



DEIRDIRE





G. H.

H.M. 86.

Lyons. p. 64

DEIRDIRE



DEIRDRE



DEIRDIRE

AND

THE LAY OF THE CHILDREN OF UISNE

Orally Collected in the Island of Barra, and
Literally Translated by

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EDINBURGH: NORMAN MACLEOD

LONDON: DAVID NUTT

DUBLIN: GILL & SON

1905



LAURISTON CASTLE
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Edinburgh: T. and A. CONSTABLE, Printers to His Majesty

DEIRDIRE

AGUS

LAOIDH CHLANN UISNE

Sgrìobhta bho bheulachas ann am Barraidh
agus eadar-theangaichte le

ALASDAIR MACGILLEMHICHEIL

DUNEIDEAN : TORMOD MACLEOID

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DEIRDIRE

INTRODUCTORY

THE story of Deirdire was written down on 16th March 1867, from the recital of John Macneill, known as 'Iain Donn,' brown John, cottar at Buaille-nam-bodach in the island of Barra. The reciter said that he was then eighty-three years of age—'the same age as General Macneill, were he living, the last of the ancient Macneills of Barra.'

John Macneill was rather under than over medium height, wonderfully well featured and well proportioned, and possessed an active perceptive mind. He was not known as a reciter of tales, but his brother Alexander was.

Alexander Macneill was rather over middle height, well featured and well proportioned, with large, blue, beautiful eyes. He was a famous 'seanchuidh'—reciter, and a practised dictater, having dictated many tales to Mr. Hector Maclean, Islay, Mr. Iain F. Campbell of Islay, and the present writer, all of which, however, were but a small part of the wonderful volume of old lore that died with him.

The following conversation occurred between Alexander Macneill and the writer. 'I have taken down a good tale from John your brother, Alexander.' 'Indeed, with your leave, John my brother never had a tale, unless he might have had a fragment of one. He never could take a tale in, and he never could give a tale out. You never, by your leave, saw a man

going to recite who had less gumption than John my brother. He would not take tales with him, and he would not give forth tales, yet for all that he would be at scraps of lore.' 'This tale that John gave me is very good, but he was not willing to give it to me at all since he did not have it right. He was saying that he had only bits of it.' 'What is the name of the tale, if you please?' 'It is "Deirdire, daughter of Colum Cruitire."' 'There is a good tale there indeed, a beautiful tale. It was with myself that John heard that tale, but he did not have it right at all—he only took bits of it with him. I went one night to "ceilidh" to the house of John. He was telling that story to people who were in before I arrived. I listened to him as long and as patiently as I could,

and, Mary mother ! it was not easy for me to listen to my own brother spoiling the good story. There was vexation upon me for the bad treatment of the good tale, but I was keeping check on myself, but at last I could keep check on myself no longer, and I rose softly and dumbly and I left the house and I returned home. The tale of Deirdire is a good tale, and I have the whole of it from beginning to end, and I will give you every word of it if you wish it, and I would like to give it to you before I go.' 'I have no time on this occasion to write the tale of Deirdire, Alexander, but the next time I come to Barra perhaps I will have more time.' 'Your own will, but Deirdire is a good story, and I would like to give you it before I go. There was a lay on Deirdire, too, but I have not the lay. I never

took a lay or a song with me. You will not get the lay now from any one in Barra unless you get it from Donald the smith at Breubhaig, I heard that Donald had it. And you will not get the tale from any one in Barra now but from myself, unless the fragments that you got from John my brother.'

The story of Deirdire and the Children of Uisne belongs to the Cuchulain cycle of Gaelic sagas. It is one of the 'three sorrows of story-telling,' the other two being the story of the Children of Lir and the story of the Children of Tuirenn.

The people of the Highlands have retained more of the tales of the Fiann cycle, while the people of Ireland have retained more of the tales of the Cuchulain cycle. The present is, I believe, the only version of this tale

that has been got from oral sources in Scotland. It was printed in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, volumes xiii. and xiv., and has since been translated into French and German. Those who are acquainted with our Gaelic tales will not fail to notice the quiet restraint and freedom from exaggeration of this story. The dignity of all the principal characters, and especially of Deirdire herself, is well matched by the dignified and simple yet highly idiomatic diction of the long-descended tale. In the wording of the tale two things call for special mention. Professor Mackinnon has pointed out that the duplication of 'tri tiura pog' (when Deirdire and Naoise meet, p. 56) indicates that when the word 'tiura,' 'teora,' was becoming obsolete the reciter added the modern

equivalent 'tri'—three, by way of explanation. Again Professor Mackinnon solves the term 'drochaid shaor' (when Conachar bribes the sons of Fergus), to which neither reciter nor collector could give any clue, as being a corruption of 'tricha cet,' a measure of land.

The lay which comprises the second part of this volume gives a different version of the story and of the manner of death of Deirdire and of the sons of Uisne from that of the prose tale.

DEIRDIRE

I

BHA fear ann an Eirinn uair ris an canaidhte Colum Cruitire. Bha an duine na dhuine coir agus cuid mhath de chuibhrionn an t-saoghail aige. Bha bean aige, ach cha robh duine teaghlach orra. Rainig am fear agus a' bhean aois mhor, air alt agus nach robh duil aca ri duine sliochd gu brath.

Gu de chuala Colum Cruitire ach gu'n robh fiosaiche air tighinn dachaidh dha 'n aite, agus bho 'n a bha an duine na dhuine coir bha toil aige gu'n tigeadh am fiosaiche faisge daibh. Ge b'e co dhiu chuireadh fios air no thainig e leis

DEIRDIRE

I

THERE was once a man in Eirin of the name of Colum Cruitire—*Colum the Harper*. The man was a worthy man, and he had a goodly portion of worldly means. He had a wife, but the husband and wife had no children. The husband and wife reached a great age, so that they had no expectation of children for ever.

What should Colum Cruitire hear but that a soothsayer was come home to the place, and, as the man was a hospitable man, he had a wish that the soothsayer should come near them. Whether it was that he was asked to

fein, thainig am fiosaiche dh' ionnsaidh tigh Choluim Chruitire.

‘Am bheil thu a’ deanamh fiosachd?’ orsa Calum Cruitire. ‘Tha mi a’ deanamh beagan. Am bheil fiosachd ga do dhith?’ ors’ am fiosaiche. ‘An ta, tha mi coma ged a ghabhainn fiosachd uait, na ’m bitheadh fiosachd agad domh, agus gu’m b’e do thoil a deanamh.’ ‘Ma ta, ni mise fiosachd duit. Gu de an seorsa fiosachd a ta uait?’ ‘An ta, bha fiosachd uam fhein thu dh’ innseadh domh mo chor, no gu de bha ri eiridh domh, no na ’m faodadh tu fiosrachadh a thoirt domh air.’ ‘An ta, tha mi dol a mach, agus an uair a thilleas mi steach cuiridh mi ceist riut’; agus chaidh am fiosaiche mach as an tigh.

Cha robh e fada mach an uair a thill e steach. ‘An robh duine teagh-

come, or that he was come of his own accord, the soothsayer came to the house of Colum Cruitire.

‘Art thou making soothsaying?’ said Colum Cruitire. ‘I am making a little; art thou seeking soothsaying?’ said the soothsayer. ‘Well, I do not mind should I take soothsaying from thee if thou hast soothsaying for me, and that thou wouldst be pleased to make it.’ ‘Well, I will make thee soothsaying; what kind of soothsaying wouldst wish to have?’ ‘Well, the soothsaying that I myself would wish to have would be to know my condition, and what was to happen to me, were it permissible for thee to tell me.’ ‘Well, I am going out, and when I come in I will put a question to thee,’ and the soothsayer went out of the house.

The soothsayer was not long out when he came into the house again.

laich ort riamh?’ ors’ am fiosaiche.
‘An ta, cha robh,’ orsa Colum Cruitire ;
‘cha robh duine sliochd orm fhein no
air an te ta agam riamh, agus cha’n
’eil duil-a’m gu’m bi gu brath. Cha’n
’eil agam ach mi fhein agus mo bhean.’
‘Ma ta,’ ors’ am fiosaiche, ‘tha sin
a’ cur neonachais orm fhein, agus mi
faicinn anns an dailgneachd agam gur
ann mu dheighinn nighinne duit is
mutha dhoirtear a dh’ fhuil a dhoirt-
eadh riamh ann an Eirinn, o chionn
re agus linn. Agus ni na tri olaich
is ainmeile bha riamh ri fhaighinn an
cinn a chall air a tailibh.’ ‘An e sin
fiosachd a tha thu a’ deanamh domh?’
orsa Colum Cruitire le feirge, agus e
saoilsinn gu’n robh am fiosaiche fanaid
air. ‘An ta, is e,’ ors’ am fiosaiche.
‘An ta, ma ’s e sin fiosachd a ta thu
deanamh domh faodaidh tu a cumail
agad fhein ; cha mhor is d’ fhiach thu
fein no do chuid fiosachd, agus bi gabh-

‘Hadst thou ever any offspring?’ said the soothsayer to Colum Cruitire. ‘Well, no,’ said Colum Cruitire, ‘there has never been offspring upon me or upon her whom I have, and we never expect any now; I have only myself and my wife.’ ‘Well,’ said the soothsayer, ‘that surprises me much, and that I see in my augury that it is about a daughter of thine that the greatest amount of blood will be spilt that has been spilt in Eirin for generations and ages past, and the three heroes of the greatest renown in the land shall lose their lives on her account.’ ‘Is that the soothsaying that thou art making me?’ said Colum Cruitire with anger, he thinking that the soothsayer was mocking him. ‘Well, it is,’ said the soothsayer. ‘Well, if that be the soothsaying that thou art making me, thou mayest keep it to thyself, for neither thou thyself

ail rathaid eile.' 'An ta,' ors' am fiosaiche, 'tha mise ga do dheanamh cinnteach gu leoir as sud; tha mi ga fhaicinn sud gle riochdail am inntinn fhein.' 'An ta,' orsa Colum Cruitire, 'cha'n urrainn sin cinneachadh; tha mise agus mo bhean aois mhor, air chor agus nach urrainn gu'm bi duine sliochd gu brath oirnn. Cha'n 'eil mi a' diteadh d' fhiosachd—cha'n 'eil coir agam air—ach sud an ni as am bheil mi cinnteach, nach robh agus nach bi duine sliochd orm fhein no air mo mhnaoi gu brath. Ach foghnaidh sud; tuilleadh cha sir agus cha ghabh mise bho'n a rinn thu an fhiosachd gun doigh.' Agus leig Colum Cruitire am fiosaiche air falbh, ma thug no nach d' thug e bàidse da.

Dh' fhalbh am fiosaiche. Cha b' e sin ri ailis air an sgeul, ach cha robh am fiosaiche fada air falbh an uair a

nor thy soothsaying is worth much, and be taking another road.' 'Well,' said the soothsayer, 'I make thee sure enough of this ; I see it very clearly in my augury.' 'Well,' said Colum Cruitire, 'that cannot come to pass ; I and my wife are of great age, so that it is not possible that there ever shall be offspring upon us. I do not revile thy soothsaying—I have no right to do that ; but that is the thing of which I am sure, that there never has been and that there never shall be offspring upon me or upon my wife. But that will suffice ; more of thy soothsaying I will neither seek nor receive, since thou hast made the soothsaying without sense.' And Colum Cruitire allowed the soothsayer to go away, whether or not he gave him a gift.

The soothsayer went away. That is not ridiculing the story, but the soothsayer was not long away when the wife

thoisich bean Choluim Chruitire ri fas trom. Agus mar bha ise fas leth-tromach bha eise fas doltromach, agus e diumbach, dorrnach deth fhein nach do rinn e an corr seanchais ris an fhiosaiche ri linn da bhi na chainnt. Bha Colum Cruitire fo smuairein la agus fo chnamhan oidhche nach robh ann fhein ach duine gun doigh, gun tuigse, agus e gun chaomh charaid, gun chul-taic aige ris an t-saoghal, agus na 'n tigeadh an turlach so air a nis—ni bha coltach gu'n tigeadh—agus e fhein cho fada na aghaidh an toiseach. Bha e nis a' creidsinn gu'n tigeadh a' h-uile dad gu crich mar a chunnaic am fiosaiche anns an dailgneachd, agus bha e fo champar agus fo chàs. Cha robh fios aige de aon doigh an domhan a dheanadh e gus an dortadh fala so a chur seachad air an tir; agus is e an smaoin a chinnich na cheann na 'n cuireadh Ni-math an urra bha so air aghaidh thun an t-saoghail—

of Colum Cruitire became pregnant; and as the wife grew more heavy the husband grew more dolorous, and vexed at himself that he did not make more conversation with the soothsayer the time he was talking to him. Colum Cruitire was under pain by day and care by night, that he himself was but a man without sense, without knowledge, without trusted friend, without back-support in the world, and should this burden come upon him now, a thing likely to come, and he himself so much against it at first. He now believed that everything would come to pass as the soothsayer said in his augury, and he was in sore distress and dismay. He did not know of one way in the wide world that he would do to ward off the spilling of blood from the land, and it was the thought that grew in his head that, should the Good Being send this infant into the world—

ni bha coltach gu'n cuireadh—gur h-ann a dh' fheumadh e a cur air falbh fad as, far nach faiceadh suil sealladh di, agus far nach cluinneadh cluas gabhadh oirre.

Dhluthaich an so àm a h-asaid air bean Choluim Chruitire, agus thugadh i thun na leaba-làir. Dh' asaideadh am boirionnach agus rug i leanabh nighinne. Cha do leig Colum Cruitire duil bheo dachaidh thun an tighe aige a thoirt aire d' a mhnaoi, ach e fein agus a' bhean-ghlun. Chuir Colum Cruitire an sin ceist ris a' bhoirionnaich so an gabhadh i fhein a mhentil ris an leanabh a thoirt a nios, agus a cumail am falach fad air falbh far nach faiceadh suil sealladh di agus nach cluinneadh cluas guth mu deighinn. Thuirt am boirionnach gu'n gabhadh, agus gu'n deanadh i an dichioll a b' fhearr a b' urrainn di.

Fhuair an sin Colum Cruitire triuir

a thing he was likely to send—that he himself would need to put her away to a far-off place, where no eye would see a sight of her, and no ear would hear a sound of her.

Now the time of her delivery drew upon the wife of Colum Cruitire, and she was brought to the floor-bed. The woman was delivered, and she brought forth an infant girl. Colum Cruitire did not allow a living creature to come home to his house, to give attendance to his wife, but the knee-woman alone. Colum Cruitire then put a question to this woman if she herself would undertake to bring up the child, and to keep her in hiding in some remote place, where no eye could see her and no ear could hear word about her. The woman said she would, and that she would make her utmost efforts.

Then Colum Cruitire got three men,

fhear, agus thug e leis air falbh iad gu monadh mor falachaidh fad o laimh, gun fhios, gun fhàth, gun fhaireachadh do neach air bith. Thug e ma-near ann an sin cnoc cruinn, gorm, a threachailt as a bhroinn, agus an còs a chomhdach gu grinn mu 'n cuairt, air chor agus gu'n deanadh coisridh bheag cuideachd comh-nuidh ann. Rinneadh so.

Chuir Colum Cruitire a' bhean-ghlun air falbh leis an leanabh gu ruig am bothan beag am measg nam beann mora, fiadhaiche, fasaiche, fad o laimh, far nach faiceadh suil sealladh agus nach cluinneadh cluas guth air Deirdire; oir b' e sin ainm an leinibh. Chuir e h-uile dad doigheil air an cinn, agus chuir e lòn la agus bliadhna leo; agus thuir e ris a' bhean-ghlun gu'n reachadh lòn thuca a rithist an ceann na bliadhna, agus mar sin o bhliadhna gu bliadhna am fad a bhiodh esan beo. Is ann mar so a thachair.

and he led them to a great mountain far away, without knowledge, without hint to any person. He there betook him to dig out the inside of a green conical mound, and to line the hollow thus formed right round, so as to enable a small party to dwell therein comfortably. This was done.

Colum Cruitire then sent the knee-woman away with the infant to this small low sheiling among the great hills in the wild distant desert, where no eye could see and no ear could hear Deirdire, for that was the name of the child. He put everything in order before them, and he sent food and raiment with them to last them for a year and a day, and he told the knee-woman that food and clothing would be sent to them again at the end of the year, and that way from year to year as long as he was alive. And this was so.

II

Bha Deirdire agus a muime altruim a' tamh anns a' bhothan am measg nam beann, gun fios, gun fàth aig duine beo mu 'n deighinn no mu dheighinn sian a thachair, gus an robh Deirdire ceithir-bliadhna-diag a dh' aois. Bha Deirdire a' fas mar am fiuran fionn, agus i dìreach, deas, mar an luachran moin-tich. Bha i os cionn coimeas sluagh an t-saoghail, dealbhach na pearsa, sgiambhach na maise, agus a lìth agus a lùth mar eala nan tonn agus eilid nam beann. Is i boinne-fala bu chaoine cruth, a b'aillidhe snuadh agus a bu shuairce mein eadar ùir agus adhar an Eirinn; agus ge b'e air bith dath no dreach a bhiodh oirre roimhe sin, cha robh suil a shealladh na h-aodann nach rachadh ise na caoire dearga fala r'a linn.

II

Deirdire and her nurse-mother were dwelling in the low little bothy among the great high hills, without the knowledge, without the suspicion of any living one about them, or of anything that happened, till Deirdire was fourteen years of age. Deirdire was growing as lithe and fair as the stately sapling, and as straight and symmetrical as the young moorland rush. She was above comparison of the people of the world, shapely in her person, lovely in her beauty, while her skin and her gait were like those of the swan of the lake and the hind of the hill. She was the blood-drop of finest form, of loveliest complexion, and of gentlest mien between earth and sky in Eirin. And whatever other colour or complexion she should have on before, no eye looked in her face but she instantly went into blushes like glowing fire on the occasion.

Bha am boirionnach a bha na bun a' toirt a h-uile fiosrachaidh agus eolais do Dheirdire air an robh fios agus eolas aice fhein. Cha robh fiar a' fas a friamh, no ian a' seinn a coill, no reul a' soillse a nèamh air nach robh ainm aig Deirdire. Ach aon rud, cha robh i air son gu'm biodh cuid no comhradh aice ri neach beo do shluagh coitcheann an t-saoghail.

Ach oidhche dhudarra gheamhraidh agus na neoil dhubha fo ghruaim, agus sealgair sìthne siubhail a bha sgìth ri siubhal bheann, dè ach a thainig seachran-seilg air an duine, agus chaill e a chursa agus a chompanaich. Thuit tromaltan cadail air an duine, agus e sgìth ri siubhal shliabh, agus laigh e sìos ri taobh an tolmair bhoidhich ghuirm an robh Deirdire a' tamh agus chaidil e. Bha an duine fann le acras agus allaban, agus ga lathadh le

The nurse-mother was teaching Deirdire all the intelligence and knowledge of which she herself had intelligence and knowledge. There was no plant springing from root, nor bird singing from grove, nor star gleaming from heaven, for which Deirdire had not a name. But one thing, the woman did not wish that Deirdire should have communion or converse with any living one of the general people of the earth.

But on a wild, wintry night and the dark clouds surly, a hunter of wandering game was tired with travelling hills, and what but hunt-wandering came on the man, and he lost his course and his companions. Drowsiness came down on the man from wandering the hills, and he laid himself down beside the beautiful green knoll in which Deirdire dwelt, and he fell asleep. The man was weak from hunger and fatigue, and benumbed with cold, and deep sleep

fuachd, agus thainig suain chadail air. An uair a laigh e sìos ri taobh a' ghrianain ghuirm an robh Deirdire tamh, thainig bruaillean air an duine agus bha duil aige gu'n robh e ann am blaths brugh nan sithichean agus na sithichean a stigh ri ceol. Dh' eubh an sealgair na bhruaillean ma bha duine anns a' bhruigh iad ga leigeadh a stigh air sgàth Ni-maith.

Chuala Deirdire an guth agus thuirt i r' a muime, 'A mhuime, gu de tha sud?' 'Cha'n 'eil ach rud gun diù—eoin na h-ealtainn air seachran agus iada's sireadh a cheile; ach siubhladh iad seachad gu doire nan geug.' Thainig an sin bruaillean eile air an t-sealgair agus dh' eubh e a rithist ma bha duine steach anns a' bhruigh, air sgàth Tì-nan-dùl iad ga leigeadh a stigh. 'De tha sud?' orsa Deirdire. 'Cha'n 'eil ach rud gun doigh,' ors' a muime—'eoin na coille air chall air a cheile; ach siubhladh iad

came on him. When he lay down beside the green bower in which Deirdire abode, sleep-wandering came upon the man, and he thought that he was in the warmth of the mound of the fairies, and the fairies making music within. The hunter called in his dreams, if there was any one in the mound that they would let him in for the sake of the Good Being.

Deirdire heard the voice, and she said to the nurse-mother, 'Nurse-mother, what is that?' 'Only a thing of little worth, the birds of the air astray from each other, and seeking one another; but let them hie them away past to the forest of branches.' Another sleep-wandering came upon the hunter, and he called again, if there was any one in the knoll for the sake of the Being of the Elements to let him in. 'What is that?' said Deirdire. 'Only a thing without sense, the birds of the woods astray

seachad gu doire nan geug.' Thainig an sin bruillean eile air an t-sealgair, agus dh' eubh e mach an treasa turas ma bha duine anns a' bhrugh, air sgàth Dia-nan-dùl a leigeadh a stigh, gu'n robh e ga lathadh le fuachd agus ga chlaoidh le acras. 'O, gu de tha sud, a mhuime?' orsa Deirdire. 'Cha ruig thusa leas duil a bhith agad gu bheil dad an sud gu toileachadh a thoirt duit, a bhuinneag; am bheil an sud ach eoin na h-ealtainn agus iad air call a cheile; ach siubhladh iad seachad gu doire nan geug. Cha'n 'eil fasgath no fardach an so daibh a nochd.' 'O, mhuime, dh'iarr an t-ian a stigh air sgàth Dia-nan-dùl, agus their thu fhein riumsa nì air bith a dh'iarrar oirnn na ainm-san gur coir dhuinn a dheanadh. Mur leig thu leam an t-ian a tha ga lathadh le fuachd agus ga chlaoidh le acras a leigeil a stigh cha mhor is diù leam

from each other, and seeking one another; but let them hie them away past to the forest of branches.' Then another sleep-wandering came upon the hunter, and he called out the third time, if there was any one in the knoll for the sake of the God of the Elements to let him in, for he was benumbed with cold and sore with hunger. 'Oh! what is that, nurse-mother?' said Deirdire. 'Thou needst not think there is aught there to give thee gladness, maiden,' said the nurse-mother, 'there is there but the birds of the air and they having lost one another; but let them hie them away past to the forest of branches. There is neither shelter nor home for them here this night.' 'Oh! nurse-mother, the bird asked in the name of the God of the Elements, and thou thyself sayest to me that whatever is asked of us in His name that it should be done. If thou wilt not allow me to let

fhein do chainnt no do chreideamh. Ach o'n a tha mise toirt ceill do d' chainnt agus do d' chreideamh a dh' ionnsaich thu domh, leigidh mi fhein a stigh an t-ian.'

Agus dh' eirich Deirdire agus thug i an cleite bhar comhla an doruis, agus leig i stigh an sealgair. Chuir i suidhe-achan an aite suidhe, biadh an aite ithidh, agus deoch an ait' òil, dha 'n duine thainig dhachaidh.

'Siuthad agus ith biadh agus tu riatanach air,' orsa Deirdire. 'An ta, bha mise sin, riatanach air biadh, agus air deoch agus air blàths, an trath thainig mi dachaidh dha 'n tulaich so; ach nar a meal mi mo shlainte mur d' fhalbh iad diom co loma luath agus a chunna mi thu.' 'O bhith 's aodaich, a dhuine thainig dhachaidh nach ann air do theang' tha an ruiteis!' ors' a' chailleach, 'Cha

in the bird benumbed with cold and sore with hunger, I myself will doubt thy speech and thy faith. But, as I believe in thy speech and in thy faith that thou didst teach me, I myself will let in the bird.'

And Deirdire arose, took the bar off the leaf of the door, and she let in the hunter. She placed a seat in a place of sitting, food in a place of eating, and drink in a place of drinking, for the man who came home.

'Go on and eat food, and thou needful of it,' said Deirdire. 'Well, I was that, needful of food, and of drink and of warmth, when I came home to this knoll,' said the hunter; 'but may I never enjoy my health if these are not gone from me as soon as ever I beheld thee, maiden.' 'Oh, food and clothing! thou man who camest home, is it not upon thy tongue the talk is!' said the woman. 'It is not a

mhor an nì dhuit do bhial a chumail duinte, agus do theang a chumail balbh ri linn duit tighinn dachaidh agus fasgath na fardaich fhaighinn air oidhche dhudarra gheamhraidh.' 'An ta,' ors' an sealgair, 'faodaidh mise sin a dheanamh, mo bhial a chumail duinte agus mo theang a chumail balbh ri linn domh tighinn dachaidh agus aoidheachd fhaighinn uait; ach air laimh d' athar agus do sheanar, agus air do dha laimh fhein ga 'n saoradh sin, na 'm faiceadh cuid eile shluagh an t-saoghail am boinne-fala ta agad gu falachaidh an so cha b' fhada sin fhein, a Rìgh nan dùl 's nan domhan, a dh' fhagadh iad agadsa i.' 'De na daoine tha sin, no co iad?' orsa Deirdire. 'An ta, innsidh mise sin duits, a nighean,' ors' an sealgair, 'tha Naoise mac Uisne, agus Ailleán agus Ardan, a dha bhrathair.' 'Agus de e coltas nam feadhnach sin ri linn am faicinn, na'm faiceadhmaid iad?'

great thing for thee to keep thy mouth shut and thy tongue dumb on coming home here and obtaining the shelter of the dwelling on a cold wintry night.' 'Well,' said the hunter, 'I may do that, keep my mouth closed and keep my tongue dumb, on my coming home and receiving hospitality from thee; but, by thy father's hand, and thy grandfather's, and by thine own two hands to free these, were some others of the world's people to see this blood-drop whom thou hast in hiding here, it is not long, O King of the elements and of the world, that they would leave her with thee.' 'What people are these or who are they?' said Deirdire. 'Well, I will tell thee that, maiden,' said the hunter. 'They are Naoise, the son of Uisne, and Ailleán and Ardan, his two brothers.' 'And what is the likeness of these on being seen, should we see them?' said Deirdire. 'Well, those

orsa Deirdire. ‘An ta, sud agad an ainm agus an sloinneadh, na chunna agus na chuala mise orra,’ ors’ an sealgair, ‘agus is e dreach agus dealbh nan daoine ri linn am faicinn, lùth an fhithich air an gruag, an cneas mar eala nan tonn, an leac mar fhuil an laoigh bhric dheirg, agus an lùth agus an leum mar bhradan a’ bhoinne-bhrais agus mar fhiadh a bhearraidh bhric, agus tha na bheil os cionn cromadh an da shlinnein a bharrachd aig Naois air sluagh eile na h-Eirinn.’

‘De air bith mar tha iad,’ ors’ a’ bhan-altruim, ‘bi thusa a’ falbh as a so, agus a’ gabhail rathaid eile, agus a Rìgh na gile ’s na greine, gu dearbh agus gu deimhin is beag mo chomain no mo chiatadh fhein dhiot fhein no dhe ’n te thug a stigh thu.’

Dh’ fhalbh an sealgair. Beagan an deigh da falbh smaointich an duine aige fhein gu’n robh Conachar, rìgh

for you are their names and descent, all that I saw and heard of them,' said the hunter; 'and the appearance and form of the men on being seen is—the colour of the raven on their hair, their skin like the swan of the waves, and their cheeks like the blood of the speckled-red fawn, while their strength and their stateliness are those of the salmon of the rapid stream and the stag of the brindled hill; and Naoise has all above the slope of the two shoulders over the other people of Eirin.'

'However they are,' said the foster-mother, 'be thou going out of here, and taking another road, and oh! King of the moon, and of the sun, truly and verily small are my own obligations or delight for thyself or for her who let thee in.'

The hunter went his way. Shortly after he left, the man thought to himself that Conachar, the king of Ulster,

Ulla, a' laighe agus ag eirigh leis fhein, gun chagar comhraidh, gun cheile conaltraidh ; agus na 'm faiceadh e am boinne-fala bha so gur docha gu'n tugadh e dachaidh i d' a ionnsaidh fhein, agus gu'n deanadh e gean-math ris-san fhein ri linn innseadh da gu'n robh a leithid do rìghinn air bith-braonach an t-saoghail.

Falbhar an sealgair, lom agus dìreach gu pàilios Rìgh Conachar. Chuir e fios a stigh thun an rìgh gu'm bu toigh leis a bhith a' seanchas ris, na 'm b' e chead e. Fhreagair an rìgh an teachdair-eachd agus thainig e a mach a sheanchas ris an duine. 'Gu de e fath do thuruis riums?' ors' an rìgh ris an t-sealgair. 'Is e fath mo thuruis fhein ruibh, a Rìgh,' ors' an sealgair, 'gu'm faca mi an aona bhoinne-fala is aillidhe a rugadh riamh an Eirinn, agus thainig mi ga innseadh duibh.' 'Co i am boinne-fala tha sin, no c' àit am bheil i ri fhaicinn,

was lying down and rising up alone without a confidential love, without a conversational mate beside him, and that were he to see this blood-drop that was here, he might possibly bring her home to himself, and perhaps do a good deed to him himself for telling him that there was such a damsel on the surface of the living dewy world.

The hunter went straight and direct to the palace of King Conachar. He sent a message in to the king that he would like to be talking to him were it his pleasure. The king answered the message and came out to speak to the man. 'What is the purport of thy errand with me?' said the king to the hunter. 'The cause of my own business with you, King,' said the hunter, 'is that I have seen the loveliest blood-drop that ever was born in Eirin, and I have come to tell you.' 'Who is she that blood-drop, and where is she to be seen,

an uair nach facas riamh roimhe i gus am fac thusa i, ma chunnaic thu i?' 'An ta, chunnaic mise i,' ors' an sealgair, 'ach ma chunnaic cha'n fhaic fear eile i gu'm faigh e seoladh air an aite am bheil i a' tamh.' 'Agus an seol thu domhsa far am bheil i' tamh, agus bidh duais do sheolaidh cho math ri duais do theachdaireachd?' ors' an righ. 'An ta, seolaidh, a Righ, ga docha nach bithear air a shon,' ors' an sealgair. 'Fuirichidh tu anns an teaghlaich so fhein an nochd,' orsa Conachar, 'agus falbhaidh mise agus mo dhaoine leat moch maduinn am maireach.' 'Fuirichidh,' ors' an sealgair. Fuirichear an sealgair an oidhche sin an teaghlach Righ Conachair.

Chuir Conachar, righ Ulla, fios air na daoine bu dilse da mar bha triuir mhac Fhearachair 'ic Ro, clann bhrathar-athar fhein, agus leig e a run riù. Ge

when she had not been seen ever before till thou didst see her, if seen her thou hast?' said the king. 'Well, I have seen her,' said the hunter; 'but if I have, no one else can see her till he gets guidance to the place where she dwells.' 'And wilt thou guide me to the place where she dwells, and the reward for thy guidance will be as good as the reward for thy messaging,' said the king. 'Well, I will, O King,' said the hunter, 'though probably my doing so may not be wished.' 'Thou shalt remain in this household itself to-night, and I and my men will go with thee at early morning to-morrow,' said Conachar. 'I will stay,' said the hunter. The hunter remained that night in the household of King Conachar.

Conachar, the king of Ulster, sent word to the men who were nearest of kin to himself, such as the three sons of Fearachar, the son of Ro, the children

bu mhin mochaireach ceileireachd ian nan còs agus ceol ian nan doire, bu mhoiche na sin moch-eirigh Chonachair, rìgh Ulla, le a chomhlan chaomh chairdean an caoin chamhanaich a' cheitein chiuin, ùir, agus bruchd dhe 'n dealt air bharraibh gach dois, luis agus freumh, a' falbh a thoirt a mach a ghrianain ghuirm an robh Deirdire tamh. Bha iomadh og ghaisgeach aig an robh ceum lùthmhor, leumnaidh, luaineach aig àm falbh, aig an robh ceum fann, fàilneach, fiaraidh a' ruighinn, aig faidead an astair agus gairbhead na slighe.

'Sud e a nis shios air urlar a' ghlinne, am brugh am bheil am boirionnach a' tamh; ach cha teid mise na 's faisge na so air a' chaillich,' ors' an sealgair. Chaidh Conachar le choisir chairdean a sios thun an tolmain an robh Deirdire

of his own father's brother, and he told them his secret intent. Though soft and early was the carolling of the birds of the bush, and the song of the birds of the grove, yet earlier still was the early rising of Conachar, the king of Ulster, and his band of trusted friends in the mild morning dawn of the gentle, fresh May, with an outpouring of dew on the points of sapling, bush, and plant, going in search of the green sunny sheiling in which Deirdire dwelt. There was many a gay gallant of lithe, lively, lightsome step at leaving, who was of weak, wounded, waddled step on reaching there, from the greatness of the distance and the roughness of the way.

'There it is now, down on the floor of the glen, the sheiling in which the woman abides, but I will go no nearer than this to the carlin,' said the hunter. Conachar and his band of trusted friends went down to the knoll wherein

tamh, agus ghnog e ann an dorus a' bhoth. Thuirt a' bhan-altruim nach tugteadh freagar no fosgladh do neach air bith, agus nach robh i air son neach air bith a chur dragh oirre fhein no air a bothan. 'Fosgail thus,' orsa Conachar, 'agus gheibh thu talla is fearr na so ri linn duinn a dhol dachaidh.' 'Cha'n 'eil mise,' ors' a' bhean bhochd, 'a' sireadh talla no tuam is fearr na mo bhothan fein na 'm fàgt' ann mi, agus cead mo laighe 's m' eirigh fhagail agam fhein. Cha lugha na facal rìgh agus feachd rioghachd a chuireas mis as mo bhothan fhein an nochd.' 'Fosgail thus, agus mur fosgail thu dhe do dheoin fosglaidh tu dhe d' aindeoin,' ors' an rìgh, agus e fàs feargach. 'An ta bhithinn na 'r comain,' ors' am boirionnach, 'na 'n tugadh sibh brath dhomh co tha sireadh orm dorus mo bhothain fhosgladh.' 'Tha mise, Conachar, rìgh Ulla, agus na biodh a'

Deirdire dwelt, and they knocked at the door of the hut. The foster-mother said that no answer or opening would be given to any one, and that she was not for any person to be molesting herself or her home. 'Open thou,' said Conachar, 'and thou shalt get a better hall than this when we get home.' 'I am not wanting a better hall or house than my own little bothy were I left in it,' said the poor woman, 'and permission for my lying down and my rising up left to myself. It is not less than the word of a king and the army of a kingdom that shall drive me from my own little hut this night.' 'Open thou, and if thou wilt not open it with thy will thou shalt open it against thy will,' said the king, and he growing angry. 'Indeed I would be obliged to you,' said the woman, 'were you to tell me who is seeking me to open my bothy door?' 'It is I, Conachar, the king

chuis an dalla-chrannachd ort na 's fhaide.' An uair a chuala bhean bhochd co bha 's an dorus, dh' eirich i le cabh-aig, agus leig i stigh an rìgh agus na thoilleadh a stigh d' a choisir.

An uair a chunnaic an rìgh am boirionnach a bha air a chionn, agus air an robh e an toir, bha leis nach fac e riamh ann an cùrs' an la no ann an aislig na h-oidhche boinne-fala cho aillidh ri Deirdire, agus thug e cudrom a chridhe de ghaol di. Cha robh manear d'a fhein agus d'a dhaoine, bho thoiseach gu crìch na cùise, ach Deirdire a spionadh leo air fras-mhullach an guailne, biodh nar-a biodh i deonach. Is e so a rinneadh, thogadh Deirdire air fras-mhullach ghuala nan laoch, agus thugadh i fhein, agus a muim-altruim air falbh gu pàilios Rìgh Conachar, Ulla.

of Ulster, and let not the matter be in darkness to thee longer.' When the poor woman heard who was at the door she arose with haste and she let in the king and all who could hold within of his band.

When the king saw the damsel who was before him and of whom he was in search, he thought to himself that never in the course of the day nor in a dream of the night saw he a blood-drop so lovely as Deirdire; and he gave her the weight of his heart of love. There was nothing in his own mind, or in the minds of his men, from the beginning to the end of the matter, but to snatch Deirdire away on the summit of their shoulders be she willing or not. This was what was done, and Deirdire was raised on the summit of the shoulders of the heroes, and she herself and her foster-mother were taken away to the palace of King Conachar of Ulster.

Leis an deigh a bha aig Conachar air Deirdire bha e deonach a posadh air Iarach nam bonn, biodh nar-a biodh ise deonach es' a phosadh. An uair a chuireadh a' chuis na cead-se, cha deanadh i idir, idir e, a muigh no mach, agus nach fac i cruitheachd creutair riamh thuige so. Cha robh fios aice air deanadas mna no air gnathachadh maighdinn, agus nach do shuidh i riamh ann an cuideachd no an comhlan thuige so. Cha b' urra dhi urrad agus suidhe air *séur* le cion nach fac i daoine riamh thuige so. Leis mar bha Conachar a' sparadh posaidh air Deirdire thuirte i ris na 'n leigeadh e leatha dàil la agus bliadhna gu'm biodh i na chomain. Thuirte e rithe gu'n tugadh e sud di ge bu chruaidh e, na'n tugadh ise gealladh cinnteach dasan gu'm posadh i e air ceann na bliadhna. Thug i so.

Fhuair an rìgh bean-ionnsachaidh do

With the fondness that Conachar had for Deirdire he wished to marry her immediately (*lit.* on the track of their soles) whether or not she was willing to marry him. When the matter was placed before her she would not do it at all, at all, and that she never saw the features of living man till now. She had no knowledge of the duties of wife, nor of the manners of maiden, and that she had never sat in gathering or in company before. She could not so much as sit on a chair, because she never saw people till now. From the way that Conachar was thrusting marriage upon Deirdire she said, if he would give her a delay of a year and a day she would be obliged to him. He said he would give her that, though it would be hard, if she would give him a sure promise that she would marry him at the end of the year. She gave this.

The king got a teaching woman for

Dheirdire, agus maighdeanan cridheil, grinn, modhail, mìn, mèinneach a bhiodh a' laighe agus ag eirigh, a' cluich agus a' comhradh leatha.

Bha Deirdire deanadach ann an gnìomh maighdinn agus ann an tuigse mna ; agus bha le Conachar nach fac e fhein le shuilean corpora riamh boinne-fala cho taitneach rithe.

III

De ach a bha Deirdire agus na mnathan-coimheadaidh là muigh air a' chnoc cul an tighe, a' gabhail seallaidh agus ag ol na greine. Co chunnaic iad a tighinn ach gu'm b' e triuir fhear air astar. Bha Deirdire dearcadh air na daoine bha tighinn agus i gabhail ioghnaidh diu. An uair a dhluthaich na daoine riu chuimhnich Deirdire air cainnt an t-sealgair, agus thuirt i rithe fhein gu'm b'iad so triuir mhac Uisne

Deirdire, and merry, elegant, mannerly, gentle, modest maidens who would be lying down and rising up, and playing and conversing with her.

Deirdire was eident in maidenly acquirements and in womanly knowledge, and Conachar bethought him that he never himself with his bodily eyes saw a blood-drop so pleasing as she.

III

What but Deirdire and her attendant women were one day out on the hill behind the house taking the scene and drinking the sun. Whom should they see coming their way but three men on a journey. Deirdire was gazing at the men who were coming, and wondering at them. When the men neared them Deirdire remembered the words of the hunter, and she said to herself that these were the three sons of Uisne, and

agus gu'm b' e so Naois, agus na bha os cionn cromadh an da shlinnein aige os cionn fir Eirinn uile.

Ghabh an triuir bhraithrean seachad gun suim a ghabhail diu, gun suil a thoirt os an cionn air na h-ainnirean air a' chnoc. De ach gu'n do thalantaich gradh Naois ann an cridhe Deirdire gus nach b' urr' i fuireach gun falbh as a dheigh. Trusar i a trusgan agus falbhar air deaghaidh nam fear a ghabh seachad bonn a' chnoic, agus fagar na mnai-coimheadachd a' sud, biodh iad buidheach no diumbach.

Chual Ailleán agus Ardan mu dheighinn a' bhoirionnaich a bha aig Conachar, rìgh Ulla, agus smaoinich iad na 'm faiceadh Naois, am brathair, i gur ann a bhiodh i aige fhein, seachd araidh o nach robh i posd aig an rìgh. Mhòthaich iad dha 'n bhoirionnaich a' tighinn agus dh' iarr iad air cach-a-cheile ceum a chumail ann, an t-astar mor aca

that this was Naoise, and that he had all that was above the slope of the two shoulders over all the men of Eirin.

The three brothers passed them by without heeding them, without looking above them at the maidens on the hill. What but that the love of Naoise became so implanted in the heart of Deirdire that she could not remain without going after him. She gathers up her garments, and she goes after the men who have passed by at the base of the hill, and leaves the attendant women there, be they pleased or annoyed.

Ailleán and Ardan heard of the damsel whom Conachar, king of Ulster, had, and they thought if Naoise, their brother, were to see her he would have her himself, very especially as she was not married to the king. They noticed the damsel coming, and they exhorted one another to walk well, because of the long distance they had to do, and the

r'a dheanamh, agus ciaradh na h-oidhche a' tighinn. Rinn iad so. Ghlaodh ise, 'A Naois, mhic Uisne, an ann a' brath m' fhagail a tha thu?' 'Gu de an glaodh sud a chuala mo chluas nach 'eil soirbh domh a fhreagairt, agus nach 'eil furasda dhomh a dhiultadh?' orsa Naois. 'Cha'n 'eil ach lachraich nan lacha-luin aig Conachar,' ors' a bhraithrean. 'Ach luathaicheamaid ar cas agus graideamaid ar ceum, agus an t-astar mor againn r'a dheanamh, agus ciaradh an fheasgair a' tuiteam.' Rinn iad so, agus bha iad a' sineadh an astair eadar iad fhein agus ise. Ghlaodh an sin Deirdire, 'A Naois! a Naois, mhic Uisne, an ann a' brath m' fhagail a tha thu?' 'De an glaodh a tha na m'chluais agus a bhual mo chridhe, nach 'eil soirbh dhomh a fhreagairt agus nach 'eil furasda dhomh a dhiultadh?' 'Cha'n 'eil ach glaodh nan geadh glas aig Conachar,' ors' a bhraithrean. 'Ach

darkness of night coming on. They did this. She called, 'Naoise, thou son of Uisne, is it intending to leave me thou art?' 'What is that cry mine ear heard that is not easy for me to answer, and that is not easy for me to refuse?' said Naoise. 'It is but the quacking of the lake-ducks of Conachar,' said his brothers. 'But let us hasten our feet and hurry our steps, and the long distance we have to do, and the darkness of night falling.' They did this, and they were stretching the distance between themselves and her. Then Deirdire called again, 'Naoise! Naoise! thou son of Uisne, is it intending to leave me thou art?' 'What cry is in my ear and that struck my heart, that is not easy for me to answer, nor easy for me to refuse.' 'There is but the cry of the grey geese of Conachar,' said his brothers. 'But let us walk well, for we have the walking to do

cumamaid ceum ann agus a choiseachd againn r'a dheanamh agus dubhradh na h-oidhche tighinn.' Rinn iad so, agus bha iad a' sineadh an astair eadar iad fhein agus ise. Ghlaodh a' sin Deirdire, an treasa turas, 'A Naois! a Naois! a Naois, mhic Uisne, an ann a' brath m' fhagail a tha thu?' 'Gu de an glaodh gointe cruaidh is binne chuala mo chluas agus is cruaidhe bhuaile mo chridhe dhe na h-uile glaodh a rainig mi riamh?' orsa Naois. 'Am bheil ann ach guileag nan eala-luin aig Conachar,' ors' a bhraithrean. 'Tha treasa glaodh na h-eigin an sud,' orsa Naois, 'agus boid laoich orm fhein ma 's urrainn domh dol seach a so gus am faic mi co uaith a thainig an glaodh'; agus thill Naois.

Chomhlaich Naois agus Deirdire ri cheile, agus thug Deirdire na trì tiura pog do Naois, agus pog an aon d'a bhraithre. Leis an naisneachd a bha air Deirdire bha i dol na caoire dearga

and the blackness of night coming on.' They did this, and they were stretching the distance between themselves and her. Then Deirdire called the third time, 'Naoise! Naoise! Naoise, thou son of Uisne, is it intending to leave me thou art?' 'What is the wounded, hard cry, the sweetest my ear ever heard, and the hardest that ever struck my heart, of all the cries that ever reached me?' said Naoise. 'It is but the wail of the lake-swans of Conachar,' said his brothers. 'There is the third cry of distress there,' said Naoise, 'and with the vow of a hero upon me I can go no further than this till I see whence comes the cry,' and Naoise went back.

Naoise and Deirdire met each other, and Deirdire gave the three kisses to Naoise, and a kiss each to his brothers. From the shame that was upon Deirdire, she was going into red blushes of

teine, agus a' caochladh rugha-gruaidhe cho luath ri crithionn nan allt. Bha le Naois nach fac e fhein anns a' choluinn shaoghalta riamh boinne-fala coltach ris a' bhoinne-fala bha so ; agus thug Naois gradh do Dheirdire nach d' thug e do ni, no do nial, no do neach riamh ach dhi fhein.

Chuir Naois Deirdire air fras-mhullach a ghuaille, agus dh'iarr e air a bhraithrean ceum a chumail ann ; agus chum a bhraithrean ceum ann.

Smaointich Naois nach robh math dha fuireach an Eirinn leis mar a chuir e Conachar, rìgh Ulla, mac bhrathar-athar fhein, na aghaidh a thaobh a' bhoirionnaich, ge nach robh i posd aige, agus tilllear e air ais a dh' Alba. Rainig e taobh Loch-Naois agus rinn e tigheadas ann. Mharbhadh e bradan a bhoinne bhrais a mach air an dorus, agus fiadh a' bhearraidh bhric a mach air an uinneig. Bha Naois agus Deirdire agus

fire, her ruddy cheeks were changing as fast as moves the aspen of the streams. Naoise thought to himself that he himself had never seen in bodily form a blood-drop like the blood-drop that was here; and Naoise gave love to Deirdire that he never gave to thing, nor to vision, nor to person, but to herself alone.

Naoise placed Deirdire on the very summit of his shoulders, and he requested his brothers to walk well now, and his brothers walked well.

Naoise thought that he must not remain in Eirin, as he had put Conachar, king of Ulster, his own father's brother's son, against him, on account of this damsel, though she was not married to him, and he returned back to Albain. He reached the side of Loch Naois, and he made a home there. He could kill the salmon of the rapid stream out at the door, and the deer of the many-coloured hill out at the window. Naoise

Ailleán agus Ardan a' tamh ann an tur, agus bha iad gu sona ri linn a bhi ann.

Thainig an so ceann an àm aig an robh aig Deirdire ri Conachar, rìgh Ulla, a phosadh. Gu de bha Conachar ach na bheachd fhein gu'n tugadh e mach Deirdire leis a' chlaidheamh, i bhi posd aig Naois no gun i bhith. Gu de an obair a bha aig Conachar ach a' cur a suas cuirm mhor mheadhrach. Chuir e fios a mach fad agus farsuing feadh Eirinn uile d' a dhaimhich tighinn thun na cuirme. Bha e smaointinn aige fhein la blair agus baiteil a thoirt do Naoise, mac Uisne, agus a' bhean a thoirt uaith biodh nar a biodh i posd aige. Bha Conachar a' smaointinn aige fhein nach tigeadh Naois ged a chuireadh e fios air; agus is e an *sgém* a chinnich na cheann brath a chur air brathair athar, Fearachar Mac Ro, agus a chur air theachdaireachd a dh' ionn-

and Deirdire, Aillean and Ardan, were dwelling in a tower, and they were happy during the time they were there.

Then came the end of the time when Deirdire was to marry Conachar, the king of Ulster. What was Conachar in his own mind but meditating to win out Deirdire by the sword, be she married to Naoise or be she not. What work was Conachar engaged upon but preparing a great, merry banquet. He sent a message out far and wide through all Eirin to his kinsmen to come to the feast. He was thinking to himself to give a day of combat and of battle to Naoise, the son of Uisne, and to take the woman from him be she or be she not married to him. Conachar thought to himself that Naoise would not come should he send a message to him, and it was the scheme that grew in his head to send word to his father's brother, Fearachar, the son of Ro, and

saidh Naois. Rinn e so, agus thuirte Conachar ri Fearachar, ‘ Abair ri Naois, mac Uisne, gu bheil mise cur suas cuirm mhoir, mheadhraich do m’ chairdean agus do m’ dhaimhich fad fin-foinneach-fiaraidh na h-Eirinn uile agus nach bi fois la, no tamh oidhche agam, ma bhios esan agus Ailleán agus Ardan as iunais na cuirme.

Falbhair Fearachar Mac Ro agus a dha mhac air an turus agus rainigear an tur an robh Naois a’ tamh ri taobh Loch-Eite. Chuir Clann Uisne failte chairdeil, chaoimhneil air Fearachar Mac Ro agus air a dha mhac, agus dh’ fheoraich iad diu sgeula na h-Eirinn. ‘ An sgeul is fearr a th’ agam duibh,’ ors’ an curaidh cruaidh, ‘ gu bheil Conachar, rìgh Ulla, a cur suas cuirm mhoir sholasaich d’ a chairdean agus d’ a dhaimhich fad fin-foinneach-fiaraidh Eirinn uile agus gu’n d’ thug e boid air an talamh a ta fodha, agus air an ard

to send him on an embassy to Naoise. He did this, and Conachar said to Fearachar, ' Say thou to Naoise, the son of Uisne, that I am preparing a great, joyous feast for my friends and kinsmen throughout the whole length of all Eirin, and that I shall have no day peace nor night rest and he and Ailleán and Ardan absent from the feast.

Fearachar, the son of Ro, and his two sons went on their mission, and reached the tower in which Naoise dwelt by the side of Loch Etive. The sons of Uisne put friendly, kindly welcome on Fearachar, the son of Ro, and on his two sons, and they asked of them the news of Eirin. ' The best tale I myself have for you,' said the hardy hero, ' is that Conachar, the king of Ulster, is preparing a great, joyous banquet for his friends and kinsmen throughout the whole length of all Eirin, and that he has vowed a vow by the earth that is

adhar a ta os a chionn, agus air a' ghrein a tha dol seachad siar nach biodh fois la no tamh oidhche aige mur tigeadh Clann Uisne, clann bhrathar-athar fhein air an ais do thir an dachaidh agus do thalamh an duthchais, agus a dh' ionnsaidh na cuirme; agus chuir e sinne air theachd-aireachd d' ur n-iarraidh.' 'Theid sinn leat,' orsa Naois. 'Theid,' ors' a bhraith-rean. 'Theid,' orsa Fearachar Mac Ro, 'agus bidh mo thriuir mac leibh.' 'Bidh,' ors' am Boinne Borb. 'Bidh,' ors' an Cuilinn Cruaidh. 'Is fearr an tighearnas fhein an Albainn na an tigheadas an Eirinn,' orsa Deirdire. 'Is anns' an duthchas seach an dualchas,' ors' am Fearachar Mac Ro. 'Is mi-aoibhinn do neach air feabhas a chuibh-rinn agus a chrannchuir mur faic e dhuthaich fhein agus a dhachaidh fhein an àm eirigh anns a' mhaduinn agus an àm laighe anmoch.' 'Is mi-aoibhinn,' orsa Naois; 'is annsa leam fhein an duthchas

beneath him, by the high sky that is above him and by the westward-passing sun, that he would not have day peace nor night rest if the Children of Uisne, his own father's brother's sons, did not return to the land of their home and the country of their inheritance and to the banquet, and he has sent us on embassage to ask you.' 'We will go with you,' said Naoise. 'We will go,' said his brothers. 'You will go,' said Fearachar, the son of Ro, 'and my three sons will be with you.' 'We will be,' said Boinne Borb. 'We will be,' said Cuilionn Cruaidh. 'Better is one's own lording in Albain than householding in Eirin,' said Deirdire. 'Dearer is the hereditary home than the hereditary country,' said Fearachar, the son of Ro. 'Unhappy it is for a man, however good his means and his lot, if he does not see his own country and his own home at the time of rising in the

seach an dualchas, ge mor a gheibhinn
 an so seach an sin.' 'Is neochoireach
 duibh gun dol leam,' ors' am Fearachar.
 'Is neochoireach,' orsa Naois, 'agus
 theid sinn leat.'

Cha bu deoin le Deirdire falbh le
 Fearachar Mac Ro agus chuir i h-uile
 impidh air Naois gun e dh' fhalbh leis.
 Sheinn i agus thuirt i :—

I

'Tha donnal nan con am chluais,
 Agus bruadal na h-oidhch am shuil;
 Chi mi Fearachar an comhlan duais',
 Chi mi Conachar gun truas na mhur,
 Chi mi Conachar gun truas na mhur.

II

'Chi mi Naois gun ursna-chatha,
 Chi mi Ailde gun am beum-sgeithe,
 Chi mi Ardan gun sgiath, gun chlaidhe,
 'S tulach Atha gun rath, gun eibhneas,
 'S tulach Atha gun, rath, gun eibhneas.

morning and at the time of lying at night.' 'It is unhappy,' said Naoise; 'dearer to myself is the land hereditary than the kin hereditary; though much more we would get here than there.' 'It is harmless for you to go with me,' said Fearachar. 'It is harmless,' said Naoise; 'and we will go with you.'

Deirdire was not willing to go with Fearachar, the son of Ro, and she put every supplication on Naoise not to go with him. She sang and said:—

I

'The howling of the dogs is in mine ear,
 The vision of the night is in mine eye;
 I see Fearachar in league with a bribe,
 I see Conachar without compassion in his
 tower,
 I see Conachar without compassion in his
 tower.

II

'I see Naoise without supports of battle,
 I see Ailleán without sounding shield,
 I see Ardan without his targe, without his sword;
 I see the house of Atha without luck, without
 joy,
 I see the house of Atha without luck, without
 joy.

III

‘Chi mi Conachar le iota fala,
 Chi mi Fearachar le faileas-bhreige,
 Chi mi ’n triuir bhraithre ’s an cul ri talamh,
 ’S chi mi Deirdire galach, deurach,
 ’S chi mi Deirdire galach, deurach.’

‘Cha bu chaomh leam fhein agus cha do gheill mi riamh do bhural chon no do bhruadal bhan, a Naois, agus bho ’n a chuir Conachar, righ Ulla, teachdair-eachd cuirm agus cairdeis thugaibh is niarach neochoireach duibh mur teid sibh ann, a Naois,’ orsa Fearachar Mac Ro. ‘Is neochoireach,’ orsa Naois, ‘agus theid sinn leat.’ ‘Chunnacas aislig eile, Naois, agus minich domh i,’ orsa Deirdire :—

I

‘Chunnas na tri calmana geala,
 Leis na tri balgama meala na ’m beuil ;
 ’S, O ! a Naois mhic Uisne,
 Sorchair thusa dhomh dubhar mo sgeuil.’

Naois

‘Am bheil ann ach bruillean pràmh,
 A’s lionn-dubh mna, a Dheirdire.’

III

‘I see Conachar with a thirst for blood,
 I see Fearachar with the reflection of guile,
 I see the three brothers with their backs to the
 earth,
 And I see Deirdire sorrowful, tearful,
 And I see Deirdire sorrowful, tearful.’

‘I myself never liked and never yielded to the howlings of dogs nor to the dreams of women, Naoise, and as Conachar, the king of Ulster, has sent invitation of feast and of friendship to you, it will be unfriendly deed if you do not come, Naoise,’ said Fearachar, the son of Ro. ‘It will,’ said Naoise, ‘and we will go with you.’ I saw another vision, Naoise, and explain it to me,’ said Deirdire:—

I

‘I saw the three white doves
 With their three sips of honey in their
 mouths;
 And, oh! Naoise, thou son of Uisne,
 Enlighten thou to me the darkuess of my
 tale.’

Naoise

‘It is but the disturbance of sleep,
 And woman’s melancholy, O Deirdire!’

II

Deirdire

‘Chunnas na tri seabhaga duaire,
 Leis na tri braona fala, fuar-fhuil nan
 treun ;
 ‘S, O ! a Naois mhic Uisne,
 Sorchair thusa dhomh dubhar mo sgeuil.’

Naois

‘Am bheil ann ach bruillean pràmh,
 A’s lionn-dubh mna, a Dheirdire.’

III

Deirdire

‘Chunnas na tri fitheacha dubha,
 Leis na tri duilleaga dubhach crann-iubhar
 an eig,
 ‘S, O ! a Naois mhic Uisne,
 Sorchair thusa nis turus mo sgeuil.’

Naois

‘Am bheil ann ach bruillean pràmh,
 A’s lionn-dubh mna, a Dheirdire.’

‘An la agus gu’n do chuir Conachar an
 teachdaireachd thugainn tighinn thun
 na cuirme is niarach duinn mur teid
 sinn ann, a Dheirdire.’ ‘Theid sibh

II

Deirdire

‘I saw the three ungenerous hawks
With the three drops of blood, cold blood
of heroes ;
And, oh ! Naoise, thou son of Uisne,
Enlighten thou to me the darkness of my
tale.’

Naoise

‘It is only the disturbance of sleep,
And woman’s melancholy, O Deirdire !’

III

Deirdire

‘I saw the three black ravens
With the three sad leaves of the yew tree
of death ;
And, oh ! Naoise, thou son of Uisne,
Enlighten thou now the message of my tale.’

Naoise

‘It is only the disturbance of sleep,
And woman’s melancholy, O Deirdire !’

‘As Conachar, the king of Ulster,
has sent us the message to come to the
banquet, it will be unfriendly of us if
we do not go, Deirdire.’

ann,' orsa Fearachar Mac Ro; 'agus ma nochdas Conachar cairdeas ruibh nochdaidh sibh cairdeas ris, agus ma dh' fhiachas e gairge ruibh fiachas sibh gairge ris, agus bidh mi fhein agus mo thriuir mac leibh.' 'Bidh,' ors' am Boinne Borb. 'Bidh,' ors' an Cuillionn Cruaidh. 'Tha triuir mhac agamsa agus iad na 'n triuir ghaisgeach, agus beud no baoghal a dh' eireas duibh, bidh iad leibh agus bidh mi fhein comhla riu.'— Agus thug Fearachar Mac Ro boid agus briathar am fianuis arm, beud no baoghal a thigeadh an carabh Chlann Uisne nach fagadh esan agus a thriuir mhac ceann air column bheo an Eirinn, a dh' aindeoin claidheamh no clogad, sleagh no sgiath, lann no luireach mhailleach d' am feabhas.

Cha bu deòin le Deirdire falbh as Alba, ach dh' fhalbh i le Naois. Bha

‘You will go,’ said Fearachar, the son of Ro; ‘and if Conachar shows friendship to you, you will show friendship to him; and if he tries fierceness to you, you will try fierceness to him, and I myself and my three sons will be with you.’ ‘We will,’ said Boinne Borb. ‘We will,’ said Cuilionn Cruaidh. ‘I have three sons and they are three champions, and harm or danger that shall rise to you they will be with you, and I myself will be along with them.’ And Fearachar, the son of Ro, gave his vow and his word in the presence of his arms, that if any harm or danger should come near the Children of Uisne he and his three sons would leave no head on living body in Eirin, despite sword and helmet, spear and shield, blade and shirt of mail at their best.

Deirdire was not willing to leave Albain, but she went with Naoise.

Deirdire fras-shileadh nan deur, agus sheinn i :—

‘ Is ionmhuinn an tir, an tir ud thall,
 Albainn choillteach lingeantach !
 Is goirt le m’ chridhe bhi ga d’ fhagail,
 Ach tha mi falbh le Naois.’

Cha do stad Fearachar Mac Ro gus an d’ fhuair e Clann Uisne air falbh leis, a dh’ aindeoin amharus Dheirdire.

‘ Cuireadar an curach air sàl,
 Càireadar rithise breid,
 A’s ruigeadar an dara-mhaireach,
 Traigh bhan na h-Eire.’

IV

Co luath agus a chaidh Clann Uisne air tir an Eirinn chuir am Fearachar Mac Ro fios thun Chonachair, rìgh Ulla, gu robh na daoine air an robh e an toir a nis air tighinn, agus feuch a nis an nochdadh e còiread riutha.

Deirdire was heavy-showering the tears
and she sang :—

‘ Beloved is the land, that yonder land,
Albain full of woods and full of lakes !
Sore to my heart to be leaving thee,
But I go away with Naoise.’

Fearachar, the son of Ro, did not stop
till he got the sons of Uisne away with
him, despite the suspicions of Deirdire.

‘ They placed their curach on the brine,
They hoisted to her the sails,
And they reached on the second morrow
The fair strand of Eirin.’

IV

As soon as the Children of Uisne
went on land in Eirin, Fearachar, the
son of Ro, sent information to Con-
achar, the king of Ulster, that the
men, of whom he was in pursuit, were
now come, and to see that he would
now act justly towards them.

‘Ma ta,’ orsa Conachar, ‘cha robh dùil-a’m gu’n tigeadh Clann Uisne ged a chuir mi fios thuca, agus cha’n ’eil mi buileach deas air an cionn. Ach tha tigh shios ud anns an robh mi cumail amhusg, agus rachadh iad a sios ann an diugh, agus bidh mo thigh-sa deas air an cinn am maireach.’ Dh’innis am Fearachar Mac Ro an teachdaireachd do Chlann Uisne. ‘An ta,’ orsa Naois, ‘o’n is e sin àite dh’ orduich an Rìgh dhuinn theid sinn ann, ach is cinnteach mi nach ann air son barrachd graidh a tha Conachar ga ’r caradh am measg nan amhusg.’

Chaidh iad a sios air an leagadh sin agus rainig iad astail nan amhusg. Bha ann a’ sin coma cearta comhla coig fichead diag amhusg agus coig amhusg diag. Cha robh amhusg riamh diubh sin nach do leig an glag mor gaire ri linn nan daoine thighinn dachaidh na

‘Well,’ said Conachar, ‘I did not expect that the Children of Uisne would come, though I sent a message to them, and I am not quite prepared for them. But there is a house down yonder where I was keeping mercenaries, and let them go down there to-day, and my house will be ready before them to-morrow.’ Fearachar, the son of Ro, told the message to the Children of Uisne. ‘Well,’ said Naoise, ‘since that is the place which the king has ordered for us, we will go there, but sure am I it is not for too much love of us that Conachar is placing us among the mercenaries.’

They went down on that occasion, and they reached the quarters of the mercenaries. There were there huddled together fifteen twenties of mercenaries, and of mercenaries fifteen. There was not a man among them all who did not give the loud laugh on seeing

'm measg. Agus leig Naois an da ghlag mor gaire bu mho na cach gu leir.

An uair a fhuair na h-amhuisg a stigh iad eireadar iad fear mu seach agus cuirear droll am fear air a' chomhla. Eirear Naois an uair a chunnaic e so agus cuirear e fhein da dhroll air a' chomhla. 'Co e an t-aon olach macanta mor a thainig dachaidh oirnn an so, a rinn an da ghlag mor gaire agus a chuir an da dhroll air a' chomhla?' orsa ceannard nan amhusg. 'Innsidh mise sin dusa ma dh' innseas tusa so dhomhsa,' orsa Naois: 'Gu de an t-aon aobhar mu 'n do rinn a h-uile fear agaibh fhein glag gaire, agus mu 'n do chuir sibh droll air a' chomhla?' 'Innsidh mi sin duit, olaich; cha'n fhaca mi fir bhur dealbh no bhur dreach a' tighinn dachaidh dha 'n fhardaich so riamh, agus cha'n fhaca

these men coming home among them. And Naoise laughed two loud laughs louder than the loud laugh of all the others together.

When the mercenaries got them within they rose one by one, and each placed a bar on the door. Naoise arose when he saw this, and he himself placed two bars on the door. 'Who is he, the great stalwart man who has come home among us here, who has made the two loud laughs, and who has placed the two bars on the door?' said the commander of the mercenaries. 'I will tell thee that if thou wilt tell me this,' said Naoise. 'What was the cause that made all of you laugh, and that made each of you to put a bar on the door?' 'I will tell thee that, hero. I have never seen men of your form, and of your colour, coming home to this dwelling, and I have never seen men, a mouthful of whose flesh and a drop of

mi daoine bu docha leam greim d' am feoil agus stolum d' am fuil na ur feoil agus ur fuil fhein,' orsa ceannard nan amhusg. 'Ach innis fhein a nis, olaich, de an t-aon aobhar mu 'n do rinn thu da ghlag mor gaire, agus mu 'n do chairich thu da dhroll air a' chomhla,' orsa ceannard nan amhusg. 'An ta innsidh mi sin duit; cha'n fhaca mi riamh air talamh nam beo, no 'n comhlan nam marbh, no do shluagh coitcheann an t-saoghail a b' fherr leam na sibh fein an so, amhuisg, a chur a' chinn dibh cruinn cearta comhla.' Agus dh' eirich Naois na sheasamh mor agus rug e air an amhusg bu mho ceann agus bu chaoile casan, agus shlacanaich e orra shios agus shuas, thall agus a bhos, agus m' an d' thainig moran uine cha d' fhag e amhusg beo. Ghlan iad an sin an arach daibh fhein agus chuir iad a suas an gealbhan greadhnach

whose blood I would like so well as your own flesh and your own blood,' said the commander of the mercenaries. 'But tell thou now, hero, why laughed thou the two loud laughs, and why placed thou the two bars on the door?' said the head man of the mercenaries. 'Well, I will tell thee that,' said Naoise. 'I have not seen in the land of the living, nor in the company of the dead, nor among the general people of the world, those whom I would prefer to yourselves here, mercenary, to knock off your heads completely, directly, and together.' And Naoise rose in his great standing, and he seized the mercenary of biggest head and of slenderest shank, and he beat upon them up and down, on this side and on that, and before long he left not a mercenary alive. Then they cleaned the house for themselves, and raised the bright and blazing fire, and

griosaich, agus bha iad doigheil gu leoir gu maduinn.

Ach bha am fear a bha shuas a' gabhail fadachd nach robh e faighinn fios a nios cia-mar bha dol daibh shios an tigh nan amhusg. 'Falbh thusa sios, a mhuime,' orsa Conachar, 'agus faic am bheil a dreach agus a tuar fhein air Deirdire agus feuch am bheil i mar bha i an uair a dh' fhag i mise. Ma tha, bheir mise mach Deirdire le faobhar lann agus rinn claidhimh a dh' aindeoin na Feinne d' am feobhas; ach mur a bheil, biodh i aig Naois mac Uisne dha fhein.' Chaidh a' mhuime sios gu arach nan amhusg far an robh Clann Uisne agus Deirdire tamh. Cha robh doigh no innleachd aice air sealltuinn air Deirdire ach troimh tholl beag a' bhigire a bha air comhla an doruis. Sheall am boirionnach a stigh troimh tholl a' bhigire agus thill i dachaidh far an robh Conachar. 'Seadh, a mhuime,

they were comfortable enough till morning.

But the man who was up was becoming impatient that he was not getting word up how they were faring down in the house of the mercenaries. 'Go thou down, foster-mother,' said he, 'and see if her own bloom and beauty are still upon Deirdire, and if she is what she was when she went away from me. If so, I will win Deirdire at the edge of the lance and by the point of the sword, despite the Feinne at their best; but if not, be she Naoise's own.' The foster-mother went down to the quarters of the mercenaries, where the Clann Uisne and Deirdire dwelt. She had no way or device of looking at Deirdire, but through the small chicken-hole on the door. The woman gazed through the chicken-hole, and she returned home to Conachar. 'Well, foster-mother, and how now does she

cia-mar tha i coimhead? no bheil a dreach no a tuar fhein air Deirdire?' orsa Conachar. 'Tha bhilath agus a' bhuil gur ann air iomairt agus air anradh a bha gradh mo chridhe agus sugh mo cheile bho 'n a dh' fhalbh i; cha mhor a tha d' a dealbh no d' a dreach fhein air Deirdire an nochd,' ors' a' mhuime. 'Cha 'n fhuilear leam dearbhadh eile air a sin fhathast m' an teid mi ga leigeil seachad. Falbh thusa, a Ghealbhan Ghreadhnaich, a mhic rìgh Lochlainn, a sios, agus thoir brath a nios thugams' am bheil a dreach agus a dealbh fhein air Deirdire. Ma tha bheir mise mach i le faobhar lainn agus rinn claidhimh; agus mur bheil biodh i aig Naois mac Uisne dha fhein,' orsa Conachar.

Chaidh an Gealbhan Greadhnach, greannar, mac Rìgh Lochlainn, a sios gu arach nan amhusg far an robh Clann Uisne agus Deirdire tamh.

look ? or are her own bloom and beauty still upon Deirdire ?' 'It is clear and evident that it is through suffering and sorrow that the love of my heart and the treasure of my soul has been since she went away ; there is not much of her own bloom or beauty upon Deirdire this night.' 'I will need another proof than that yet ere I let her past. Go thou, Gealbhan Greadhnach, thou son of the king of Scandinavia, down, and bring me up information are her own bloom and beauty on Deirdire. If they are, I will win her at the edge of the blade and the point of the sword ; and if not, she may be with Naoise, son of Uisne, for himself,' said Conachar.

The gay Gealbhan Greadhnach, the son of the king of Scandinavia, went down to the quarters of the mercenaries where the Clann Uisne and Deirdire

Sheall e stigh air toll a' bhigire a bha air a' chomhla. Am boirionnach sin ris an robh a ghnothach b' abhaist di dol na caoire dearga teine ri linn do neach sealltuinn oirre. Thug Naois suil air Deirdire agus dh' aithnich e gu'n robh cuideigin a' coimhead oirre cul na comhla. Thug e taruinn air aon de na disne geala bha air a' bhord mu choinneamh, agus sadar sud troimh tholl a' bhigire agus cuirear an t-suil as a' Ghealbhan Ghreadhnach, ghreannar, agus a mach air chul a chinn. Thill an Gealbhan a suas dachaidh gu pailios Rìgh Conachair. 'Bha thu greadhnach, greannar, a' falbh, ach chi mi mi-ghreadhnach mi-ghreannar a' tilleadh thu. Gu de so dh'eirich duit, a Ghealbhan? Ach am fac thus ise, no bheil a dreach agus a tuar fhein air Deirdire?' orsa Conachar. 'An ta chunnaic mise Deirdire, agus chunnaic mi gu dearbh i cuideachd, agus ri linn

abode. He looked in through the chicken-hole which was on the door. That woman with whom his business was, was wont to go into glowing blushes of red fire when a person looked on her. Naoise glanced at Deirdire, and he observed that some one was looking on her from behind the door. He seized one of the white dice on the board before him, and he threw it through the chicken-hole and drove the eye out of the gay Gealbhan Greadhnach and out at the back of his head. The Gealbhan went back home to the palace of King Conachar. 'Thou wert cheerful and joyful going, but I see thee cheerless and joyless returning. What is this has happened thee, Gealbhan? But hast thou seen her, or are her own bloom and beauty on Deirdire?' said Conachar. 'Well, I have seen Deirdire, and I have seen her indeed too, and while I was looking

domh bhith coimhead oirre troimh tholl a' bhigire a bha air a' chomhla, chuir Naois, mac Uisne, an t-suil asam leis an disne bha na laimh. Ach gu dearbh agus gu deimhin ge do chuir e an t-suil fhein asam b' e mo mhiann fuireach fathast a' coimhead oirre leis an t-suil eile mur bhith chabhag a chuir sibh orm,' ars' an Gealbhan. 'Is fìor sin,' orsa Conachar. 'Rachadh tri cheud treun ghaisgeach a sios gu aros nan amhusg agus thugadh iad a nios thugamsa Deirdire agus marbhadh iad cach.'

'Tha an tòrachd a' tighinn,' orsa Deirdire. 'Theid mi fhein a mach agus caisgidh mi an tòrachd,' orsa Naois. 'Cha tu theid a mach ach mise,' ors' am Boinne Borb, mac Fhearachair 'ic Ro; 'is ann rium a dh' earb m'athair gun bheud, gun bhaoghal a leigeadh oirbh ri linn dha fhein a dhol dachaidh.' Agus chaidh am Boinne Borb a mach

at her through the chicken-hole that was on the door, Naoise, the son of Uisne, put the eye out of me with the dice which was in his hand. But of a truth and verity, though he drove the eye itself out of me, I would fain have continued to gaze at her with the other eye had it not been for the hurry you put on me.' 'That is true,' said Conachar. 'Let three hundred mighty heroes of valour go down to the quarters of the mercenaries, and let them bring me up Deirdire, and kill the others.'

'The pursuit is coming,' said Deirdire. 'I myself will go out and check the pursuit,' said Naoise. 'It is not thou but I who will go out,' said Boinne Borb, the son of Fearachar, the son of Ro. 'It was to me that my father entrusted not to let injury or danger on you when he himself went home.' And the Boinne Borb went out, and

agus mharbh e trian dhe na gaisgich.' Thainig an rìgh a mach agus dh' eubh e shuas, 'Co sud shìos air a' bhlar, a' deanamh àr air mo chuid daoine?' 'Tha mise, am Boinne Borb, ciad mhac Fhearachair 'ic Ro.' 'Thug mi drochaid (trìcha cet) shaor do d' sheanair, drochaid (trìcha cet) shaor do d' athair, agus bheir mi drochaid (trìcha cet) shaor duit fhein cuideachd, agus thig a nall air an laimh so dhìom an nochd,' ors' an Conachar. 'An ta, gabhaidh mi sin,' agus cuirear am Boinne Borb an car tuathal deth agus rachar a null air laimh an rìgh. 'Chaidh am fear ud a null air laimh an rìgh,' orsa Deirdire. 'Chaidh, ach rinn e feum math mu 'n d' fhalbh e,' orsa Naois.

Dh' orduich an sin an Conachar trì cheud lan ghaisgeach a sìos gu aros nan amhusg, agus Deirdire thoirt a nìos agus cach a mharbhadh. 'Tha an tòrachd a' tighinn,' orsa Deirdire.

he killed a third of the warriors. The king came out, and he called from above, 'Who is that down on the plain slaying my people?' 'I am the Boinne Borb, the first son of Fearachar, the son of Ro.' 'I gave a free cantred (of land) to thy grandfather, a free cantred to thy father, and I will give a free cantred to thyself too, and come over on this hand of me to-night,' said the Conachar. 'Well, I will take that from you,' and the Boinne Borb turned wither-shins, and went over to the hand of the king. 'That man is gone over to the hand of the king,' said Deirdire. 'He has gone, but he performed good work before he went,' said Naoise.

Then Conachar ordered three hundred full warriors down to the quarters of the mercenaries to bring up Deirdire, and to kill the others. 'The pursuit is coming,' said Deirdire. 'It is,'

‘Tha,’ orsa Naois, ‘ach theid mi fhein a mach agus caisgidh mi an tòrachd.’ ‘Cha tu theid a mach ach mise,’ ors’ an Cuilinn Cruaidh, mac Fhearachair ‘ic Ro; ‘is ann rium a dh’earb m’athair gun bheud, gun bhaoghal a leigeadh oirbh an uair a dh’ fhalbh e fhein dachaidh.’ Agus chaidh an Cuilinn Cruaidh a mach agus mharbh e da thrìan na cuideachd. Thainig an Conachar a mach agus dh’ eubh e shuas, ‘Co sud shios air a’ bhlar a’ deanamh àr air mo chuid daoine?’ ‘Tha mise an Cuilinn Cruaidh, dara mac Fhearachair ‘ic Ro.’ ‘Thug mi drochaid (trìcha cet) shaor dha d’ sheanair, drochaid (trìcha cet) shaor dha d’ athair, drochaid (trìcha cet) shaor dha d’ bhra-thair, agus bheir mi drochaid (trìcha cet) shaor dhuit fhein cuideachd agus thig a nall air an laimh so dhìom a nochd,’ ors’ an Conachar. ‘An ta gabhaidh mi sin,’ ors’ an Cuilinn Cruaidh, agus

said Naoise, 'but I myself will go out and check the pursuit.' 'It is not thou but I who will go out,' said the Cuilinn Cruaidh, the son of Fearachar, the son of Ro, 'it was to me that my father entrusted to allow no mishap or danger to you when he himself went home.' And the Cuilinn Cruaidh went out and he killed two-thirds of the company. Conachar came out and he called from above, 'Who is that down on the plain slaying my people?' 'I am the Cuilinn Cruaidh, the second son of Fearachar, the son of Ro.' 'I gave a free cantred to thy grandfather, a free cantred to thy father, a free cantred to thy brother, and I will give a free cantred to thyself too, and come over on this hand of me to-night,' said Conachar. 'Well, I will take that,' said the Cuilinn Cruaidh; and he went over to the hand of the king. 'That man

ghabh e null air laimh an rìgh. ‘Chaidh am fear ud a null air taobh an rìgh,’ orsa Deirdire. ‘Chaidh,’ orsa Naois, ‘ach rinn e gnìomh gaisgich m’ an d’ fhalbh e.’

Dh’ orduich Conachar an sin trì cheud luth ghaisgeach a sìos gu aros nan amhusg, agus Deirdire thoirt a nìos agus cach a mharbhadh. ‘Tha an t-òrachd a’ tighinn,’ orsa Deirdire. ‘Tha ach theid mi fhein a mach agus caisgidh mi an t-òrachd,’ orsa Naois. ‘Cha tu theid a mach ach mise,’ ors’ am Fiallan Fionn; ‘is ann rium a dh’ earb m’ athair gun bheud, gun bhaoghal a leigeil oirbh an uair a dh’ fhalbh e fhein dachaidh.’ Agus chaidh an t-og ghallan ur-allail, ur-fhearail, ur-sgiamhach, le chiabha leadarra, donn, a mach crioslaichte na arm-chatha chruaidh chomhraig agus comhdaichte na chulaidh chomhraig chatha chruaidh a bha gu liobha, liobh-arra, loinnreach, lannrach, leusach, air

has gone over to the hand of the king,' said Deirdire. 'He has gone,' said Naoise, 'but he performed gallant deeds before he went.'

Conachar then ordered three hundred strong heroes down to the quarters of the mercenaries to bring up Deirdire and to kill the others. 'The pursuit is coming,' said Deirdire. 'Yes, but I myself will go out and check the pursuit,' said Naoise. 'It is not thou who will go out but I,' said the Fillan Fionn, 'it was to me that my father entrusted to allow no injury or danger to you when he himself went home.' And the young hero, fresh-noble, fresh-manly, fresh-glorious, with his lovely brown locks, went out girded in his war weapons of hard battle, and clothed in his clothing of hard combat and battle, that was polished, gleaming, glitter-

am bu lionmhor dealbh beist, ian agus biasd shnagach, leigheann (?), leoghann, tiger, gnìomh-ineach, iolaire dhonn agus seabhag shiubhlach agus nathair bheuraich, agus chasgraich an t-og ghaisgeach treas trian na cuideachd. Thainig Conachar a mach an graide agus dh' eubh e le feirg, 'Co sud shios air urlar blair a deanamh àr air mo chuid daoine?' 'Tha mise, am Fiallan Fionn, treasa mac Fhearachair 'ic Ro.' 'An ta, ors' an rìgh, 'thug mi drochaid (tricha cet) shaor do d' sheanair, agus drochaid (tricha cet) shaor dha d' athair, agus drochaid (tricha cet) shaor am fear dha do dha bhrathair, agus bheir mi drochaid (tricha cet) shaor dhuit fhein cuideachd agus thig a null air an laimh so dhìom an nochd.' 'An ta, Chonachair, cha ghabh mi an tairgse sin uait no taing air a shon. Is mutha gu mor is fhearr leam fhein dol dachaidh agus innseadh an lathaireachd m'athar an treuntas a

ing, brilliant, flashing, on which were the many figures of beasts, birds, and creeping things—*leigheann*(?) lion, tiger and griffin, brown eagle and swift hawk and deadly serpent—and the young gallant checked the third third (three-thirds?) of the band. Conachar came out in haste, and asked in wrath, ‘Who is there down on the floor of the plain making slaughter on my people?’ ‘I am, the Fillan Fionn, the third son of Fearachar, the son of Ro.’ ‘Well,’ said the king, ‘I gave a free cantred to thy grandfather, a free cantred to thy father, and free cantreds to both thy brothers, and I will give thee a free cantred too, and come over on this hand of me to-night.’ ‘Well, Conachar, I will not accept that offer from thee, nor thank thee for it. Much more do I prefer to go home, and to tell in the presence of my father the heroism I have done, than any one thing which I could

rinn mi, seach aon dad a gheibhinn uaitse ga chinn anns an doigh sin. Agus tha Naois mac Uisne, agus Aillean agus Ardan cho cairdeach duit fhein agus a tha iad domhsa, ged tha thu co titheach air am fuil a dhortadh, agus dhoirteadh tu m' fhuil-sa cuideachd, a Chonachair.' Agus thill an t-og allail, fearail, sgiamhach, le chiabha leadarra, donn, a steach agus tuis dhealtraidh m'an ghnuis aluinn bu ghile 's a bu deirge snuadh. 'Tha mise a nis,' ors' esan, 'a' dol dachaidh a dh'innseadh do m'athair gu bheil sibhse a nis sabhailt o lamhan an righ.'

Agus dh' fhalbh am fiuran ur, direach, deasarra, donn agus ciatach, dachaidh a dh'innseadh d' a athair gu'n robh Clann Uisne sabhailte. Bha so ann an dealachadh nan trath agus ann an dail na camhanaich, agus thuirte Naois gu'm bu choir daibh falbh 'us astail ud fhagail agus tilleadh a dh' Alba.

receive from thee, especially in that manner. And Naoise, the son of Uisne, and Ailleán and Ardan are as near of kin to thee as they are to me, though thou art so keen to spill their blood, and thou wouldst spill my blood too, Conachar.' And the proud, manly, handsome youth, with his beautiful brown locks, returned to the house, the dewy incense around the noble countenance of whitest and reddest of hues. 'I am now,' said he, 'going home to tell to my father that you are now safe from the hands of the king.'

And the young, straight, handsome hero, brown and splendid, went away home to tell his father that the Children of Uisne were safe. This was about the parting of night from day, at the delay of the morning dawn, and Naoise said that they should go away, and leave this house and return to Albain.

V

Dh' fhalbh Naois agus Deirdire, Ailleán agus Ardan, chum tilleadh do dh' Albainn. Chaidh brath a suas thun an rìgh gu'n robh a' bhuidheann air an robh e an toir air falbh. Chuir an rìgh an sin fios air Duanan Gacha Draogh, druidhiche bha aige fhein, agus thuirte ris mar so :— 'Is mor am beairteas a chosd mise riutsa, a Dhuanain Gacha Draogh, a' toirt sgoil agus foghlum agus diomhaireachd druidhiche duit ged a tha iad sud air falbh uamsa an diugh gun diù, gun dion, gun suim aca domh, gun chothrom agam air cur riu, gun chomas air an tilleadh.' 'Ma ta, tillidh mise iad,' ors' an druidhiche, 'gus an till a' chuideachd a chuir thu air an toir.' Agus chuir an druidhiche coille rompa troimh nach b' urrainn do dhuine falbh. Ach ghabh Clann Uisne troimh 'n choill gun tilleadh, gun

V

Naoise and Deirdire, Aillean and Ardan, left to return to Albain. Word went up to the king that the company, of whom he was in search, had gone away. Then the king sent word to Duanan Gacha Draogh, a druid of his own, and he spoke to him thus: 'Great is the wealth that I have spent upon thee, Duanan Gacha Draogh, giving thee schooling and learning and the secrets of druidism, though those are gone away from me to-day without choice, without heed, without respect for me, without my ability to check them, without power to turn them.' 'Well, I will turn them,' said the druid, 'till those whom you sent in pursuit return.' And the druid placed a wood before them, through which no one could go. But the Children of Uisne went through the wood without turn-



tearbadh, agus bha Deirdire air laimh aig Naoise. ‘De ga math sud, cha dean e foghnadh fathast,’ orsa Conachar; ‘iad a falbh gun lubadh air an cas, gun chasadh air an ceum, gun diù aca diomsa, gun mheas ac’ orm, agus gun chomas agams’ air cur riu agus mi gun chothrom an tilleadh an nochd.’

‘Fiachaidh mise doigh eile daibh,’ ors’ an druidh; agus chuir e fairge ghlas rompa air a’ mhachaire ghuirm. Ruisg an triuir òlach iad fhein agus cheangail iad an cuid aodaich air chul an cinn agus chuir Naois Deirdire na suidhe air bhac a dha shlinnein.

‘Shìn iad an taobh ri struth,
 ’S bu cho-ionann leo muir ’us tìr,
 An fhairge mholach ghlas,
 Ris a’ mhachaire ghorm mhin.’

‘Ge math sud, a Dhuanain, cha toir e tilleadh air na daoine,’ orsa Conachar; ‘gun diù aca diom, gun urram aca

ing, without hindrance, and Naoise had Deirdire by the hand. 'However good that is it will not yet suffice,' said Conachar, 'they going without the bending of foot, without the turning of step, without heed for me, without respect for me, and I without ability to put against them, or power to turn them back this night.'

'I will try another way with them,' said the druid, and he placed a grey sea before them on the green plain. The three brave heroes bared themselves and tied their share of clothing behind their heads, and Naoise placed Deirdire on the bend of his two shoulders.

'They stretched their sides to the stream,
Indifferent to them was sea or land ;
The grey, shaggy sea,
Or the green, smooth machair.'

'Though that is good, Duanan, it does not turn the men,' said Conachar, 'they without heed for me, without respect

domh, agus gun chomas agam air cur riu no an tilleadh an nochd.'

'Fiachaidh sinn doigh eile riu bho nach do chuir sud stad orra,' ors' an druidhiche. Agus reòdh an druidhiche an fhairge chorrach ghlas na cnapan carrach cruaidh, géiread lainn air an dara h-oir agus nimhead nathrach air an oir eile dhi. Dh'eubh an sin Ardan gu robh e fhein a' fas sgith agus an anar toirt fairis. 'Thig thus, Ardan, agus suidh air mo ghuala dheis,' orsa Naois. Agus thainig Ardan agus shuidh e air guala Naois. Ach cha robh e fada mar sin an uair a fhuair Ardan bàs; ach ged a bha e marbh fhein cha robh Naois ga leigeadh as. Dh'eubh an sin Aillean gu'n robh e fhein a' fas fann agus an anar toirt fairis. An uair a chuala Naois an achuinge leig e osna ghoint' a' bhais as, agus dh'iarr e air Aillean greim a dheanamh air, agus gu'n toireadh esan gu tir e. Ach cha robh Aillean fada

for me, and me without ability to hinder them or to turn them back to-night.'

'We will try another way with them since that did not stop them,' said the druid. And the druid froze the grey, uneven sea into jagged, hard lumps, the sharpness of swords on one side of them and the venom of serpents on the other. Then Ardan called that he himself was becoming tired and nearly giving up. 'Come thou, Ardan, and sit on my right shoulder,' said Naoise. And Ardan came and he sat on the shoulder of Naoise. But he was not long there when Ardan died; but though he was dead, Naoise was not letting him go. Then Ailleán called that he himself was becoming tired and nearly giving up. When Naoise heard the confession he heaved the sore sigh of death, and he desired Ailleán to hold on to him and that he would bring him to land. But Ailleán was not long that

mar sin an uair a thainig laigse bhais air agus dh' fhailnich a ghreim. Sheall Naois uaith agus an trath chunnaic e gu'n robh a dha bhrathair a ghradhaich e cho mor, marbh, bha e coma co dhiu bhiodh e fhein marbh no beo, agus leig e osna ghoirt a' bhais agus sgain a chridhe.

'Tha iad sud seachad,' orsa Duanan Gacha Draogh ris an righ, 'agus rinn mise mar a shir thu orm. Tha Clann Uisne nis marbh agus cha chuir iad dragh tuille ort, agus tha aobhar do mhna agus do leannain agadsa slan, fallain.'

'A bheannachd sin agadsa agus a' bhuidh agam fhein, a Dhuanain. Cha chall leamsa sin na chosd mi riutsa a' toirt sgoil agus ionnsachaidh duit. Tiormaich a nis a' bhailc agus feuch am faic mise Deirdire,' orsa Conachar. Agus thiormaich Duanan Gacha Draogh a' bhailc agus bha triuir mhac Uisne

way when the weakness of death came upon him, and his hold relaxed. Naoise looked from him, and when he saw that his two brothers whom he loved so greatly were dead, he cared not whether he himself were dead or alive, and he heaved the sore sigh of death, and his heart rent.

‘Those are now past,’ said Duanan Gacha Draogh to the king, ‘and I have done as thou didst seek of me. The Children of Uisne are now dead, and they shall trouble thee no more, while thou hast thy wife-to-be, and thy sweetheart, whole and hale.’

‘The honour of that to thee, and the gain to me, Duanan. I call it no loss all that I spent on thee in giving thee schooling and learning. Dry now the sea, so that I may behold Deirdire,’ said Conachar. And Duanan Gacha Draogh dried the sea, and the three sons of Uisne were lying together dead,

na 'n laighe comhla marbh, gun deo,
taobh ri taobh air a' mhachaire mhin
ghuirm, agus Deirdire crom os an cionn
a' fras-shileadh nan deur.

Chruinnich an sin a' chuideachd
cruinn timchioll corp nan laoch, agus
dh' fheoraich iad dha 'n rìgh gu de
dheantadh ris na cuirp. Is e an t-òrdan
a thug an rìgh seachad an uair sin
sloc a threachailt agus an triuir
bhraithrean a chur ann comhla, taobh
ri taobh.

Bha Deirdire na suidhe air bruaich
na h-uagha agus i sior iarraidh air
luchd-treachailt na h-uaghach an sloc
a chladhach leathann, reidh. An trath
chuireadh corp nam braithrean anns an
uaigh, thuirte Deirdire—

'Teann a nall, a Naoise mo ghraidh,
Druideadh Ardan ri Ailleán,
Na 'n robh ciall aig mairbh,
Dheanadh sibhs' aite dhomhsa.'

Rinn iad sin. Leum ise a sìos an sin

without life, side by side on the green, smooth machair, and Deirdire bending over their corpses heavy-showering the tears.

Then the people gathered round the corpses of the heroes, and they asked the king what should be done to their bodies. It was the order that the king gave then to dig a pit and to put the three brothers together side by side.

Deirdire was sitting on the bank of the grave, and she ever asking the people digging the grave to dig the pit broad and smooth. When the bodies of the brothers were laid in the grave Deirdire said—

‘ Move thou hither, O Naoise of my love ;
Close thou Ardan over to Ailleán ;
If dead had understanding,
Ye would make place for me.’

They did this. Then Deirdire leapt

anns an uaigh agus laigh i ri Naois, agus bha i marbh r'a thaobh.

Dh'orduich an droch righ a corp a thogail as an uaigh agus a thiodhlacadh taobh thall an locha. Rinneadh mar a dh'orduich an righ agus dhuineadh an sloc. Chinn an sin gath giubhais as an uaigh aig Deirdire, agus gath giubhais as an uaigh aig Naois, agus chuir an da ghath snaim diu os cionn an locha. Dh'orduich an sin an Righ an da ghath ghiubhais a ghearradh sios, agus rinneadh so da thurus gus an d'thug a' bhean a phos an righ air sgur d'an droch obair agus d'a dhioladh air slighe nam marbh.

down into the grave, and she lay close to Naoise, and she was dead by his side.

The wicked king ordered her body to be lifted out of the grave and to be buried on the other side of the loch. It was done as the king commanded, and the grave was closed. Then a young pine branch grew from the grave of Deirdire; and a young pine branch from the grave of Naoise, and the two branches twined together over the lake. Then the king commanded that the two young pine branches should be cut down, and this was done twice, till the wife whom the king married made him to cease the bad work and his persecution of the way of the dead.

LAOIDH CHLANN UISNE
(LAY OF THE CHILDREN OF UISNE)

INTRODUCTORY

THE Lay of the Children of Uisne was taken down on 15th March 1867, from 'Domhull gobha'—Donald the smith, otherwise Donald Macphie, smith, Breubhaig, in the island of Barra. Donald Macphie was already an old man when I came to know him in 1865, but he was still a big muscular man of good form and features, and he must have been a handsome, powerful man when young. His nature was calm and kindly, while his memory was full of old lore and old traditions heard in his boyhood.

He had heard this poem from an old

man at Eoligearry, who had died long before I knew Donald Macphie.¹ He had heard it again from an old man who had gone to Cape Breton with his children and his grandchildren when the crofters were evicted from Grinn and Cliat in Barra. Donald Macphie said that many many books could have been filled in his youth with old tales and poems from the old men and women in Barra.

¹ This old man was known throughout the Isles as 'Dall Mor Eoiligearruidh'—the big blind of Eoligearry. He was ceolaire—musician to General Roderick Macneill of Barra, the last of a hardy, intrepid race. The man was blind from boyhood, but the loss of sight would seem to have strengthened and intensified the other faculties. The Dall Mor played with equal skill upon several instruments. He had a marvellous ear for old-world music and melodies, and a wonderful memory for old songs and hymns, most of which died with him when he died. The man was unlettered, and knew Gaelic only.

LAOIDH CHLANN UISNE

A Chlann Uisne nan each geala
'Us sibh an tìr nam fear fuileach,
Gu de e do bhi air 'ur n-eachaibh?
Na 'n cion-fath a ta 'g 'ur cumail?

Ta 'g 'ur cumail fada bhuainn,
'S gur ann leibh a chuirteadh an ruaig,
Do lannan bagairt 'ur namhaid,
Agus amhluadh anns a chumasg.

Ach chuireadh leibh 'ur long a mach
A chaitheadh a chuain gu h-eolach,
Bha Naos bu treasa 'g a seoladh,
Agus Aille, maise nan ogan.

Bha Ardan bu deise 'g a stiuireadh,
Air freasdal dithist bhrathar iulmhor—
Tha ghaoth, gun eismeil ri sgeimh
A gleachd ri trillse grinne, reidh.

LAY OF THE CHILDREN OF UISNE

Ye Children of Uisne of the white steeds,
And you in the land of the men of blood,
What is it that ails your horses?
Or what cause does delay you?

That keeps you so long from us,
And that it is you who would force retreat
Upon the threatening arms of our foes,
And cause confusion in the combat.

But you have sent your ship afloat,
To traverse the ocean skilfully,
Naos the mightiest was sailing her,
And Aille, most handsome of youths.

Ardan the deftest was steering her,
To the guidance of the two skilful
brothers—

The wind, which heeds not beauty,
Struggles with her smooth, lovely lines.

Cadal shul is beag a tlachd
 Dha 'n mhnaoi tha aca ri deoireachd,
 Mar tha 'n oidhche falach a boichead
 Tha Dearduil dubhach dubh-bhronach.

Dearduil thug barrachd an ailleachd
 Air mnathan eile na Feinne,
 Cha choimeasar rithse cach
 Ach mar bhaideal air sgath na reultaig.

'Gu de fath do thurs' a bhean?
 Agus sinne beo ri do bheatha,
 'Us nach aithne duinn neach d'ar buadhachd,
 An ceithir ranna ruadh an domhan.'

'Aisling a chunnacas an raoir
 Oirbhse a thriuir bhraithre bharra-chaoin—
 Bhur cuibhreach agus bhur cur 's an uaigh
 Leis a Chonachar chlaon ruadh.'

'Air chlacha sin, agus air chranna,
 Agus air lacha nan lianta,
 Agus air chuileana fiar an t-sionnaich,

.

Sleep of eyes is but little to the liking
 Of the woman whom they have weeping,
 As night conceals her loveliness
 Dearduil is sad with black sorrow.

Dearduil who excelled in beauty
 All other women of the Feinne,
 With her no other woman compares
 But as a cloud in the shade of the starlet.

‘What is the cause of thy grief, O woman?
 And that we live but for thy sake,
 And that we know none to subdue us,
 Within the four red bounds of the world.’

‘A vision which I saw yestreen,
 Of you ye three all-excelling brothers—
 That you were gyved and laid in the grave
 By the wily red-haired Conachar.’

‘By these stones, and by the trees,
 And by the ducks upon the meres,
 And by the cunning cubs of the fox,

.

‘Gu de bheireadh sinne ’n dail an laoi ch ?
 Agus farsuinneachd fairg’ a muigh,
 Agus a liu’ cala, caol ’us cuan
 ’S am faodamaid tarruinn gun uamhas.’

Cadal na h-og mhna ni’in bi faoin,
 Is diomhain bhi spairneachd ri gaoith,
 Loch-Eite nan sian bu chian o ’n iul,
 Agus Cona-thuil nan cranna-choill ura.

Cha tig soirbheas a deas, mo nuar !
 Cha ’n islich friodh na gaoithe tuath,
 Cha tig Naos air ais ri a re,
 Cha tog e ri bruthach an fheidh.

Ris tha Coigeanh a dluthadh,
 ’Us Conachar nan car na mhur ann,
 Agus an tir uile fo a smachd
 Anns na ghabh Dearduil a tlachd.

Bu shoinmheil le Dearduil an t-og,
 Agus aghaidh mar shoillse an lo,
 Air li an fhithich do bha ghruag,
 Bu deirge na ’n sugh a ghruaidh.

‘What would bring us in the presence of the
hero ?

While wideness of sea lies before us.
And the many havens, straits, and oceans
To which we might draw without dread.’

Nor vain was the sleep of the maiden,
Useless it is to strive with the wind,
Loch Etive of the storms is far from their
course,
And Connel of the fresh forest-trees.

No wind shall come from the south, my grief !
The venom of the north wind shall not cease,
Naos shall never come back in his life,
He shall never ascend the hill of the deer.

To him Coigeamh ¹ is nearing,
And Conachar of the wiles in his palace there,
And the country all is under his sway
Wherein Dearduil gave of her love.

Delightful to Dearduil was the youth,
Whose face was the brightness of day,
Of the lustre of the raven were his locks,
Redder than the rasp were his cheeks.

¹ See note.

Bha chneas mar chobhar nan struth,
 Bha mar uisge balbh a ghuth,
 Do bha chridhe fearail, fial,
 Agus aobhach ciuin mar a ghrian.

Ach 'n uair dh' eireadh a fhraoch 'us fhearg
 Bi' choimeas an fhairge gharg,
 B' ionnan agus neart nan tonn
 Fuaim nan lann aig an t-sonn.

Mar reodhairt a bhuinne bhorb
 Bha e 's an araich ri streup cholg
 Am facas le Dearduil e an tus,
 'S i 'g amharc bho mhullach an duin.

' Ionmhuinn,' ors' an oigh thlath,
 ' An t-aineol bho bhlar nam beud,
 Ach is goirt le cridh' a mhathar
 A dhainead ri uchd na streup.'

' A nighean Cholla nan sgiath,'
 Do radh Naois bu tiamhaidh fonn,
 ' Ge fada bhuainn Alba nam Fiann,
 Agus Eite nan ciar aighe donn.'

LAY OF CHILDREN OF UISNE 123

His skin was like the foam of streams,
Like quiet waters was his voice,
His heart was manly and generous,
And his mien was gentle as the sun.

But when arose his wrath and his ire
His likeness was the ocean fierce,
Like unto the strength of the waves
Was the sound of the arms of the hero.

Like the springtide's violent flood
Was he in battle at strife of swords
Where Dearduil saw him first,
And she looking from the top of the tower.

'Beloved,' said the lovely maiden,
'Is the stranger from the field of war,
But anguish to the heart of his mother
Is his boldness in the van of the strife.'

'Thou daughter of Coll of the shields,'
Said Naois of most melodious sound,
'Though far from us is Alba of the Fianna,
And Etive of the dark brown hinds,'

.
 ‘Ach a Dhearduil is grinne nos,
 Tha do chomhradh air fas fann,
 Tha toirm nan stuadh agus na gaoith
 A toir caochladh air d’ uirighleadh ann.’

‘B’ ioma-ghointe mo chridhe ma m’ athair,
 Agus chrom mi gu talamh ’ga thearnadh,
 Ach chaochail ruthadh a ghruaidh,
 Threig a shnuadh agus a chaileachd.’

.
 Chaidh long Chlann Uisne air tir
 Fo bhaile mor Rìgh Conachair.

Thainig Conachar a mach le feachd—
 Fìthead laoch ceann uallach—
 ‘Us dh’ fhiosraich e le briathra bras—
 ‘Co na sloigh ta air an luing so?’

‘Clann air seachran a ta ann,
 Triuir sinn a thainig air tuinn,
 Air einich ’s air comaraich an Rìgh
 Tha gradh dilseachd ar cairdeis.’

.
 ' But Dearduil of kinliest mien,
 Thy speech has become weak,
 The noise of the waves and of the wind
 Is making change upon thine utterance.'

.
 ' Much grieved was my heart for my father,
 And I bent to the ground to save him,
 But the ruddiness of his cheek changed,
 His colour and his feeling forsook him.'

.
 The ship of Clan Uisne went ashore
 Below the great town of King Conachar.

Conachar came out with forces—
 Twenty proud-headed heroes—
 And he demanded in words of wrath—
 ' Who are the people upon this ship ?'

' Children astray are we,
 Three who came over the waves,
 On the truce and safeguarding of the King,
 Is the faithful affection of our kinship.'

‘ Cha chlann air seachran liomsa sibh,
 Cha bheirt saoidh a rinn sibh orm,
 Thug sibh uam a bhean am braid—
 Dearduil dhonn-shuileach, ghle-gheal.’

‘ Eirich a Naois agus glac do chlaidheamh,
 A dheadh mhic rìgh is glan coimhead,
 Ge nach faigheadh a cholunn shuaire
 Ach a mhain aon chuairt dhe ’n anam.’

Chuir Naois a shailtean ri bord,
 Agus ghlac e a chlaidheamh ’na dhorn,
 Bu gharg deannal nan deadh laoch,
 A tuiteam air gach taobh da bord.

Thorachadh mic Uisne ’s a ghreis,
 Mar thri ghallain a dh’ fhas gu deas
 Air an sgrios le doinionn eitigh—
 Cha d’ fhagadh meangan, meur no geug
 dhiubh.

‘ Gluais, a Dhearduil, as do luing,
 A gheug ur an abhra dhuinn,
 Agus cha ’n eagal dha do ghnuis ghlain,
 Fuath, no eud, no achmhasan.’

‘ Not children astray are ye to me,
 No act of hero to me have you done,
 You took from me the woman in abduction—

Dearduil the brown eyed, the surpassing fair.’

‘ Arise thou Naois and grasp thy glave,
 Thou good son of a king, goodly to see,
 Though thy comely body should get
 But only one round of the soul.’

Naois placed his heels to the deck,
 And he seized his sword in his grasp,
 Fierce was the struggle of the bold warriors
 As they fall on each side of her deck.

Overpowered were the sons of Uisne in the
 strife,

Like three saplings that grew beauteously
 Destroyed by the blasting storm—
 Nor branch, nor bough, nor twig of them is
 left.

‘ Move thou, Dearduil, from thy ship,
 Thou fairest branch of the brown eyebrows,
 And naught to fear has thy pure face
 Of hatred, or jealousy, or reproach.’

'Cha teid mi mach as mo luing
 Gu'm faigh mi mo rogha athchuinge.

.

'Cha tir, cha talamh, cha tuar,
 Cha triuir bhraithre bu ghlan snuadh,
 Cha 'n or, cha 'n airgiod, 's cha 'n eich,
 Cha mho is bean uaibhreach mise.

'Ach mo chead a dhol dha 'n traigh,
 Far am bheil Clann Uisne na 'n tamh,
 Agus gu'n tiubhrainn na tri poga mine,
 meala
 Dha 'n tri corpa caomha, caona, geala.'

Ghluais Dearduil a' sin dha 'n traigh,
 Agus fhuair i saor a snaitheadh ramh,
 A sgian aige na leth-laimh,
 A thuagh aige na laimh eile.

'A shaoir is fearr ga 'm facas riamh
 Gu de air an toireadh tu an sgian?
 Is e bheirinnse duit ga cionn
 Aon fhainne buadhach na h-Eirionn.'

‘I will not go out of my ship
Till I obtain my choice petition.

.

‘Nor land, nor country, nor riches,
Nor three brothers of fairest countenance,
Nor gold, nor silver, nor horses,
Neither am I a proud woman.

‘But my leave to go to the strand,
Where the Children of Uisne lie in their
stillness,
That I may print the three kisses smooth,
honeyed
Upon their three dear, beautiful, fair corpses.’

Then moved Dearduil to the strand,
And there found a wright trimming oars,
His knife he had in his one hand,
His axe he had in his other hand.

‘Thou wright, the best that ever was seen,
For what wouldst thou give thy knife?
What I would give thee in return
Is the one precious ring of Erin.’

Shanntaich an saor am fainne
 Air a ghrinnead, air a dheisead, air aillead,
 Agus thug e do Dhearduil an sgian,
 Rainig i leatha ionad a miann—

‘Cha ghairdeachas gun Chlann Uisne,
 O! is tursach gun bhi na ’r cuallachd,
 Tri mic rìgh le ’n diolta deoire,
 An diugh gun chomhradh ri uchd uagha.

‘Triuir màghamhna Innse Breatuinn,
 Triuir sheobhag shliabh a Chuillinn
 Triuir da ’n geilleadh gaisgich,
 Triuir da ’n tiubhradh amhuis urram.

‘Na tri eoin a b’ aillidh snuadh
 A thainig thar chuan nam bare,
 Triuir mhac Uisne an liuin ghrinn,
 Mar thriuir eal’ air tuinn a snamh.

‘Theid mise gu aobhach, uallach,
 Do ’n triuir uasal a b’ annsa,
 Mo shaoghal na ’n deigh cha ’n fhada,
 Agus cha ’n eug fear-abhuilt domhsa.

The wright coveted the ring
 For its fineness, its beauty, its loveliness,
 And he gave to Dearduil the knife,
 She reached with it the place of her desire—

‘ There is no joy without the children of
 Uisne,
 Oh ! grievous not to be in your company,
 Three sons of a king who helped the helpless,
 To-day without speech on the bank of the
 grave.

‘ The three bears of the Isles of Britain,
 The three hawks of the hill of Cuillinn,¹
 The three to whom heroes would yield,
 Three to whom hirelings would pay homage.

‘ The three birds of loveliest hues
 That came over the ocean of billows,
 The three sons of Uisne of beautiful mien,
 Like three swans on the waves floating.

‘ I will go joyfully, proudly,
 To the three nobles most beloved,
 My time behind them is not long,
 Nor a coward’s death is mine.

¹ See note.

‘ Tri iallan nan tri chon sin
 Do bhuaain osna ghoint’ o m’ chridhe,
 Is ann agam fein a (nach ?) bhiodh an
 tasgaidh
 Mur faicinn an saor caomha.

‘ A Chlann Uisne tha sid thall,
 Sibh na ’r laidhe bonn ri bonn,
 Na ’n sumhlaicheadh mairbh roimh bheo
 Shumhlaicheadh sibhse romhamsa.

‘ Teann a nall a Naoise no ghraidh,
 Druideadh Ardan ri Aillein,
 Na ’n robh ciall aig mairbh
 Dheanadh sibhse aite dhomhsa.’

'The three leashes of those three dogs
Have drawn sore sighs from my heart,
It is I who would (not ?) have the treasure
Had I not seen the kindly wright.

'Ye Children of Uisne over there,
Ye lying together sole to sole,
If dead could lie closer for a living
Ye would lie closer for me.

'Move hither, O Naoise of my love !
Let Ardan draw near to Aillein,
If dead had understanding
Ye would make room for me.'

NOTES

THE name Deirdire is variously given as Deirdre, Deiridire, Dearduil, Deurduil, Dearshuil, Diarshula, Deurthula. The form Deirdire seems to be confined to the tale, and the form Dearduil to the poems on the lady. In one form or another the name is impressed upon localities throughout a great length of country, from south Argyle to north Inverness, and probably even beyond this. Uisne takes the forms of Usna, Uisneach, Uisneachan, Snitheachan, and Sniothachan. Naois is spoken of as Naos, Naosna, Naosnach, Naoisne, Naoisneach with an open sound, and as Nis, Nise, and Nis with a close sound. Aillein varies as Aille, Ainle, Aluinn. Ardan is not liable to much change. Lochness and the neighbourhood of Inverness are identified with Deirdire and the sons of Uisne. It is thought by some that they lived on the site of 'Caisteil Urchadain'—Castle Urquhart, at the mouth of Glen Urquhart, on Lochness.

The story speaks of Clann Uisne being able to kill the deer out of the window, and the salmon out

of the door of their dwelling. Castle Urquhart is one of several places connected with the tale in which this could be done. The old reciters spoke irregularly—some said 'Loch Naois' with an open sound, and some said 'Loch Nìs, Nìs' with a close sound.

Slightly south of Inverness was a small lake, which is now drained, called 'Loch Dhearduil,' while slightly north of Inverness is a small hill called 'Dun Dearduil,' 'Cnoc Dhearduil.'

Loch Etive is in Argyle, a land greatly studded with fresh-water lakes, and as greatly severed with salt-water lochs. Loch Etive runs in from the sea for twenty-four miles, lying between hills all the way. It is suppositiously divided into two equal parts, called 'Loch Eite Iochdrach,' Lower Loch Etive, and 'Loch Eite Uachdrach,' Upper Loch Etive.

It is the most varied, the most storied, the most stormy, and the most beautiful loch in Scotland. Its two divisions differ greatly. Lower Loch Etive is wider and more varied, expanding here and there into broad bays, and projected into here and there by long peninsulas. On each side, between the edge of the water and the base of the mountains, runs a belt of arable land, irregularly broad, studded with trees and fields, houses and churches. In Upper Loch Etive the bases of the towering mountains on each side descend immediately down to the water. They continue thus for twelve miles to the head of Loch Etive, and for six miles more to the head of Glen Etive. Loch and glen resemble a

huge, deep railway cutting, through which the winds blow up or down during the years and the ages.

Loch Etive, Gaelic 'Eite,' 'Eitigh,' means wild, stormy, raging, and no name could be more appropriate here, for Loch Etive is the dread of men who have to navigate its dark waters in sailing vessels, from the suddenness, fierceness, and contrariness with which the whirling winds come down through the glens and ravines, and from the scarred mountain summits, moving everything that is movable in their path.

The district of Loch Etive is deeply identified with Deirdire and the sons of Uisne. The old people who lived on the sides and at the head of Loch Etive, in the glens which run back, some of them for miles, among the mountains, spoke much of Deirdire. I know of this from Duncan Macniven, who spent his long life as an itinerant teacher among these almost inaccessible glens, which were tenanted by strong, robust people of clear, retentive memories. Alas, hardly one of these native people is now left on the land—all having been cleared away.

Duncan Macniven said that when he was sent, while still a youth, to teach there, 'the people were big, powerfully built people of bone and muscle. The old people were full of old stories, and of old rhymes, many of them scarcely Christian, but very grand all the same. The stories and poems were about everything—the sun and moon and stars,

the beasts and birds and fishes, old feuds and battles and old cattle-raids. I was instructed to unteach these, and to teach the Bible and the Catechism. The people were most kind and most civil to me, and striving who would show me most hospitality. They listened politely to my Bible stories, but when I condemned their Pagan stories and poems about Ossian, and Oscar, and Fionn, and Cumhal, and Cuchulain, and their wild beliefs in the miracles of Calumcille and the other saints, the old people hardly disguised their impatience and resentment. I suppose, like most men who have, or think they have, a mission, I was more earnest than discreet, full of my own beliefs and importance, and intolerant of the beliefs of others. But the old people of those remote glens were grand people, with all their old faults and wild beliefs.'

They had many stories and poems about Deirdire, but they did not speak of her by that name, but as 'Dearduil,' or, more commonly, 'Dearshūla' or 'Dearthūla': 'Dearshula nighean Choluim Chruitire,' Dearshula, daughter of Colum the harper; 'Dearthula nan cneasa geala bu bhuidhe loinn na oir soir ghrein an t-samhraidh,' Dearthula of the fair skin, whose locks were more yellow than the western gold of the summer sun.

Dearshula was much mixed up with 'Clann Uisne nan each geala,' Uisne's Children of the white horses; 'Clann Uisne nam miol donna,' Uisne's Children of the brown hounds; 'Clann Uisne nam bogha brasa, bu leithne cleibhe na comhla dhoruis,'

Clann Uisne of the quick bows, whose chests were broader than door-leaves.

At the head of Glen Etive is a plain called 'Dail-an-eas,' dale of the waterfall. The waterfall is not much for the Highlands, the cascade being only a few feet high. From the foot of the fall the water flows a long distance upon a bottom of small boulders, bordered on one side by a perpendicular wall of rock, and on the other side by a natural bank of stones. A gentle declivity looks down on the waterfall, and on the clear crystalline water running on the boulders, and away down between the mountains and down the course of the loch. A spot upon this declivity is called 'Grianan Dearduil,' 'Grianan Dearshula'—the sunny bower of Dearshula. The remains of some building are indicated in the green grass of the slope. The old people of the place had a tradition—'gu'n robh grianan Dearshula air a thubhadh a mach le reang-roinneach nan glac agus le ruadh chriadh nam poll, agus air a linseadh a steach le giubhas nam beann agus le cloimh-iteach nan ian'—that the sunny bower of Dearshula was thatched without with the long-stalked fern (royal fern) of the dells and the red clay of the pools, and lined within with the pine of the mountains and the down feathers of birds. Here the deer of the hill could be shot from the window and the salmon of the stream could be fished from the door of the bower. The spot is most beautiful and the prospect most magnificent. The whole of this district was a royal forest, at

least as early as the days of the early Stewart kings, and there is reason to think that it was so even before their time. Dail-an-eas, Dalness, was the residence of the hereditary keepers of the royal forest and is still held by their descendant. Two Gaelic poets are intimately connected with Dalness—Alexander Macdonald, the greatest of Gaelic poets, is connected with it through his wife, who was daughter of Macdonald of Dalness. The Macdonalds of Dalness were known as ‘Clann Reamhair,’ ‘Clann Dhomhnuil Reamhair’—the fat clan, the clan of Donald the fat. They were a sept of the Macdonalds of Glencoe. Duncan Ban Macintyre, who excels all British poets, Gaelic or English, as the poet of nature, lived for some years at Dalness and within a few yards of Grianan Dearshula.

Near the middle of Upper Loch Etive and on the west side is a small bay called ‘Caitirle,’ and near it is a small island variously called ‘Eilean Uisne,’ ‘Eilean Uisneachan,’ the isle of Uisne, the isle of Uisneachan, and ‘Eilean Chlann Uisne,’ the isle of the children of Uisne. Though these names still remain, the island is better known now as ‘Eilean nan ron,’ the isle of seals, because when a seal strays up here this isle is the only place in this part of the loch whereon he can rest and sleep. In this sunny bay of Caitirle there was an orchard famous from early times. It was known as ‘Garadh ubhal Chlann Uisne,’ the apple garden of Clann Uisne. Special trees in the orchard were known as ‘Craobh - ubhal Dhearduil,’ the apple-tree of

Dearduil; 'Craobh-ubhal Naoise,' the apple-tree of Naoise; 'Craobh-ubhal Ardan,' the apple-tree of Ardan; and 'Craobh-ubhal Aillein,' the apple-tree of Aillein. The last of these trees became known as 'Craobh-ubhal Chlann Uisne,' the apple-tree of the Children of Uisne.

In Christian times the place became the property of the Church and of the priory of Airdchattan. In the time of the last prior of Airdchattan a violent storm occurred, driving the waters of the sea into Loch Etive, and raising the water of the loch to such an abnormal height that it overflowed the ancient orchard of Caitirle and the violence of the sea destroyed the ancient tree. 'Rob Pritheir'—Prior Robert, sent skilled men to prop up the tree, and brought a cargo of rich soil from Ireland to replace that which had been washed away by the sea. All efforts to revive the tree were unavailing, however, to the great regret of the whole surrounding district. 'Lann ubhal Chaitirle,' 'Craobh-ubhal Dhearshula,' and 'Craobh Chlann Uisne'—the apple enclosure of Caitirle, the apple-tree of Dearshula, and the tree of Clann Uisne—entered largely into the old lore of the people of the place.

A little beyond the entrance to Upper Loch Etive on the west side are the remains of an ancient keep variously called 'Dun Bhanr'inn Eirinn,' the dun of the queen of Ireland; 'Caisteal Nighean Righ Eirinn,' the castle of the Daughter of the King of Ireland. No personal name is now attached to these old ruins.

At the mouth of Upper Loch Etive, and on a point jutting well into the loch where the river Awe joins Loch Etive, is a height known to the old people as 'Dun Dearduil' and 'Dun Uisne.' No remains are visible now, though there are indications of a building having been there. The situation here is wonderfully fine, the point forming an extended spur of Ben Cruachan, which rises up behind. To the right is a long view of Upper Loch Etive running up between its mountain barriers. To the left is the river Awe, leaving Loch Awe through the dark haunted Pass of Brander. Right across the Awe at the foot is the land of North Lorn, with 'Coille Naois,' the wood of Naois, just in front, with 'Beinn Ardain,' 'Cruach Ardain,' the hill of Ardain, in the distance, and the farm of Ardanaidh to the left. Between Coille Naois and Beinn Ardain is a glen called 'Gleann Aluinn,' the glen of Aillein, and 'Tullach Aluinn,' the knoll of Aillein. Across the bay of Bunawe from Dun Dearduil is a big ice boulder situated near low water. It is called 'Clach mo Nesag,' the stone of my Nesag, and probably got its name from S. Nesag rather than from Nessa, the mother of Conachar, king of Ireland.

Across the loch and near the edge of it is the priory of Airdchattan, where Bruce held his first council or parliament, the proceedings being in Gaelic, then the language of much the greater part of Scotland. The ridge of mountains running between Loch Etive and Loch Crearan ends in

'Beinn Laoire,' and 'Beinn Laoire' ends in a precipice called 'Creag-an-iuchd,' corrupted Creagniuic, Creagneuk, rock of the angle, and 'Creag Bhail-an-righ,' corrupted Valarie, rock of the town of the king. On the summit of this precipice was a fort called 'Dun Bhail-an-righ,' corrupted Dunvalarie, the dun of the town of the king. Nothing now remains of this fort, the stones having been hurled over the precipice for the purpose of building down below. In the neighbourhood of Dun Bhail-an-righ is Bail-an-righ, the town of the king, the famed 'Barragobhan,' 'Barr-nan-gobhan,' the ridge of the smiths or armourers. George Buchanan, the greatest Latinist of his day, and a Gaelic-speaking man, Latinised many of the Gaelic names of the country, to the confusion of investigators, and he converted 'Barr-nan-gobhan' into 'Beregonium.' This place was known by many names—'Barr-an-righ,' the ridge of the king; 'Dun Uisne,' 'Dun Uisneachan,' 'Dun mhic Uisneachan,' and corrupted 'Dun mhic Snitheachan,' the dun of the sons of Uisneachan, Dun Dearduil; Dun Loisge, 'Dun Loisgte,' the burnt dun; 'Dun nan seachd Dun,' the dun of the seven duns; 'Dun Fhinn,' the dun of Fionn; 'Dun Banruinn Fhinn,' the dun of the queen of Fionn, corrupted by Hogg and other writers into 'Queen Hynde.' This place of many names is an isolated ridge on a wide plain by the edge of the sea. One end of the ridge abuts on a long strand called 'Traigh-li,' the strand of water, fresh water, from the wells and pools of fresh water immediately behind.

One of the two or three passes to the summit of the ridge of Barragobhan is called 'Bealach na Banruinn,' 'Bealach Banruinn Fhinn,' 'Bealach Banruinn Fhionnghail'—the pass of the queen, the pass of the queen of Fionn, the pass of the queen of Fingal.

Tradition says that Barragobhan was the seat of the Pictish monarchy of the west, and that it was destroyed by fire from heaven because of its wickedness, and that hence the burnt stones on the ridge. Barragobhan was a vitrified fort, of which there were many throughout the Highlands, and of which there are still many remains. It is said that there were seven duns or forts on the ridge. Some of these are still traceable and their vitrified walls still visible.

The whole surrounding country is full of place-names of suggestive and reminiscent interest. There are still two tall monoliths and two huge cairns left untouched, but other pillared stones and other large cairns are known to have been carried away and used for building houses, dykes, culverts, and road embankments, purposes which have been fatal to antiquarian objects of all kinds, including churches, oratories, sculptured crosses, and sculptured tombstones.

The Pictish royal family of Beregonium were buried in the neighbouring island of Lismore. The place is known as 'Cladh nan righ,' 'Cladh nan righrean,' the burial-place of the kings, and 'Cill an t-suidhe,' 'Cill an t-suidhean.' There are

many place-names throughout the country in which the word 'suidh' occurs.

A deep, wide ditch and a broad, high mound surrounded this circular burying-place. Somewhere in the earlier part of the eighteenth century a lady of the name of Macalpine died on the side of Loch Awe, Argyle. She was very aged and very greatly honoured throughout the country, and was said to be descended from the ancient Alpin kings of Albain—

'Sliochd nan righribh duthchasach,
Bha shios an Dun-s-da-innis,
Aig an robh crun na h-Alb' o thus,
'S aig am bheil duthchas fhathasd ris.'

Children of the native kings,
Who were down at Dunstaffnage,
Who first the crown of Alban owned,
And still have native right to it.

When this lady died, people came from Perth and Cowal, from Lochaber and from the Isles of the West to the funeral, travelling over roadless, mountainous land and over steamless, boisterous sea to do honour to the memory of the lady and of her race. The body was carried overland to the old castle of Dunstaffnage, and rested there, and then across the sea to ancient Barragobhan, and there rested again, and then over the sea to the rush- and fern- and thistle-covered 'Cladh nan righrean' standing within its mound and moat. Tradition describes the funeral as a wonderful sight from the great number of persons

assembled. With the exception of an unbaptized infant, this lady was the last person buried in the place. Some sixty or seventy years ago the farmer who rented the land—described as ‘duine burachail dona, gun churam Dhe, gun eagal dhaoine,’ an ill, burrowing man without the care of God or the fear of men—removed the mound, filled in the ditch, tilled the place, and planted potatoes in the burial-place of the kings.

‘Coigeamh, the Fifth’ (of Ireland), here Ulster.

‘The hill of Cuillinn,’ mentioned in the Lay, evidently refers to the same place as ‘Inis Cuilenn,’ the island of Cuilenn, of which Professor Mackinnon says, ‘An Irish variant gives *Rachlainn*, “Rathlin,” for *Inis Cuilenn*, an island not otherwise identified’ (Glenmasan MS. in the *Celtic Review*, vol. i. p. 113).



