glorious crime,
from my knee to my navel.
A hundred cows, a hundred ounces of gold,
a hundred bridled horses were collecting,
a hundred garments of each variegated colour,
these were brought as a price for me.
A hundred of each other beast came hither,
the drove was great;
these to me quickly, till the sum was complete,
gave Eochaid at the one time.
Line 14. Of poem. "Were collecting," *ratinol*. This is the rendering in Windisch's Dictionary, but is a doubtful one.
Line 18. *Imerge* means "drove," not "journey," as in Windisch.
Line 27 of text. "Wrought a great healing, &c." Irish, *ro lessaig*, "healed him" (Windisch); "waited upon him" (Strachan).
PAGE 19
Line 17. "For fear of danger." *Baegal*, "danger," has sometimes the sense of "chance," "risk."
Line 23. "That is what I would demand of thee." Translation not quite certain Irish, *cid rotiarfaiged*.
PAGE 20
Line 2. "That both of us do indeed deem, &c." lit. "it is so indeed well to us both."
Line 22. For the incident compare Bodleian Dinnshenchas (Nutt, p. 27): the introduction of Crochen is a human touch which seems to be characteristic of the author of this version. The Dinnshenchas account seems to be taken from the romance, but it gives the name of Sinech as Mider's entertainer at Mag Cruachan.

Line 25. "The Fairy Mound of Croghan." Irish, *co sith sínighe Crúachan*; for *sínighe* read Maighe, "to the sid of Mag C."

PAGE 21

Line 2. Until the same day upon the year, &c.," *ón ló cu céle*, "from that day to its fellow," i.e. "till the same day next year."

Line 10. "Three wands of yew." This looks like an early case of a divining-rod

Line 2 1. "Hath smitten thee," *rotirmass* for *ro-t-ormaiss*, "hath hit thee."

Line 29. "They ruined," "*docuas ar*," an idiomatic phrase; "they overcame," an idiomatic phrase. Compare Annals of Ulster under years 1175, 1315, 1516.

PAGE 22

Line 2. "Messbuachalla." This makes Etain the great-grandmother of Conary, the usual account makes her the grandmother, so that there is here an extra generation inserted. Yet in the opening she and Eochaid Airem are contemporary with kings who survived Conary!

Line 4. "The fairy host, &c." The order of the words in the original is misleading and difficult *sithchaire* and Mider are the subjects to *ro choillsiut* and to *doronsat*.

PAGE 23

Line 12. That there should be adjusted)" *fri commus*, lit. "for valuation," but *commus* has also the sense of "adjusting."

PAGE 24

Line 4. "Since he for a long time, &c.," *fodaig dognith abairt dia sirsellad*. See Meyer's Contributions, s.v. *abairt*.

Line 23. "To gaze at her." Up to this point the L.U. version (exclusive of the Prologue) bears the character of an abstract, afterwards the style improves.

PAGE 25

Line 2. "But it shall. not be in the abode, &c." Windisch seems to have mimed the point here, he considers these lines to be an interpolation.

PAGE 26

Line 5. Following Windisch's suggestion, this poem has been placed here instead of the later place where it occurs in the text. This famous poem has been often translated; but as there appear to be points in it that have been missed, a complete literal rendering is appended:

O fair-haired woman, will you come with me
into a marvellous land wherein is music (?);
the top of the head there is hair of primrose,
the body up to the head is colour of snow.
In that country is no "mine" and no "thine";
white are teeth there, black are eyebrows,

the colour of the eyes is the number of our hosts,
each cheek there the hue of the foxglove.
The purple of the plain is (on) each neck,
the colour of the eyes is (colour of) eggs of blackbird;
though pleasant to the sight are the plains of Fal (Ireland),
they are a wilderness (7) for a man who has known the Great Plain.
Though intoxicating to ye the ale of the island of Fal,
the ale of the Great Country is more intoxicating
a wonder of a land is the land I speak of,
a young man there goes not before an old man.
Stream smooth and sweet flow through the land,
there is choice of mead and wine;
men handsome (?) without blemish,
conception without sin, without crime.
We see all on every side,
and yet no one seeth us,
the cloud of the sin of Adam it is
that encompasses us from the reckoning.
O woman, if thou wilt come to my strong people,
it is top of head of gold shall be on thy head,
unsalted pork, new milk and mead for drink
shalt thou have with me there, O fair-haired woman.

Line 2. *Hi fil rind*. The meaning of *rind* (?) music) is uncertain.

Line 3. *Is barr sobarche folt and*. This line is often translated as "hair is wreathed with primrose": the image would be better, but it is not the Irish. *Barr* is "top of head," and *folt* is "hair."

Line 4. *Is and nad bi mui na tai*. *Muisse* is in old Irish the possessive of the first sing. when followed by a noun it becomes *mo*, when not so followed it is *mui*; *tai* is also found for *do*. O'Curry gave this line as "there is no sorrow nor care."

Lines 7 and 10. *Is li sula lin ar sluag* and *is li sula ugai luin* are so similar that *is li sula* must mean the same in both, and cannot mean "splendour of eyes" in the first case unless it does so in the second. The idea in the first case seems to be that the hosts are reflected in the eyes; it is so rendered in the verse translation. A blackbird's egg has a blue ground, but is so thickly powdered with brown spots of all shapes that it looks brown at a distance. At first I was inclined to take the idea to be "hazel" eyes, but comparing line 7, it seems more likely that the idea is that all sorts of shapes appear in the pupil.

Line 12. The translation of *annam* as a "wilderness" is very doubtful, it more probably is "seldom"; and the line should be "seldom will it be so after knowledge of, &c."

Line 16. This has always been rendered "no youth there grows to old age." But the Irish is *ni thecht oac* and *re siun*, and *re siun* can only mean "before an old (man)." The sense possibly is, that as men do not become feeble with advancing years, the younger man has not the same advantage over his elders in the eyes of women that he has in this world.

Line 17. *Teith millsi*, "smooth and honey-sweet" (Meyer, MacCongl., p. 196).

Line 24. Compare a story of some magical pigs that could not be counted accurately (*Revue Celtique*, vol. xiii. p. 449).

Line 31. *Muc úr*, "unsalted pork"; see Glossary to Laws, p. 770; also MacConglinne (Kuno Meyer), p, 99.

PAGE 27

Line 23. "He ascended." *Fosrocaib for sosta*: *fosrocaib* is an unknown compound (=fo-sro-od-gaib). Perhaps *frisocaib for sosta*, "mounted on the heights."

Line 29. *Co brainni a da imdæ*, "to the edges of his two shoulders"; see *braine*, in Meyer's Contributions.

PAGE 28.

Line 19. "Casting their light on every side," *cacha air di = cacha airidi*, "in every direction."

Line 25. "If thou dost obtain the forfeit of my stake," *mad tu beras mo thócell*. For *tócell* see Zimmer, Kuhn's *Zeitsch.*, xxx. 80.

Line 29. "Eager" (?), *femendae*. See *Bruiden da Derga* (Stokes), 50, 51.

Line 30. "Easily stopped," *so-ataidi* suggested for *sostaidi* in the text: cf. *Bruiden da Derga*. The conjecture has not Strachan's authority.

PAGE 29

Line 19. Literal translation of *rhetoric*: "Put it in hand, place it close in hand, noble are oxen for hours after sunset, heavy is the request, it is unknown to whom the gain, to whom the loss from the causeway."

Line 28. "Over the chariot-pole of life" seems to be a literal rendering of *for fertas in betha*. Strachan renders "on the face of the world," which is of course the meaning of the simile.

Line 30, "High was he girt," *ard chustal*. The meaning of *custal* is not known; it was used of some arrangement of the dress. See *Ir. Text.*, iii. 226; also L.U. 79*a*, 35, L.L. 97*a*, 40; 98*a*, 51; 253*a*, 30.

Line 31. "Eochaid arose," *Atrigestar Eochaid*. Strachan thinks it much more likely that this is "Eochaid feared him," the verb coming from *atagur*. It is, however, just

possible that the word might be a deponent form from *atregaim*, "I arise." Eochaid does not elsewhere show any fear of Mider, the meaning given agrees better with the tone of the story, and is grammatically possible.

PAGE 30

Line 1. "All things that seemed good, &c.," lit. "I have been accustomed to get what seemed good to thee," *adethaind ni bad maith*.

Line 3. "Anger for anger," bara fri búre. Compare the word bura in Meyer's Contributions.

Line 25. "In order that Eochaid should stand in his debt," lit. "that there might be cause of reproach for him to Eochaid."

Line 32. "Forest that is over Breg." MS. *fid dar bré*, with mark of abbreviation. This is read to be *dar Breg*. Professor Rhys (Arthurian Legend, p. 28) renders "to cover Darbrech with trees."

Line 33. "As it is written in the book of Drom Snechta. "This is a conjecture by Mrs. Hutton as a restoration of the words in L.U., which is torn just here: the words appear to be *amal atbert lebor drums*.

PAGE 31

Line 1. This rhetoric is very obscure; much of it cannot be translated. The text seems to be as follows, according to Strachan: Cuisthe illand tochre illand airderg damrad trom inchoibden clunithar fír ferdi buidni balc-thruim crandchuir forderg saire fedar sechuib slimprib snithib scítha láma indrosc clóina fo bíth óen mna. Duib in dígail duib in trom dáim tairthim flatho fer ban fomnis fomnis in fer mbranie cerpiæ fomnis diád dergae fer arfeid soluig fria iss esslind fer brón for-tí ertechta in de lámnado luáchair for di Thethbi dílecud (? diclochud) Midi in dracht cóich les coich amles ? thocur ? dar c? moin.

Apparent rendering: "Place on the land, place close on the land, very red oxen, heavy troop which hears, truly manlike ? troops, strong heavy placing of trees, very red . . . is led past them with twisted wattles, weary hands, the eye slants aside (squints) because of one woman. To you the vengeance, to you the heavy ? oxen ? splendour of sovereignty over white men, . . . man sorrow on thee . . . of childbirth, rushes over Tethba, clearing of stones from Meath . . . where the benefit where the evil, causeway over . . . moor." It seems that the oxen were transformed people of Mider's race; this appears from *fír-ferdi*, which is taken to mean "really men"; and *duib in digail duib in trom-dáim*, which is taken to mean "to you the vengeance, to you heavy oxen."

Professor Strachan disagrees with this, as *daim*, to be "oxen," should not have the accent, he makes *trom-dáim* "heavy companies." He also renders *clunithar fír*

ferdi buindi, as "which hears truth, manly troops." The rest of the translation he agrees to, most of it is his own.

The passage from *fomnis fomnis* to *lámnado* seems untranslatable.

PAGE 32

Line i. Lit. "no evil wedding feast (*banais*, text *banas*) for thee?

MAC DATHO'S BOAR

PAGE 37

Line 3. The Rawlinson version gives, instead of "who was the guardian of all Leinster," the variant "who would run round Leinster in a day." This semi-supernatural power of the hound is the only supernatural touch in either version of the tale.

Line 6. The verse "Mesroda son of Datho" is from the Rawlinson MS. The literal version of it is in *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, Mediæval Series, part viii. p. 57. (This reference will in future be given as *A.O.*, p. 57.)

Line 20. The list of the hostelries or guest-houses of Ireland includes the scene of the famous Togail Da Derga, in the sack of which Conaire, king of Ireland, was killed. Forgall the Wily was the father of Emer, Cuchulain's wife. The tale of the plunder of da Choca is in the MS. classed as H. 3, 18 in the Trinity College, Dublin, Library.

PAGE 38

The literal version of the dialogue between Mac Datho and his wife is given in A.O., p. 58, following the Leinster text (there are only two lines of it given in the Rawlinson MS.); but I note a few divergencies in the literal version from which the verse translation was made.

Verse 3, line 1. *Asbert Crimthann Nia Nair*, "Crimthann Nia Nair has said" (A.O.). Nia is "sister's son," and has been so rendered. Nia is a champion, and this is the meaning given in the Coir Anmann; but nia has no accent in either the Leinster or Harleian manuscripts of the text. The Coir Anmann (*Ir. Tex.*, iii. 333) says that Nar was a witch.

Verse 4, lines 1, 2. *Cid fri mnai atbertha-su Mani thesbad ní aire*, "Why wouldest thou talk to a woman if something were not amiss?" (A.O.). "Why dost thou speak against a woman unless something fails on that account" seems as good a translation, and fits the sense better.

Verse 7, line 2. *Leis falmag dar sin túaith*, "By him Ireland (shall be roused) over the people." The omitted verb is apparently "to be," as above. Line 4 of the same verse is left untranslated in A.O., it is *ata neblai luim lúaith*. It seems to mean

"There is nothing on the plain for bareness (*luim*) of ashes," more literally, "There is a no-plain for, &c."

Verse 9, lines 2, 3. *Isi ním dění cutal*. *Ailbe do roid dia*. "It does not make sorrow for me; as for Ailbe, "God sent him" seems to be the sense; but the meaning of *cutal* is obscure.

PAGE 41

Line 8. "Forty oxen as side-dishes," lit. "forty oxen crosswise to it" (*dia tarsnu*). The Rawlinson MS. gives "sixty oxen to drag it" (*dia tarraing*).

Line 33. "The son of Dedad." Clan Dedad was the Munster hero clan, having their fortress in Tara Luachra; they correspond to the more famous Clan Rury of Ulster, whose stronghold was Emain Macha. Curoi of Munster seems to have been a rival hero to Cuchulain.

PAGE 42

Line 20. "Pierced through with a spear." The different ways in which Ket claims to have conquered his rivals or their relations may be noted; the variety of them recalls the detailed descriptions of wounds and methods of killing so common in Homer. There are seven victories claimed, and in no two is the wound the same, a point that distinguishes several of the old Irish romances from the less elaborate folk-tales of other nations. Arthur's knights in Malory "strike down" each other, very occasionally they "pierce through the breast" or "strike off a head," but there is seldom if ever more detail. In the Volsunga Saga men "fall," or are "slain," in a few cases of the more important deaths they are "pierced," or "cut in half," but except in the later Niebelungenlied version where Siegfried is pierced through the cross embroidered on his back, a touch which is essential to the plot, none of the Homeric detail as to the wounds appears. The same remark applies to the saga of Dietrich and indeed to most others; the only cases that I have noticed which resemble the Irish in detail are in the Icelandic Sagas (the Laxdale Saga and others), and even there the feature is not at all so prominent as here, in the "Tain be Cuailnge," and several other Irish romances, though it is by no means common to all of them. It may be noted that the Irish version of the "Tale of Troy" shows this feature, and although it is possible that the peculiarity is due to the great clearness and sharpness of detail that characterises much of the early Irish work, it may be that this is a case of an introduction into Irish descriptions of Homeric methods.

It may be also noted that six of Ket's seven rivals are named among the eighteen Ulster chiefs in the great gathering of Ulster on the Hill of Slane before the final battle of the Tain, Angus being the only one named here who is not in the Hill of Slane list. Two others in the Hill of Slane list, Fergus mac Lets and Feidlimid, are mentioned elsewhere in this tale. Several of these are prominent in other tales:

Laegaire (Leary) is a third with Cuchulain and Conall in the Feast of Bricriu, and again in the "Courtship of Emer;" Cuscrid makes a third with the same two principal champions in the early part of the "Sick-bed;" Eogan mac Durthacht is the slayer of the sow of Usnach in the old version of that tale; and Celtchar mac Uitechar is the Master of the Magic Spear in the "Bruiden da Derga," and has minor romances personal to himself.

PAGE 45

The literal translation of the rhetoric seems to be: *Ket*. "Welcome, Conall! heart of stone: wild glowing fire: sparkle of ice: wrathfully boiling blood in hero breast: the scarred winner of victory: thou, son of Finnchoem, canst measure thyself with me!" *Conall*. "Welcome, Ket! first-born of Mata! a dwelling place for heroes thy heart of ice: end of danger (7); chariot chief of the fight: stormy ocean: fair raging bull: Ket, Magach's son! That will be proved if we are in combat: that will be proved if we are separated: the goader of oxen (?) shall tell of it: the handcraftsman (?) shall testify of it: heroes shall stride to wild lion-strife: man overturns man to-night in this house."

PAGE 46

The literal translation of the quatrain is in A.O., p. 63. The quatrain does not occur in the Leinster version.

PAGE 47

Line 4. "A great oak-tree." After the plucking up of the oak-tree by Fergus, the Rawlinson MS. adds: "Others say that it was Curoi mac Dari who took the oak to them, and it was then that he came to them, for there was no man of Munster there (before) except Lugaid the son of Curoi and Cetin Pauci. When Curoi had come to them, he carried off all alone one half of the Boar from all the northern. half of Ireland." This exploit attributed to Curoi is an example of the survival of the Munster account of the Heroic Age, part of which may be preserved in the tales of Finn mac Cumhail.

PAGE 48

The Rawlinson manuscript adds, after mentioning the rewards given to Ferloga But he did not get the serenade (*cepóca*), though he got the horses." Literal translation of the final poem:

O lads of Connaught, I will not fill
your heaviness with a lying tale;
a lad, small your portion,
divided the Boar of Mac Datho.
Three fifties of fifty men
are gone with troops of heroes;

combat of pride for that Ailbe,
small the fault in the matter of the dog.
Victorious Conor came (?),
Ailill of the hosts, and Ket;
Bodb over the slaughters after the fight,
Cuchulain conceded no right.
Congal Aidni there from the east,
Fiamain the man of harmony from the sea,
(he who) suffered in journeys after that
Eogan the son of dark Durthacht.
three sons of Nera (famous) for numbers of battle-fields,
three sons of Usnach, fierce shields:
Senlaech the charioteer,
he was not foolish, (came) from high Conalad Cruachan;
Dubhtach of Emain, high his dignity;
Berba Baither of the gentle word;
Illan glorious for the multitude of his deeds;
fierce Munremur of Loch Sail;
Conall Cernach, hard his valour;
Marcan . . .
Celtchar the Ulsterman, man over man;
Lugaid of Munster, son of three dogs.
Fergus waits great Ailbe,
shakes for them the . . . oak,
took hero's cloak over very strong shield;
red sorrow over red shield.
By Cethern the son of Finntan they were smitten,
single his number at the ford (i.& he was alone);
the men of Connaught's host
he released not for the time of six hours.
Feidlimid with multitude of troops,
Loegaire the Triumphant eastwards,
was half of complaint about the dog
with Aed son of Morna not great.
Great nobles, mighty (?) deeds,
hard heroes, fair companions in a house,
great champions, destruction of clans,
great hostages, great sepulchres.

In this poem may be noted the reference to Cuchulain in line x2 in close connection with that to Bodb the Goddess of War, as indicating the original divine nature of Cuchulain as a war-god also the epithet of Lugaid, "son of three dogs." Two of the dogs are elsewhere stated to be Cu-roi and Cu-chulain, the third seems uncertain. Line 26, describing Marcan, seems untranslatable; the Irish is *Marcan sinna set rod son*. The epithet of the oak in line 32 is also obscure, the Irish is *dairbre n-dall*.

THE SICK-BED OF CUCHULAIN

PAGE: 57

Line 2. "Samhain." Samhain was held on November 1st, and on its eve, "Hallow-e'en"

The exhibition of tips of tongues, on the principle of Indian scalps, has nothing at all to do with the story, and is not mentioned in the usual descriptions of the romance. It is a piece of antiquarian information, possibly correct, and should serve to remind us that the original form of these legends was probably of a barbaric kind, before they were taken in hand by the literary men who gave to the best forms of the romances the character they now have.

Line 23. For the demons screaming from the weapons of warriors compare the Book of Leinster version of the "Combat at the Ford": pages 126, 143 in this volume.

PAGE 58

Line 4. The delay of Conall and Fergus leads to nothing, it is perhaps an introduction from some third form of the story.

Line 19. Leborcham is, in the story of Deirdre, Deirdre's nurse and confidant.

Line 26. "Their three blemishes." This disfigurement of the women of Ulster in honour of their chosen heroes seems to point to a worship of these heroes as gods in the original legend. It may, however, be a sort of rough humour intentionally introduced by the author of the form of the story that we call the Antiquarian form; there are other instances of such humour in this form of the story.

PAGE 59

Line 2. "Like the cast of a boomerang." This is an attempt to translate the word *taithbeim*, return-stroke, used elsewhere (L.U., 63*a*., 4) for Cuchulain's method of capturing birds.

Line 8. "I deem it as being by me that the distribution was made." The words "I deem it" are inserted, they are not in the text. It appears that what Ethne meant was that the distribution by Cuchulain was regarded by her as done by her through her husband.

PAGE 60

Line 9. “Dun Imrith nor yet to Dun Delga.” Dun Imrith is the castle in which Cuchulain was when he met the War-Goddess in the “Apparition of the Morrigan,” otherwise called the “Tain bo Regamna.” Dun Delga or Dundalk is the residence usually associated with Cuchulain. The mention of Emer here is noticeable; the usual statement about the romance is that Ethne is represented as Cuchulain’s mistress, and Emer as his wife; the mention here of Emer in the Antiquarian form may support this; but this form seems to be drawn from so many sources, that it is quite possible that Ethne was the name of Cuchulain’s wife in the mind of the author of the form which in the main is followed. There is no opposition between Emer and Ethne elsewhere hinted at.

Line 15. The appearance of Lugaid Red-Stripes gives a reason for his subsequent introduction in the link between the two forms of the story.

Line 18. “Near the entrance of the chamber in which Cuchulain lay.” It does not yet seem certain whether *imda* was a room or a couch, and it would seem to have both meanings in the Antiquarian form of this story. The expression *forsind airiniuch na imdai* which occurs here might be rendered “at the head of the bed”; but if we compare *i n-airniuch ind rigthige* which occurs twice in “Bricriu’s Feast,” and plainly means “at the entrance of the palace,” it seems possible that *airinech* is here used in the same sense, in which case *imda* would mean “room,” as Whitley Stokes takes it in the “Bruiden da Derga.” On the other hand, the word imda translated on page 63, line 11, certainly means “couches.”

Line 27. “Ah Cuchulain, &c.” Reference may be made for most of the verses in this romance to Thurneysen’s translation of the greater part of it in Sagen aus dem alten Irland but, as some of his renderings are not as close as the verse translations in the text, they require to be supplemented. The poem on pp. 60, 61 is translated by Thurneysen, pp. 84 and 85; but the first two lines should run:—

Ah Cuchulain, under thy sickness
not long would have been the remaining.

And lines 7 and 8 should be:

Dear would be the day if truly
Cuchulain would come to my land.

The epithet “fair” given to Aed Abra’s daughters in line 4 by Thurneysen is not in the Irish, the rest of his translation is very close.

Line 32. “Plain of Cruach.” Cromm Cruach is the name of the idol traditionally destroyed by St. Patrick in the “Lives.” Cromm Cruach is also described In the Book of Leinster (L.L. 213*b*) as an idol to whom human sacrifices were offered. The name of this plain is probably connected with this god.

PAGE 61

Line 30. "Hath released her," Irish *ros léci*. These words are usually taken to mean that Manannan had deserted Fand, and that she had then turned to Cuchulain, but to "desert" is not the only meaning of *lécim*. In the second form of the story, Fand seems to have left Manannan, and though of course the two forms are so different that it is not surprising to find a contradiction between the two, there does not seem to be any need to find one here; and the expression may simply mean that Manannan left Fand at liberty to pursue her own course, which divine husbands often did in other mythologies. Manannan is, of course, the Sea God, the Celtic Poseidon.

PAGE 62

Line 3. Eogan Inbir (Yeogan the Stream) occurs in the Book of Leinster version of the Book of Invasions as one of the opponents of the Tuatha De Danaan, the Folk of the Gods (L.L. 9*b*, 45, and elsewhere).

Line 15. "Said Liban." The text gives "said Fand." This seems to be a scribal slip: there is a similar error corrected on page 79, line 21, where the word "Fand" is written "Emer" in the text.

Line 16. "A woman's protection." The "perilous passage," passed only by a woman's help, occurs elsewhere both in Irish and in other early literatures. See Maelduin, para. 17; Ivain (*Chrétien de Troyes*), vv. 907 *sqq.*; and Mabinogion, "Lady of the Fountain" (Nutt's edition, p. 177).

Line 28. "Labra." Labraid's usual title, as given to him by Liban in both forms of the romance and once by Laeg in the second description of Fairyland, is *Labraid Luath lamar-claideb*, the title being as closely connected with him as {Greek *boh`n a?gaðo`s Mene'laos*}with Menelaus in Homer. It is usually translated as "Labraid quick-hand-on-sword," but the *Luath* need not be joined to lam, it is not in any of the places in the facsimile closely joined to it, and others than Liban give to Labraid the title of *Luath* or "swift," without the addition.

The literal translation of the short pieces of *rhetoric* on pages 62, 63 are,

"Where is Labraid the swift hand-on-sword,
who is the head of troops of victory?
(who) triumphs from the strong frame of his chariot,
who reddens red spear-points."

"Labraid the son of swiftness is there,
he is not slow, abundant shall be
the assembly of war, slaughter is set
when the plain of Fidga shall be full."

"Welcome to thee, O Laeg!
for the sake of her with whom thou hast come;

and since thou hast come,
welcome to thee for thyself!"

The metre of the first two pieces is spirited and unusual. The second one runs:

Atá Labraid luithe cland,
ni bá mall bid immda
tinol catha, cuirther ár,
día bá Ian Mag Fidgae.

PAGE 63

Line 24. "Fand." The derivations of the names of Fand and of Aed Abra are quite in keeping with the character of the Antiquarian form, and would be out of place in the other form of the romance. It may perhaps be mentioned that the proper meaning of Abra is "an eyelash," but the rendering "Aed Abra of the Fiery Eyebrows," which has been employed in accounts of this romance, would convey a meaning that does not seem to have been in the mind of the authors of either of the two forms.

For the literal translations of the three invocations to Labraid, on pp. 63, 66, Thurneysen (p. 87) may be referred to; but there would be a few alterations.

In the first, line 2 should be "heir of a little host, equipped with light spears," if Windisch's Dictionary is to be followed; line 5 would seem to begin "he seeketh out trespasses" (*oirgniu*); and line 7 should begin, "attacker of heroes," not "an attacking troop," which hardly makes sense.

In the second invocation the first line should alter Labraid's title to "Labraid the swift hand-on-sword-of-battle;" line 3 should end with "wounded his side." In line 6 and again in the third line of the third invocation, Thurneysen translates *gus* as "wrath": Windisch gives the word to mean "strength."

Line 4 of the third invocation is rendered "he pierceth through men" by Thurneysen; the Irish is *criathraid ocu*. *Criathraim* is given by O'Reilly as meaning "to sift": "he sifteth warriors" seems a satisfactory meaning, if O'Reilly is to be relied on.

PAGE 65

Labraid's answer to the three invocations seems to run thus, but the translation is doubtful, many words are marked unknown by Windisch: "I have no pride or arrogance, O lady, nor renown, it is not error, for lamentation is stirred our judgment" (reading *na ardarc nid mell, chai mescthair* with the second MS.), "we shall come to a fight of very many and very hard spears, of plying of red swords in right fists, for many peoples to the one heart of Echaid Juil (?), (let be) no *anbi* of thine nor pride, there is no pride or arrogance in me, O lady." I can make nothing of *Anbi*.

PAGE 66

Thurneysen does not translate the *rhetoric*; the translation seems to run thus:

Great unprofitableness for a hero to lie
in the sleep of a sick-bed;
for unearthly women show themselves,
women of the people of the fiery plain of Trogach,
and they have subdued thee,
and they have imprisoned thee,
and they have chased thee away (?) amid great womanish folly.
Rouse thyself from the contest of distress
(*Gloss*, "the sickness sent by the fairy women")
for all is gone of thy vigour
among heroes who ride in chariots,
and thou sittest (?) in the place of the young
and thou art conquered (? *condit chellti* if connected with *tochell*),
and thou art disturbed (?) in thy mighty deeds,
for that which Labraid's power has indicated
rise up, O man who sittest (?) that thou mayest be great.
"Chased thee away" in line 7, for *condot ellat*, perhaps connected with *do-ellaim* (?).

PAGE 67

Thurneysen's translation (p. 91) of Emer's lament may be referred to, but he misses some strong points. Among these are:
Line 5. "Woe to Ulster where hospitality abounds."
Line 12. "Till he found a Druid to lift the weight."
Line 25. "Were it Furbaide of the heroes."
Line 27. "The hound would search through the solid earth."
Line 29. "The hosts of the Sid of Train are dead."
Line 30. "For the hound of the Smith of Conor."
Line 34. "Sick for the horseman of the plains."
Note the familiarity with the land of the fairies which Laeg is asserted to have in the first verse of the poem: this familiarity appears more than once in the Literary form of the story. Laeg speaks of the land of Labraid as "known to him" in his-first description of that land, again in the same description Laeg is recognised by Labraid by his five-folded purple mantle, which seems to have been a characteristic fairy gift. Also, Laeg seems at the end of the tale to be the only one to recognise Manannan. There is no indication of any familiarity of Laeg with the fairy country in the Antiquarian form.

The different Ulster heroes alluded to are mostly well-known; all except Furbaide are in "Mae Datho's Boar." Furbaide was a son of Conor; be is one of the eighteen leaders who assemble on the Hill of Slane in the "Tain bo Cuailgne."

The Smith of Conor is of course Culann, from whom Cuchulain got his name.

PAGES 68, 69

A translation of Emer's "Awakening of Cuchulain" may be found in Thurneysen, p. 92 but there are one or two points that seem to be noted as differing from the rendering there given.

Lines 3 and 4 seem to mean: "Look on the king of Macha, on my beauty / does not that release thee from deep sleep?" Thurneysen gives "Look on the king of Macha, my heart! thy sleep pleases him not." *Mo crath* can hardly mean "my heart."

Line 6 is in the Irish *deca a churnu co comraim!* "see their horns for the contest!" Instead of *comraim* Thurneysen seems to prefer the reading of the second MS., *co cormaim*, and translates "their horns full of beer." Churnu may mean trumpets as well as drinking-horns, and Emer would hardly call on Cuchulain to throw off a drunken sleep (line 21) and then take to beer!

The following translation of lines 17 to 20 seems preferable to Thurneysen's:

"Heavy sleep is decay, and no good thing;
it is fatigue against a heavy war;
it is 'milk for the satiated,'
the sleep that is on thee;
death-weakness is the tanist of death."

The last line is *tánaisi d'éc écomnart*. The tanist was the prince who stood next to the king; the image seems too good a one to be lost; Thurneysen translates "weakness is sister to death."

Line 14 seems to mean "see each wonder wrought by the cold"; Emer calls Cuchulain's attention to the icicles which she thinks he is in danger of resembling.

PAGE 69

For the literal translation of Liban's invitation see Thurneysen, p. 93.

Line 14 should run: "Colour of eyes his skin in the fight;" the allusion is, apparently, to a bloodshot eye.

PAGE 71

Line 4. The Plain of Speech (*Mag Luada*) and the Tree of Triumphs (*Bile Buada*) are apparently part of the Irish mythology; they appear again in Laeg's second description of Fairyland, which is an additional reason for keeping this poem where it is in the second version, and not following Thurneysen in transferring it to the first. *Mag Luada* is sometimes translated as "moving plain," apparently deriving the word from *luath*, "swift."

Laeg's two descriptions of the Fairyland are (if we except the voyage of Bran) the two most definite descriptions of that country in Irish literature. There is very little extravagance in these descriptions; the marvellously fruitful trees, the ever-flowing vat of mead, and the silver-branched tree may be noted. Perhaps the trees of "purple glass" may be added, but for these, see note on line 30. The verse translation has been made to follow the original as closely as possible; for a literal translation Thurneysen's versions (pp. 94 and 88) may be referred to, but some alterations may be made.

The first description seems to begin thus:

I went with noble sportiveness
to a land wonderful, yet well-known;
until I came to a cairn for twenty of troops
where I found Labraid the Long-haired.
There I found him on that hill
sitting among a thousand weapons,
yellow hair on him with beautiful colour,
an apple of gold for the confining of it.

And it ends thus:

Alas I that he went not long ago,
and each cure (should come) at his searching,
that he might see how it is
the great palace that I saw.
Though all Erin were mine
and the kingship of yellow Bregia,
I would resign it; no slight trial;
for knowledge of the place to which I came.

The following points should also be noted:

Line 30 of this first description is *tri bile do chorcor glain*. This undoubtedly means "three trees of purple glass"; but *do chorcor glan* would mean "of bright purple"; and this last rendering, which is quite a common expression (see Etain, p. 12), has been adopted in the verse translation. The order of the words in the expression in the text is unusual, and the adoption of them would give an air of artificiality to the description which is otherwise quite absent from it.

Lines 37 and 38 run thus:

There are there thrice twenty trees,
their tops meet, and meet not.

Lines 43, 44, rendering: "Each with splendid gold fastening well hooked through its eye," are literally "and a brooch of gold with its splendour in the 'ear' of each

cloak." The ears of a cloak, usually described as made of the peculiar white bronze, occur elsewhere in the tales, and there are different speculations as to their use and meaning. The most probable explanation is that they were bronze rings shaped like ears, and sewn into the cloak; a brooch to fasten the cloak being passed through the rings. This explanation has been suggested by Professor Ridgeway, and seems to fit admirably the passages in which these "ears" occur. Compare Fraech, line 33, in the second volume; also the "Courtship of Ferb" (Nutt), p. 6.

There are also a few corrections necessary to Thurneysen's translation of the second description.

Lines 13 to 20 should run thus:

A beautiful band of women;—victory without fetters;—
are the daughters of Aed Abra;
the beauty of Fand is a rushing sound with splendour,
exceeding the beauty of a queen or king.
(The last line is more literally, "not excepting a queen or, &c.")
I will say, since it hath been heard by me,
that the seed of Adam was sinless;
but the beauty of Fand up to my time
hath not found its equal.

For the allusion to Adams sin, compare Etain, p. 26. Allusions like these show that the tales were composed in Christian times. There seems no reason to suppose them to be insertions, especially in cases like this one, where they come in quite naturally.

Line 21 is literally "with their arms for slaying"; not "who warred on each other with weapons" as in Thurneysen.

PAGE 76

For the cooling of Cuchulain's battle-frenzy with water compare the similar treatment in the account of his first foray (L.U., 63*a*; Miss Faraday's translation, p. 34).

For a literal translation of Faud's triumph song over Cuchulain's return see Thurneysen's translation on page 97 Of the work already referred to. Thurneysen's translation is very close; perhaps the last verse should run: "Long rain of red blood at the side of the trees, a token of this proud and masterful, high with wailing is the sorrow for his fiend-like frenzy."

The description of Cuchulain's appearance in verses 5 and 6 seems to point to a conception of him as the sun-god. Compare the "sunlike" seat of his chariot on page 79.

PAGE 78

The literal translation of Liban's rhetoric in welcome to Cuchulain seems to be, "Hail to Cuchulain! King who brings help, great prince of Murthemne! great his mind; pomp of heroes; battle-triumphing; heart of a hero; strong rock of skill; blood-redness of wrath; ready for true foes of the hero who has the valour of Ulster (?); bright his splendour; splendour of the eyes of maidens; Hail to Cuchulain!"

Torc in the second line is glossed in the MS. by "that is, a king."

Cuchulain's account of his own battle is omitted by Thurneysen, possibly because the account that he gives differs from that in the text, as is pointed out by Windisch, *Ir. Text.*, vol. i. p. 201). But it is quite in keeping with the hero's character that he should try to lessen his own glory; and the omission of this account destroys one of the features of the tale.

The literal rendering is:

I threw a cast with my light spear
into the host of Eogan the Stream;
not at all do I know, though renowned the price,
the victory that I have done, or the deed.
Whether he was better or inferior to my strength
hitherto I chanced not on for my decision,
a throw, ignorance of the man in the mist,
certainly he came not away a living man.
A white army, very red for multitudes of horses,
they followed after me on every side (?),
people of Manannan Mac Lir,
Eogan the Stream called them.
I set out in each manner
when my full strength had come to me;
one man to their thirty, hundreds,
until I brought them to death.
I heard the groan of Echaid Juil,
lips speak in friendship,
if it is really true, certainly it was not a fight (?),
that cast, if it was thrown.

The idea of a battle with the waves of the sea underlies the third verse of this description.

PAGE 79

Five pieces of *rhetoric* follow, all of which are translated by Thurneysen. A few alterations may be made, but all of them would be small ones. The verse translations

given are, it is believed, a little closer to the text than Thurneysen's. The metres of the first three pieces are discussed by Professor Rhys in *Y Cymmrodor* for 1905 (pages 166, 167). Professor Rhys reduces the second of these to a hexameter followed by three pentameters, then a hexameter followed by a pentameter. The other two reduce to hexameters mixed with curtailed hexameters and pentameters. The last two pieces of the five, not mentioned by Professor Rhys, show a strophic correspondence, which has been brought out in the verse translation; note especially their openings, and the last line of Emer's speech, *cia no triallta*, as balancing the last line but four of Cuchulain's speech, *cia no comgellta*. The last of these five pieces shows the greatest differences between the verse and literal translations. A literal translation of this would run:

"Wherefore now, O Emer!" said Cuchulain, "should I not be permitted to delay with this lady? for first this lady here is bright, pure, and clear, a worthy mate for a king; of many forms of beauty is the lady, she can pass over waves of mighty seas, is of a goodly shape and countenance and of a noble race, with embroidery and skill, and with handiwork, with

understanding, and sense, and firmness; with plenty of horses and many cattle, so that there is nothing under heaven, no wish for a dear spouse that she doth not. And though it hath been promised (?), Emer," he said, "thou never shalt find a hero so beautiful, so scarred with wounds, so battle-triumphing, (so worthy) as I myself am worthy."

PAGE 81

Line 11. "Fair seems all that's red, &c.," is literally "fair is each red, white is each new, beautiful each lofty, sour is each known, revered is each thing absent, failure is each thing accustomed."

For a translation of the poem in which Fand resigns Cuchulain reference may be made to Thurneysen (p. 101). A more accurate translation of the first verse seems to run thus:

I am she who will go on a journey
which is best for me on account of strong compulsion;
though there is to another abundance of her fame,
(and) it were dearer to me to remain.

Line 16 of poem, translated by Thurneysen "I was true and held my word," is in the original *dáig is misi rop irán*. *Irán* is a doubtful word, if we take it as a form of *aur-án*, *aur* being the intensitive prefix, a better translation may be, "I myself was greatly glowing."

PAGE 82

Line 26. “The lady was seized by great bitterness of mind,” Irish *ro gab etere moir*. The translation of *etere* is doubtful.

PAGE 83

For the final poem, in which Fand returns to Manannan, reference may as before be made to Thurneysen’s translation; but a few changes may be noted:

Line 1 should be, “See the son of the hero people of the Sea.”

Line 5 seems to be, “Although” (lit. “if”) “it is to-day that his cry is excellent.”

Line 7 is a difficult one. Thurneysen gives, “That indeed is the course of love,” apparently reading *rot*, a road, in place of *ret*; but he leaves *eraise* untranslated; the Irish is *is eraise in ret in t-serc*. Might not *eraise* be “turning back,” connected with *eraim*, and the line run: “It is turning back of the road of love”?

Lines 13 to 16 are omitted by Thurneysen. They seem to mean:

When the comely Manannan took me,
he was to me a fitting spouse;
nor did he at all gain me before that time,
an additional stake (?) at a game at the chess.

The last line, *cluchi erail* (lit. “excess”) *ar fidchill*, is a difficult allusion. Perhaps the allusion is to the capture of Etain by Mider as prize at chess from her husband. Fand may be claiming superiority over a rival fairy beauty.

Lines 17 and 18 repeat lines 13 and 14.

Lines 46 and 47 are translated by Thurneysen, “Too hard have I been offended; Laeg, son of Riangabra, farewell,” but there is no “farewell” in the Irish. The lines seem to be: “Indeed the offence was great, O Laeg, O thou son of Riangabra,” and the words are an answer to Laeg, who may be supposed to try to stop her flight.

PAGE 85

Line 24. “That she might forget her jealousy,” lit. “a drink of forgetfulness of her jealousy,” *deoga dermait a héta*. The translation seems to be an accepted one, and certainly gives sense, but it is doubtful whether or not *éta* can be regarded as a genitive of *ét*, “jealousy “; the genitive elsewhere is *eoit*.

There is a conclusion to this romance which is plainly added by the compiler: it is reproduced here, to show the difference between its style and the style of the original author:

“This then was a token given to Cuchulain that he should be destroyed by the People of the Mound, for the power of the demons was great before the advent of the Faith; so great was that power that the demons warred against men in bodily form, and they showed delights and secret things to them; and that those demons were co-eternal was believed by them. So that from the signs that they showed, men called them the Ignorant Folk of the Mounds, the People of the Sid.”

THE EXILE OF THE SONS OF USNACH

PAGE 91

The four pieces of rhetoric, at the beginning of this text are translated by Thurneysen, *Sagen aus dem alten Irland*, pp. 11 and 12. In the first, third, and fourth of those, the only difference of any importance between the text adopted and Thurneysen's versions is the third line of the third piece, which perhaps should run: "With stately eyes with blue pupils," *segdaib suilib sellglassaib*, taking the text of the Yellow Book of Lecan.

The second piece appears to run as follows:

Let Cathbad hear, the fair one, with face that all love,
the prince, the royal diadem, let he who is extolled be increased
by druid arts of the Druid:
because I have no words of wisdom
to oppose (?) to Feidlimid,
the light of knowledge;
for the nature of woman knows not
what is under her body,
(or) what in the hollow of my womb cries out.

These rhetorics are remarkable for the great number of the alliterations in the original.

PAGE 93

Thurneysen omits a verse of Cathbad's poem. A translation of the whole seems to run thus

Deirdre, great cause of destruction,
though thou art fair of face, famous, pale,
Ulster shall sorrow in thy time,
thou hidden (?) daughter of Feidlimid.

Windisch's Dict. gives "modest daughter" in the last line; the original is *ingen fial*. But the word might be more closely connected with *fiál*, "a veil." "Modest" is not exactly the epithet that one would naturally apply to the Deirdre of the Leinster version, and the epithet of "veiled" or "hidden" would suit her much better, the reference being to her long concealment by Conor.

There shall be mischief yet afterwards
on thy account, O brightly shining woman,
hear thou this! at that time shall be
the exile of the three lofty sons of Usnach.
It is in thy time that a violent deed

shall be done thereupon in Emain,
yet afterwards shall it repent the violation
of the safeguard of the mighty son of Róg.

Do fóesam is read in the last verse, combining the Leinster and the Egerton texts.

It is through thee, O woman with excellence,
(is) the exile of Fergus from the Ulstermen,
and a deed from which weeping will come,
the wound of Fiachna, the son of Conor.

Fiachna. is grandson to Conor in the Book of Leinster account of the battle. Fiacha is Conor's son in the Glenn Masain version.

It is thy fault, O woman with excellence,
the wound of Gerrc son of Illadan,
and a deed of no smaller importance,
the slaying of Eogan mac Durthacht.

There is no account of the slaying of Eogan in the Book of Leinster version; and Eogan appears on the Hill of Slane in the Ulster army in the War of Cualgne. The sequel to the Glenn Masain version, however, describes Eogan's death at the hand of Fergus (*Celtic Review*, Jan. 1905, p. 227).

Thou shalt do a deed that is wild and hateful
for wrath against the king of noble Ulster;
thy little grave shall be in that place,
thy tale shall be renowned, O Deirdre.

PAGE 95

Line 13. "Release me, O my wife!" *eirgg uaim a ben*. It is suggested that the vocative ben is "wife," not "woman." It occurs in seven other places besides this in Windisch's Dictionary, and in six of these it means wife (Emer is addressed as wife of Cuchulain in a *deig-ben*, in "Sick-bed," 44). In the remaining case ("Fled Bricrend," 31) the word is abbreviated, and stands b in the text, which might be for *bé*, "O lady," though we should have then expected the accent. I suggest that Naisi, by giving to Deirdre the name of "wife," accepts her offer, for no other sign of acceptance is indicated, and the subsequent action shows that she is regarded as his wife afterwards.

Line 30, "Near to Ballyshannon," and "which men to-day call the Mountain of Howth," are inserted as the modern names of the places. The words correspond to nothing in the Irish.

PAGE 97

Line 13. “Fiacha.” Fiacha, the son of Fergus, corresponds to Illan in the better known version. There is no one in this version who corresponds to the traitor son, Buinne.

PAGE 98

The “Lament of Deirdre,” one of the finest of the older Irish poems, has been rendered by Thurneysen and by others, among which should be specially mentioned Miss Hull, in the Cuchullin Saga, pp. 50-51. O’Curry’s and O’Flanagan’s versions seem to be very far from correct, and it will be more convenient to give that literal translation which

seems nearest to the original, instead of indicating divergencies. The literal translation adopted runs as follows:

Though fair to you seems the keen band of heroes
who march into Emain that they lately left (lit “after departing”),
more stately was the return to their home
of the three heroic sons of Usnach.
Naisi, with mead of delicious hazel-nuts
(came), to be bathed by me at the fire,
Ardan, with an ox or boar of excellence,
Aindle, a faggot on his stately back.
Though sweet be the excellent mead to you
which is drunk by the son of Ness, the rich in strife,
there has been known to me, ere now, leaping over a bank,
frequent sustenance which was sweeter.

Line 3 of the above stanza seems to be *baithium riam réim for bra*, taking *reim* from the Egerton text. The allusion is to a cascade.

When the noble Naisi spread out
a cooking-hearth on hero-board of tree,
sweeter than any food dressed under honey[1]
was what was captured by the son of Usnach.
Though melodious to you each month
(are the) pipers and horn-blowers,
it is my open statement to you to-day
I have heard melody sweeter far than these.
For Conor, the king, is melody
pipers and blowers of horns,
more melodious to me, renowned, enchanting
the voice given out by the sons of Usnach.
Like the sound of the wave the voice of Naisi,

it was a melodious sound, one to hearken to for ever,
Ardan was a good barytone,
the tenor of Aindle rang through the dwelling-place.
Naisi is laid in his tomb,
sad was the protection that he got;
the nation by which he was reared poured out
the cup of poison by which he died.
[1. For “food dressed under honey” compare Fraech, line 544, in the second volume.]
Dear is Berthan, beautiful its lands,
stately the men, though hilly the land,
it is sorrowful that to-day I rise not
to await the sons of Usnach.
Dear the mind, firm, upright,
dear the youth, lofty, modest,
after going with him through the dark wood
dear the girding (?) at early morning.
Dear his gray eye, which women loved,
it was evil-looking against enemies,
after circuit of the wood (was) a noble assembly,
dear the tenor through the dark wood.
I sleep not therefor,
and I stain not my nails with red,
joy comes not to my wakefulness,
for the sons of Usnach return not.
The last line is the Egerton reading.
I sleep not
for half the night on my bed,
my mind wanders amidst clouds of thoughts,
I eat not, nor smile.
There is no leisure or joy for me
in the assemblies of eastern Emain;
there is no peace, nor pleasure, nor repose
in beholding fine houses or splendid ornaments.
What, O Conor, of thee?
for me only sorrow under lamentation hast thou prepared,
such will be my life so long as it remains to me,
thy love for me will not last.

The man who under heaven was fairest to me,
the man who was so dear
thou hast torn from me; great was the crime;
so that I shall not see him until I die.
His absence is the cause of grief to me,
the shape of the son of Usnach shows itself to me,
a dark hill is above his white body
which was desired before many things by me.
His ruddy cheeks, more beautiful than meadows (?),
red lips, eyebrows of the colour of the chafer,
his teeth shining like pearls,
like noble colour of snow.
Well have I known his splendid garb
among the warrior men of Alba;
mantle of crimson, meet for an assembly,
with a border of red gold.
His tunic of satin of costly price,
on it a hundred pearls could be counted, goodly the number
(lit. "a smooth number" ? a round number),
for its embroidery had been used, it was bright,
fifty ounces of *findruine* (*i.e.* white bronze).
A gold-hilted sword in his hand,
two green spears with terrible points (?),
a shield with border of yellow gold,
and a boss of silver upon it.
Fair Fergus brought injury upon us
when inducing us to cross the sea;
he has sold his honour for ale,
the glory of his high deeds is departed.
If there were upon this plain
the warriors of Ulster in the presence of Conor,
all of them would I give up without a struggle
for the companionship of Naisi, the son of Usnach.
Break not to-day my heart (O Conor!),
soon shall I reach my early grave,
stronger than the sea is my grief,
dost thou not know it, O Conor?
PAGE 103

For the literal translations of the poems in the Glenn Masain version see Whitley Stokes in *Irische Texte*, ii. 2, 172 *sqq.*

Stanzas 13 to 16 are not in LVI. (the manuscript which is the second authority used by Stokes for this version, and is the chief authority for this part of the version). They are in the manuscript that Stokes calls II. (the version used by O'Flanagan), which, like LVI., agrees pretty closely with the Glenn Masain text so far as the latter manuscript extends.

Stanza 22 is also from O'Flanagan's manuscript. This verse is not translated by Stokes, but it seems worth inserting. The literal translation of it is:

I am Deirdre without joy,
it is for me the end of my life;
since to remain behind them is the worst thing,
not long life to myself.

PAGE 107

Line 21. Two passages, one describing Fergus' sons born in Connaught, the other summing up his deeds, are omitted, as it is not intended to reproduce this version in full.

THE COMBAT AT THE FORD

The well-known translation by O'Curry of this part of the Book of Leinster version of the "Tain bo Cuailgne" is given in the third volume of his "Manners and Customs," pp. 414-463. There are, as has often been pointed out, many inaccuracies in the translation, and the present version does not claim to correct all or even the greater part of them; for the complete version of the Great Tain by Windisch which has so long eagerly been expected should give us a trustworthy text, and the present translation is in the main founded on O'Curry; to whose version reference may be made for literal translations for such parts of the verse passages as are not noted below. A few more obvious corrections have been made; most of those in the prose will appear by comparing the rendering with O'Curry's; some of the corrections in the literal versions adopted for the poems are briefly indicated. Two poems have been literally translated in full: in these the renderings which have no authority other than O'Curry's are followed by a query, in order to give an indication of the extent to which the translation as given may for the present be regarded as uncertain. For all the more valuable of the corrections made to O'Curry's translation I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. E. J. Quiggin, Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge.

PAGE 118

Line 7 Of the first stanza. O'Curry gives this as "Thou hast come out of every strife,"' which seems to be an impossible rendering; "Take whatever is thy will" seems to be nearer the sense of the passage, and has been adopted.

Lines 5 to 8 of the fourth stanza are very uncertain; and the translation given, which is in part based upon O'Curry, is very doubtful; a more trustworthy one has not, however, been arrived at.

Line 4 of the fifth stanza in O'Curry's rendering means "Here is what thou wilt not earn," *i.e.* "We can pay more than a full reward for thy services."

Lines 5 and 6 of the sixth stanza should be, "If my request be granted me I will advance, though I am not his match."

Line 2 Of the eighth stanza, "Not thine a pleasant smile for a consort." *Brachail* in the next line is "guardian."

Line 10 of the last stanza. Elgga is one of the names of Ireland.

PAGE 121

Line 1. *Maeth n-araig*, "in an easy task," the force of which O'Curry seems to miss, translating it "as he thought."

There are several changes to make in O'Curry's rendering of the dialogue between Fergus and Cuchulain. It should run thus:

F. O Cuchulain, manifest is the bargain,
I see that rising is timely for thee;
here comes to thee in anger
Ferdiad, son of Daman, of the ruddy face.
C. I am here, it is no light task
valiantly delaying the men of Erin;
I have not yielded a foot in retreat
to shun the combat of any one man.
F. Fierce is the man in his excited (?) rage
because of his blood-red sword:
a horny skin is about Ferdiad of the troops,
against it prevails not battle or combat.
C. Be silent, urge not thy story,
O Fergus of the powerful weapons!
on any field, on any ground,
there is no unequal fight for me.
F. Fierce is the man, a war for twenties,
it is not easy to vanquish him,
the strength of a hundred in his body, valiant his deed (?),
spears pierce him not, swords cut him not.

C. Should we happen to meet at a ford (*i.e.* a field of battle),
I and Ferdiad of well-known valour,
the separation shall not be without history,
fierce shall be our edge-combat.
F. Better would it be to me than reward,
O Cuchulain of the blood-stained sword,
that it was thou who carried eastward
the spoils (*coscur*, not *corcur*) of the proud Ferdiad.
C. I give thee my word with boasting,
though I am not good at bragging,
that it is I who shall gain the victory
over the son of Daman, the son of Daré.
F. It is I who gathered the forces eastwards
in revenge for my dishonour by the men of Ulster;
with me they have come from their lands,
their champions and their battle warriors.
C. If Conor had not been in his sickness
hard would have been his nearness to thee;
Medb of Magh in Scail had not made
an expedition of so loud boastings.
F. A greater deed awaits thy hand,
battle with Ferdiad son of Daman,
hardened bloody weapons, friendly is my speech,
do thou have with thee, O Cuchulain!

PAGE 124

Line 7 of O'Curry's rendering of the first stanza should run: "So that he may take the point of a weapon through him."

Stanza 2 of the poem should run thus:

It would be better for thee to stay,
thy threats will not be gentle,
there will be some one who shall have sickness on that account,
distressful will be thy departure
to encounter the Rock of Ulster;
and ill may this venture turn out;
long will be the remembrance of it,
woe shall be to him who goeth that journey.

Line 4 of the next stanza, "I will not keep back to please you."

PAGE 126

The literal rendering of the poem seems to be:
I hear the creaking of a chariot
with a beautiful silver yoke,
the figure of a man with perfection
(rises) from the wheels of the stout chariot;
over Breg Row, over Braine
they come (?), over the highway
beside the lower part of the Burg of the Trees;
it (the chariot?) is triumphant for its victories.
It is a heroic (?) hound who drives it,
it is a trusty charioteer who yokes it,
it is a noble hawk who scourges
his horses to the south:
he is a stubborn hero,
he is certain (to cause) heavy slaughter,
it is well-known that not with indexterity (?)
is the bringing of the battle to us.
Woe for him who shall be upon the hillock
waiting for the hound who is fitly framed (lit. in harmony");
I myself declared last year
that there would come, though it be from somewhere, a hound
the Hound of Emain Macha,
the Hound with a form on which are hues of all colours,
the Hound of a territory, the Hound of battle;
I hear, we have heard.
As a second rendering of the above in a metre a little closer to the original than that given in the text, the following may be suggested:
Shrieks from war-car wake my hearing,
Silver yokes are nigh appearing;
High his perfect form is rearing,
He those wheels who guides!
Braina, Braeg Ross past it boundeth,
Triumph song for conquests soundeth,
Lo! the roadway's course it roundeth,
Skirting wooded sides.
Hero Hound the scourge hard plieth,
Trusty servant yoke-strap tieth,
Swift as noble hawk, he flieth,

Southward urging steeds!
Hardy chief is he, and story
Soon must speak his conquests gory,
Great for skilful war his glory;
We shall know his deeds!
Thou on hill, the fierce Hound scorning,
Waitest; woe for thee is dawning;
Fitly framed he comes, my warning
Spoke him thus last year:
"Emain's Hound towards us raceth,
Guards his land, the fight he faceth,
Every hue his body graceth:"
Whom I heard, I hear.

PAGE 127

In O'Curry's rendering of the dialogue between Ferdia and his servant, line 3 should be, "That it be not a deed of prophecy," not "a deferred deed"; and line 6, With his proud sport."

Last stanza of the poem:

It seems thou art not without rewards,
so greatly hast thou praised him;
why else hast thou extolled him
ever since I left my house?
they who now extol the man
when he is in their sight
come not to attack him,
but are cowardly churls.

PAGE 128

Line 34. "As a hawk darts up from the furrow." O'Curry gives "from the top of a cliff." The word in the Irish is *claiss*.

PAGE 129

The metre of this poem, which is also the metre of all the preceeding poems except the second in this romance, but does not occur elsewhere in the collection, may be illustrated by quoting the original of the fifth verse, which runs as follows:

Re funiud, re n-aidchi
Madit eicen airrthe,
Comrac dait re bairche,
Ni ba bán in gléo:
Ulaid acot gairmsiu,

Ra n-gabartar aillsiu,
Bud olc dóib in taidbsiu
Rachthair thairsiu is treó.
Literal translation of the first two stanzas:
What has brought thee here, O Hound,
to fight with a strong champion?
crimson-red shall flow thy blood
over the breaths of thy steeds;
woe is thy journey:
it shall be a kindling of fuel against a house,
need shalt thou have of healing
if thou reach thy home (alive).
I have come before warriors
who gather round a mighty host-possessing prince,
before battalions, before hundreds,
to put thee under the water,
in anger with thee, and to slay thee
in a combat of hundreds of paths of battle,
so that thine shall the injury
as thou protectest thy head.
Line 2 of the fifth stanza, “Good is thy need of height.”
Line 8 of the seventh stanza, “Without valour, without strength.”
PAGE 133
Line 3. Literally: “Whatever be the excellence of her beauty.” A similar literal translation for page 138, line 10, of the dialogue; the same line occurs in verse 3 on page 148, but is not rendered in the verse translation.
PAGE 134
Line 18. “O Cuchulain! for beautiful feats renowned.” O’Curry gives this as prose, but it is clearly verse in the original.
PAGE 138
Lines 5, 6 of dialogue. “O Cuchulain! who art a breeder of wounds” (lit. “pregnant with wounds”); “O true warrior! O true” (?accent probably omitted) “champion!”
Lines 7, 8. “There is need for some one” (*i.e.* himself) “to go to the sod where his final resting-place shall be.” The Irish of line 7 is *is éicen do neoch a thecht*, which O’Curry translates “a man is constrained to come,” and he is followed by Douglas Hyde, who renders the two lines:
Fate constrains each one to stir,
Moving towards his sepulchre.

But *do neoch* cannot possibly mean "every man," it means "some man;" usually the person in question is obvious. Compare page 125 of this romance, line 3, which is literally: "There will be some one who shall have sickness on that account," *biaid nech diamba galar*, meaning, as here, Ferdia.

The line is an explanation of Ferdia's appearance, and is not a moral reflection.

Line 29. "O Cuchulain! with floods of deeds of valour," or "brimming over with deeds, &c."

PAGE 141

Line 9. "Four jewels of carbuncle." This is the reading of H. 2, 17; T.C.D; which O'Curry quotes as an alternative to "forty" of the Book of Leinster. "Each one of them fit to adorn it" is by O'Curry translated "in each compartment." The Irish is a *cach aén chumtach*: apparently "for each one adornment."

PAGE 144

Line 8 of poem. "Alas for the departing of my ghost."

PAGE 146

Lines 1, 2. "Though he had struck off the half of my leg that is sound, though he had smitten off half my arm."

PAGE 148

Line 5. "Since he whom Aife bore me," literally "Never until now have I met, since I slew Aife's only son, thy like in deeds of battle, never have I found it, O Ferdia." This is O'Curry's rendering; if it is correct, and it seems to be so substantially, the passage raises a difficulty. Aife's only son is, according to other records, Conlaoch, son of Cuchulain and Aife, killed by his father, who did not at the time know who Conlaoch was. This battle is usually represented as having taken place at the end of Cuchulain's life; but here it is represented as preceding the War of Cualgne, in which Cuchulain himself is represented to be a youth. The allusion certainly indicates an early date for the fight with Conlaoch, and if we are to lay stress on the age of Cuchulain at the time of the War, as recorded in the Book of Leinster, of whose version this incident is a part, the "Son of Aife" would not have been a son of Cuchulain at all in the mind of the writer of this verse. It is possible that there was an early legend of a fight with the son of Aife which was developed afterwards by making him the son of Cuchulain; the oldest version of this incident, that in the Yellow Book of Lecan, reconciles the difficulty by making Conlaoch only seven years old when he took up arms; this could hardly have been the original version.

Line 23 of poem is literally: "It is like thrusting a spear into sand or against the sun."

The metre of the poem "Ah that brooch of gold," and of that on page 144, commencing "Hound, of feats so fair," are unique in this collection, and so far as I know do not occur elsewhere. Both have been reproduced in the original metre, and the rather complicated rhyme-system has also been followed in that on page 148. The first verse of the Irish of this is

Dursan, a éo óir
a Fhirdiad na n-dám
a belc bemnig buain
ba buadach do lámh.

The last syllable of the third line has no rhyme beyond the echo in the second syllable of the next line; *oir*, "gold," has no rhyme till the word is repeated in the third line of the third verse, rhymed in the second line of the fourth, and finally repeated at the end. The second verse has two final words echoed, *brass* and *maeth*; it runs thus

Do barr bude brass
ba cass, ba cáin sét;
do chriss duillech maeth
immut táeb gu t-éc.

The rhymes in the last two verses are exactly those of the reproduction, they are cáin sáir, máin, láim, cháin, the other three end rhymes being óir, chóir, and óir.

Line 3 of this poem is "O hero of strong-striking blows."

Line 4. "Triumphant was thine arm."

PAGE 149

Lines 11 and 12 of the poem. "Go ye all to the swift battle that shall come to you from German the green-terrible" (? of the terrible green spear).

PAGE 150

Line 12. The Torrian Sea is the Mediterranean.

PAGE 151

Line 15. Literally: "Thou in death, I alive and nimble."

Line 23. "Wars were gay, &c." *Cluchi cach, gáine cach*, "Each was a game, each was little," taking *gaine* as *gainne*, the known derivative of *gand*, "scanty." O'Curry gives the meaning as "sport," and has been followed by subsequent translators, but there does not seem any confirmation of this rendering.

PAGE 153

Line 10. Banba is one of the names of Ireland.

END OF VOL. I.

HEROIC ROMANCES OF IRELAND

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE AND VERSE, WITH PREFACE, SPECIAL INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES,

BY

A H LEAHY

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON
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PREFACE TO VOL. II

IT seems to have been customary in ancient Ireland to precede by shorter stories the recital of the Great Tain, the central story of the Irish Heroic Age. A list of fourteen of these "lesser Tains," three of which are lost, is given in Miss Hull's "Cuchullin Saga"; those preserved are the Tain bo Aingen, Dartada, Flidais, Fraich, Munad, Regamon, Regamna, Ros, Ruanadh, Sailin, and Ere. Of these, five only have been edited, viz. the Tain bo Dartada, Flidais, Fraich, Regamon, and Regamna; all these five are given in this volume.

The last four tales are all short, and perhaps are more truly "preludes" (*remscela*) than the Tain bo Fraich, which has indeed enough of interest in itself to make it an independent tale, and is as long as the four put together. All the five tales have been rendered into verse, with a prose literal translation opposite to the verse rendering, for reasons already given in the preface to the first volume. A short introduction, describing the manuscript authority, is prefixed to each; they all seem to go back in date to the best literary period, but appear to have been at any rate put into their present form later than the Great Tain, in order to lead up to it. A possible exception to this may be found at the end of the Tain bo Flidais, which seems to give a different account of the end of the war of Cualgne, and to claim that Cuchulain was defeated, and that Connaught gained his land for its allies. It may be mentioned that the last four tales are expressly stated in the text to be "*remscela*" to the Great Tain.

INTRODUCTION IN VERSE

When to an Irish court of old
Came men, who flocked from near and far
To hear the ancient tale that told
Cuchulain's deeds in Cualgne's War;
Oft, ere that famous tale began,
Before their chiefest bard they hail,
Amid the throng some lesser man
Arose, to tell a lighter tale;
He'd fell how Maev and Ailill planned
Their mighty hosts might best be fed,
When they towards the Cualgne land
All Irelands swarming armies led;
How Maev the youthful princes sent
To harry warlike Regamon,
How they, who trembling, from her went,
His daughters and his cattle won;
{p. viii}
How Ailill's guile gained Darla's cows,
How vengeful fairies marked that deed;
How Fergus won his royal spouse
Whose kine all Ireland's hosts could feed;
How, in a form grotesque and weird,
Cuchulain found a Power Divine;
Or how in shapes of beasts appeared
The Magic Men, who kept the Swine;
Or how the rowan's guardian snake
Was roused by order of the king;
Or how, from out the water, Fraech
To Finnabar restored her ring.
And though, in greater tales, they chose
Speech mired with song, men's hearts to sway,
Such themes as these they told in prose,
Like speakers at the "Feis" to-day.

To men who spake the Irish tongue
That form of Prose was pleasing well,
While other lands in ballads sung
Such tales as these have loved to tell:
So we, who now in English dress
These Irish tales would fain
And seek their spirit to express,
Have set them down in ballad verse;
And, though to Celts the form be strange,
Seek not too much the change to blame;
'Tis but the form alone we change;
The sense, the spirit rest the same.

THE PRELUDES TO THE RAID OF CUALGNE

TAIN BO FRAICH

INTRODUCTION

THE Tain bo Fraich, the Driving of the Cattle of Fraech, has apparently only one version; the different manuscripts which contain it differing in very small points; most of which seem to be due to scribal errors.

Practically the tale consists of two quite separate parts. The first, the longer portion, gives the adventures of Fraech at the court of Ailill and Maev of Connaught, his courtship of their daughter, Finnabar, and closes with a promised betrothal. The second part is an account of an expedition undertaken by Fraech to the Alps "in the north of the land of the Long Beards," to recover stolen cattle, as well as his wife," who is stated by O'Beirne Crowe, on the authority of the "Courtship of Trebland" in the Book of Fermoy, to have been Trebland, a semi-deity, like Fraech himself. Except that Fraech is the chief actor in both parts, and that there is one short reference at the end of the second part to the fact that Fraech did, as he had promised in the first part, join Ailill and Maev upon the War of Cualnge, there is no connection between the two stories. But the difference between the two parts is not only in the subject-matter; the difference in the style is even yet more apparent. The first part has, I think, the most complicated plot of any Irish romance, it abounds in brilliant descriptions, and, although the original is in prose, it is, in feeling, highly poetic. The second part resembles in its simplicity and rapid action the other "fore tales" or preludes to the War of Cualnge contained in this volume, and is of a style represented in English by the narrative ballad.

In spite of the various characters of the two parts, the story seems to have been regarded as one in all the manuscripts which contain it; and the question how these two romances came to be regarded as one story becomes interesting. The natural hypothesis would be that the last part was the original version, which was in. its earlier part re-written by a man of genius, possibly drawing his plot from some brief statement that Finnabar was promised to Fraech in return for the help that he and his recovered cattle could give in the Great War; but a difficulty, which prevents

us from regarding the second part as an original legend, at once comes in. The second part of the story happens to contain so many references to nations outside Ireland that its date can be pretty well fixed. Fraech and his companions go, over the sea from Ulster, *i.e.* to Scotland; then through "north Saxon-land" to the sea of Icht (*i.e.* the sea of Wight or the English Channel); then to the Alps in the north of the land of the Long-Beards, or Lombards. The Long-Beards do not appear in Italy until the end of the sixth century; the suggestion of North Saxon-Land reaching down to the sea of Wight suggests that there was then a South Saxon-Land, familiar to an Irish writer, dating this part of the story as before the end of the eighth century, when both Saxons and Long-Beards were overcome by Charlemagne. The second part of the story is, then, no original legend, but belongs to the seventh or eighth century, or the classical period; and it looks as if there were two writers, one of whom, like the author of the Egerton version of Etain, embellished the love-story part of the original legend, leaving the end alone, while another author wrote an account of the legendary journey of the demi-god Fraech in search for his stolen cattle, adding the geographical and historical knowledge of his time. The whole was then put together, like the two parts of the Etain story; the difference between the two stories in the matter of the wife does not seem to have troubled the compilers.

The oldest manuscript authority for the Tain bo Fraich is the Book of Leinster, written before 1150. There are at least two other manuscript authorities, one; in Egerton, 1782 (published by Professor Kuno Meyer in the *Zeitschrift für Celt. Philologie*, 1902); the other is in MS. XL., Advocates' Library, Edinburgh (published in the Revue Celtique, Vol. XXIV.). Professor Meyer has kindly allowed me to copy his comparison of these manuscripts and his revision of O'Beirne Crowe's translation of the Book of Leinster text. The text of the literal translation given here follows, however, in the main O'Beirne Crowe's translation, which is in the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy for 1870; a few insertions are made from the other MSS.; when so made the insertion is indicated by a note.

For those who may be interested in the subsequent history of Fraech, it may be mentioned that he was one of the first of the Connaught champions to be slain by Cuchulain in the war of Cualnge; see Miss Faraday's translation (Grimm Library, page 35).

PERSONS IN THE STORY

MORTALS

AILILL, *King of Connaught*.
MEDB (or Maev), *Queen of Connaught*.
FINDABAR (or Finnabar), *their daughter*.
FROECH (or Fraech), (pronounced Fraych); *son of a Connaught man and a fairy mother*.
CONALL CERNACH (Conall the Victorious), *champion of Ulster*.
Two IRISH WOMEN, in captivity in the Alps, north of Lombardy.
LOTHAR (or Lothur), *a follower of Fraech*.
BICNE, *a follower of Conall*.

IMMORTALS

BEFIND, *Fraech's fairy mother*.
BOAND (pronounced like "owned"), *sister to Befind; Queen of the Fairies*.
THREE FAIRY HARPERS.

TAIN BO FRAICH
THE RAID FOR THE CATTLE OF FRAECH

LITERAL TRANSLATION

FRAECH, son of Idath of the men of Connaught, a son he to Befind from the *Sidé*: a sister she to Boand. He is the hero who is the most beautiful that was of the men of Eriu and of Alba, but he was not long-lived. His mother gave him twelve cows out of the Sid (the fairy mound), they are white-eared. He had a good housekeeping till the end of eight years without the taking of a wife. Fifty sons of kings, this was the number of his household, co-aged, co-similar to him all between form and instruction. Findabair, daughter of Ailill and Medb, loves him for the great stories about him. It is declared to him at his house. Eriu and Alba were full of his renown and the stories about him.

To Fraech[1] was Idath[2] father,
A Connaught man was he:
And well we know his mother
Who dwells among the Shee;[3]
Befind they call her, sister
To Boand,[4] the Fairy Queen;
And Alba ne'er, nor Erin,
Such grace as Fraech's hath seen.
Yet wondrous though that hero's grace,
His fairy lineage high,
  For years but few his lovely face
  Was seen by human eye.
Fraech had twelve of white-eared fairy-cattle,
'Twas his mother those cattle who gave:
For eight years in his home he dwelt wifeless,
And the state of his household was brave;
Fifty princes, whose age, and whose rearing,
And whose forms were as his, with him played;
And his glory filled Alba and Erin

Till it came to the ears of a maid:
For Maev and Ailill's[5] lovely child,
Fair Findabar, 'twas said,
By tales of Fraech to love beguiled,
With Fraech in love would wed.

[1. Pronounced Fraych.
2. Pronounced Eeda.
3. The Fairies.
4. Pronounced with the sound of "owned."
5. Pronounced Al-ill.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

After this going to a dialogue with the maiden occurred to him; he discussed that matter with his people.

"Let there be a message then sent to thy mother's sister, so that a portion of wondrous robing and of gifts from the *Sidé* (fairy folk) be given thee from her." He goes accordingly to the sister, that is to Boand, till he was in Mag Breg, and he carried away fifty dark-blue cloaks, and each of them was like the back of a black chafer,[1] and four black-grey, rings on each cloak, and a brooch of red gold on each cloak, and pale white tunics with loop-animals of gold around them. And fifty silver shields with edges, and a candle of a king's-house in the hand of them (the men), and fifty studs of *findruine*[2] on each of them (the lances), fifty knobs of thoroughly burned gold on each of them; points (*i.e.* butt-ends) of carbuncle under them beneath, and their point of precious stones. They used to light the night as if they were the sun's rays.

And there were fifty gold-hilted swords with them, and a soft-grey
mare under the seat of each man, and bits of gold to them;
Now the news of the love of that maid to Fraech, at his home where he dwelt, was brought,
And he called his folk, and with all he spoke, and for speech with the maid he sought:
And they counselled him thus: "Let a message from thee be sent to thy fairy kin
To entreat their aid when we seek that maid; a boon we may chance to win:
For the wondrous robes of the fairy land, and for gifts from the fairies plead;
And sure thy mother's sister's hand will give to thee all thy need."
To Mag Breg,[3] where his mother's sister dwelt, to Boand he away hath gone,
And she gave to him mantles of dark black-blue, like a beetle's back they shone:
Four dark-grey rings in each cloak she gave were sewn, and a brooch shone, bright

With the good red gold in each mantle's fold; she gave tunics pale and white,
And the tunics were bordered with golden loops, that forms as of beasts displayed;
And a fifty she added of well-rimmed shields, that of silver white were made.
Then away they rode, in each hero's hand was a torch for a kingly hall,
For studs of bronze, and of well-burned gold, shone bright on the spears of all;
On carbuncle sockets the spears were set, their points with jewels blazed;
And they lit the night, as with fair sunlight, as men on their glory gazed.
By each of the fifty heroes' side was a sword with a hilt of gold;
And a soft-grey mare was for each to ride, with a golden curb controlled;
[1. The Book of Leinster gives "fifty blue cloaks, each like findruine of art."
2. Pronounced "find-roony," the unknown "white-bronze" metal.
3. Pronounced Maw Brayg.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

a plate of silver with a little bell of gold around the neck of each horse. Fifty caparisons[1] of purple with threads of silver out of them, with buckles of gold and silver and with head-animals (*i.e.* spiral ornaments). Fifty whips of findruine, with a golden hook on the end of each of them. And seven chase-hounds in chains of silver, and an apple of gold between each of them. Greaves of bronze about them, by no means was there any colour which was not on the hounds.
Seven trumpeters with them with golden and silver trumpets with many coloured garments, with golden fairy-yellow heads of hair, with shining tunics. There were three jesters before them with silver diadems under gilding. Shields with engraved emblems (or marks of distinction) with each of them;
At each horse's throat was a silver plate, and in front of that plate was swung,
With a tinkling sound to the horse's tread, a bell with a golden tongue.
on each steed was a housing of purple hide, with threads of silver laced,
And with spiral stitch of the silver threads the heads of beasts were traced,
And each housing was buckled with silver and gold: of *findruine*[3] was made the whip
For each rider to hold, with a crook of gold where it came to the horse man's grip.
By their sides, seven chase-hounds were springing
At leashes of silver they strained,
And each couple a gold apple, swinging
On the fetter that linked them, sustained:
And their feet with bronze sheaths had been guarded,
As if greaves for defence they had worn,
Every hue man hath seen, or hath fancied,

By those chase-hounds in brilliance was borne.
Seven trumpeters strode on the road before, with colour their cloaks were bright,
And their coats, that shone with the gauds they wore, flashed back as they met the light;
On trumpets of silver and gold they blew, and sweet was the trumpets' sound,
And their hair, soft and yellow, like fairy threads, shone golden their shoulders round.
Three jesters marched in the van, their-crowns were of silver, by gilt concealed,
And emblems they. carried of quaint device, engraved on each jester's shield;
[1. The word for caparisons is "acrann," the usual word for a shoe. It is suggested that here it may be a caparison of leather: "shoes" seem out of place here. See Irische Texts, iii.
2. p. 531.
3. Pronounced "find-roony," the unknown "white-bronze" metal.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

with crested staves, with ribs of bronze (copper-bronze) along their sides, Three harp-players with a king's appearance about each of them opposite to these.[1] They depart for Cruachan with that appearance on them.
The watchman sees them from the dun when they had come into the plain of Cruachan. "A multitude I see," he says, "(come) towards the dun in their numbers. Since Ailill and Maev assumed sovereignty there came not to them before, and there shall not come to them, a multitude, which is more beautiful, or which is more splendid. It is the same with me that it were in a vat of wine my head should be, with the breeze that goes over them.
"The manipulation and play that the young hero who is in it makes—I have not before seen its likeness. He shoots his pole a shot's discharge from him; before it reaches to earth the seven chase-hounds with their seven silver chains catch it."
At this the hosts come from the *dun* of Cruachan to view them. The people in the *dun* smother one another, so that sixteen men die while viewing them.
[1. "Opposite to these" is in the Egerton MS. only.]
They had staves which with crests were adorned, and ribs down their edges in red bronze ran;
Three harp-players moved by the jesters' sides, and each was a kingly man.
All these were the gifts that the fairy gave, and gaily they made their start,
And to Croghan's' hold, in that guise so brave, away did the host depart.
On the fort stands a watchman to view them,
And thus news down to Croghan he calls:

"From yon plain comes, in fulness of numbers,
A great army to Croghan's high walls;
And, since Ailill the throne first ascended,
Since the day we hailed Maev as our Queen,
Never army so fair nor so splendid
Yet hath come, nor its like shall be seen."
"'Tis strange," said he," as dipped in wine,
So swims, so reels my head,
As o'er me steals the breath divine
Of perfume from them shed."
"A fair youth," said he, "forth with them goeth,
And the grace of such frolicsome play,
And such lightness in leap as he showeth
Have I seen not on earth till to-day:
For his spear a full shot's length he flingeth,
Yet the spear never reacheth to ground,
For his silver-chained hounds follow after,
In their jaws is the spear ever found!"
The Connaught hosts without the fort
To see that glory rushed:
Sixteen within, of baser sort,
Who gazed, to death were crushed.
[1. Pronounced Crow-han.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

They alight in front of the *dun*. They tent their steeds, and they loose the chase-hounds. They (the hounds) chase the seven deer to Rath-Cruachan, and seven foxes, and seven hares, and seven wild boars, until the youths kill them in the lawn of the *dun*. After that the chase-hounds dart a leap into Brei; they catch seven otters. They brought them to the elevation in front of the chief rath. They (Fraech and his suite) sit down there.

A message comes from the king for a parley with them. It is asked whence they came, they name themselves according to their true names, "Fraech, son of Idath this," say they. The steward tells it to the king and queen. "Welcome to them," say Ailill and Maev; "It is a noble youth who is there," says Ailill, "let him come into the *Liss* (outer court)." The fourth of the house is allotted to them. This was the array of the house, a seven fold order in it; seven apartments from fire to side-wall

in the house all round. A rail (or front) of bronze to each apartment; a partitioning of red yew under variegated planing all.
To the fort came the youths, from their steeds they leapt, for the steeds and the stabling cared,
And they loosed the hounds that in leash they kept, for the hunt were the hounds prepared;
Seven deer, seven foxes and hares, they chased to the dun on Croghan's plain,
Seven boars they drave, on the lawn in haste the game by the youths was slain:
With a bound they dashed into Bree, whose flood by the lawns of Croghan flows;
Seven otters they caught in its stream, and brought to a hill where the gateway rose.
'Twas there that Fraech and the princes sat at the castle-gate to rest,
And the steward of Croghan with Fraech would speak, for such was the king's behest:
Of his birth it was asked, and the men he led all truth to the herald spake:
"It is Idath's son who is here," they said, and they gave him the name of Fraech.
To Ailill and Maev went the steward back of the stranger's name to tell;
"Give him welcome," said they: "Of a noble race is that youth, and I know it well;
Let him enter the court of our house," said the king, the gateway they opened wide;
And the fourth of the palace they gave to Fraech, that there might his youths abide.
Fair was the palace that there they found,
Seven great chambers were ranged it round;
Right to the walls of the house they spread,
Facing the hall, where the fire glowed red:
Red yew planks, that had felt the plane,
Dappled the walls with their tangled grain:

LITERAL TRANSLATION

Three plates of bronze in the skirting of each apartment. Seven plates of brass from the ceiling (?) to the roof-tree in the house.
Of pine the house was made; it is a covering of shingle it had externally. There were sixteen windows in the house, and a frame of brass, to each of them; a tie of brass across the roof-light. Four beams of brass on the apartment of Ailill and Medb, adorned all with bronze, and it in the exact centre of the house. Two rails of silver around it under gilding. In the front a wand of silver that reached the middle rafters of the house. The house was encircled all round from the door to the other.[1]
They hang up their arms in that house, and they sit, and welcome is made to them.

Rails of bronze at the side-walls stood,
Plates of bronze had made firm the wood,
Seven brass bolts to the roof-tree good
  Firmly the vaulting tied.
All that house had of pine been made,
Planks, as shingles, above were laid;
Sixteen windows the light let pass,
Each in a frame of the shining brass:
High through the roof was the sky seen bright;
Girder of brass made that opening tight,
Under the gap it was stretched, and light
  Fell on its gleaming side.
All those chambers in splendour excelling,
The midmost of all in the ring,
Rose a room, set apart as the dwelling
Of Queen Maev, and of Ailill the king.
Four brass columns the awning supported
For their couch, there was bronze on the wall;
And two rails, formed of silver, and gilded,
In that chamber encircled it all:
In the front, to mid-rafters attaining,
Rose in silver a wand from the floor;
And with rooms was that palace engirdled,
For they stretched from the door to the door.
'Twas there they went to take repose,
On high their arms were hung;
And down they sank, and welcome rose,
Acclaimed by every tongue.

[1. It should be noted that it is not certain whether the word "imdai," translated apartments, really means "apartments" or "benches." The weight of opinion seems at present to take it as above.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"Welcome to you," say Ailill and Medb. "It is that we have come for," says Fraech. "It shall not be a journey for boasting[1] this," says Medb, and Ailill and Medb arrange the chess-board after that. Fraech then takes to the playing of chess with a man of their (?) people.

It was a beauty of a chess-board. A board of *findruine* in it with four ears[2] and edges of gold. A candle of precious stones at illuminating for them. Gold and silver the figures that were upon the table. “Prepare ye food for the warriors,” said Ailill. “Not it is my desire,” said Medb, but to go to the chess yonder against Fraech.” “Get to it, I am pleased,” said Ailill, and they play the chess then, and Fraech.

His people were meanwhile at cooking the wild animals. “Let thy harpers play for us,” says Ailill to Fraech. “Let them play indeed!” says Fraech. A harp-bag[3] of the skins of otters about them with their adornment of ruby (*or* coral), beneath their adornment of gold and silver.

[1. This is the rendering in the Yellow Book of Lecan, considered by Meyer to be the true reading. The Book of Leinster text gives “aig-baig,” a word of doubtful meaning. The Eg. MS. has also a doubtful word.

2. The “ears” were apparently handles shaped like ears. The same word is used for the rings in the cloaks, line 33 above.

3. Meyer translates this: “the concave part of the harp.”]

By the queen and the king they were welcome made, the strangers they turned to greet;
And their courtesy graciously Fraech repaid: “’Twas thus we had hoped to meet.”
“Not for boasting to-day are ye come!” said Maev; the men for the chess she set:
And a lord of the court in the chess-man sport by Fraech in a match was met.
’Twas a marvellous board of *findruine* fair was prepared, when they played that game,
Four handles, and edges of gold it had, nor needed they candles’ flame;
For the jewels that blazed at the chess-board’s side, a light, as from lamps, would yield;
And of silver and gold were the soldiers made, who engaged on that mimic field.
“Get ye food for the chiefs!” said the king; said Maev, “Not yet, ’tis my will to stay,
To sit with the strangers, and here with Fraech in a match at the chess to play!”
“Let thy game be played!” said Ailill then, “for it pleaseth me none the less:”
And Queen Maev and Fraech at the chess-board sate, and they played at the game of chess.
Now his men, as they played, the wild beasts late caught were cooking, they thought to feed;
And said Ailill to Fraech, “Shall thy harpmen play?” “Let them play,” said Fraech, “indeed:”

Now those harpers were wondrous men, by their sides they had sacks of the otter's skin,
And about their bodies the sacks were tied, and they carried their harps within,
With stitches of silver and golden thread each case for a harp was sewed;
And, beneath the embroidery gleaming red, the shimmer of rubies showed!
The skin of a roe about them in the middle, it was as white as snow; black-grey eyes in their centre. Cloaks of linen as white as the tunic of a swan around these ties.[1] Harps of gold and silver and bronze, with figures of serpents and birds, and hounds of gold and silver: as they moved those strings those figures used to run about the men all round.
They play for them then so that twelve of the people[2] of Ailill and Medb die with weeping and sadness.
Gentle and melodious were the triad, and they were the Chants of Uaithne[3] (Child-birth). The illustrious triad are three brothers, namely *Gol-traiges* (Sorrow-strain), and *Gen-traiges* (Joy-strain), and *Suan-traiges* (Sleep-strain). Boand from the fairies is the mother of the triad:
At every one of the harpers' waists was girded the hide of a roe,
And black-grey spots in its midst were placed, but the hide was as white as snow;
And round each of the three of them waved a cloak, as white as the wild swan's wings:
{160} Gold, silver, and bronze were the harps they woke; and still, as they touched the strings,
The serpents, the birds, and the hounds on the harps took life at the harps' sweet sound,
And those figures of gold round the harpmen rose, and floated in music round.
Then they played, sweet and sad was the playing,
Twelve of Ailill's men died, as they heard;
It was Boand[4] who foretold them that slaying,
And right well was accomplished her word.
'Tis the three Chants of Child-Birth
Give names to those Three;
Of the Harp of the Dagda[5]
The children they be.
To those harpers a fairy
Is mother, of yore
To that Harp, men call Child-Birth,
Queen Boand the three bore.
They are three noble brothers,

And well are they known;
They are kindly and gentle,
And tuneful of tone.

[1. This is the Egerton version, which is clearly right here. The Book of Leinster gives: "These figures accordingly used to run," &c., leaving out all the first part of the sentence, which is required to make the meaning plain.
2. The Book of Leinster omits "of Ailill and Medb."
3. Pronounced something like Yew-ny.
4. Pronounced with sound of "owned."
5. The Dagda seems to have been the chief god of the old Celtic mythology.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

it is from the music which Uaithne, the Dagda's harp, played that the three are named. The time the woman was at the bearing of children it had a cry of sorrow with the soreness of the pangs at first: it was smile and joy it played in the middle for the pleasure of bringing forth the two sons: it was a sleep of soothingness played the last son, on account of the heaviness of the birth, so that it is from him that the third of the music has been named.

Boand awoke afterwards out of the sleep. "I accept," she says, "thy three sons O Uaithne of full ardour, since there is *Suan-traide* and *Gen-traide*, and *Gol-traide* on cows and women who shall fall by Medb and Ailill,

One is Joy-Song, one Sorrow's,
  One, "Song that gives Sleep,"
And the Harp's strains, their father's,
  Remembered they keep.
For when Boand was at bearing,
  Came Sorrow the first,
From the Harp, its strings tearing
  With cry, Sorrow burst.
Then there came to her pleasure
  For birth of a boy;
And a sweet smiling measure
  The Harp played, 'twas Joy.
And she swooned in her anguish,
  For hard the third birth:
From the Harp, her pains soothing,
  Sleep's strain came on earth.
Then from Boand passed her slumber,

And, "Uaithne,"[1] she cried,
Thy three sons, thou sharp Child-Birth,
I take to my side.
Cows and women by Ailill
And Maev shall be slain;
For on these cometh Sorrow,
And Joy, and Sleep's strain:
[1. Pronounced something like Yew-ny.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

men who shall perish by the hearing of art from them."
They cease from playing after that in the palace: "It is stately it has come," says Fergus. "Divide ye to us," says Fraech to his people, "the food, bring ye it into the house." Lothur went on the floor of the house: he divides to them the food. On his haunches he used to divide each joint with his sword, and he used not to touch the food part: since he commenced dividing, he never hacked the meat beneath his hand.
They were three days and three nights at the playing of the chess on account of the abundance of the precious stones in the household of Fraech. After that Fraech addressed Medb. "It is well I have played against thee (*i.e.* have beaten thee)," he says, "I take not away thy stake from the chess-board that there be not a decay of hospitality for thee in it."
Yea, and men, who these harpers,
Thy children, shall hear,
By their art to death stricken,
Shall perish in fear."
Then the strains died away in the palace,
The last notes seemed to sink, and to cease:
"It was stately," said Fergus, "that music."
And on all came a silence, and peace.
Said Fraech, "The food divide ye!
Come, bring ye here the meat! "
And down to earth sank Lothar,
On floor he set his feet;
He crouched, on haunches sitting,
The joints with sword he split;
On bones it fell unerring,
No dainty part he hit!

Though long with sword he hewed, and long
Was meat by men supplied,
His hand struck true; for never wrong
Would Lothar meat divide.
Three days at the chess had they played; three nights, as they sat at the game, had gone:
And they knew not the night for the sparkling light from the jewels of Fraech that shone;
But to Maev turned Fraech, and he joyously cried, "I have conquered thee well at the chess!
Yet I claim not the stake at the chess-board's side, lest thy palace's wealth be less."

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"Since I have been in this *dun* this is the day which I deem longest in it ever," says Medb. "This is reasonable," says Fraech, "they are three days and three nights in it." At this Medb starts up. It was a shame with her that the warriors were without food. She goes to Ailill: she tells it to him. "A great deed we have done," said she, "the stranger men who have come to us to be without food." "Dearer to thee is playing of the chess," says Ailill. "It hinders not the distribution to his suite throughout the house. They have been three days and three nights in it but that we perceived not the night with the white light of the precious stones in the house." "Tell them," says Ailill, "to cease from the lamenting until distribution is made to them." Distribution is then made to them, and things were pleasing to them, and they stayed three days and three nights in it after that over the feasting.

It is after that Fraech was called into the house of conversation, and it is asked of him what brought him. "A visit with you," said he, "is pleasing to me." "Your company is indeed not displeasing with the household," said Ailill, "your addition is better than your diminution."

"For no lengthier day have I sat in such play," said Maev, "since I here first came."

"And well may the day have seemed long," said Fraech, "for three days and three nights was the game!"

Then up started Maev, and in shame she blushed that the chiefs she had failed to feed;
To her husband, King Ailill, in wrath she rushed: "We have both done a goodly deed!
For none from our stores hath a banquet brought for the youths who are strangers here!"

And said Ailill, “In truth for the play was thy thought, and to thee was the chess more dear.”
“We knew not that darkness had come,” said Maev, “’tis not chess thou should’st thus condemn;
Though the day had gone, yet the daylight shone from the heart of each sparkling gem;
Though the game we played, all could meal have made, had men brought of the night advice,
But the hours sped away, and the night and the day have approached and have fled from us thrice!”
“Give command,” said the king, “that those wailing chants, till we give them their food, be stilled.”
And food to the hands of each they gave, and all with the meat were filled;
And all things merrily went, for long the men with a feast were fed,
For, as feasting they sat, thrice rose the day, thrice night above earth was spread.
They brought Fraech, when that banquet was ended,
To the House of Debate, which was near,
And they asked of his errand: “In friendship,
For a visit,” said Fraech, “am I here!”
“And ’twas joy that we felt, when receiving
This your host,” said the king, “ye have brought
Much of pleasure to all, and with grieving,
When ye go, shall your presence be sought!”

LITERAL TRANSLATION

“We shall stay here then,” says Fraech, “another week.” They stay after that till the end of a fortnight in the dun, and they have a hunt every single day towards the dun. The men of Connaught used to come to view them.
It was a trouble with Fraech not to have a conversation with the daughter: for that was the profit that had brought him. A certain day he starts up at the end of night for washing to the stream. It is the time she had gone and her maid for washing. He takes her hand. “Stay for my conversing,” he says; “it is thou I have come for.” “I am delighted truly,” says the daughter; “if I were to come, I could do nothing for thee.” “Query, wouldst thou elope with me?” he says.
“Then,” said Fraech, “for a week we abide here.”
For two weeks in that *dun* they abode:
And the Connaught men pressed round to view them,
As each eve home from hunting they rode.

Yet Fraech was sad, with Findabar
A word he sought in vain;
Though he in truth from home so far
Had come that word to gain.
Fraech, as night was ending,
Sprang from out his bed;
Sought the brook, intending
There to lave his head.
There King Ailill's daughter
Stood, and there her maid:
They that hour from water
Sought the cleansing aid.
"Stay," he cried, and speaking
Caught the maiden's hand;
"Thee alone as seeking,
I have reached this land:
Here am I who sought thee,
Stay, and hear me woo!"
"Ah! thy speech hath brought me
Joy," she said, "most true;
Yet, thy side if nearing,
What for thee can I?"
"Maid!" he cried, "art fearing
Hence with me to fly?"

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"I will not elope," says she, "for I am the daughter of a king and a queen. There is nothing of thy poverty that you should not get me (*i.e.* thy poverty is not so great that thou art not able to get me) from my family; and it shall be my choice accordingly to go to thee, it is thou whom I have loved. And take thou with thee this ring," says the daughter, "and it shall be between us for a token. My mother gave it to me to put by, and I shall say that I put it astray." Each of them accordingly goes apart after that.

"I fear," says Ailill, "the eloping of yon daughter with Fraech, though she would be given to him on solemn pledge that he would come towards us with his cattle for aid at the Spoil." Fraech goes to them to the house of conversation. "Is it a secret (*cocur*, translated "a whisper" by Crowe) ye have?" says Fraech. "Thou wouldest fit in it," says Ailill.

"Flight I hold disloyal,"
Answered she in scorn;
"I from mother royal,
to king was born;
What should stay our wedding?
None so mean or poor
Thou hast seemed, nor dreading
Kin of mine; be sure:
I will go! 'tis spoken,
Thou beloved shalt be!
Take this ring as token,
Lent by Maev to me!
'Twas my mother who bid me to save it,
For the ring she in secret would hide;
'Tis as pledge of our love that I gave it,
As its pledge it with thee should abide.
Till that ring we can freely be showing
I will tell them I put it astray!"
And, the love of each other thus knowing,
Fraech and Finnabar went on their way.
"I have fear," said the king, "that with Fraech yon maid to his home as his wife would fly;
Yet her hand he may win, if he rides on the Raid with his kine when the time draws nigh."
Then Fraech to the Hall of Debate returned, and he cried: "Through Some secret chink
Hath a whisper passed?" and the king replied, "Thou would'st fit in that space, I think!"

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"Will ye give me your daughter?" says Fraech. "The hosts will clearly see she shall be given," says Ailill, "if thou wouldest give a dowry as shall be named." "Thou shalt have it," says Fraech. "Sixty black-grey steeds to me, with their bits of gold to them, and twelve milch cows, so that there be milked liquor of milk from each of them, and an ear-red, white calf with each of them; and thou to come with me with all thy force and with thy musicians for bringing of the cows from Cualgne; and my daughter to be given thee provided thou dost come" (*or* as soon as[1] thou

shalt come). “I swear by my shield, and by my sword, and by my accoutrement, I would not give that in dowry even of Medb.” He went from them out of the house then. Ailill and Medb hold a conversation. “It shall drive at us several of the kings of Erin around us if he should carry off the daughter. What is good is, let us dash after him, and let us slay him forthwith, before he may inflict destruction upon us.” “It is a pity this,” says Medb, “and it is a decay of hospitality for us.” “It shall not be a decay of hospitality for us, it shall not be a decay of hospitality for us, the way I shall prepare it.”

[1. This is Thurneysen’s rendering (“Sagen aus dem alten Irland,” p. 121).]

“Will ye give me your daughter?” said Fraech: said the king, “In sight of our hosts she goes;
If, as gift to suffice for her marriage price, thy hand what I ask bestows.”
“I will give thee what price thou dost name,” said Fraech, “and now let its sum be told!”’
“Then a sixty steeds do I claim,” said the king, “dark-grey, and with bits of gold;
And twelve milch-cows, from their udders shall come the milk in a copious stream,
And by each of the cows a white calf shall run; bright red on its ears shall gleam;
And thou, with thy harpers and men, shalt ride by my side on the Cualgne[1] Raid,
And when all thy kine driven here shall stand, shall the price of her hand be paid!”
Now I swear by the edge of my sword,” said Fraech, “I swear by my arms and shield,
I would give no such pledge, even Maev to take, were it her thou wert fain to yield! “
And he went from the House of Debate, but Maev with Ailill bent low in plot:
All around us our foes,” said the king, “shall close, if Finnabar stays here not;
Many kings of Erin, who seek that maid, shall hear of her borne away,
And in wrath they will rush on our land; ‘twere best that Fraech we devise to slay;
Ere that ruin he bring, let us make our spring, and the ill yet unwrought arrest.”
“It were pity such deed should be done,” said Maev, “and to slay in our house our guest!
‘Twill bring shame on us ever.” “No shame to our house,” said King Ailill, “that death shall breed!”
(And he spake the words twice)—”but now hear my advice, how I plan we should do this deed.”

[1. Pronounced Kell-ny.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

Ailill and Medb go into the palace. “Let us go away,” says Ailill,, that we may see the chase-hounds at hunting till the middle of the day, and until they are tired.” They all go off afterwards to the river to bathe themselves.

“It is declared to me,” says Ailill, “that thou art good in water. Come into this flood, that we may see thy swimming.” “What is the quality of this flood?” he says. “We know not anything dangerous in it,” says Ailill, “and bathing in it is frequent.” He strips his clothes off him then, and he goes into it, and he leaves his girdle above. Ailill then opens his purse behind him, and the ring was in it. Ailill recognises it then. “Come here, O Medb,” says Ailill. Medb goes then. “Dost thou recognise that?” says Ailill. “I do recognise,” she says. Ailill flings it into the river down.

All the plot had been planned; to their house at last
King Ailill and Maev through the doorway passed;
And the voice of the king uprose:
“’Tis now that the hounds should their prey pursue,
Come away to the hunt who the hounds would view;
For noon shall that hunting close.”
So forth went they all, on the chase intent,
And they followed till strength of the hounds was spent,
And the hunters were warm; and to bathe they went
Where the river of Croghan flows.
And, “’Tis told me,” said Ailill, “that Fraech hath won
A great fame for the feats he in floods hath done:
Wilt thou enter these streams by our side that run?
We are longing to see thee swim!”
And said Fraech: “Is it good then indeed thy stream?
And said Ailill: “Of danger no need to dream,
For many a youth from the Connaught Court
In its current hath bathed, and hath swum it in sport,
Nor of any who tried have we heard report
That ill hath been found by him!”
Then Fraech from his body his garments stripped,
And he sprang down the bank, and he swiftly slipped
In the stream: and the king’s glance fell
On a belt, left by Fraech on the bank; the king
Bent low; in the purse saw his daughter’s ring,

And the shape of the ring could tell.
"Come hither, O Maev," Ailill softly cried;
And Queen Maev came up close to her husband's side
"Dost thou know of that ring?" in the purse she spied
The ring, and she knew it well.
Then Ailill the ring from the purse withdrew,
And away from the bank the fair gem he threw;
And the ring, flashing bright, through the air far flew,
To be lost in the flood's swift swell.

LITERAL TRANSLATION

Fraech perceived that matter. He sees something, the salmon leaped to meet it, and caught it in his mouth. He (Fraech) gives a bound to it, and he catches its jole, and he goes to land, and he brings it to a lonely[1] spot on the brink of the river. He proceeds to come out of the water then. "Do not come," says Ailill, "until thou shalt bring me a branch of the rowan-tree yonder, which is on the brink of the river: beautiful I deem its berries." He then goes away, and breaks a branch off the trees and brings it on his back over the water. The remark of Find-abair was: "Is it not beautiful he looks?" Exceedingly beautiful she thought it to see Fraech over a black pool: the body of great whiteness, and the hair of great loveliness, the face of great beauty, the eye of great greyness; and he a soft youth without fault, without blemish, with a below-narrow, above-broad face;
And Fraech saw the gem as it brightly flashed,
And a salmon rose high, at the light it dashed,
And, as back in the stream with the ring he splashed,
At the fish went Fraech with a spring:
By its jole was the salmon secured, and thrown
To a nook in the bank, that by few was known;
And unnoticed he threw it, to none was it shown
{360} As it fell to the earth, with the ring.
And now Fraech from the stream would be going:
But, "Come not," said the king, "to us yet:
Bring a branch from yon rowan-tree, showing
Its fair berries, with water-drops wet."
Then Fraech, swimming away through the water,
Brake a branch from the dread rowan-tree,
And a sigh came from Ailill's fair daughter;
"Ah! how lovely he seemeth," said she.

Fair she found him, swimming
Through that pool so black
Brightly gleamed the berries,
Bound athwart his back.
White and smooth his body,
Bright his glorious hair;
Eyes of perfect greyness,
Face of men most fair:
Soft his skin, no blemish,
Fault, nor spot it flawed;
Small his chin, and steady,
Brave his brow, and broad.
[1. "Hidden spot" (Windisch).]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

and he straight, blemishless; the branch with the red berries between the throat and the white face. It is what Find-abair used to say, that by no means had she seen anything that could come up to him half or third for beauty.

After that he throws the branches to them out of the water. "The berries are stately and beautiful, bring us an addition of them." He goes off again until he was in the middle of the water. The serpent catches him out of the water. "Let a sword come to me from you," he says; and there was not on the land a man who would dare to give it to him through fear of Ailill and Medb. After that Find-abair strips off her clothes, and gives a leap into the water with the sword. Her father lets fly a five-pronged spear at her from above, a shot's throw, so that it passes through her two tresses, and that Fraech caught the spear in his hand. He shoots the spear into the land up, and the monster in his side. He lets it fly with a charge of the methods of playing of championship, so that it goes through the purple robe and through the tunic (? shirt) that was about Ailill.

Straight he seemed, and stainless;
Twixt his throat and chin
Straying scarlet berries
Touched with red his skin.
Oft, that sight recalling,
Findabar would cry:
"Ne'er was half such beauty,
Naught its third came nigh!"

To the bank he swam, and to Ailill was thrown, with its berries, the tree's torn limb:
"Ah! how heavy and fair have those clusters grown; bring us more," and he turned to swim;
The mid-current was reached, but the dragon was roused that was guard to that rowan-tree;
And it rose from the river, on Fraech it rushed: "Throw a sword from the bank!" cried he.
And no man on the bank gave the sword: they were kept by their fear of the queen and the king;
But her clothes from her Finnabar stripped, and she leapt in the river his sword to bring.
And the king from above hurled his five-barbed spear; the full length of a shot it sped:
At his daughter it flew, and its edge shore through two tresses that crowned her head:
And Fraech in his hand caught the spear as it fell, and backward its point he turned.
And again to the land was the spear launched well: 'twas a feat from the champions learned.
Though the beast bit his side as that spear was cast, yet fiercely the dart was flung,
Through the purple robe of the king it passed, through the tunic that next him clung!

LITERAL TRANSLATION

At this the youths who were about Ailill rise to him. Find-abair goes out of the water and leaves the sword in Fraech's hand, and he cuts the head off the monster, so that it was on its side, and he brought the monster with him to land. It is from it is Dub-lind Fraech in Brei, in the lands of the men of Connaught. Ailill and Medb go to their *dun* afterwards.

"A great deed is what we have done," says Medb. "We repent," says Ailill, "of what we have done to the man; the daughter however," he says, "her lips shall perish [common metaphor for death] to-morrow at once, and it shall not be the guilt of bringing of the sword that shall be for her. Let a bath be made by you for this man, namely, broth of fresh bacon and the flesh of a heifer to be minced in it under adze and axe, and he to be brought into the bath." All that thing was done as he said. His trumpeters then before him to the dun. They play then until

Then up sprang the youths of the court, their lord in danger they well might deem,

But the strong hand of Fraech had closed firm on the sword, and Finnabar rose from the stream.
Now with sword in his hand, at the monster's head hewed Fraech, on its side it sank,
And he came from the river with blade stained red, and the monster he dragged to the bank.
Twas then Bree's Dub-lind in the Connaught land the Dark Water of Fraech was named,
From that fight was it called, but the queen and the king went back to their *dun*, ashamed!
"It is noble, this deed we have done!" said Maev: "'Tis pitiful," Ailill cried:
"For the hurt of the man I repent, but to her, our daughter, shall woe betide!
On the morrow her lips shall be pale, and none shall be found to aver that her guilt,
When the sword for his succour to Fraech she gave, was the cause why her life was spilt!
Now see that a bath of fresh bacon broth be prepared that shall heal this prince,
And bid them with adze and with axe the flesh of a heifer full small to mince:
Let the meat be all thrown in the bath, and there for healing let Fraech be laid!"
And all that he ordered was done with care; the queen his command obeyed.
Then arose from Fraech's trumpets complaining,
As his men travelled back to the *dun*;
Their soft notes lamentation sustaining,
And a many their deaths from them won;

LITERAL TRANSLATION

thirty of the special friends of Ailill die at the long-drawn (or plaintive) music. He goes then into the *dun*, and he goes into the bath. The female company rise around him at the vat for rubbing, and for washing his head. He was brought out of it then, and a bed was made. They heard something, the lament-cry on Cruachan. There were seen the three times fifty women with crimson tunics, with green head-dresses, with brooches of silver on their wrists.
A messenger is sent to them to learn what they had bewailed. "Fraech, son of Idath," says the woman, "boy-pet of the king of the *Sidé* of Erin." At this Fraech heard their lament-cry.
Thirty men whom King Ailill loved dearly
By that music were smitten to die;
And his men carried Fraech, and they laid him
In that bath, for his healing to lie.

Around the vat stood ladies,
They bathed his limbs and head;
From out the bath they raised him,
And soft they made his bed.
Then they heard a strange music;
The wild Croghan "keen";
And of women thrice fifty
On Croghan were seen.
They had tunics of purple,
With green were they crowned;
On their wrists glistened silver,
Where brooches were bound.
And there neared them a herald
To learn why they wailed;
"'Tis for Fraech," was their answer,
"By sickness assailed;
'Tis for Fraech, son of Idath,[1]
Boy-darling is he
Of our lord, who in Erin
Is king of the Shee!"[2]
And Fraech heard the wail in their cry;

[1. Pronounced Eeda.
2 The Fairies.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"Lift me out of it," he says to his people; "this is the cry of my mother and of the women of Boand." He is lifted out at this, and he is brought to them. The women come around him, and bring him from them to the *Sid* of Cruachan (*i.e.* the deep caverns, used for burial at Cruachan).

They saw something, at the ninth hour on the morrow he comes, and fifty women around him, and he quite whole, without stain and without blemish; of equal age (the women), of equal form, of equal beauty, of equal fairness,

And he well knew its meaning;
And, "Lift me, my folk,"
He cried, "surely that keening
From Boand's women broke:
My mother, the Fairy, is nigh."
Then they raised him, and bore him

Where wild rose the sound;
To his kin they restored him;
His women pressed round:
And he passed from their sight out of Croghan;
For that night from earth was he freed,
And he dwelt with his kin, the Sid-Dwellers
In the caverns of Croghan's deep Sid.[1]
All at nine, next morrow,
Gazed, for back he came,
Round their darling pressing
Many a fairy dame:
Brave he seemed, for healing
All his wounds had got;
None could find a blemish,
None a sear or spot.
Fifty fairies round him,
Like in age and grace;
Like each form and bearing;
Like each lovely face.

[1. Pronounced Sheed; Sid is the fairy mound.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

of equal symmetry, of equal stature, with the dress of women of the fairies about them so that there was no means of knowing of one beyond the other of them. Little but men were suffocated around them. They separate in front of the *Liss*.[1] They give forth their lament on going from him, so that they troubled[2] the men who were in the *Liss* excessively. It is from it is the Lament-cry of the Women of the Fairies with the musicians of Erin.

He then goes into the *dun*. All the hosts rise before him, and bid welcome to him, as if it were from another world he were coming.

Ailill and Medb arise, and do penance to him for the attack they had made at him, and they make peace. Feasting commenced with them then at once. Fraech calls a servant of his suite:

[1. The Liss is the outer court of the palace.

2. "Oo corastar tar cend," "so that they upset, or put beside themselves." Meyer takes literally, "so that they fell on their backs" (?)]

All in fairy garments,
All alike were dressed;

None was found unequal;
None surpassed the rest.
And the men who stood round, as they neared them,
Were struck with a marvellous awe;
They were moved at the sight, and they feared them,
And hardly their breath they could draw.
At the *Liss* all the fairies departed,
But on Fraech, as they vanished, they cried:
And the sound floated in of their wailing,
And it thrilled through the men, and they sighed.
Then first that mournful measure,
"The Ban-Shee[1] Wail," was heard;
All hearts with grief and pleasure
That air, when harped, hath stirred.

To the *dun* came Fraech, and the hosts arose, and welcome by all was shown:
For it seemed as if then was his birth among men, from a world to the earth unknown!
Up rose for him Maev and King Ailill, their fault they confessed, and for grace they prayed,
And a penance they did, and for all that assault they were pardoned, and peace was made.
And now free from all dread, they the banquet spread, the banqueting straight began:
{490} But a thought came to Fraech, and from out of his folk he called to his side a man.

[1. Spelt "Ban Side," the fairy women.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"Go off," he says, "to the spot at which I went into the water. A salmon I left there—bring it to Find-abair, and let herself take charge over it; and let the salmon be well broiled by her, and the ring is in the Centre of the salmon. I expect it will be asked of her to-night." Inebriety seizes them, and music and amusement delight them. Ailill then said: "Bring ye all my gems to me." They were brought to him then, so that the were before him. "Wonderful, wonderful," says every one. "Call ye Find-abair to me," he says. Find-abair goes to him, and fifty maidens around her. "O daughter," says Ailill, "the ring I gave to thee last year, does it remain with thee? Bring it to me that the warriors may see it. Thou shalt have it afterwards." "I do not know," she says, "what has been done about it." "Ascertain then," says Ailill, "it must be sought, or thy soul must depart from thy body."

"It is by no means worth," say the warriors, "there is much of value there, without that." "There is naught of my jewels that will not go for the maid," says Fraech, "because she brought me the sword for pledge of my soul."
"Now hie thee," he said, "to the river bank, a salmon thou there shalt find;
For nigh to the spot where in stream I sank, it was hurled, and 'twas left behind;
To Finnabar take it, and bid her from me that the salmon with skill she broil:
In the midst of the fish is the ring: and none but herself at the task must toil;
And to-night, as I think, for her ring they call ": then he turned to the feast again,
And the wine was drunk, and the revellers sunk, for the fumes of it seized their brain,
And music and much of delights they had; but the king had his plans laid deep,
"Bring ye all of my jewels," he cried-on the board they were poured in a dazzling heap.
"They are wonderful, wonderful!" cried they all: "Call Finnabar!" said the king;
{500} And his daughter obeyed, and her fifty maids stood round in a lovely ring.
My daughter," said Ailill, "a ring last year I gave thee, is't here with thee yet?
Bring it hither to show to the chiefs, and anon in thy hand shall the gem be set."
"That jewel is lost," said the maid, "nor aught of the fate of the ring I know! "
Then find it," said Ailill, "the ring must be brought, or thy soul from thy limbs must go!"
"Now, nay!" said they all, "it were cruel
That such fate for such fault should be found:
Thou hast many a fair-flashing jewel
In these heaps that lie scattered around!"
And said Fraech: "Of my jewels here glowing
Take thy fill, if the maid be but freed;
'Tis to her that my life I am owing,
For she brought me the sword in my need."

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"There is not with thee anything of gems that should aid her unless she returns the ring from her," says Ailill.
"I have by no means the power to give it," says the daughter, "what thou mayest like do it in regard to me." "I swear to the god to whom my people swear, thy lips shall be pale (literally, shall perish) unless thou returnest it from thee," says Ailill.
"It is why it is asked of thee, because it is impossible; for I know that until the people who have died from the beginning of the world. come, it comes not out of the spot in which it was flung." "It shall not come for a treasure which is not

appreciated,"[1] says the daughter, "the ring that is asked for here, I go that I may bring it to thee, since it is keenly it is asked." "Thou shalt not go," says Ailill; "but let one go from thee to bring it."
The daughter sends her maid to bring it.
"There is none of thy gems that can aid her,"
Said Ailill, "nor aught thou canst give;
There is one thing alone that shall save her;
If the ring be restored, she shall live!
Said Finnabar; "Thy treasure
To yield no power is mine:
Do thou thy cruel pleasure,
For strength, I know, is thine."
"By the god whom our Connaught land haileth,
I swear," answered Ailill the king,
"That the life on thy lips glowing faileth,
If thou place in my hand not the ring!"
And that hard," he laughed softly, "the winning
Of that jewel shall be, know I well;
They who died since the world had beginning
Shall come back to the spot where they fell
Ere that ring she can find, and can bear it
To my hand from the spot where 'twas tossed,
And as knowing this well, have I dared her
To restore what for aye hath been lost!"
"No ring for treasure thus despised,"
She said, "exchanged should be;
Yet since the king its worth hath prized,
I'll find the gem for thee!"
Not thus shalt thou fly," said the king, "to thy maid let the quest of the ring be bid!"
And his daughter obeyed, and to one whom she sent she told where the ring was hid:
[1. This is Windisch's rendering (Irische Texte, I. p. 677: s.v. main).]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"I swear to the god to whom my territories swear, if it shall be found, I shall by no means be under thy power any longer though I should be at great drinking continually." (?)[1] "I shall by no means prevent you from doing that, namely even if it were to the groom thou shouldst go if the ring is found," says Ailill. The

maid then brought the dish into the palace, and the broiled salmon on it, and it dressed under honey which was well made by the daughter; and the ring of gold was on the salmon from above.

Ailill and Medb view it. After that Fraech looks at it, and looks at his purse. "It seems to me it was for proof that I left my girdle," says Fraech. "On the truth of the sovereignty," says Fraech, "say what thou did'st about the ring." "This shall not be concealed from thee," says Ailill; "mine is the ring which was in thy purse, and I knew it is Find-abair gave it to thee. It is therefore I flung it into the Dark Pool. On the truth of thine honour and of thy soul, O Fraech, declare thou what way the bringing of it out happened."

"But," Finnabar cried, "by my country's god I swear that from out this hour,
Will I leave this land, and my father's hand shall no more on my life have power,
And no feasting shall tempt me to stay, no draughts of wine my resolve shall shake!"

"No reproach would I bring, if as spouse," said the king, "thou a groom from my stalls would'st take!
But that ring must be found ere thou goest! "Then back came her maid, and a dish she bore:
And there lay a salmon well broiled, as sauce with honey 'twas garnished o'er:
By the daughter of Ailill herself with skill had the honey-sweet sauce been made.
And high on the breast of the fish, the ring of gold that they sought was laid.
King Ailill and Maev at the ring gazed hard; Fraech looked, in his purse he felt:
Now it seemeth," he said, "'twas to prove my host that I left on the bank my belt,
And Ailill now I challenge
All truth, as king to tell;
What deed his cunning fashioned,
And what that ring befell."
"There is naught to be hidden," said Ailill;
"It was mine, in thy purse though it lay
And my daughter I knew as its giver:
So to river I hurled it away.
Now Fraech in turn I challenge
By life and honour's claim:
Say how from yon dark water
That ring to draw ye came."

[1. "dian dumroib for sar-ol mogreis." Meyer gives "if there is any one to protect me." The above is Crowe's rendering.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"It shall not be concealed on thee," says Fraech. "The first day I found the ring in front of the outer court, and I knew it was a lovely gem. It is for that reason I put it up industriously in my purse. I heard, the day I went to the water, the maiden who had lost it a-looking for it. I said to her: 'What reward shall I have at thy hands for the finding of it?' She said to me that she would give a year's love to me.

"It happened I did not leave it about me; I had left it in the house behind me. We met not until we met at the giving of the sword into my hand in the river. After that I saw the time thou open'st the purse and flungest the ring into the water: I saw the salmon which leaped for it, so that it took it into its mouth. I then caught the salmon,

"There is naught to be hidden," he answered,
"The first day that I came, on the earth,
Near the court round thy house, was that jewel;
And I saw all its beauty and worth:
In my purse then I hid it; thy daughter,
Who had lost it, with care for it sought;
And the day that I went to that water
Was the news of her search to me brought:
And I asked what reward she would give me,
If the gem in her hand should be placed;
And she answered that I, if I found it,
For a year by her love should be graced.
But not then could the ring be delivered:
For afar in my chamber it lay:
Till she gave me the sword in the river,
We met not again on that day.
'Twas then I saw thee open
My purse, and take the ring:
I watched, and towards the water
That gem I saw thee fling:
I saw the salmon leaping,
The ring it caught, and sank:
I came behind, and seized it;
And brought the fish to bank.

LITERAL TRANSLATION

took it up in the cloak, put it into the hand of the daughter. It is that salmon accordingly which is on the dish."

The criticising and the wondering at these stories begin in the house hold. "I shall not throw my mind on another youth in Erin after thee," says Find-abair. "Bind thyself for that," say Ailill and Medb, "and come thou to us with thy cows to the Spoil of the Cows from Cualnge; and when thou shalt come with thy cows from the East back, ye shall wed here that night at once and Find-abair." "I shall do that thing," says Fraech. They are in it then until the morning. Fraech sets about him self with his suite. He then bids farewell to Ailill and Medb. They depart to their own territories then.

Then I wrapped it up close in my mantle;
And 'twas hid from inquisitive eyes;
And in Finnabar's hand have I placed it:
And now there on the platter it lies!"
Now all who this or that would know
To ask, and praise began:
Said Finnabar, "I'll never throw
My thoughts on other man!"
Now hear her word," her parents cried,
"And plight to her thy troth,
And when for Cualgne's[1] kine we ride
Do thou redeem thine oath.
And when with kine from out the east
Ye reach our western land;
That night shall be thy marriage feast;
And thine our daughter's hand."

"Now that oath will I take," answered back to them Fraech, "and the task ye have asked will do!"

So he tarried that night till the morning's light; and they feasted the whole night through;

And then homewards bound, with his comrades round, rode Fraech when the night was spent,

And to Ailill and Maev an adieu he gave, and away to their land they went.

[1. Pronounced Kell-ny.]

TAIN BO FRAICH

PART II

LITERAL TRANSLATION

IT happened that his cows had been in the meanwhile stolen. His mother came to him. "Not active (*or* "lucky") of journey hast thou gone; it shall cause much of trouble to thee," she says. "Thy cows have been stolen, and thy three sons, and thy wife, so that they are in the mountain of Elpa. Three cows of them are in Alba of the North with the Cruthnechi (the Picts)." "Query, what shall I do?" he says to his mother. "Thou shalt do a non-going for seeking them; thou wouldest not give thy life for them," she says. "Thou shalt have cows at my hands besides them." "Not so this," he says: "I have pledged my hospitality and my soul to go to Ailill and to Medb with my cows to the Spoil of the Cows from Cualnge." "What thou seekest shall not be obtained," says his mother. At this she goes off from him then.

He then sets out with three nines, and a wood-cuckoo (hawk), and a hound of tie with them,

UNTO Fraech it hath chanced, as he roved from his lands
That his cattle were stolen by wandering bands:
And there met him his mother, and cried, "On thy way
Thou hast tarried, and hard for thy slackness shalt pay!
In the Alps of the south, the wild mountains amid,
Have thy children, thy wife, and thy cattle been hid:
And a three of thy kine have the Picts carried forth,
And in Alba they pasture, but far to the north!"
"Now, alack!" answered Fraech, "what is best to be done?"
"Rest at home," said his mother, "nor seek them my son;
For to thee neither cattle, nor children, nor wife
Can avail, if in seeking thou losest thy life;
And though cattle be lacking, the task shall be mine
To replace what is lost, and to grant thee the kine."

"Nay, not so," answered Fraech, "by my soul I am sworn,
That when cattle from Cualgne by force shall be torn
To King Ailill and Maev on my faith as their guest
I must ride with those cattle for war to the west!"
"Now but vainly," she said, "is this toil on thee cast;
Thou shalt lose what thou seekest", and from him she passed.
Three times nine of his men for that foray were chosen, and marched by his side,
And a hawk flew before, and for hunting, was a hound with a hunting-leash tied;

LITERAL TRANSLATION

until he goes to the territory of the Ulstermen, so that he meets with Conall Cernach (Conall the Victorious) at Benna Bairchi (*a mountain on the Ulster border*).
He tells his quest to him. "What awaits thee," says the latter, "shall not be lucky for thee. Much of trouble awaits thee," he says, "though in it the mind should be." "It will come to me," says Fraech to Connall, "that thou wouldest help me any time we should meet." (?) "I shall go truly," says Conall Cernach. They set of the three (*i.e.* the three nines) over sea, over Saxony of the North, over the Sea of Icht (the sea between England and France), to the north of the Long-bards (the dwellers of Lombardy), until they reached the mountains of Elpa. They saw a herd-girl at tending of the sheep before them. "Let us go south," says Conall, "O Fraech, that we may address the woman yonder, and let our youths stay here."
To Ben Barchi they went, for the border of Ulster their faces were set:
And there, of its marches the warder, the conquering Conall they met.
Fraech hailed him, the conquering Conall, and told him the tale of his spoil;
"'Tis ill luck that awaits thee," said Conall, "thy quest shall be followed with toil!
"'Twill be long ere the goal thou art reaching, though thy heart in the seeking may be."
"Conall Cernach,[1] hear thou my beseeching said Fraech, "let thine aid be to me;
I had hoped for this meeting with Conall, that his aid in the quest might be lent."
"I will go with thee truly," said Conall: with Fraech and his comrades he went.
Three times nine, Fraech and Conall before them,
Over ocean from Ireland have passed;
Through the Land of North Saxony bore them,
And the South Sea they sighted at last.
And again on the sea billows speeding,
They went south, over Ichtian foam;
And marched on: southward still was their leading:
To the land where the Long-Beards have home:

But when Lombardy's bounds they were nearing
They made stand; for above and around
Were the high peaks of Alpa appearing,
And the goal that they sought had been found.
On the Alps was a woman seen straying, and herding the flocks of the sheep,
"Let our warriors behind be delaying," said Conall, "and south let us keep:
[1. Pronounced Cayr-nach.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

They went then to a conversation. She said, "Whence are ye?" "Of the men of Erin," says Conall. "It shall not be lucky for the men of Erin truly, the coming to this country. From the men of Erin too is my mother. Aid thou me on account of relationship."

"Tell us something about our movements. What is the quality of the land we have to come to?" "A grim hateful land with troublesome warriors, who go on every side for carrying off cows and women as captives," she says. "What is the latest thing they have carried off?" says Fraech. "The cows of Fraech, son of Idath, from the west of Erin, and his wife, and his three sons. Here is his wife here in the house of the king, here are his cows in the country in front of you." "Let thy aid come to us," says Conall. Little is my power, save guidance only." "This is Fraech," says Conall, and they are his cows that have been carried off." "Is the woman constant in your estimation?" she says. "Though constant in our estimation when she went, perchance she is not constant after coming." "The woman who frequents the cows, go ye to her; tell ye of your errand; of the men of Ireland her race; of the men of Ulster exactly."

'Twere well we should speak with yon woman, perchance she hath wisdom to teach!"

And with Conall went Fraech at that counsel; they neared her, and held with her speech.

"Whence have come you?" she said: "Out of Ireland are we,"
Answered Conall: "Ill luck shall for Irishmen be
In this country," she cried, "yet thy help I would win;
From thy land was my mother; thou art to me kin!"
"Of this land we know naught, nor where next we should turn,"
Answered Conall.; "its nature from thee we would learn."
"'Tis a grim land and hateful," the woman replied,
"And the warriors are restless who forth from it ride;
For full often of captives, of women and herd

Of fair kine by them taken is brought to me word."
"Canst thou say what latest spoil," said Fraech, "they won?"
"Ay," she said, "they harried Fraech, of Idath[1] son
He in Erin dwelleth, near the western sea;
Kine from him they carried, wife, and children three
Here his wife abideth, there where dwells the king,
Turn, and see his cattle, yonder pasturing."
Out spoke Conall Cernach;[2] "Aid us thou" he cried:
"Strength I lack," she answered, "I can only guide."
"Here is Fraech," said Conall, "yon his stolen cows":
"Fraech!" she asked him, "tell me, canst thou trust thy spouse?"
"Why," said Fraech, "though trusty, doubtless, when she went;
Now, since here she bideth, truth may well be spent."
"See ye now yon woman?" said she, "with your herd,
Tell to her your errand, let her hear your word;
Trust in her, as Irish-sprung ye well may place;
More if ye would ask me, Ulster reared her race."
[1. Pronounced Eeda.
2. Pronounced Cayr-nach.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

They come to her; they receive her, and they name themselves to her, and she bids welcome to them. "What hath led you forth?" she says. "Trouble hath led us forth," says Conall; "ours are the cows and the woman that is in the *Liss*."
"It shall not be lucky for you truly," she says, "the going up to the multitude of the woman; more troublesome to you than everything," she says, "is the serpent which is at guarding of the *Liss*." "She is not my country-name (?)," says Fraech, "she is not constant in my estimation; thou art constant in my estimation; we know thou wilt not lead us astray, since it is from the men of Ulster thou art." "Whence are ye from the men of Ulster?" she says. "This is Conall Cernach here, the bravest hero with the men of Ulster," says Fraech. She flings two hands around the throat of Conall Cernach. "The destruction has come in this expedition," she says, "since he has come to us; for it is to him the destruction of this dun has been prophesied. I shall go out to my house,"[1] she says, "I shall not be at the milking of the cows. I shall leave the *Liss* opened; it is I who close it every night.[2] I shall say it is for drink the calves were sucking. Come thou into the *dun*, when they are sleeping; only trouble. some to you is the serpent which is at the *dun*; several tribes are let loose from it."

[1. "To my house" is in the Egerton MS. only.
2. "Every night" is in the Egerton MS. only.]
To that woman they went, nor their names from her hid;
And they greeted her; welcome in kindness she bid:
"What hath moved you," she said, "from your country to go?"
"On this journey," said Conall, "our guide hath been woe:
All the cattle that feed in these pastures are ours,
And from us went the lady that's kept in yon towers."
"'Tis ill-luck," said the woman, "that waits on your way,
All the men of this hold doth that lady obey;
Ye shall find, amid dangers, your danger most great
In the serpent who guardeth the *Liss* at the gate."
"For that lady," said Fraech, "she is none of my
She is fickle, no trust from me yet did she win:
But on thee we rely, thou art trusty, we know;
Never yet to an Ulsterman Ulster was foe."
"Is it men out of Ulster," she said, "I have met?"
"And is Conall," said Fraech, "thus unknown to you yet?
Of all heroes from Ulster the battle who faced
Conall Cernach is foremost." His neck she embraced,
And she cried, with her arms around Conall: "Of old
Of the conquering Conall our prophets have told;
And 'tis ruin and doom to this hold that you bring;
For that Conall shall sack it, all prophecies sing."
"Hear my rede," she told him: "When at fall of day
Come the kine for milking, I abroad will stay;
I the castle portal every eve should close:
Ye shall find it opened, free for tread of foes:
I will say the weakling calves awhile I keep;
'Tis for milk, I'll tell them: come then while they sleep;
Come, their castle enter, all its wealth to spoil;
Only rests that serpent, he our plans may foil:
Him it rests to vanquish, he will try you most;
Surely from that serpent swarms a serpent host!"

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"We will go truly," says Conall. They attack the *Liss*; the serpent darts leap into the girdle of Conall Cernach, and they plunder the *dun* at once. They save off then the

woman and the three sons, and they carry away whatever was the best of the gems of the *dun*, and Conall lets the serpent out of his girdle, and neither of them did harm to the other. And they came to the territory of the people of the Picts, until they saw three cows of their cows in it. They drove off to the Fort of Ollach mac Briuin (now Dunolly near Oban) with them, until they were at Ard Uan Echach (high-foaming Echach). It is there the gillie of Conall met his death at the driving of the cows, that is Bicne son of Loegaire; it is from this is (the name of) Inver Bicne (the Bicne estuary) at Benchor. They brought their cows over it thither. It is there they flung their horns from them, so that it is thence is (the name of) Tracht Benchoir (the Strand of Horn casting, perhaps the modern Bangor?).

Fraech goes away then to his territory after, and his wife, and his sons, and his cows with him, until he goes with Ailill and Medb for the Spoil of the Cows from Cualnge.

"Trust us well," answered Conall, "that raid will we do!
And the castle they sought, and the snake at them flew:
For it darted on Conall, and twined round his waist;
Yet the whole of that castle they plundered in haste,
And the woman was freed, and her sons with her three
And away from her prison she went with them free:
And of all of the jewels amassed in that *dun*
The most costly and beauteous the conquerors won.
Then the serpent from Conall was loosed, from his belt
It crept safely, no harm from that serpent he felt:
And they travelled back north to the Pictish domains,
And a three of their cattle they found on the plains;
And, where Olla Mae Briuin[1] his hold had of yore,
By Dunolly their cattle they drove to the shore.
It chanced at Ard Uan Echach,[2] where foam is hurled on high,
That doom on Bicne falling, his death he came to die:
'Twas while the cows were driven that Bicne's life was lost:
By trampling hooves of cattle crushed down to death, or tossed;
To him was Loegaire[3] father, and Conall Cernach chief
And Inver-Bicne's title still marks his comrades' grief.
Across the Stream of Bicne the cows of Fraech have passed,
And near they came to Benchor, and there their horns they cast:
'Tis thence the strand of Bangor for aye is named, 'tis said:
The Strand of Horns men call it; those horns his cattle shed.
To his home travelled Fraech, with his children, and

And his cattle, and there with them lived out his life,
Till the summons of Ailill and Maev he obeyed;
And when Cualgne was harried, he rode on the Raid.

[1. Pronounced “Brewin.”
2. Pronounced “Ard Oon Ay-ha,”
3. Pronounced “Leary.”]

THE RAID FOR DARTAID'S CATTLE
INTRODUCTION

THIS tale is given by Windisch (*Irische Texte*, II. pp. 185-205), from two versions; one, whose translation he gives in full, except for one doubtful passage, is from the manuscript in the British Museum, known as Egerton, 1782 (dated 1414); the other is from the Yellow Book of Lecan (fourteenth century), in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.

The version in the Yellow Book is sometimes hard to read, which seems to be the reason why Windisch prefers to translate the younger authority, but though in some places the Egerton version is the fuller, the Yellow Book version (Y.B.L.) often adds passages, some of which Windisch has given in notes; some he has left untranslated. In the following prose version as much of Y.B.L. as adds anything to the Egerton text has been translated, with marks of interrogation where the attempted rendering is not certain: variants from the text adopted are placed below the prose version as footnotes. The insertions from Y.B.L. are indicated by brackets; but no note is taken of cases where the Egerton version is fuller than Y.B.L.

The opening of the story (the first five lines in the verse rendering) is in the eleventh century Book of the Dun Cow: the fragment agrees closely with the two later texts, differing in fact from Y.B.L. in one word only. All three texts are given in the original by Windisch.

The story is simple and straightforward, but is a good example of fairy vengeance, the description of the appearance of the troop recalls similar descriptions in the Tain bo Fraich, and in the Courtship of Ferb. The tale is further noticeable from its connection with the province of Munster: most of the heroic tales are connected with the other three provinces only. Orlam, the hero of the end of the tale, was one of Cuchulain's earliest victims in the Tain bo Cualgne.

THE RAID FOR DARTAID'S CATTLE

FROM THE EGERTON MS. 1782 (EARLY FIFTEENTH-CENTURY), AND THE YELLOW BOOK OF LECAN (FOURTEENTH-CENTURY)

LITERAL TRANSLATION

The Passages that occur only in the Yellow Book (Y.B.L.) are indicated by being placed in square brackets.

EOCHO BEC, the son of Corpre, king of Cliu, dwelt in the *Dun* of Cuillne,[1] and with him were forty fosterlings, all sons of the kings of Munster; he had also forty milch-cows for their sustenance. By Ailill and Medb messengers were sent, asking him to come to a conference. "[In a week,"][2] said Eocho, "I will go to that conference;" and the messengers departed from him.

One night Eocho lay there in his sleep, when he saw something approach him; a woman, and a young man in her attendance. "Ye are welcome!" said Eocho. ["Knowest thou us?"] said she, "Where hast thou learned to know us?" "It seems to me as if I had been near to you." "I think that we have been very near to one another, though we have not seen each other face to face!" "In what place do ye dwell?" said Eocho. "Yonder in Sid Cuillne (the fairy mound of Cuillne)," said she. "And, wherefore have ye come?" "In order to give thee counsel," said she. For what purpose is the counsel," said he, "that thou givest me?"

"Something," she said, "that will bring thee honour and renown on thy journey at home and abroad. A stately troop shall be round thee, and goodly foreign horses shall be under thee."[3] "With how many shall I go?" said Eocho. "Fifty horsemen is the number that is suitable for thee," she answered.

[1. The eleventh century MS., the Leabhar na h-Uidhri, which gives the first four lines of this tale as a fragment, adds here as a note: "this is in the land of the O'Cuanach": apparently the O'Briens of Cuanach.

2. At Samhuin day (Egerton).

3. Y.B.L. adds a passage that Windisch does not translate: it seems to run thus: "Unknown to thee is the half of what thou hast met: it seems to us that foreign may be thy splendour"(?)]

EOCHO BEC,[1] the son of Corpre, reigning in the land of Clew,[2]
Dwelt in Coolny's[3] fort; and fostered sons of princes not a few:
Forty kine who grazed his pastures gave him milk to rear his wards;
Royal blood his charges boasted, sprung from Munster's noblest lords.
Maev and Ailill sought to meet him: heralds calling him they sent:
"Seven days hence I come" said Eocho; and the heralds from him went.
Now, as Eocho lay in slumber, in the night a vision came;
By a youthful squire attended, rose to view a fairy dame:
"Welcome be my greeting to you!" said the king: "Canst thou discern
Who we are?" the fairy answered, "how didst thou our fashion learn?"
"Surely," said the king, "aforetime near to me hath been thy place!"
"Very near thee have we hovered, yet thou hast not seen my face."
"Where do ye abide?" said Eocho. "Yonder dwell we, with the *Shee*:[4]
"In the Fairy Mound of Coolny!" "Wherefore come ye hereto me?"
"We have come," she said, "a counsel as a gift to thee to bring!"
"Speak! and tell me of the counsel ye have brought me," said the king.
"Noble gifts," she said, "we offer that renown for thee shall gain
When in foreign lands thou ridest; worship in thine own domain;
For a troop shall circle round thee, riding close beside thy hand:
Stately it shall be, with goodly horses from a foreign land!"
"Tell me of that troop," said Eocho, "in what numbers should we ride? "
Fifty horsemen is the number that befits thee," she replied:

[1. Pronounced Yeo-ho Bayc.

2. Cliu, a district in Munster.

3. Spelt Cuillne, in Y.B.L. it is Cuille.

4. The Fairies, spelt Sidh.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"To-morrow in the morning fifty black horses, furnished with bridles of gold and silver, shall come to thee from me; and with them fifty sets of equipment of the equipment of the *Sidé*; and all of thy foster-children shall go with thee; well it becomes us to help thee, because thou art valiant in the defence of our country and our soil." Then the woman left him.

Early in the morning they arise, there they see something: the fifty black horses, furnished with bridles of gold and silver tied fast to the gate of the castle, also fifty breeches of silver with embellishment of gold; and fifty youths' garments with their edges of spun gold, and fifty white horses with red ears and long tails, purple-red were all their tails and their manes, with silver bits (?)[1] and foot-chains of brass upon each horse; there were also fifty whips of white bronze (*findruine*), with end pieces of gold that thereby they might be taken into hands.[2]

Then King Eocho arises, and prepares himself (for the journey): they depart with this equipment to Cruachan Ai:[3] and the people were well-nigh overcome with their consequence and appearance: their troop was great, goodly, splendid, compact: [fifty heroes, all with that appearance that has just been related.

"How is that man named?" said Ailill. "Not hard, Eocho Bec, the king of Cliu." They entered the *Liss* (outer court), and the royal house; welcome was given to them, he remained there three days and three nights at the feasting.]

"Wherefore have I have been invited to come?" said Eocho to Ailill: "To learn if I can obtain a gift from thee," said Ailill; "for a heavy need weighs upon me, even the sustenance of the men of Ireland for the bringing of the cattle from Cualgne."

[1. co m-belgib (?) Windisch translates "bridles," the same as cona srianaib above.

2. Y.B.L. adds, "Through wizardry was all that thing: it was recited (?) how great a thing had appeared, and he told his dream to his people."

3. Egerton here gives "Ailill and Medb made them welcome;" it omits the long passage in square brackets.]

"Fifty horses, black in colour; gold and silver reins and bits;
Fifty sets of gay equipment, such as fairies well befits;
These at early dawn to-morrow shall my care for thee provide:
Let thy foster-children with thee on the road thou makest ride!
Rightly do we come to help thee, who so valiantly in fray
Guardest for us soil and country!" And the fairy passed away.

Eocho's folk at dawn have risen; fifty steeds they all behold:
Black the horses seemed; the bridles, stiff with silver and with gold,
Firmly to the gate were fastened; fifty silver breeches there

Heaped together shone, encrusted all with gold the brooches were:
There were fifty knightly vestments, bordered fair with golden thread:
Fifty horses, white, and glowing on their ears with deepest red,
Nigh them stood; of reddish purple were the sweeping tails and manes;
Silver were the bits; their pasterns chained in front with brazen chains:
And, of fair *findruine*[1] fashioned, was for every horse a whip,
Furnished with a golden handle, wherewithal the goad to grip.
Then King Eocho rose, and ready made him; in that fair array
Forth they rode, nor did they tarry till they came to Croghan[2] Ay.
Scarcely could the men of Connaught bear to see that sight, amazed
At the dignity and splendour of the host on which they gazed;
For that troop was great; in serried ranks the fifty riders rode,
Splendid with the state recounted; pride on all their faces glowed.
"Name the man who comes!" said Ailill; "Easy answer!" all replied,
Eocho Bee, in Clew who ruleth, hither to thy court would ride":
Court and royal house were opened; in with welcome came they all;
Three long days and nights they lingered, feasting in King Ailill's hall.
Then to Ailill, king of Connaught, Eocho spake: "From out my land
Wherefore hast thou called me hither?" "Gifts are needed from thy hand,"
Ailill said; "a heavy burden is that task upon me laid,
To maintain the men of Ireland when for Cualgne's kine we raid."
[1. Pronounced "findroony."
2. Pronounced Crow-han.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"What manner of gift is it that thou desirest?" said Eocho. "Nothing less than a gift of milking-kine," said Ailill. "There is no superfluity of these in my land," said Eocho; "I have forty fosterlings, sons of the kings of Munster, to bring them up (to manhood); they are here in My company, there are forty cows to supply the needs of these, to supply my own needs are seven times twenty milch-cows [there are fifty men for this cause watching over them].

"Let me have from thee," said Ailill, "one cow from each farmer who is under thy lordship as my share; moreover I will yield thee assistance if at any time thou art oppressed by superior might." "Thus let it be as thou sayest," said Eocho; "moreover, they shall come to thee this very day."

For three days and three nights they were hospitably entertained by Ailill and Medb, and then they departed homewards, till they met the sons of Glaschu, who came from Irross Donnan (the peninsula of Donnan, now Mayo); the number of

those who met them was seven times twenty men, And they set themselves to attack each other, and to strive with each other in combat, and [at the island of O'Conchada (Inse Ua Conchada)] they fought together. In that place fell the forty sons of kings round Eocho Bec, and that news was spread abroad over all the land of Ireland, so that four times twenty kings' sons, of the youths of Munster, died, sorrowing for the deaths of these princes.

On another night, as Ailill lay in his sleep, upon his bed, he saw some thing, a young man and a woman, the fairest that could be found in Ireland. "Who are ye?" said Ailill. "Victory and Defeat are our names," she said. "Victory indeed is welcome to me, but not so Defeat," said Ailill. "Victory shall be thine in each form!" said she. ["What is the next thing after this that awaits us?" said Ailill. "Not hard to tell thee," said she] "let men march out from thy palace in the morning, that thou mayest win for thyself the cattle of Dartaid, the daughter of Eocho. Forty is the number of her milch-cows, it is thine own son, Orlam mac Ailill, whom she loves. Let Orlam prepare for his journey with a stately troop of valiant men, also forty sons of those kings who dwell in the land of Connaught; and by me shall be given to them the same equipment that the other youths had who fell in yon fight,

Eocho spoke: "What gift requirest thou from me?" "For milking-kine,"
Ailill said, "I ask"; and Eocho, "Few of these indeed are mine!
Forty sons of Munster's princes have I in my halls to rear;
These, my foster-sons, beside me m my troop have journeyed here;
Fifty herdsmen guard the cattle, forty cows my wards to feed,
Seven times twenty graze beside them, to supply my people's need."
"If, for every man who follows thee as liege, and owns a farm,
Thou a cow wilt yield," said Ailill, "then from foes with power to harm
I will guard thee in the battle!" "Keep then faithfully thy vows,"
Eocho said, "this day as tribute shall to Croghan come the cows."
Thrice the sun hath set and risen while they feasting there abide,
Maev and Ailill's bounty tasting, homeward then they quickly ride:
But the sons of Glaschu met them, who from western Donnan came;
Donnan, from the seas that bound it, Irross Donnan hath for name;
Seven times twenty men attacked them, and to battle they were brought,
At the isle of O'Canàda, fiercely either party fought;
With his foster children round him, Eocho Bec in fight was killed,
All the forty princes perished, with that news the land was filled;
All through Ireland lamentation rose for every youthful chief;
Four times twenty Munster princes, weeping for them, died of grief.
Now a vision came to Ailill, as in sleep he lay awhile,

or a youth and dame approached him, fairer none in Erin's Isle:
"Who are ye?" said Ailill; "Conquest," said the fairy, "and Defeat
"Though Defeat I shun," said Ailill, "Conquest joyfully I meet."
"Conquest thou shalt have!" she answered: "Of the future I would ask,
Canst thou read my fate?" said Ailill: "Light indeed for me the task,"
Said the dame: "the kine of Dartaid, Eocho's daughter, may be won:
Forty cows she owns; to gain them send to her thy princely son,
Orlam, whom that maiden loveth: let thy son to start prepare,
Forty youths from Connaught with him, each of them a prince's heir:
Choose thou warriors stout and stately; I will give them garments bright,
Even those that decked the princes who so lately fell in fight:

LITERAL TRANSLATION

bridles and garments and brooches; [early in the morning shall count of the treasure be made, and now we go to our own land," said she].

Then they depart from him, and forthwith they go to [Corp[1] Liath (the Gray),] who was the son of Tassach. His castle was on the bank of the river Nemain, upon the northern side, he was a champion of renown for the guarding of the men of Munster; longer than his hand is the evil he hath wrought. To this man also they appeared, and "What are your names?" said he: "Tecmall and Coscrad (Gathering of Hosts, and Destruction)," said they. "Gathering of Hosts is indeed good," said Corp Liath, "an evil thing is destruction": "There will be no destruction for thee, and thou shalt destroy the sons of kings and nobles": "And what," said Corp Liath, "is the next thing to be done?"

"That is easy to say," they said;[2] "each son of a king and a queen, and each heir of a king that is in Connaught, is now coming upon you to bear off cows from your country, for that the sons of your kings and queens have fallen by the hand of the men of Connaught. To-morrow morning, at the ninth hour they will come, and small is their troop; so if valiant warriors go thither to meet them, the honour of Munster shall be preserved; if indeed thine adventure shall meet with success."

"With what number should I go?" he said. "Seven times twenty heroes thou shouldest take with thee," she replied, ["and seven times twenty warriors besides"]: "And now" said the woman, "we depart to meet thee to-morrow at the ninth hour."

At the time (appointed), when morning had come, the men of Connaught saw the horses and the raiment of which we have spoken, at the gate of the fort of Croghan, [even as she (the fairy) had foretold, and as we have told, so that at that gate was

all she had promised, and all that had been seen on the sons of kings aforetime], and there was a doubt among the people whether they should go on that quest or not. "It is shame," said Ailill,

[1. The Egerton MS. gives the name, Corb Cliach.

2. Y.B.L. gives the passage thus: "Assemble with you the sons of kings, and heirs of kings, that you may destroy the sons of kings and heirs of kings." "Who are they?" said Corp Liath. "A noble youth it is from Connaught: he comes to yon to drive your cows before him, after that your young men were yesterday destroyed by him, at the ninth hour of the morning they will come to take away the cows of Darta, the daughter of Eocho."]

Bridles, brooches, all I give thee; ere the morning sun be high
Thou shalt count that fairy treasure: to our country now we fly."
Swiftly to the son of Tassa sped they thence, to Corp the Gray:
On the northern bank of Naymon was his hold, and there he lay;
And before the men of Munster, as their champion did he stand:
He hath wrought-so runs the proverb-evil, longer than his hand.
As to Corp appeared the vision: "Say," he cried, "what names ye boast!"
"Ruin, one is called," they answered; "one, The Gathering of the Host!"
An assembled host I welcome," answered them the gray Corp Lee;
"Ruin I abhor": "And ruin," they replied, "is far from thee;
Thou shalt bring on sons of nobles, and of kings a ruin great":
"Fairy," said Corp Lee, the Gray one, "tell me of that future fate."
"Easy is the task," she answered, "youths of every royal race
That in Connaught's land hath dwelling, come to-morrow to this place;
Munster's kine they hope to harry, for the Munster princes fell
Yesterday with Connaught fighting; and the hour I plainly ten:
At the ninth hour of the morning shall they come: the band is small:
Have thou valiant men to meet them, and upon the raiders fall!
Munster's honour hath been tarnished! clear it by a glorious deed!
Thou shalt purge the shame if only in the foray thou succeed."
"What should be my force?" he asked her: "Take of heroes seven score
For that fight," she said, "and with them seven times twenty warriors more:
Far from thee we now are flying; but shall meet thee with thy power
When to-morrow's sun is shining; at the ninth, the fated hour."
At the dawn, the time appointed, all those steeds and garments gay
Were in Connaught, and they found them at the gate of Croghan Ay;
All was there the fay had promised, all the gifts of which we told:
All the splendour that had lately decked the princes they behold.

Doubtful were the men of Connaught; some desired the risk to face;
Some to go refused: said Ailill, “It should bring us to disgrace

LITERAL TRANSLATION

“to refuse a thing that is good”; and upon that Orlam departed [till[1] he came to the house of Dartaid, the daughter of Eocho, in Cliu Classach (Cliu the Moated), on the Shannon upon the south (bank).

There they halted], and the maiden rejoiced at their coming: “Three of the kine are missing.” “We cannot wait for these; let the men take provision on their horses, [for rightly should we be afraid in the midst of Munster. Wilt thou depart with me, O maiden?” said he. “I will indeed go with thee,” said she]. “Come then thou,” said he, “and with thee all of thy cows.”

[Then the young men go away with the cows in the midst, and the maiden was with them; but Corp Liath, the son of Tassach, met them with seven times twenty warriors to oppose their march. A battle was fought], and in that place fell the sons of the kings of Connaught, together with the warriors who had gone with them, all except Orlam and eight others,[2] who carried away with them the kine, even the forty milch-cows, and fifty heifers, [so that they came into the land of Connaught]; but the maiden fell at the beginning of the fight.

Hence is that place called Imlech Dartaid. (the Lake Shore of Darta), in the land of Cliu, [where Dartaid, the daughter of Eocho, the son of Corpre, fell: and for this reason this story is called the Tain bo Dartae, it is one of the preludes to the Tain bo Cualnge].

[1. Egerton Version has only “towards Chu till he came to the home of Dartaid, the daughter of Eocho: the maiden rejoiced,” &c. From this point to the end the version in the Yellow Book is much fuller.

2 Y.B.L. inserts Dartaid’s death at this point: “and Dartaid fell at the beginning of the fight, together with the stately sons of Connaught.”]

If we spurned such offered bounty”: Orlam his reproaches felt;
Sprang to horse; and towards the country rode, where Eocho’s daughter dwelt:
And where flows the Shannon river, near that water’s southern shore,
Found her home; for as they halted, moated Clew[1] rose high before.
Dartaid met them ere they halted, joyful there the prince to see:
All the kine are not assembled, of their count is lacking three!”
“Tarry not for search,” said Orlam, “yet provision must we take
On our steeds, for hostile Munster rings us round. Wilt home forsake,
Maiden? wilt thou ride beside us?” “I will go indeed,” she said.

Then, with all thy gathered cattle, come with us; with me to wed!
So they marched, and in the centre of their troop the kine were set,
And the maiden rode beside them: but Corp Lee, the Gray, they met;
Seven times twenty heroes with him; and to battle they must go,
And the Connaught nobles perished, fighting bravely with the foe:
All the sons of Connaught's princes, all the warriors with them died:
Orlam's self escaped the slaughter, he and eight who rode beside:
Yet he drave the cows to Croghan; ay, and fifty heifers too!
But, when first the foe made onset, they the maid in battle slew.
Near a lake, did Eocho's[2] daughter, Dartaid, in the battle fall,
From that lake, and her who perished, hath been named that region all:
Emly Darta is that country; Táin bo Dartae is the tale:
And, as prelude, 'tis recited, till the Cualgne[3] Raid they hail.

[1. Spelt Cliu.
2 Pronounced Yeo-ho.
3. Pronounced Kell-ny.]

THE RAID FOR THE CATTLE OF REGAMON

INTRODUCTION

THE two versions of this tale, given by Windisch in the *Irische Texte*, II. pp. 224-238, are from the same manuscripts as the two versions of the Raid of the Cattle of Dartaid; namely the Yellow Book of Lecan, and the Egerton MS. 1782. In the case of this tale, the Yellow Book version is more legible, and, being not only the older, but a little more full than the other version, Windisch has translated this text alone: the prose version, as given here, follows this manuscript, nearly as given by Windisch, with only one addition from the Egerton MS.; the omissions in the Egerton MS. are not mentioned, but one or two changes in words adopted from this MS. are mentioned in the foot-notes to the prose rendering.

The whole tone of the tale is very unlike the tragic character of those romances, which have been sometimes supposed to represent the general character of old Irish literature: there is not even a hint of the super-natural; the story contains no slaughter; the youthful raiders seem to be regarded as quite irresponsible persons, and the whole is an excellent example of an old Celtic: romance with what is to-day called a “good ending.”

THE RAID FOR THE CATTLE OF REGAMON

FROM THE YELLOW BOOK OF LECAN (A MANUSCRIPT OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY)

LITERAL TRANSLATION

IN the time of Ailill and Medb, a glorious warrior and holder of land dwelt in the land of Connaught, and his name was Regamon. He had many herds of cattle, all of them fair and well-shaped: he had also seven daughters with him. Now the seven sons of Ailill and Medb loved these (daughters): namely the seven Maine, these were Maine Morgor (Maine with great filial love), Maine Mingar (Maine with less filial love), Maine Aithremail (Maine like his father), Maine Mathremail (Maine like his mother), Maine Milbel (Maine with the mouth of honey),[1] Maine Moepert (Maine too great to be described), Maine Condageb-uile (Maine who combined all qualities): now this one had the form both of father and mother, and had all the glory that belonged to both parents.

[1. The name of Maine Annai, making an eighth son, is given in Y.B.L., but not in the Egerton MS.]

WHEN Ailill and Maev in the Connaught land abode, and the lordship held,
A chief who many a field possessed in the land of Connaught dwelled:
A great, and a fair, and a goodly herd of kine had the chieftain won:
And his fame in the fight was in all men's word; his name was Regamon.
Now seven daughters had Regamon; they dwelt at home with their sire:
Yet the seven sons of King Ailill and Maev their beauty with love could fire:
All those seven sons were as Mani[1] known; the first was as Morgor hailed,
For his love was great: it was Mingar's fate that in filial love he failed:
The face was seen of the mother-queen on the third; and his father's face

Did the fourth son show: they the fifth who know cannot speak all his strength and grace:
The sixth son spoke, from his lips the words like drops of honey fell:
And last came one who all gifts possessed that the tongue of a man can tell;
For his father's face that Mani had, in him was his mother seen;
And in him abode every grace bestowed on the king of the land or the queen.
[1. Pronounced Mah-nee.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

The seven daughters of Regamon were the three Dunann, and the four Dunlaith;[1] from the names of these is the estuary of Dunann in western Connaught, and the Ford of Dunlaith in Breffny.

Now at a certain time, Ailill and Medb and Fergus held counsel together. "Some one from us," said Ailill, "should go to Regamon, that a present of cattle may be brought to us from him; to meet the need that there is on us for feeding the men of Ireland, when the kine are raided from Cualgne." "I know," said Medb, "who would be good to go thither, if we ask it of them; even the Maine; on account of their love for the daughters."

His sons were called to Ailill, and he spoke with them. "Grateful is he, and a better journey does he go," said Maev, "who goes for the sake of his filial love." "Truly it shall be that it is owing to filial love that we go," said Mani Morgor. "But the reward should (also) for this be the better," said Mani Mingar; "it stands ill with our heroism, ill with our strength.

[1. So Egerton, which Windisch follows here; the reading of Y.B.L. is Dunmed for the daughters, and Dumed for the corresponding ford.]

Of the daughters of Regamon now we speak: two names those maidens bore:
For as Dunnan three ever known shall be; Dunlaith[1] was the name for four:
And in Breffny's land is the Ford Dunlaith, and the fame of the four recalls;
The three ye know where the Dunnan's flow in western Connaught falls.
With Fergus, Ailill and Maev were met: as at council all conferred;
{20} "It were well for our folk," thus Ailill spoke, "if the lord of that cattle-herd,
That strays in the fields of Regamon, would tribute to us pay:
And to gain that end, let us heralds send, to his burg who may make their way,
And bear to our court that tribute back; for greatly we soon shall need
Such kine when we in the time of war our hosts shall have to feed;
And all who share in our counsels know that a burden will soon be mine,
When the men must be fed of Ireland, led on the Raid for the Cuailgne[2] Kine!"
Thus Ailill spoke; and Queen Maev replied, "The men to perform that task

Right well I know; for our sons will go, if we for their aid but ask!
The seven daughters of Regamon do the Mani in love now seek:
{30} If those maidens' hands they can gain by the deed, they will heed the words we speak."
To his side King Ailill has called his sons, his mind to the youth he shows.
"Best son," says Maev, "and grateful he, from filial love who goes!"
And Morgor said, "For the love that we owe, we go at our sire's behest:"
"Yet a greater reward," thus Mingar spake, "must be ours, if we go on this quest!
For naught have we of hero-craft; and small shall be found our might;
And of valiant breed are the men," said he, "with whom we shall have to fight.
[1. Pronounced Dun-lay.
2. Pronounced Kell-ny.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

It is like going from a house into the fields, (going) into the domains or the land of foes. Too tenderly have we been brought up; none hath let us learn of wars; moreover the warriors are valiant towards whom we go!"
They took leave of Ailill and Medb, and betook themselves to the quest, They set out, seven times twenty heroes was the number, till they were in the south of Connaught, in the neighbourhood of the domain of Corcomroe[1] in the land of Ninnus, near to the burg. "Some of you," said Mani Morgor, "should go to find out how to enter into the burg; and to test the love of maidens." Mani Mingar, with two others, went until he came upon three of the maidens at the water-springs, and at once he and his comrades drew their swords against them. "Give life for life!" said the maiden. "Grant to me then my three full words!" said Mani Mingar. "Whatever thy tongue sets forth shall be done," said the maiden, "only let it not be cows,[2] for these have we no power to give thee." "For these indeed," said Mani, "is all that now we do."[3]
[1. Properly "Coremodruad," the descendants of Modh Ruadh, third son of Fergus by Maev; now Corcomroe in County Clare.
2. "Only let it not be cows" is in the Egerton MS. alone.
3. "That we do" is Egerton MS. (cich indingnem), Y.B.L. has "cechi m-bem."]
As men from the shelter of roof who go, and must rest in the open field,
So thy sons shall stand, if they come to a land where a foe might be found concealed!
We have dwelt till now in our father's halls, too tenderly cared for far:
Nor hath any yet thought, that to us should be taught the arts that belong to war!"
Queen Maev and Ailill their sons have sped, away on the quest they went,
With seven score men for the fight, whom the queen for help of her sons had sent:

To the south of the Connaught realm they reached, the burg that they sought was plain
For to Ninnus land they had come, and were nigh to the Corcomroe domain.
"From our band," said Mani Morgor, "some must go, of that burg to learn
How entrance we may attain to win, and back with the news return
We must test the strength of the maidens' love!" On Mingar the task was set,
And with two beside him, he searched the land, till three of the maids they met:
By springs of water they found the maids, drew swords, and against them leapt!
"O grant our lives!" was the maiden's cry, "and your lives shall be safely kept!"
"For your lives," he said, "will ye grant a boon, set forth in three words of speech?"
"At our hands," said she, "shall granted be, whatever thy tongue shall teach;
Yet ask not cattle; those kine have we no power to bestow, I fear":
"Why, 'tis for the sake of the kine," he said, "that all of us now are here!"

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"Who art thou?" said she: "Mani Mingar, son of Ailill and Medb," said he: "Welcome then," she said, "but what hath brought with you here?" "To take with us cattle and maidens," he said: "'Tis right," she said, "to take these together; (but) I fear that what has been demanded will not be granted, the men are valiant to whom you have come." "Let your entreaties be our aid!" he said. "We would desire," she said, "that it should be after that counsel hath been taken that we obey you."

"What is your number?" said she: "Seven times twenty heroes," he said, "are with us." "Remain here," she said, "that we may speak with the other maidens": "We shall assist you," said the maidens, "as well as we can."

They went from them, and came to the other maidens, and they said to them: "Young heroes from the lands of Connaught are come to you, your own true loves, the seven sons of Ailill and Medb." "Wherefore are they come?" "To take back with them cattle and wives." "That would we gladly have, if only we could;
"Who art thou then?" from her faltering broke: "Mani Mingar am I," he replied;
I am son to King Ailill and Maev: And to me thou art welcome," the maiden cried;
"But why have ye come to this land?" said she: For kine and for brides," he said,
Have we come to seek: And 'tis right," said she, such demands in a speech to wed:
Yet the boon that you ask will our folk refuse, and hard will your task be found;
For a valiant breed shall you meet, I fear, in the men who guard this ground!"
"Give your aid," he said, "then as friends: But time," said she, "we must have for thought;

For a plan must be made, e'er thy word be obeyed, and the kine to thy hands be brought:
Have ye journeyed here with a force of men? how great is the strength of your band?"
"Seven score are there here for the fight," he said, "the warriors are near at hand!"
"Wait here," said she; "to my sisters four I go of the news to tell:
"And with thee we side!" all the maidens cried, "and we trust we shall aid thee well,"
Away from the princes the maidens sped, they came to their sisters four,
And thus they spoke: "From the Connaught land come men, who are here at your door;
The sons of Ailill and Maev have come; your own true loves are they!"
"And why have they come to this land?" they said; "For kine and for brides, they say,
Have they come to seek:" "And with zeal their wish would we joyfully now fulfil
If but powers to aid were but ours," they said, "which would match with our right good will:

LITERAL TRANSLATION

(but) I fear that the warriors will hinder them or drive them away," said she. "Go ye out, that ye may speak with the man." "We will speak with him," they said. The seven maidens went to the well, and they greeted Mani. "Come ye away," he said, "and bring your cattle with you. That will be a good deed. We shall assist you with our honour and our protection, O ye daughters of Regamon," said he.[1] The maidens drove together their cows and their swine, and their sheep, so that none observed them; and they secretly passed on till they came to the camp of their comrades. The maidens greeted the sons of Ailill and Medb, and they remained there standing together. "The herd must be divided in two parts," said Mani Merger, "also the host must divide, for it is too great to travel by the one way; and we shall meet again at Ath Briuin (the Ford of Briuin)." So it was done.
King Regamon was not there on that day. He was in the domain of Corco Baiscinn,[2]
[1. Windisch conjectures this instead of "said the warriors," which is in the text of Y.B.L.
2. In the south-west of Clare.]
But I fear the youths in this burg who dwell, the plans that we make may foil;
or far from the land may chase that band, and drive them away from their spoil!"
"Will ye follow us now, with the prince to speak?" They willingly gave consent,

And together away to the water-springs the seven maidens went.
They greeted Mani; “Now come!” said he, “and bring with you out your herds:
And a goodly meed shall reward your deed, if you but obey my words;
For our honour with sheltering arms is nigh, and shall all of you safely keep,
Ye seven daughters of Regamon!” The cattle, the swine, and sheep
Together the maidens drove; none saw them fly, nor to stay them sought,
Till safe to the place where the Mani stood, the herd by the maids was brought.
The maidens greeted the sons of Maev, and each by her lover stood;
And then Morgor spoke: “Into twain this herd of kine to divide were good,
At the Briuin[1] Ford should the hosts unite; too strait hath the path been made
For so vast a herd”: and to Morgor’s word they gave heed, and his speech obeyed.
Now it chanced that Regamon, the king, was far from his home that day,
For he to the Corco Baiscinn land had gone, for a while to stay;
[1. Pronounced Brewin.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

to hold a conference with the Firbolgs. His people raised a cry behind him, message was brought to Regamon, and he went in pursuit with his army. The whole of the pursuing host overtook Mani Morgor, and brought defeat upon him.
“We all,” said Mani, “must go to one place, and some of you shall be sent to the cattle to summon the young men hither, and the maidens shall drive the cattle over the ford to Cruachan, and shall give Ailill and Medb tidings of the plight in which we are here.” The maidens went to Cruachan, and told all the tale. “Thy sons are at Ath Briuin in distress, and have said that help should be brought to them.” The men of Connaught with Ailill, and Medb, and Fergus, and the banished men of Ulster went to Ath Briuin to help their people.
The sons of Ailill had for the moment made hurdles of white-thorn and black-thorn in the gut[1] of the ford, as defence against Regamon and his people, so that they were unable to pass through the ford ere Ailill and his army came;
[1. Literally “mouth.”]
With the Firbolg[1] clans, in debate, he sat; and a cry as the raiders rode,
Was behind him raised: to the king came men, who the news of that plunder showed:
Then the king arose, and behind his foes he rode, and o’ertook their flight,
And on Mani Morgor his host pressed hard, and they conquered his men in the fight.
“To unite our band,” thus Morgor cried, “fly hence, and our comrades find!
Call the warriors back from the cattle here, and leave the maids behind;

Bid the maidens drive to our home the herd as far as the Croghan Fort,
And to Ailill and Maev of our perilous plight let the maidens bear report."
The maidens went to the Croghan Fort, to Maev with their news they pressed:
"Thy sons, O Maev, at the Briuin Ford are pent, and are sore distressed,
And they pray thee to aid them with speed": and Maev her host for the war prepared,
With Ailill the warriors of Connaught came; and Fergus beside them fared,
And the exiles came, who the Ulster name still bore, and towards that Ford
All that host made speed, that their friends in need might escape from the vengeful sword.

Now Ailill's sons, in the pass of that Ford, had hurdles strongly set:
And Regamon failed through the ford to win, ere Ailill's troops were met:
Of white-thorn and of black-thorn boughs were the hurdles roughly framed,
And thence the name of the ford first came, that the Hurdle Ford is named;
[1. Pronounced Feer-bol.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

so thence cometh the name Ath Cliath Medraidi[1] (the Hurdle Ford of Medraide), in the country of Little Bethra in the northern part of the O'Fiachrach Aidne between Connaught and Corcomroe. There they met together with all their hosts.

A treaty was then made between them on account of the fair young men who had carried off the cattle, and on account of the fair maidens who had gone with them, by whose means the herd escaped. Restitution of the herd was awarded to Regamon, and the maidens abode with the sons of Ailill and Medb; and seven times twenty milch-cows were given up, as a dowry for the maidens, and for the maintenance of the men of Ireland on the occasion of the assembly for the Tain bo Cualnge; so that this tale is called the Tain bo Regamon, and it is a prelude to the tale of the Tain bo Cualnge. Finit, amen.

[1. Ath Cliath oc Medraige, now Maaree, in Ballycourty parish, Co. Galway (Stokes, Bodleian Dinnshenchus, 26). It may be mentioned that in the Dinnshenchus, the cattle are said to have been taken "from Dartaid, the daughter of Regamon in Munster," thus confusing the Raids of Regamon and Dartaid, which may account for O'Curry's incorrect statement in the preface to Leabhar na h-Uidhri, p. xv.]

For, where the O'Feara[1] Aidne folk now dwell, can ye plainly see
In the land of Beara[2] the Less, that Ford, yet called Ath[3] Clee Maaree,
In the north doth it stand; and the Connaught land divideth from Corcomroe;
And thither, with Regamon's troops to fight, did Ailill's army go.

Then a truce they made; to the youths, that Raid who designed, they gave back their lives;

And the maidens fair all pardoned were, who had fled with the youths, as wives,
Who had gone with the herd, by the maids conferred on the men who the kine had gained:
But the kine, restored to their rightful lord, in Regamon's hands remained;
The maiden band in the Connaught land remained with the sons of Maev;
And a score of cows to each maiden's spouse the maidens' father gave:
As his daughters' dower, did their father's power his right in the cows resign,
That the men might be fed of Ireland, led on the Raid for the Cualgne[4] Kine.
This tale, as the Táin bo Regamon, is known in the Irish tongue;
And this lay they make, when the harp they wake, ere the Cualgne[4] Raid be sung.

[1. Pronounced O'Fayra Ain-ye.
2. Pronounced Bayra.
3. Spelt Ath Cliath Medraidi. Ath is pronounced like Ah.
4. Pronounced Kell-ny.]

THE DRIVING OF THE CATTLE OF FLIDAIS

INTRODUCTION

THE Tain bo Flidais, the Driving of the Cows of Flidais, does not, like the other three Preludes to the Tain bo Cualnge, occur in the Yellow Book of Lecan; but its manuscript age is far the oldest of the four, as it occurs in both the two oldest collections of Old Irish romance, the Leabbar na h-Uidhri (abbreviated to L.U.), and the Book of Leinster (abbreviated to L.L.), besides the fifteenth century Egerton MS., that contains the other three preludes. The text of all three, together with a translation of the L.U. text, is given by Windisch in *Irische Texte*, II. pp. 206-223; the first part of the story is missing in L.U. and is supplied from the Book of Leinster (L.L.) version. The prose translation given here follows Windisch's translation pretty closely, with insertions occasionally from L.L. The Egerton version agrees closely with L.L., and adds little to it beyond variations in spelling, which have occasionally been taken in the case of proper names. The Leabhar na h-Uidhri version is not only the oldest, but has the most details of the three; a few passages have, however, been supplied from the other manuscripts which agree with L.U. in the main.

The whole tale is much more like an old Border riding ballad than are the other three Preludes; it resembles the tone of Regamon, but differs from it in having a good deal of slaughter to relate, though it can hardly be called tragic, like Deirdre and Ferb, the killing being taken as a matter of course. There is nothing at all supernatural about the story as contained in the old manuscripts, but a quite different' version of the story given in the Glenn Masain Manuscript, a fifteenth century manuscript now in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, gives another complexion to the tale.

The translation of this manuscript is at present being made in the Celtic Review by Professor Mackinnon; the version it gives of the story is much longer and fuller than that in the Leabhar na h-Uidhri, and its accompanying manuscripts. The

translation as printed in the Celtic Review is not as yet (July 1905) completed, but, through Professor Mackinnon's kindness, an abstract of the general features of the end of the story may be given here.

The Glenn Masain version makes Bricriu, who is a subordinate character in the older version, one of the principal actors, and explains many of the allusions which are difficult to understand in the shorter version; but it is not possible to regard the older version as an abridgment of that preserved in the Glenn Masain MS., for the end of the story in this manuscript is absolutely different from that in the older ones, and the romance appears to be unique in Irish in that it has versions which give two quite different endings, like the two versions of Kipling's *The Light that Failed*.

The Glenn Masain version commences with a feast held at Cruachan, when Fergus and his exiles had joined their forces with Connaught as a result of the murder of the Sons of Usnach, as told in the earlier part of the manuscript. At this feast Bricriu. engages in conversation with Fergus, reproaching him for his broken promises to the Ulstermen who had joined him, and for his dalliance with Queen Maev. Bricriu, who in other romances is a mere buffoon, here appears as a distinguished poet, and a chief ollave; his satire remains bitter, but by no means scurrilous, and the verses put into his mouth, although far beneath the standard of the verses given to Deirdre in the earlier part of the manuscript, show a certain amount of dignity and poetic power. As an example, the following satire on Fergus's inability to keep his promises may be cited:—

Fergus, hear thy friend lamenting!
  Blunted is thy lofty mind;
Thou, for hire, to Maev consenting,
  Hast thy valour's pride resigned.
Ere another year's arriving,
  Should thy comrades, thou didst vow,
Three-score chariots fair be driving,
  Shields and weapons have enow!
When thy ladies, bent on pleasure,
  Crowd towards the banquet-hall,
Thou of gold a goodly measure
  Promised hast to grant to all!
Ill to-night thy friends are faring,
  Naught hath Fergus to bestow;
He a poor man's look is wearing,
  Never yet was greater woe!

After the dialogue with Fergus, Bricriu, with the poets that attend him, undertakes a journey to Ailill the Fair, to obtain from him the bounty that Fergus had promised but was unable to grant. He makes a fairly heavy demand upon Ailill's bounty, but is received hospitably, and gets all he had asked for, as well as honour for his poetic talents. He then asks about Ailill's wife Flidais, and is told about her marvellous cow, which was able to supply milk to more than three hundred men at one night's milking. Flidais returns from a journey, is welcomed by Bricriu, who produces a poem in honour of her and her cow, and is suitably recompensed.

A long conversation is then recorded between Flidais and Bricriu in which Bricriu extols the great deeds of Fergus, supplying thereby a commentary on the short statement at the beginning of the older version, that Flidais' love to Fergus was on account of the great deeds which had been told her that he had done. Flidais declares to Bricriu her love for Fergus, and Bricriu, after a vain attempt to dissuade the queen from her purpose, consents to bring a message to Fergus that Flidais and her cow will come to him if he comes to her husband's castle to seek her. He then returns to Connaught laden with gifts.

The story now proceeds somewhat upon the lines of the older version. Bricriu approaches Fergus on his return, and induces him to go in the guise of an ambassador to Ailill the Fair, with the secret intention of carrying off Flidais. Fergus receives the sanction of Maev and her husband for his errand, and departs, but not as in the older version with a few followers; all the Ulster exiles are with him. Dubhtach, by killing a servant of Maev, embroils Fergus with the queen of Connaught; and the expedition reaches Ailill the Fair's castle. Fergus sends Bricriu, who has most unwillingly accompanied him, to ask for hospitality; he is hospitably received by Ailill, and when under the influence of wine reveals to Ailill the plot. Ailill does not, as in the older version, refuse to receive Fergus, but seats him beside himself at a feast, and after reproaching him with his purpose challenges him to a duel in the morning. The result of the duel, and of the subsequent attack on the castle by Fergus' friends, is much as stated in the older version, but the two stories end quite differently. The L.U. version makes Flidais assist in the War of Cualgne by feeding the army of Ailill each seventh day with the produce of her cows; she dies after the war as wife of Fergus; the Glenn Masain version, in the "*Pursuit of the Cattle of Flidais*," makes the Gamanrad clan, the hero-clan of the West of Ireland, pursue Maev and Fergus, and rescue Flidais and her cow; Flidais then returns to the west with Muiretach Menn, the son of her murdered husband, Ailill the Fair.

The comparison of these two versions, from the literary point of view, is most interesting. The stress laid on the supernatural cow is peculiar to the version in the later manuscript, the only analogy in the eleventh century version is the semi-

supernatural feeding of the army of Ireland, but in this it is a herd (*buar*), not a single animal, that is credited with the feat, and there is really nothing supernatural about the matter; it is only the other version that enables us to see the true bearing of the incident. The version in the Glenn Masain Manuscript looks much more ancient in idea than that in the older texts, and is plainly capable of a mythic interpretation. It is not of course suggested that the Glenn Masain version is ancient as it stands: there are indeed enough obvious allusions in the text to comparatively late works to negative such a supposition, independently of linguistic evidence, but it does look as if the author of the eleventh century text had a super natural tale to work upon, some of whose incidents are preserved in the Glenn Masain version, and that he succeeded in making out of the traditional account a story that practically contains no supernatural element at all, so that it requires a knowledge of the other version to discover the slight trace of the supernatural that he did keep, viz. the feeding of the army of Ireland by the herd (not the cow) of Flidais.

It is possible that the common origin of the two versions is preserved for us in another place, the *Coir Annam*, which, though it as it stands is a Middle Irish work, probably keeps ancient tradition better than the more finished romances. In this we find, following Stokes' translation, given in Irische Texte, III. P. 295, the following entries:—

"Adammair Flidaise Foltcháin, that is Flidais the Queen, one of the tribe of the god-folk (the Tuatha dé Danaan), she was wife of Adammair, the son of Fer Cuirp, and from her cometh the name *Buar Flidaise*, the Cattle of Flidais.

"Nia Ségamain, that is *ség* (deer) are a *máin* (his treasure), for in his time cows and does were milked in the same way every day, so that he had great wealth in these things beyond that of all other kings. The Flidais spoken of above was the mother of Nia Ségamain, Adammair's son, for two kinds of cattle, cows and does, were milked in the days of Nia Ségamain, and by his mother was that fairy power given to him."

It seems, then, not impossible that the original legend was much as stated in the Coir Annam, viz. that Flidais was a supernatural being, milking wild deer like cows, and that she was taken into the Ulster Cycle and made part of the tale of Fergus.

This adoption was done by an author who made a text which may be regarded as the common original of the two versions; in his tale the supernatural character of Flidais was retained. The author of the L.U. version cut out the supernatural part, and perhaps the original embassy of Bricriu; it may, however, be noted that the opening of the older version comes from the L.L. text, which is throughout shorter than that in L.U., and the lost opening of L.U. may have been fuller. The author of

the Glenn Masain version kept nearer to the old story, adding, however, more modern touches. Where the new character of Bricriu comes from is a moot point; I incline to the belief that the idea of Bricriu as a mere buffoon is a later development. But in neither version is the story, as we have it, a pre-Christian one. The original pre-Christian idea of Flidais was, as in the Coir Annam, that of a being outside the Ulster Cycle altogether.

THE DRIVING OF THE CATTLE OF FLIDAIS FROM THE LEABHAR NA H-UIDHRI (ELEVENTH-CENTURY MS.), THE BEGINNING AND A FEW ADDITIONS FROM THE BOOK OF LEINSTER (TWELFTH CENTURY)

LITERAL TRANSLATION

FLIDAIS was the wife of Ailill Finn (the Fair-haired) in the district of Kerry.[1] She loved Fergus the son of Róg on account of the glorious tales about him; and always there went messengers from her to him at the end of each week.

So, when he came to Connaught, he brought this matter before[2] Ailill: "What[3] shall I do next in this matter?" said Fergus: "it is hard for me to lay bare your land, without there being loss to thee of honour and renown therewith." "Yes, what shall we do next in the matter?" said Ailill; "we will consider this in counsel with Maev." "Let one of us go to Ailill Finn," (said Maev), "that he may help us, and as this involves a meeting of some one with him, there is no reason why it should not be thyself who goest to him: the gift will be all the better for that!"

[1. Kerry is the district now called Castlereagh, in the west of the present county of Roscommon.

2. i.e. Ailill of Connaught.

3. This sentence to the end is taken from the Egerton version, which seems the clearer; the Book of Leinster gives: "What shall I do next, that there be no loss of honour or renown to thee in the matter?"]

A LAND in West Roscommon, as Kerry known of old,
Was ruled by Ailill Fair-haired; of him a tale is told:
How Flidais,[1] Ailill's [2] consort, each week, and near its end,
To Ró's great son, to Fergus, her herald still would send;
'Twas Fergus' love she sought for; the deeds by Fergus done,
In glorious tales recited, had Flidais' fancy won.
When Fergus fled from Ulster, and Connaught's land he sought,
To Ailill, king of Connaught, this tale of love he brought:
"Now give me rede," said Fergus, "how best we here should act,
That Connaught's fame and honour by none may stand attacked;
Say, how can I approach them, and strip thy kingdom bare,
And yet the fame of Ailill, that country's monarch, spare?"
"'Tis hard indeed to teach thee," cried Ailill, sore perplexed;
"Let Maev come nigh with counsel what course to follow next!"
"Send thou to Ailill Fair-haired to ask for aid!" said Maev,
"He well may meet a herald, who comes his help to crave
Let Fergus go to crave it: no harm can there be seen;
And better gifts from Ailill shall Fergus win, I ween!"

[1. Pronounced Flid-das.

2. Pronounced Al-ill.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

Then Fergus set out thereon, in number thirty men; the two Ferguses (*i.e.* Fergus mac Róg, and Fergus mac Oen-lama) and Dubhtach; till they were at the Ford of Fenna in the north of the land of Kerry. They go to the burg, and welcome is brought to them.[1] "What brings you here?" said Ailill Finn. "We had the intention of staying with you on a visit, for we have a quarrel with Ailill the son of Magach." "If it were one of thy people who had the quarrel, he should stay with me until he had made his peace. But thou shalt not stay," said Ailill Finn, "it has been told me that my wife loves thee!" "We must have a gift of cows then," said Fergus, "for a great need lies on us, even the sustenance of the troop who have gone with me into exile." "Thou shalt carry off no such present from me," he said, "because thou art not remaining with me on a visit. Men will say that it is to keep my wife that I gave thee what thou hast required. I[2] Will give to your company one ox and some

bacon to help them, if such is your pleasure." "I will eat not thy bread although offered (*lit.* however)," said Fergus, "because I can get no present of honour from thee!"

"Out of my house with you all, then!" said Ailill.

"That shall be," said Fergus; "we shall not begin to lay siege to thee and they betake themselves outside.

"Let a man come at once to fight me beside a ford at the gate of this castle!" said Fergus.

[1. The Book of the Dun Cow (Leabhar na h-Uidhri) version begins at this point. 2 L.L. and Egerton make the end of this speech part of the story: "There was given to them one ox with bacon, with as much as they wished of beer, as a feast for them."]

So forth to Ailill Fair-haired went Fergus, son of Ró;
And thirty, Dubhtach[1] leading, he chose with him to go;
And yet another Fergus his aid to Fergus brought;
Mac Oonlama[2] men called him; his sire one-handed fought.
Beside the Ford of Fenna, in Kerry's north they came,
They neared the hold, and from it rang welcome's loud acclaim:
"What quest," said Ailill Fair-haired, "hath brought these warriors here?"
"Of Ailill, son of Magach, we stand," they said, "in fear;
A feud we hold against him; with thee would fain abide!"
"For each of these," said Ailill, "who Fergus march beside,
If they were foes to Connaught, for long they here might stay,
And ne'er till peace was granted, I'd drive these men away:
For Fergus, naught I grant him a tale of him men tell
That Fergus 'tis whom Flidais, my wife, doth love too well!"
"It is kine that I ask for," said Fergus, "and hard is the task on me set:
For the men who have marched here beside me, the means to win life I must get."
"I will give no such present," said Ailill," thou comest not here as my guest:
Men will say, 'twas from fear that I gave it, lest my wife from my arms thou should'st wrest:
Yet an ox of my herds, and some bacon, if thou wilt, shall my hand to thee give;
That the men who have marched here beside thee on that meat may be stayed, and may live!"
"I eat no bread thus thrown me!" fierce Fergus straight replied:
"I asked a gift of honour; that gift thine hand denied."
"Avoid my house," said Ailill in wrath, "now get thee hence!
"We go indeed," said Fergus; "no siege we now commence:

Yet here," he cried, "for duel beside yon ford I wait,
If thou canst find a champion to meet me at thy gate."
[1. Pronounced Doov-ta.
2. Spelt Mac Oenlama, son of the one-handed one.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"That[1] will not for the sake of my honour be refused," said Ailill; "I will not hand it (the strife) over to another: I will go myself," said he. He went to a ford against him. "Which of us," said Fergus, "O Dubhtach, shall encounter this man?" "I will go," said Dubhtach; "I am younger and keener than thou art!" Dubhtach went against Ailill. Dubhtach thrust a spear through Ailill so that it went through his two thighs. He (Ailill) hurled a javelin at Dubhtach, so that he drove the spear right through him, (so that it came out) on the other side.

Fergus threw his shield over Dubhtach. The former (Ailill) thrust his spear at the shield of Fergus so that he even drove the shaft right through it. Fergus mac Oen-laimi comes by. Fergus mac Oen-laimi holds a shield in front of him (the other Fergus). Ailill struck his spear upon this so that it was forced right through it. He leaped so that he lay there on the top of his companions. Flidais comes by from the castle, and throws her cloak over the three.

Fergus' people took to flight; Ailill pursues them. There remain (slain) by him twenty men of them. Seven of them escape to Cruachan Ai, and tell there the whole story to Ailill and Medb.

[1. The end of the speech is from L.L.: the L.U. text gives the whole speech thus: "For my honour's sake, I could not draw back in this matter."]

Then up and answered Ailill: "'Tis mine this strife must be
And none shall hurt mine honour, or take this task from me:
None hold me back from battle!"—the ford for fight he sought:
"Now Dubhtach, say," said Fergus, "to whom this war is brought!
Or thou or I must meet him." And Dubhtach said, "I go;
For I am younger, Fergus, and bolder far with foe."
To the ford for the battle with Ailill he hies,
And he thrust at him fiercely, and pierced through his thighs;
But a javelin by Ailill at Dubhtach was cast,
And right through his body the shaft of it passed:
And a shield over Dubhtach, laid low in the dust,
Spread Fergus; and Ailill his spear at him thrust;
And through Fergus' shield had the spear made its way,
When Fergus Mae Oonlama joined in the fray,

And his shield he uplifted, his namesake to guard;
But at Fergus Mac Oonlama Ailill thrust hard,
And he brake through the fence of Mac Oonlama's shield;
And he leaped in his pain; as they lay on the field,
On his comrades he fell: Flidais forth to them flew,
And her cloak on the warriors to shield them she threw.
Then against all the comrades of Fergus turned Ailill the Fair-haired to fight,
And he chased them away from his castle, and slew as they scattered in flight;
A twenty he reached, and he slew them: they fell, on that field to remain;
And but seven there were of that thirty who fled, and their safety could gain:
They came to the palace of Croghan, they entered the gates of that hold,
And to Maev and to Ailill of Connaught the tale of the slaughter they told.

LITERAL TRANSLATION

Then Ailill and Medb arise, and the nobles of Connaught and the exiles from Ulster: they march into the district of Kerry Ai with their troops as far as: the Ford of Fenna.

Meanwhile the wounded men were being cared for by Flidais in the castle, and their healing was undertaken by her.

Then the troops come to the castle. Ailill Finn is summoned to Ailill mac Mata to come to a conference with him outside the castle. "I will not go," he said; "the pride and arrogance of that man there is great."

It was,[1] however, for a peaceful meeting that Ailill mac Mata had come to Ailill the Fair-haired, both that he might save Fergus, as it was right he should, and that he might afterwards make peace with him (Ailill Fair haired), according to the will of the lords of Connaught.

Then the wounded men were brought out of the castle, on hand-barrows, that they might be cared for by their own people.

[1. This passage is sometimes considered to be an interpolation by a scribe or narrator whose sympathies were with Connaught. The passage does not occur in the Book of Leinster, nor in the Egerton MS.]

Then roused himself King Ailill, of Connaught's land the king,
With Maev to march to battle, their aid to friends to bring:
And forth from Connaught's kingdom went many a lord of worth,
Beside them marched the exiles who gat from Ulster birth:
So forward went that army, and reached to Kerry's land,
And near the Ford of Fenna they came, and there made stand.
While this was done, the wounded three

Within the hold lay still,
And Flidais cared for all, for she
To heal their wounds had skill.
To Ailill Fair-Haired's castle the Connaught host was led,
And toward the foeman's ramparts the Connaught herald sped;
He called on Ailill Fair-haired to come without the gate,
And there to meet King Ailill, and with him hold debate.
"I come to no such meeting," the angry chief replied;
"Yon man is far too haughty: too grossly swells his pride!"
Yet 'twas peaceful meeting,
So the old men say,
Ailill willed; whose greeting
Heralds bore that day.
Fergus, ere he perished,
First he sought to aid
He that thought who cherished
Friendship's claims obeyed:
Then his foe he vainly
Hoped in truce to bind:
Peace, 'tis said, was plainly
Dear to Connaught's mind!
The wounded men, on litters laid,
Without the walls they bore
To friendly hands, with skill to aid,
And fainting health restore.

LITERAL TRANSLATION

Then the men attack him (Ailill Finn): while they are storming the castle, and they could get no hold on him, a full week long went it thus with them. Seven times twenty heroes from among the nobles of Connaught fell during the time that they (endeavoured) to storm the castle of Ailill the Fair-haired.

"It was with no good omen that with which you went to this castle," said Bricriu.

"True indeed is the word that is spoken," said Ailill mac Mata. "The expedition is bad for the honour of the Ulstermen, in that their three heroes fall, and they take not vengeance for them. Each one (of the three) was a pillar of war, yet not a single man has fallen at the hands of one of the three! Truly these heroes are great to be under such wisps of straw as axe the men of this castle! Most worthy is it of scorn that one man has wounded you three!"

"O woe is me," said Bricriu, "long is the length upon the ground of my Papa Fergus, since one man in single combat laid him low!"
At the castle of Ailill the Fair-Haired the Connaught-men rushed in attack,
And to win it they failed: from his ramparts in defeat were his foes driven back:
For long in that contest they struggled, yet naught in the fight they prevailed -
For a week were the walls of the castle of Ailill the Fair-Haired assailed,
Seven score of the nobles of Connaught, and all of them warriors of might,
For the castle of Ailill contended, and fell as they strove in the fight.
"'Tis sure that with omen of evil this castle was sought by our folk!"
Thus Bricroo,[1] the Poisonous Scoffer, in mockery, jeering them, spoke:
"The taunt," answered Ailill Mae Mata, "is true, and with grief I confess
That the fame of the heroes of Ulster hereafter is like to be less,
For a three of the Ulstermen's champions in stress of the fight have been quelled;
And the vengeance we wait for from Ulster hath long been by Ulster withheld;
As a pillar of warfare each hero, 'twas claimed, could a battle sustain;
Yet by none of the three in this battle hath a foeman been conquered, or slain!
In the future for all of these champions shall scorn and much mocking befall:
One man hath come forth from yon castle; alone he hath wounded them all—
Such disgrace for such heroes of valour no times that are past ever saw,
For three lords of the battle lie conquered by mannikins, fashioned of straw!"
"Ah! woe is me," said Bricroo, "how long, thus stretched on ground,
The length of Father Fergus hath here by all been found!
But one he sought to conquer; a single fight essayed,
And here he met his victor, and low on land is laid."
[1. Spelt Bricriu. The usual epithet of Bricriu, "Bricriu of the Poison Tongue," is indicated in the verse rendering.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

Then the champions of Ulster arise, naked as they were, and make a strong and obstinate attack in their rage and in the might of their violence, so that they forced in the outer gateway till it was in the midst of the castle, and the men of Connaught go beside them. They storm the castle with great might against the valiant warriors who were there. A wild pitiless battle is fought between them, and each man begins to strike out against the other, and to destroy him.
Then, after they had wearied of wounding and overcoming one another, the people of the castle were overthrown, and the Ulstermen slay seven hundred warriors there in the castle with Ailill the Fair-Haired and thirty of his sons; and Amalgaid the Good;[1] and Núado; and Fiacho Muinmethan (Fiacho the Broad-backed);

and Corpre Cromm (the Bent or Crooked); and Ailill from Brefne; and the three Oengus Bodbgnai (the Faces of Danger); and the three Eochaid of Irross (*i.e.* Irross Donnan); and the seven Breslene from Ai; and the fifty Domnall.

[1. "The Good" is in the Book of Leinster and the Egerton text, not in the Leabhar na h-Uidhri: the two later texts omit Núado.]

Then rose the men of Ulster a hardy war to wage,
And forward rushed, though naked, in strong and stubborn rage:
Against the castle gateway in wrathful might they dashed,
And down the shattered portal within the castle crashed.
Then close by Ulster's champions was Connaught's battle formed;
And Connaught's troops with Ulster by might the castle stormed;
But fitly framed for battle were men whom there they met,
Wild war, where none showed pity between the hosts was set:
And well they struck; each hero commenced with mighty blows
To crush and slay, destruction was heaped by foe on foes.
Of the wounding at length and the slaughter all weary the champions had grown,
And the men who the castle of Ailill had held were at length over thrown:
Of those who were found in that castle, and its walls had defended so well,
Seven hundred by warriors of Ulster were smitten to death, and they fell:
And there in his castle fell Ailill the Fair-haired, and fighting he died,
And a thirty of sons stood about him, and all met their death by his side.
The chief of those who perished, by Ailill's side who stood
Within his hold, were Noodoo;[1] and Awley[2] named the Good;
And Feeho[3] called the Broad-backed; and Corpre Cromm the Bent;
An Ailill, he from Breffny to help of Ailill went;
A three whose name was Angus-fierce was each warrior's face;
Three Eochaid, sea-girt Donnan[4] had cradled erst their race;
And there fell seven Breslen, from plains of Ay[5] who came;
And fifty fell beside them who all had Donnell's name.

[1. Spelt Nuado.
2. Spelt Amalgaid.
3. Spelt Fiacho.
4. Irross Donnan, the promontory of Donnan (now Mayo).
5. Mag Ai, a plain in Roscommon.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

For the assembly of the Gamanrad were with Ailill, and each of the men of Domnan who had bidden himself to come to him to aid him: they were in the same place

assembled in his castle; for he knew that the exiles from Ulster and Ailill and Medb with their army would come to him to demand the surrender of Fergus, for Fergus was under their protection.

This was the third race of heroes in Ireland, namely the Clan Gamanrad of Irross Donnan (the peninsula of Donnan), and (the other two were) the Clan Dédad in Temair Lochra, and the Clan Rudraige in Emain Macha. But both the other clans were destroyed by the Clan Rudraige.

But the men of Ulster arise, and with them the people of Medb and of Ailill; and they laid waste the castle, and take Flidais out of the castle with them, and carry off the women of the castle into captivity;

For to Ailill the Fair-Haired for warfare had marched all the Gamanra[1] clan,
And his friends from the sea-girded Donnan had sent to his aid every man;
All these had with Ailill been leaguered, their help to him freely they brought,
And that aid from them Ailill. took gladly, he knew that his hold would be sought;
He knew that the exiles of Ulster his captives from prison would save,
And would come, their surrender demanding; that Ailill mac Mata and Maev
Would bring all Connaught's troops to the rescue: for Fergus that aid they would lend,
And Fergus the succour of Connaught could claim, and with right, as a friend.
Hero clans in Erin three of old were found;
One in Irross Donnan, oceans Donnan bound,
Thence came Clan Gamanra;[1] Déda's warlike clan
Nursed in Tara Loochra[2] many a fighting man.
Déda sprang from Munster; far in Ulster's north
Oft from Emain Macha Rury's[3] clan went forth:
Vainly all with Rury strove to fight, the twain
Rury's clan hath vanquished; Rury all hath slain!
Then rose up the warriors of Ulster, the hold they had conquered to sack;
And the folk of Queen Maev and King Ailill followed close on the Ulstermen's track:
And they took with them captives; for Flidais away from her castle they tore;
And the women who dwelt in the castle away to captivity bore:

[1. Spelt Gamanrad.

2. Temair Luachra, an ancient palace near Abbeyfeale, on the borders of the counties of Limerick and Kerry. "Tara," as is well known, is a corruption of Temair, but is now established.

3. Spelt Rudraige.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

and they take with them all the costly things and the treasures that were there, gold and silver, and horns, and drinking cups, and keys, and vats; and they take what there was of garments of every colour, and they take what there was of kine, even a hundred milch-cows, and a hundred and forty oxen, and thirty hundred of little cattle.

And after these things had been done, Flidais went to Fergus mac Róg according to the decree of Ailill and Medb, that they might thence have sustenance (lit. that their sustenance might be) on the occasion of the Raid of the Cows of Cualgne. As[1] a result of this, Flidais was accustomed each seventh day from the produce of her cows to support the men of Ireland, in order that during the Raid she might provide them with the means of life. This then was the Herd of Flidais.

In consequence[2] of all this Flidais went with Fergus to his home, and he received the lordship of a part of Ulster, even Mag Murthemni (the plain of Murthemne), together with that which had been in the hands of Cuchulain, the son of Sualtam. So Flidais died after some time at Trag Bàli (the shore of Bali), and the state of Fergus' household was none the better for that. For she used to supply all Fergus' needs whatsoever they might be (lit. she used to provide for Fergus every outfit that he desired for himself). Fergus died after some time in the land of Connaught, after the death of his wife,

[1. L.L. and Egerton give "For him used every seventh day," &c.

2. L.L. and Egerton give "thereafter," adopted in verse translation.]

And all things therein that were precious they seized on as booty; the gold
And the silver they seized, and the treasures amassed by the men of that hold:
The horns, and the goblets for drinking, the vats for the ale, and the keys,
The gay robes with all hues that were glowing lay there for the raiders to seize:
And much cattle they took; in that castle were one hundred of milk giving kine;
And beside them a seven score oxen; three thousand of sheep and of swine.
Then Flidais went with Fergus, his wedded wife to be;
For thus had Maev and Ailill pronounced their high decree:
They bade that when from Cualgne to drive the kine they went,
From those who then were wedded should aid for war be sent.
And thus it fell thereafter: when Ireland went that Raid,
By milk from cows of Flidais, the lives of all were stayed;
Each seventh day she sent it; and thus fulfilled her vows,
And thus the tale is ended, men tell of Flidais' Cows.

Then, all that Raid accomplished, with Fergus Flidais dwell
And he of Ulster's kingdom a part in lordship held:
He ruled in Mag I Murthemne, yea, more than that, he won
The land where once was ruler Cuchulain, Sualtam's son:
And by the shore of Báli thereafter Flidais died,
And naught of good for Fergus did Flidais' death betide:
For worse was all his household; if Fergus aught desired,
From Flidais' wealth and bounty came all his soul required.
In the days that followed, when his wife was dead,
Fergus went to Connaught; there his blood was shed:
[1. Pronounced Maw Moortemmy (?)]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

after he had gone there to obtain knowledge of a story. For, in order to cheer himself, and to fetch home a grant of cows from Ailill and Medb, he had gone westwards to Cruachan, so that it was in consequence of this journey that he found his death in the west, through the jealousy of Ailill.

This, then, is the story of the Tain bo Flidais; it[1] is among the preludes of the Tain bo Cualnge.

[1. This sentence does not occur in the Leabhar na h-Uidhri. It is given as in the Egerton version: the Book of Leinster gives "it is among the preludes of the Tain."]

There with Maev and Ailill he a while would stay;
Men had made a story, he would learn the lay!
There he went to cheer him, hearing converse fair:
Kine beside were promised; home he these would bear:
So he went to Croghan, 'twas a deadly quest,
There he found his slaughter, death within the west:
Slain by jealous Ailill, Fergus low was laid:
Flidais' tale is ended: now comes Cualgne's Raid!

THE APPARITION OF THE GREAT QUEEN TO CUCHULAIN (TAIN BO REGAMNA)

INTRODUCTION

THIS tale is given by the same two manuscripts that give the Tain bo Dartada and the Tain bo Regamon; namely the Yellow Book of Lecan, and Egerton 1782. The text of both is given by Windisch, *Irische Texte*, II. pp. 239-254; he gives a translation of the version in the Yellow Book, with a few insertions from the Egerton MS., where the version in Y.B.L. is apparently corrupt: Miss Hull gives an English translation of Windisch's rendering, in the Cuchullin Saga, pages 103 to 107. The prose version given here is a little closer to the Irish than Miss Hull's, and differs very little from that of Windisch. The song sung by the Morrigan to Cuchulain is given in the Irish of both versions by Windisch; he gives no rendering, as it is difficult and corrupt: I can make nothing of it, except that it is a jeering account of the War of Cualgne.

The title Tain bo Regamna is not connected with anything in the tale, as given; Windisch conjectures "Tain bo Morrigna," the Driving of the Cow of the Great Queen (Morrigan); as the woman is called at the end of the Egerton version. The Morrigan, one of the three goddesses of war, was the chief of them: they were Morrigan, Badb, and Macha. She is also the wife of the Dagda, the chief god of the pagan Irish. The Yellow Book version calls her Badb in this tale, but the account in the Tain bo Cualnge (Leabhar na h-Uidhri facsimile, pp. 74 and 77), where the prophecies are fulfilled, agrees with the Egerton version in calling the woman of this tale the Morrigan or the Great Queen.

THE APPARITION OF THE GREAT QUEEN TO CUCHULAIN
(ALSO CALLED "TAIN BO REGAMNA")

FROM THE YELLOW BOOK OF LECAN (FOURTEENTH CENTURY)

LITERAL TRANSLATION

WHEN Cuchulain lay in his sleep at Dun Imrid, there he heard a cry from the north; it came straight towards him; the cry was dire, and most terrifying to him. And he awaked in the midst of his sleep, so that he fell, with the fall of a heavy load, out of his couch,[1] to the ground on the eastern side of his house. He went out thereupon without his weapons, so that he was on the lawns before his house, but his wife brought out, as she followed behind him, his arms and his clothing. Then he saw Laeg in his harnessed chariot, coming from Ferta Laig, from the north; and "What brings thee here?" said Cuchulain. "A cry," said Laeg, "that I heard sounding over the plains. "On what side was it?" said Cuchulain. "From the north-west it seemed," said Laeg, "that is, across the great road of Caill Cuan. "[2] "Let us follow after to know of it (*lit.* after it, to it for us)," said Cuchulain.

[1. Or "out of his room." The word is imda, sometimes rendered "bed," as here by Windisch sometimes also "room," as in the Bruidne da Derga by Whitley Stokes.
2. Lough Cuan was the old name for Strangford Lough.]

AT Dun Imrid lay Cuchulain,[l] and slept, when a cry rang out;
And in fear he heard from the north-land come ringing that terrible shout:
He fell, as he woke from his slumber, with the thud of a weight, to the ground,
From his couch on that side of the castle that the rising sun first found.
He left his arms in the castle, as the lawns round its walls he sought,

But his wife, who followed behind him, apparel and arms to him brought:
Then he saw his harnessed chariot, and Laeg,[2] his charioteer,
From Ferta Laig who drave it: from the north the car drew near:
"What bringeth thee here?" said Cuchulain: said Laeg, "By a cry I was stirred,
That across the plain came sounding." "And whence was the cry thou hast heard?"
"From the north-west quarter it travelled, it crossed the great Cayll[3] Cooen road!"
"Follow on, on that track," said Cuchulain, "till we know what that clamour may bode!"

[1. Pronounced Cu-hoolin.
2. Pronounced Layg.
3. Spelt Caill Cuan.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

They went out thereupon till they came to Ath da Ferta. When they were there, straightway they heard the rattle of a chariot from the quarter of the loamy district of Culgaire. Then they saw the chariot come before them, and one chestnut (*lit.* red) horse in it. The horse was one footed, and the pole of the chariot passed through the body of the horse, till a wedge went through it, to make it fast on its forehead. A red[1] woman was in the chariot, and a red mantle about her, she had two red eye-brows, and the mantle fell between the two *ferta*[2] of her chariot behind till it struck upon the ground behind her. A great man was beside her chariot, a red[3] cloak was upon him, and a forked staff of hazel at his back, he drove a cow in front of him.

"That cow is not joyful at being driven by you!" said Cuchulain. "The cow does not belong to you," said the woman, "she is not the cow of any friend or acquaintance of yours." "The cows of Ulster," said Cuchulain, "are my proper (care)." "Dost thou give a decision about the cow?" said the woman; "the task is too great to which thy hand is set, O Cuchulain." "Why is it the woman who answers me?" said Cuchulain, "why was it not the man?" "It was not the man whom you addressed," said the woman. "Ay," said Cuchulain, "(I did address him), though thyself hath answered for him:" "h-Uar-gaeth-sceo-luachair-sceo[4] is his name," said she.

[1. The above is the Egerton text: the text of Y.B.L. gives "A red woman there, with her two eyebrows red, and her cloak and her raiment: the cloak fell," &c.
2 It is not known certainly what the ferta were: Windisch translates "wheels," but does not give this meaning in his Dictionary: the ferta were behind the car, and could be removed to sound the depth of a ford. It is suggested that they were poles,

projecting behind to balance the chariot; and perhaps could be adjusted so as to project less or farther.
3 This is the Egerton text; the Y.B.L. text gives "a tunic forptha on him the meaning of forptha is unknown.
4 Cold-wind-and-much-rushes.]

At the ford of the Double Wonder, at Ah[1] Fayrta, the car made stand
For a chariot rattled toward them, from the clay-soiled Coolgarry[2] land
And before them came that chariot; and strange was the sight they saw:
For a one-legged chestnut charger was harnessed the car to draw;
And right through the horse's body the pole of the car had passed,
To a halter across his forehead was the pole with a wedge made fast:
A red woman sat in the chariot, bright red were her eyebrows twain
A crimson cloak was round her: the folds of it touched the plain:
Two poles were behind her chariot: between them her mantle flowed;
And close by the side of that woman a mighty giant strode;
On his back was a staff of hazel, two-forked, and the garb he wore
Was red, and a cow he goaded, that shambled on before.

To that woman and man cried Cuchulain, "Ye who drive that cow do wrong,
For against her will do ye drive her!" "Not to thee doth that cow belong,"
Said the woman; "no byre of thy comrades or thy friends hath that cow yet barred."
"The kine of the land of Ulster," said Cuchulain, "are mine to guard!"
"Dost thou sit on the seat of judgment?" said the dame, "and a sage decree
On this cow would'st thou give, Cuchulain?—too great is that task for thee!"
Said the hero, "Why speaketh this woman? hath the man with her never a word?"
"'Twas not him you addressed," was her answer, "when first your reproaches we heard."
"Nay, to him did I speak," said Cuchulain, "though 'tis thou to reply who would'st claim!"
'Ooer-gay-skyeo-loo-ehar-skyeo[3] is the name that he bears," said the dame.

[1. Spelt Ath Ferta, or more fully Ath da Ferta, the ford of the two marvels.
2 Spelt Culgaire.
3. Spelt Uar-gaeth-sceo-luachair-sceo]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"Alas! his name is a wondrous one," said Cuchulain. "Let it be thyself who answers,[1] since the man answers not. What is thine own name?" said Cuchulain. "The woman to whom thou speakest," said the man, "is Faebor-begbeoil-cuimdiuir-folt-scenbgairit-sceo-uath."[2] "Do ye make a fool of me?" cried Cuchulain, and

on that Cuchulain sprang into her chariot: he set his two feet on her two shoulders thereupon, and his spear on the top of her head. “Play not sharp weapons on me!” “Name thyself then by thy true name!” said Cuchulain. “Depart then from me!” said she: “I am a female satirist in truth,” she said, “and he is Daire mac Fiachna from Cualnge: I have brought the cow as fee for a master-poem.” “Let me hear the poem then,” said Cuchulain. “Only remove thyself from me,” said the woman; “it is none[3] the better for thee that thou shakest it over my head.” Thereon he left her until he was between the two poles (*ferta*) of her chariot, and she sang to him[4] . . . . . Cuchulain threw a spring at her chariot, and he saw not the horse, nor the woman, nor the chariot, nor the man, nor the cow.

[1. Y.B.L. corrupt; Egerton version adopted here.

2. Little-mouthed-edge-equally-small-hair-short-splinter-much-clamour.

3. Not is it better for thee that” is in Egerton alone.

4. See the introduction for the omission of the poem.]

“’Tis a marvellous name!” said Cuchulain, “if from thee all my answer must come,
Let it be as thou wishest; thy comrade, this man, as it seemeth, is dumb.
Tell me now of thine own name, O woman.” “Faebor-bayg-byeo-ill,”[1] said the man.
“Coom-diewr-folt-skayv-garry-skyeo-ooa is her name, if pronounce it you can!”
Then Cuchulain sprang at the chariot: “Would ye make me a fool with your jest?”
He cried, as he leapt at the woman; his feet on her shoulders he pressed,
And he set on her head his spear-point: “Now cease from thy sharp weapon-play!”
Cried the woman. Cuchulain made answer: Thy name to me truth fully say!”
“Then remove thyself from me!” she answered: I am skilled in satirical spells;
The man is called Darry I mac Feena: in the country of Cualgne[3] he dwells;
I of late made a marvellous poem; and as fee for the poem this cow
Do I drive to my home.” “Let its verses,” said Cuchulain,” be sung to me now!”
“Then away from me stand!” said the woman: “though above me thou shakest thy spear,
It will naught avail thee to move me.” Then he left her, but lingered near,
Between the poles of her chariot: the woman her song then sang;
And the song was a song of insult. Again at the car he sprang,
But nothing he found before him: as soon as the car he had neared,
The woman, the horse, and the chariot, the cow, and the man disappeared.

[1. Spelt Faebor-begbeoil-cuimdiuir-folt-seenb-gairit-sceo-uath.

2 Spelt Daire mac Fiachna: he is the owner of the Dun of Cualgne in the Great Tain,

3. Pronounced Kell-ny.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

Then he saw that she had become a black bird upon a branch near to him. “A dangerous[1] (or magical) woman thou art,” said Cuchulain: “Henceforward,” said the woman, “this clay-land shall be called *dolluid* (of evil,)” and it has been the Grellach Dolluid ever since. “If only I had known it was you,” said Cuchulain, “not thus should we have separated.” “What thou hast done,” said she, “shall be evil to thee from it.” “Thou hast no power against me,” said Cuchulain. “I have power indeed,” said the woman; “it is at the guarding of thy death that I am; and I shall be,” said she. “I brought this cow out of the fairy-mound of Cruachan, that she might breed by the Black Bull[2] of Cualnge, that is the Bull of Daire Mae Fiachna. It is up to that time that thou art in life, so long as the calf which is in this cow’s body is a yearling; and it is this that shall lead to the Tain bo Cualnge.” “I shall myself be all the more glorious for that Tain,” said Cuchulain: “I shall slay their warriors: I shall break their great hosts: I shall be survivor of the Tain.”

[1. Windisch is doubtful about the meaning of this word. He gives it as “dangerous” in his translation; it may also mean “magical,” though he thinks not. In a note he says that the meaning “dangerous” is not certain.

2. In Egerton “the Dun of Cualnge.”]

At a bird on a bough, as they vanished, a glance by Cuchulain was cast,
And he knew to that bird’s black body the shape of the woman had passed:
As a woman of danger I know you,” he cried, “and as powerful in spell!”
From to-day and for ever,” she chanted, “this tale in yon clay-land shall dwell!”
And her word was accomplished; that region to-day is the Grella Dolloo,[1]
The Clay-land of Evil: its name from the deeds of that woman it drew.
“Had I known it was you,” said Cuchulain, “not thus had you passed from my sight! “
And she sang, “For thy deed it is fated that evil shall soon be thy plight!”
Thou canst. do naught against me,” he answered. “Yea, evil in sooth can I send;
Of thy Bringer of Death I am guardian, shall guard it till cometh thine end:
From the Under-world Country of Croghan this cow have I driven, to breed
By the Dun Bull of Darry[2] Mae Feena, the Bull that in Cualgne doth feed.
So long as her calf be a yearling, for that time thy life shall endure;
But, that then shall the Raid have beginning, the dread Raid of Cualgne, be sure.”
“Nay, clearer my fame shall be ringing,” the hero replied,” for the Raid:
All bards, who my deeds shall be singing, must tell of the stand that I made,
Each warrior in fight shall be stricken, who dares with my valour to strive:
Thou shalt see me, though battle-fields thicken, from the Táin Bo returning alive!”

[1. Spelt Grellach Dolluid.
2. Spelt Daire mac Fiachna.]

LITERAL TRANSLATION

"In what way canst thou do this?" said the woman, "for when thou art in combat against a man of equal strength (to thee), equally rich in victories, thine equal in feats, equally fierce, equally untiring, equally noble, equally brave, equally great with thee, I will be an eel, and I will draw a noose about thy feet in the ford, so that it will be a great unequal war for thee." "I swear to the god that the Ulstermen swear by," said Cuchulain, "I will break thee against a green stone of the ford; and thou shalt have no healing from me, if thou leavest me not." "I will in truth be a grey wolf against thee," said she, "and I will strip a stripe' from thee, from thy right (hand) till it extends to thy left."

"I will beat thee from me," said he, "with the spear, till thy left or thy right eye bursts from thy head, and thou shalt never have healing from me, if thou leavest me not." "I shall in truth," she said, "be for thee as a white heifer with red ears, and I will go into a lake near to the ford in which thou art in combat against a man who is thine equal in feats, and one hundred white, red-eared cows shall be behind me *[1. This word is left doubtful in Windisch's translation. The word is breth in Y.B.L. and breit in Egerton. Breit may be a strip of woollen material, or a strip of land; so the meaning of a strip of flesh seems possible.]*

"How canst thou that strife be surviving?" the woman replied to his song,
"For, when thou with a hero art striving, as fearful as thou, and as strong,
Who like thee in his wars is victorious, who all of thy feats can perform,
As brave, and as great, and as glorious, as tireless as thou in a storm,
Then, in shape of an eel round thee coiling, thy feet at the Ford I will bind,
And thou, in such contest when toiling, a battle unequal shalt find."
"By my god now I swear, by the token that Ulstermen swear by," he cried;
"On a green stone by me shall be broken that eel, to the Ford if it glide:
From woe it shall ne'er be escaping, till it loose me, and pass on its way!"
And she said: "As a wolf myself shaping, I will spring on thee, eager to slay,
I will tear thee; the flesh shall be rended from thy chest by the wolf's savage bite,
Till a strip be torn from thee, extended from the arm on thy left to thy right!
With blows that my spear-shaft shall deal thee," he said, "I will force thee to fly
Till thou quit me; my skill shall not heal thee, though bursts from thy head either eye!"
I will come then," she cried, "as a heifer, white-skinned, but with ears that are red,
At what time thou in fight shalt endeavour the blood of a hero to shed,

Whose skill is full match for thy cunning; by the ford in a lake I will be,
And a hundred white cows shall come running, with red ears, in like fashion to me:

LITERAL TRANSLATION

and 'truth of men' shall on that day be tested; and they shall take thy head from thee." "I will cast at thee with a cast of my sling," said Cuchulain, "so as to break either thy left or thy right leg from under thee; and thou shalt have no help from me if thou leavest me not,"

They[1] separated, and Cuchulain went back again to *Dun* Imrid, and the Morrigan with her cow to the fairy mound of Cruachan; so that this tale is a prelude to the Tain bo Cualnge.

[1. All this sentence up to "so that this tale" is from the Egerton version. The Yellow Book of Lecan gives "The Badb thereon went from him, and Cuchulain went to his own house, so that," &c.]

As the hooves of the cows on thee trample, thou shalt test 'truth of men in the fight':
And the proof thou shalt have shall be ample, for from thee thy head they shall smite!"

Said Cuchulain: "Aside from thee springing, a stone for a cast will I take,
And that stone at thee furiously slinging, thy right or thy left leg will break:
Till thou quit me, no help will I grant thee." Morreegan,[1] the great Battle Queen,
With her cow to Rath Croghan departed, and no more by Cuchulain was seen.
For she went to her Under-World Country: Cuchulain returned to his place.
The tale of the Great Raid of Cualgne this lay, as a prelude, may grace.

[1. Spelt Morrigan.]

TEXT OF LEABHAR NA H-UIDHRI

(130 b., Line 19 to end of 132)

GIVING THE CONCLUSION OF THE "COURTSHIP OF ETAIN"

INTRODUCTION

THE following pages give, with an interlinear word for word[1] translation, the text of Leabhar na h-Uidhri, page 130 *b*. line 19 to the end of page 132 *a*. of the facsimile. The text corresponds to the end of the tale of the Court ship of Etain in vol. i., from page 27, line 21, to the end of the story; it also contains the poem which is in that volume placed on page 26, but occurs in the manuscript at the place where the first line of it is quoted on page 30 of vol. i.

It is hoped that the text may be found to be convenient by scholars: special care has been taken to make it accurate, and it has not, with the exception of the poem just referred to, been published before except in the facsimile; the remainder of the text of the L.U. version of the Courtship of Etain, together with the poem, has been given by Windisch in the first volume of the *Irische Texte*.

The immediate object of the publication of this text, with its interlinear translation, is however somewhat different; it was desired to give any who may have become interested in the subject, from the romances contained in the two volumes of this collection, some idea of their exact form in the original, and of the Irish constructions and metres, as no Irish scholarship is needed to follow the text, when supplemented by the interlinear translation. The translation may be relied on, except for a few words indicated by a mark of interrogation.

[1. The Irish idiom of putting the adjective after the noun is not always followed in the translation.]

The passage is especially well suited to give an idea of the style of Irish composition, as it contains all the three forms used in the romances, rhetoric, regular verse, and prose: the prose also is varied in character, for it includes narrative, rapid dialogue, an antiquarian insertion, and two descriptive passages. The piece of antiquarian

information and the *résumé* of the old legend immediately preceding the second *rhetoric* can be seen to be of a different character to the flowing form of the narrative proper; the inserted passage being full of explanatory words, *conid*, *issairi*, *is aice*, &c., and containing no imagery. The two descriptions, though short, are good examples of two styles of description which occur in some other romances; neither of these styles is universal, nor are they the only styles; the favour shown to one or the other in a romance may be regarded as a characteristic of its author.

The first style, exemplified by the description of Mider's appearance, consists of a succession of images presented in short sentences, sometimes, as in this case, with no verb, sometimes with the verb *batár* or a similar verb repeated in each sentence, but in all cases giving a brilliant word-picture, absolutely clear and definite, of what it is intended to convey. The second style, exemplified here by the description of the horses that Mider offers to Eochaid, consists of a series of epithets or of substantives, and is often imitated in modern Irish. These passages are usually difficult to translate, as many words appear to be coined for the purpose of the descriptions; but, in the best writings, the epithets are by no means arbitrary; they are placed so as to contrast sharply with each other, and in many cases suggest brilliant metaphors; the style being in this respect more like Latin than English. Absolutely literal translations quite fail to bring out the effect of such passages; for not only is the string of adjectives a distinctively Irish feature, but both in English and in Greek such metaphors are generally expressed more definitely and by short sentences. There is also a third style of description which does not appear in the prose of any of the romances in this collection, but appears often in other romances, as in the Bruidne da Derga, Bricriu's Feast, and the Great Tain; it resembles the first style, but the sentences are longer, yet it does not give clear descriptions, only leaving a vague impression. This style is often used for descriptions of the supernatural; it may be regarded as actual reproductions of the oldest pre-Christian work, but it is also possible that it is the result of legends, dimly known to the authors of the tales, and represented by them in the half-understood way in which they were apprehended by them: the Druidic forms may have been much more clear. Such passages are those which describe Cuchulain's distortions; the only passage of the character in this collection is in the verse of the Sick-bed, vol. i. page 77. Five of the romances in the present collection have no descriptive passages in the prose; the Combat at the Ford and the Tain bo Fraich show examples of both the first and the second form, but more often the first; the Tain bo Regamna, though a very short piece, also shows one example of each; for the description of the goblins met by Cuchulain is quite clear, and cannot be regarded as belonging to the third form. There is also one case of the second form in the

Tain bo Dartada, and two other cases of the first in the Court ship of Etain-one in the Egerton, one in the Leabhar na h-Uidhri version. The best example of the first style is in the Egerton version of Etain (vol. i. page 12); the best example of the second is the description of Cuchulain's horses (vol. i. page 128); a still better example of contrasts in such a description is in the Courtship of Ferb (Nutt, page 23).

The piece of regular verse contained in the extract should give a fair idea of the style of this form of composition. Description is common in the verse, and it is in this case a prominent feature. It may be noted that lines 8, 16, 23, 26 will not scan unless the present diphthongs are divided, also that the poem has fewer internal rhymes than is usual in this regular verse.

The two passages in rhetoric, for so I take them to be, are good examples of the style. An attempt has been made to divide them into lines, but this division is open to criticism, especially as some lines in one of the two passages cannot be translated, and the translation of some other lines is doubtful: the division suggested does, however, appear to me to give a rough metre and occasional rhymes. It is possible that, if attention is called to those lines which are at present untranslatable, something may be done for them. The verse translations given in vol. i. pages 27 and 29, give the meaning that I take the Irish to bear where I can get any meaning at all.

As to the text, the usual abbreviation for *n* has in general not been italicized, nor has that for *fri*; all other abbreviations, including *acht*, final *n* in the symbol for *con*, and that for *or* in the recognized symbol for *for*, have been italicized. In the *rhetorics*, owing to their difficulty, the abbreviation for *n* has been italicized throughout; the symbol for *ocus* is not italicised. A few conjectures have been inserted, the text being given as a foot-note; a conjectured letter supposed to be missing has been inserted in brackets, and a restoration by Professor Strachan of a few letters where the MS. is torn are similarly placed in brackets. The rest of the text is carefully copied from the facsimile, including the glosses, which are inserted above the words in the same places that they occupy in the manuscript.

{Transcribers Note: the italics in the Gaelic have not been reproduced in the next section.}

TEXT WITH INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

Fecht n-aile asraracht Eochaid Airem rí Temrach lá n-álaind
Another time arose Eochaid Airem. king of Tara on a beautiful day
i n-amsir samrata frisocaib[1] for sosta na Temrach do imcaisiu maigi Breg,
in time of summer, mounted on heights of Tara for viewing of plain of Breg,
bói fó a lí ocus fó blúth cach datha. Am-imracacha intí
was good its colour, and good blossom of every hue. When looked about the aforesaid
Eochaid imbi, co acca inn ócláech n-ingnad for sin sossad[2] inna
Eoebaid around him, he saw the young warrior unknown on the height beside
chomairi. Fuán corcair imbi, ocus móng ór-budi fair co brainni
him. Tunic purple about him, and hair gold-yellow on him to edges
a da imdae. Rosc cainlech glas ina chind. Sleg cóicrind ina láim.
of his two shoulders. Eye lustrous gray in his head. Spear five-pointed in his hand.
Sciáth taulgel ina láim con gemaib óir forri. Sochtais Eochaid, ar ní
Shield white-bossed in his hand with gems of gold on it. Was silent Eochaid, for not
fitir a bith isin Temraig inn aidehi ríam, ocus ní orslaiethe ind lis
he knew of his being in the Tara the night before, and not was opened the Liss
in trath sin. Tolluid ar inchaib Eochoda iarsain asbert Eochaid iarom,
at that hour. He came under protection of Eochaid thereon; said Eochaid then,
fochen dond láech nád athgénmár. Is ed doroehtmár or in
welcome to the hero whom we know not. It is for that we have come, said the

[1. A conjecture: MS. fosrocaib= fo-s-ro-od-gaib, an unknown compound.
2. A conjecture: MS. tossad.]

t-ócláech. Ni tathgénmár or Eochaid. Atotgénsa chétus ol in
(young) warrior. We know thee not, said Eochaid. I know thee indeed, said the
t-ócláech. Cía th'ainm seo? ol Eochaid. Ní airdairc són, ol se,
warrior. What (is) thy own name? said Eochaid. Not illustrious that, said he,
Mider Brég Léith. Cid dotroacht ol Eochaid. Do imbert fidcille
Mider of Bri Leith. What brought thee? said Eochaid. To play at chess
frit-su ol se. Am maith se ém, ol Eochaid for fithchill. A fromad
with thee, said he. I am good myself truly, said Eochaid, at chess-play. Its essaying
dún ol Mider. Atá ol Eochaid, ind rigan ina cotlud, is lé in tech
to us! said Mider. Is, said Eochaid, the queen in her sleep, it is hers the house
atá ind fithchell. Atá sund chenae, ol Mider, fidchell nad

where is the chessboard. There is here yet, said Mider, a chessboard which is not
messo. Bá fír ón, clár n-argit ocus fir oír, ocus fursunnud cacha
worse. Was true that, a board of silver and men of gold, and shining in every
hairidi for sin clár di liic logmair, ocus fer-bolg di figi rond crédumae.
direction on that board of costly stones, and a men-bag of woven chains of brass.
Ecraid Mider in fidchill iarsin. Imbir ol Mider. Ni immér acht
Set out Mider the chessboard thereupon. Play! said Mider. Not will I play, except
di giull ol Eochaid. Cid gell bias and? ol Mider. Cumma lim ol
for a stake, said Eochaid. What stake shall be here? said Mider. Equal to me, said
Eochaid. Rot-bia lim-sa ol Mider mád tú beras mo thóchell,
Eochaid. Thou shalt have from me, said Mider, if thou carry off my stake,
L. gabur n-dub-glas ite cend-brecca, croderga, biruich,
50 horses of dark-gray, and they with dappled heads, blood-red, with ears pricked
high,
bruin-lethain, bolg(s)roin, coss choela, comrassa, faeborda,[1] femendae,[1]
chests broad, nostrils distended, feet thin, strong, keen, ? vehement,
aurárda, aignecha, so-(a)staidi,[1] so
very high, spirited, easily stopped,
[1. See Bruidne da Derga (Stokes), 50, 51, faeborda, lit. with an edge on them; femendae? = Lat. vehemens; soaistidi is the form adopted by Stokes in his edition of the Bruidne; Egerton MS. gives soastaide.]
There is a gap here, a complete column being torn from the manuscript. The lost part obviously describes the issue of the chess game or games, and the penalties demanded by Bochaid: what these penalties were is plain from the succeeding story. The work of Mider and his folk in paying these penalties must also have been described: the next column (Leabhar na h- Uidhri, 131 b. of the facsimile) opens thus:
iarsin doberar uir ocus grian ocus clocha for sin monai. Fri etna
thereupon is, placed earth and gravel and stones on the bog. Over foreheads
dam dano-bátár fedmand la firu h-Erind cosind n-aidchi sin, co
of oxen then were yokes among men of Ireland till that very night, when
n-aicces la lucht in t-síde for a formnaib. Dogníth
it was seen (tbLat they were) among people of the Mounds on their shoulders. It
was done
samlaid la Eochaid, conid de atá do som. Echaid Airem, ar
so by Eochaid, so that hence is to himself (the name of) Echaid Airem, for
is aice tóisech tucad cuing for muinélaib dam do ferand h-Erind. Is
it is by him first was put yoke on necks of oxen for land of Ireland. This

ed dino and food ro bói im bélaib in t-slúaig oc denam in tócuir:
is then there word which was on lips of the host at making of the causeway:
Rhetoric—
Cuire illáim, tochra illaim,
Put into hand place (it) into hand
aurdairc damrad trathaib iar fuin
noble (are) oxen for hours after sunset
for trom ailges ni fes cuich les
very heavy request it is not known to whom (is) gain
cúich amles de thóchur dar móin Lámraige.
to whom harm from the causeway over moor of Lamrach.
Ni bíad isin bith tóchur bad ferr mani bethe oca
There would not be in the world a causeway which is better, if not (men) had been at
n-déscin Forrácbad de bochtae and iartain. Iarsin dolluid
the seeing them. Was left on that account a breach there thenceforth. Thereupon came
in rechtaire co Echaid ocus adfét scéla in mór fedma, atconnaire
the steward to Echaid, and made known tales of the great serving band, that he saw
fíadai, ocus asbert nád rabi for fertas in betha cumachta
before him, and said that there was not on the chariot pole of life a power
dodrósce de. Am bátar for a m-briathraib co n-accatár Mider
that excelled it. When they were at their talking they saw Mider (come)
chucu. Ard chustal ocus droch gné fair. Atrigestar Eochaid,
to them. High ? girt (he was), and evil face (was) on him.? Rose ?[1] Eochaid,
ocus ferais faelti fri. Is ed dorochtmár ol Mider. Is toreda ocus is
and gave welcome to him. It is for that we have come, said Mider. It is cruel and is
di-chéill no tái frim, mor decrai ocus mór aingcessa do thabairt form
senseless thou art to me, great hardship and great suffering thy bestowing on me
adethaind ní bad maith lat chena acht is bairnech mo menma frit.
I used to get what seemed good to thee still but is angry my mind against thee.
Ní bara fri búre dait-siu ón do-gignestár do menma for Eochaid.
Not anger against anger: to thyself the thing that shall choose thy mind, said Eochaid.
Gebthar dano, ol Mider. Inn imberam fidchill? for Mider. Cid gell
It shall be done then, said Mider. Shall we play at chess? said Mider. What stake
bias and? for Eochaid. Gell adcobra cechtar dá lína for
shall be there? said Eochaid. The stake that wishes each of the two parties, said
Mider. Berar tóchell n-Echdach allá sin. Rucais mo

Mider. Is carried off stake of Echaid in that very place. Thou hast carried off my
thócell, for Eebaid. Mad aíl dam nó-beraind ó chíanaib,
stake, said Echaid. If wish to me (had been) I could have carried it off long since,
for Mider. Cacht cid adcobrái form-sa? for Echaid. Dí laím im
said Mider. Question what wishest thou from myself? said Echaid. Two arms about
[1. This is a possible rendering, taking the word as a deponent form of atregaim. It would be more natural to take the word as from adagur; being equivalent to ad-d-raigestar, and to mean "feared him," but this does not agree with Eoebaid's general attitude.]
Étain, ocus póc di ol Mider. Sochtais Echaid la, sodain, ocus asbert,
Etain, and a kiss from her, said Mider. Was silent Echaid thereon, and said,
tís día mís on diu, doberthar dait aní sin. In
thou shalt come in a month from to-day, (and) shall be given to thee that very thing. The
bliadain ría tuidecht do Mider co Echaid do imbert na fidehille bói oc
year before the coming of Mider to Echaid for playing of the chess was he at
tochmarc Étaíne, ocus nis n-étad leis. Is ed ainm dobered Mider
wooing of Etain, and nothing was found by him. This is the name used to give Mider
di: befind conide asbert:
to her: fair-haired lady, so that thence he said:
Á bé find in raga lim
O fair-haired lady, wilt thou come with me
i tír n-ingnad hi fil rind
into a land marvellous, that is music?
Is barr sobarche folt and
(thus) is the top of the head, of primrose the hair there,
is dath snechta corp co ind:
is colour of snow the body to the head:
Is and nad bí múi na tái,
It is there not will be 'mine' or 'thine,'
gela det and, dubai brai,
white teeth there, black eyebrows,
Is lí sula lín ar sluag,[1]
is colour of eyes number of our hosts,
[2]no is brece is dath sion and cech grúad:
or is many-coloured is hue of foxglove there each cheek:

[1. A conjecture by Windisch. Text gives sluáig the genitive singular, which does not rhyme.

2 The three glosses are interesting. It may be noted that the last two certainly follow the word (above the line in which it occurs) that they seem to gloss: it is therefore probable that the first does so too; the two lines of a couplet are on the same line in the manuscript. It {footnote p. 156} seems then possible that the gloss "it is many-coloured" refers, not to the foxglove, but to the preceding line, "the colour of eyes is number of our hosts," and that the writer of this gloss gave the same meaning to the rather hard description of the colour of the eyes as is given in the verse translation (vol. i. p. 26), i.e. that the eyes had changing lights and shapes. We must hope, for the credit of his taste, that he did not think of the cheeks as many-coloured or freckled, but his gloss of lossa does not seem happy. The meaning "growth" is taken from O'Reilly's Dictionary.]

no lossa
Is corcair maige cach muin,[1]
or growth?
is purple of a plain each neck,
no is dath
is li sula ugai luin:
or is hue
is colour of eyes (that of) eggs of a blackbird:
cid cáin deicsiu maigi Fail
though pleasant (is) seeing plains of Fal (isle of Destiny)
annam iar gnáis maige máir.
a wilderness[2] after knowledge of the Great Plain.
Cid mesc lib coirm inse Fáil,
Though intoxicating to you (is) ale of the island Fal,
is mescu coirm tíre máir,
is more intoxicating the ale of the country great,
amra tíre tír asbiur,
a wonder of a land the land I mention,
ní theít oac and re siun.
not goes a young man there before an old man.
Srotha teith millsi tar tir,
Streams warm (and) sweet through the land,
rogu de mid ocus fín,
choice of mead and wine,

[1. A conjecture (Str.), máin, treasure, is in the text: this does not rhyme, nor give good sense; note, however, that muin has no accent-the text gives one.
2. This meaning for annam is doubtful; the sense of "seldom" is established for the word; the line possibly means "it will seldom be so after," &c.]

dóini delgnaidi, cen on,
men ? handsome, without blemish,
combart cen pecead, cen col.
conception without sin without crime.
Atchiam cách for each leth,
We see all on every side,
ocus ni-conn acci nech;
and yet not sees us anyone
temel imorbais Ádaim
the cloud of the sin of Adam
do-don-archéil[1] ar araim
encompasses us from reckoning
A ben día ris mo thuaith tind,
O woman, if thou wilt come to my people strong,
is barr oir bias fort chind,
it is top of head of gold shall be on thy head,
inue úr, laith, lemnacht la lind
pork unsalted, ale, new milk for drink
rot bia lim and, a be find, a be find.
shall be to thee with me there, O woman fair-haired.
[a gap, 9 letters lost] i atumchotaise om aithech tige rag-sa, [a gap,
thou obtainest me from my master of the house I will go,
9 letters lost] fetai, ni rag. Is iarsin dolluid Mider (L.U. 130 *a*.) co
canst, not will I go. It is thereon came Mider to
Echaid, ocus dámair a thochell fochétóir co m-beth fôlo acai
Echaid, and yields his stake immediately that may be (cause) of reproach for him
do Echaid, is airi róic na comada móra, ocus issairi is
to Echaid, it is therefore he paid the great stakes, and on that account it is (that)

[1. From tairchellaim.]

fó anfis con atig a gell. Conid iarsin giull adrubrad in tán trá
under ignorance that he asked his wager. So that after that wager it was said when now
ro bói Mider cona muinter oc íc comad na aidehi, i. in tóchor, ocus
was Mider and his folk at paying the stake of the night, that is, the causeway, and

di-chlochad Midi, ocus luachair Tetbai, ocus fid dar Breg: issé[1] seo
clearing stones off Meath, and rushes of Tethba and forest over Breg: it is he this
an no foclad bói ocá muinter amal atbert lebor drom snechta:
what used to say was with his folk as says Book of Drom-snechta:
Rhetoric—
Cuirthe illand: tochre illand: airderg dararad:
Put on the field: Put close on the field very red oxen:
trom in choibden: clunithar fir ferdi.
heavy the troop Which hears ?really-manly
buidni balc-thruim crand-chuir
troops for strong heavy setting of trees
forderg saire fedar
of very red ?oaks[2] are led
sechuib slimprib sníthib
past them on twisted wattles:
scítha láma: ind rosc clóina: fobíth oén mna
weary are hands, the eye ?slants aside? because of one woman
Dúib in dígail: duib in trom-daim:[3]
To you the revenge, to you the heavy ?oxen
tairthim flatho fer ban:
splendour of sovereignty over white men:
fomnis, fomnis, in fer m-braine cerpae fomnis diád dergæ
? ? ?
[1. Grammar not clear: perhaps the Irish is corrupt (Str.).
2. Reading daire for saire.
3. A conjecture. MS. gives trom-dáim.]
fer arfeid solaig
?
fri aiss esslind fer brón for-tí
? ? sorrow shall, come on the man?
i. more
ertechta inde lámnado luáchair for di Thethbi
? rushes over?two Tethbas
di-chlochad[1] Midi indracht cóich les, cóich amles
clearing stones from Meath ? to whom the benefit, to whom the harm
thocur dar clochach? moin.[2]
causeway over stony moor.
Dalis Mider día mís Fochiallastar (i. rotinóil). Echaid formna

Mider appointed a meeting for the end of a month. Echaid assembled (*i.e.* collected)troops.
láech la-Érend com bátar hi Temrach, ocus an ro po dech do fiannaib
of heroes of Ireland so that they were in Tara, and what was best of champions
h-Erind, cach cúaird imm araile im Temrach immedon ocus a nechtair,
of Ireland, each ring about another, around Tara im the middle, and outside it
ocus is-tig. Ocus in ri ocus in rigan immedon in taigi, ocus ind lis
and within. And the king and the queen in the middle of the house, and its Liss
iatai fó glassaib, ar ro fetatar do t-icfad fer in már cumacht. Etáin
shut under locks, for they knew that would comie of insen the great might. Etain
bói ocon dáil ind aidehi sin forsna flathi, ar ba sain dána disi dál.
was dispensing that night to the princes, for it was meet then for her pouring (of the wine)
Am bátar iarom fora. m-briathraib, co accatar Mider chucu for
When they were thereon at their talking they saw Mider (come) to them on
lar ind rigthige. Bá cáin som dógres ba cáini dana inn aidehi sin.
the floor of the royal palace. He was fair always, was fairer then on that night.
[1. A conjecture. MS. gives dílecad (Str.)
2. The last line in the Ms. is t d c m.]
Tosbert im mod na slûág ateonnairc. Sochsit uli iarom ocus
He brought to amazement the hosts that he saw.[1] Were silent all thereon, and
ferais in rí faelti fris. Is ed dorochtmar ol Mider. An ro gella
the king gave welcome to him. It is this we have come for, said Mider. What was promised
dam-sa or se, tucthar dam. Is fiach ma gelltar, an ro gellad
to myself, said he, let it be given to me. It is a debt if a promise is given,
tucus dait-siu. Ní imrordusa for Echaid, aní sin co se.
I have given to thee. Not have I thought on, said Echaid, that very thing up to now.
Atrugell Étain féin dam-sa, ol Mider, ticht uáit-siu.
Thou hast promised Etain herself to me, said Mider, message (lit. a coming) from you.
Imdergthar im Etain la, sodain. Ná imdergthar imut for Mider, ní
There was a blush on Etain thereupon. Let there be no blush on thee, said Mider, not
droch banas duit-siu. Atu-sa, ol sí, bliadain oc do chuingid com
evil marriage-feast to thee. I am myself, said he, a year at seeking thee with
máinib ocus sétaib at áildem in Ére, ocus ní tucus-sa
treasures and jewels that are the most beautiful in Ireland and not I took thee

comad chomarlécud do Echaid. Ni -lá-deóas damsa ce
till there should be permission of Echaid. Not by good-will to me any
dotchotaind. Atrubart-sa frit-su ol si, conom rire Echaid,
getting thee. I myself said to thyself, said she, until Echaid gives me up
nit rius. Atometha lat ar mo chuit féin, día nom rire Echaid.
not will I come to thee. Take me with thee for my own part, if me Echaid will give up.
Nit ririub immorro, for Echaid, acht tabrad a dí láim
Not thee will I give up however, said Echaid, but (I give) a placing of his two hands
imut for lár in tige, amal ro gabais. Dogéntar for Mider.
about thee on floor of the house, as thou art. It shall be done! said Mider.
i. mider
Atetha a gaisced ina láim clí, ocus gabais in mnái fo a leth-oxail dess,
that is, Mider
He took his weapons in his hand left, and took the woman under his shoulder right,
[1. Reading atcondairc (Str.).]
ocus fócois-lé for forlés in tige. Conérget in-t-sluáig imón rig
and carried her off over skylight of the house. Pose up the hosts, about the king
iár mélacht forro, co n-accatar in dá ela timchell na Temra. Is ed
after a disgrace on them, they saw the two swans around Tara. It is this,
ro gabsat do síd ar Femun. Ocus luid Echaid co fomno
they took (the road) to elfmound about about Femun. And went Echaid with a troop
fer n-Erend imbi do síth ar Femun i. síd ban-find.
of men of Ireland about him to elf mound about Femun *i.e.* elfmound of the fair-haired women.
B (a si com)[1] arli fer n-Erend, fochlaid each síd [a gap, 12 letters lost]
That was the counsel of the men of Ireland, he dug up each elf-mound.
tised a ben. do uádib, Foce [a gap of 13 letters, rest of the version
should come his wife to him from them.
lost.]
[1, The letters in parentheses are a conjecture by Strachan, to fill up a gap in the manuscript]

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THE END