FICTIONS

OF

OUR FOREFATHERS:

FION MAC CUMHAIL AND HIS WARRIORS.

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By the Author of "LEGENDS OF MOUNT LEINSTER."

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FICTIONS OF OUR FOREFATHERS.

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In former ages, including part of the eighteenth century, our ancestors chose to take their principal meal in the middle of the day, and thus had time and opportunity to go afterwards to their employments, to take walks or rides, or enjoy a good comedy or tragedy. Then they took their light evening meal; and after some social chat, in many cases enlivened by a social cup, they retired to rest, their well varied day being over. We would not bore our readers by needlessly informing them that we have changed all this; that now a late dinner most unhealthily spun out to bed time, concludes the day, but for the sake of making them call to mind, that in this *institution* at least, we have gone back to the customs of ages long prior to those spoken of in our opening sentence. There is this difference, however, between the evenings of these latter days and the evenings of the remote times. Now, the time after the serious business of the meal is consumed in talking politics, talking nonsense, or drinking; for as to taking part in a dance, or listening to music, these must be included in the business of next day, as they mostly take place after midnight. But with our great ancestors it was otherwise ordained. When 'thirst and hunger ceased,' and the fatigue arising from the chase or the fight made mental or bodily exertion disagreeable, they reclined on their couches, or sat upright in their high-backed chairs, according to country or climate, called in their buffoons, or dancers, or singers, or listened to the bard or storyteller, till entertainers and entertained were equally tired; and then the seance came to a natural termination; and sleep and rest did their needful duty, till a timely hour of next morning.

Thus did Homer, or some poet or poets of his supposed era, recite certain episodes of the Trojan war, at the evening banquets of the Ionian chiefs; thus did Ovid read out passages from the *Metamorphoses* while he still retained favor at the court of Augustus; and thus did the old Celtic bards, whom we may without censure call *Oisin*, *Caoilte*, or *Fergus*, make the night seem short to *Cormac*, to *Art*, or *Con of the Hundred Fights*.

It may be safely allowed that writing in Greek characters was known in the days of Roboam, about which period Homer or his *double ganger* lived; but it must be kept in mind that bards of the time were more expert at fingering the stem of the wine cup than the stile, and also that his blindness presented serious obstacles to practice in penmanship. So the sightless poet conned over in his mind his many legends; and by dint of repeating them, fixed them, in his own memory and in the memory of his disciples in the art. These again transferred them to their successors, and in lapse of time, many omissions were made, and many interpolations effected. But as the withdrawal of one blessing is generally followed by the introduction of another, letters began to flourish; and before the legends as sung by the blind bard were thoroughly forgotten or altered for the worse, the genius of Pisistratus constructed a simple frame work, in which he inserted the various lays relating to the destruction of *Ilium*, or the heroes and demi-gods who had fought for or against it.

In after times we find Aristarchus taking the epic as left by the learned tyrant of Athens (God send us a few such tyrants!), correcting mistakes, supplying deficiencies, and retrenching interpolations and superfluities.

Now we must be permitted (first asking pardon of all classic students) to state our own personal feeling towards that wonder and perfect production of human genius, and to declare that with the exception of some of its episodes, the reading or studying of the main body of the work would be about as disagreeable a mental occupation as we could conceive. Looking to the favorite characters of the author, what do we find but specimens of craft, selfishness, unrestrainable passion or unfeeling cruelty? Then see what a large portion of the poem is taken up with a mere catalogue of ships, and the names of fighting men, who without exciting the least interest in the breast of poet or reader, come on the scene, and butcher each

other in a most dreary fashion! Thus A with a javelin cast kills B, C, and D; and as he stoops to rifle his last victim, himself is transfixed by the javelin of E, who scarcely has pinned F to the ground, when he feels the lance of G piercing his own groin. The unfeeling poet describes most minutely the character of the wounds, and the tortures inflicted on the sufferers, aggravated by the sudden recollection of the sweet scenes of childhood and youth, and the love of mother, sister, or wife: but he has to give an anatomical précis of the parting scenes of some thousands more, and must get on, being as little affected himself by the anguish and misery he describes, as a professional fisher by the wriggles of a trout.

The best warriors of the Trojans are not a match for the second or third-rate Grecian Chiefs, except when directly assisted by some partial god or goddess; and it is surely a wonder how these wonderful worthies took ten long years to subdue their inferior foes, and even then were obliged to resort to stratagem. The god-like *Hector* himself, the unselfish hero, the true patriot, gets wretched treatment from his poet. His courage, like that of *Bob Acres*, comes and goes, he flies before his antagonist, and falls after a mere semblance of a struggle. And what an unmitigated ruffian is the mighty *Achilles*, the central point of interest, the champion par excellence of the poem, when placed in line with the *Pious Eneas*, with *Rinaldo*, with *Arthur* of *Britain*, *Oscur* of the Fenians, or *Siegfried* of the *Niebelungen Lied!* In his heart there is no room for mercy; for a mere personal pique he stolidly looks on the slaughter of thousands of his countrymen; and seeing the remains of his noble foe at his mercy, he draws thongs through the sinews of his legs, and drags him three times round the walls of the fortress he had so long defended, before the eyes, and in hearing of the cries of the wife, the child, and the parents of the fallen guardian of his country.

Surely magnanimity and the possession of a human heart, ought to enter into the composition of a hero. The *Hero* of the *Iliad* has not the slightest pretence to them; he has not even a just claim to real courage. He is sheathed in impenetrable armour, and his foes are such pigmies, that he is merely a butcher on a large scale through the whole of the concluding fight, and we are obliged to look on a continued disgusting series of murders.

The plot of the *Iliad* has been cried up for the imitation of all succeeding poets; let us examine with what justness. The object to be attained is evidently the destruction of the city; *that* is not attained. Let it be said that the death of *Hector* assured it, but that cannot be gathered from the accounts of the after events as related in any extant legends or narratives. Let it, however, be granted that the death of *Hector* is the thing to be achieved, and that the quarrel in the opening of the poem seems to render that object unattainable, and that we are skilfully conducted through circumstances, each naturally rising from a foregoing one, and seeming to put off the attainment of the design the farther off as we advance, but in reality conducing inevitably to the desired catastrophe. That, however, is far from being the case. *Hector* slays *Patroclus;* and then *Achilles* donning his invincible arms, slays his foe under very discreditable circumstances; and between the starting point, the turning point, and the catastrophe, we are treated to episodes, to melées and unpicturesque single combats, consisting chiefly of javelin casts; and these might be taken out of the order in which we find them, and settled in other fashions without deranging the general design.

Now, laying some of the above blame on the pagan spirit of the age, joining our voice to the acclaim of twenty-five centuries in praise of other qualities of the Deathless Lay,—recommending readers ignorant of Greek to Cowper's rather than Pope's version for the spirit and form of the original, and wishing that Pope and Dryden had exchanged tasks when they took to translate the *Iliad and Eneid,* we turn our faces westwards.

Taking into account the circumstances under which the old Celtic or Teutonic tales, either in prose or poetry, were recited, it will not cause surprise that none of them aspires to the length of an epic, or if it is at all lengthened out by mistake, it resembles one of our old coins with the cross, and will make four tales such as they are. Action, adventure, suspense, thrilling situations, are indispensable; and these are helped out with a profusion of high sounding alliterative epithets, and not unfrequently a catalogue of heroes or their stag or wolf hounds, or episodes containing complete stories in themselves.

Small favor would an epic constructed on the plan laid down by Aristotle, if it took four or five evenings in delivery, find from the excited audience of such productions as are above

mentioned. They could not afford patience or toleration to nice discrimination of character, philosophical observations, appropriate descriptions of scenery, judicious remarks on the relative duties of kings and subjects to each other, or the slow pace of a skilfully contrived Epos drawn out to the tiresome point.

It was a sure index of the artificial, unsound, and uncritical literature of last century, that James Mac Pherson, after collecting in the Highlands, some of these old Celtic fictions, a few in manuscripts of a late date, but the greater part from oral recitation, should weave them into a very passable epic, bring poor *Ossian* from fighting or coursing over the plains of Allen, naturalize him in a Highland bothy, clap a reed in his hand, and order the literati of the three kingdoms to bow down before HIM who penned a huge volume, ere running hand was known, even in the cradle of Gaelic literature.

As one lie needs the support of sundry others, he was obliged to transpose, distort, and even invent historical facts, to make our *Fenian* heroes change their names and native land; and the grave and pious Dr. Blair sat down, and wrote a volume to make his countryman's lies look like truth; and such was the delusion, that multitudes, including Napoleon 1st, took leave of the little natural sense, God had given them, and throwing up their head coverings, shouted out, "Whose dog is this Irish *Oisin*? there is no poet but the Highland *Ossian*, and Mac Pherson is his Interpreter!"

Whether our Pagan ancestors had any written books, or knew how to fill them with any characters except the Ogham, which would certainly require the skill of a cunning penman to make it look ornamental in bound folios or the primitive roll—will probably remain for ever, what it is at this moment, a vexed question.

But whatever the state of the written literature, there was little room left to the unhappy kings and chiefs to doubt of the extent of the vocal literature, prose and poetry, that flourished in the memories and on the tongues of the thousand and one bards or story tellers that annually visited their raths, and relieved them of their superfluous gold and silver wine cups, rich mantles, brooches, and girdles.

When it is taken into account that every one of these luckless dignitaries had his own hereditary seanachie or bard to support in good style, and keep in good humour, in addition

to this array of "Wandering Minstrels," it is little to be wondered at that their patience gave way at last, and that they would have sent the whole idle school to take a cool bath in the sea of Moyle, only for the good offices of St. Colum-Kil. Then the ranks were thinned, the greater part were allowed to set up as carvers in bog-oak, as cow herds, or as bearers of lance and buckler; and no King, Tanist, or Tiernach, was bound to maintain more than one poet and one genealogist in his establishment.

We sympathise with the relieved feelings of the owner of rath or fortress, when he no longer dreaded, as evening came on, the approach of the mounted bard who was strong in the possession of his thousand stories, attended by the bard next in rank, who was only made up in five hundred, who again was looked up to by the poet of a solitary hundred, but who still felt himself great in the presence of the fifty-storied aspirant, who was sedulously cared for by the apprentice of ten; and every one with minds made up to make themselves at home in the devoted dun, and eat, and drink, and not depart without a decent improvement in their worldly circumstances.

When the powers attributed to poetic satire in those times are considered, we must suppose the comfort of the relieved chiefs and kings to have been very great indeed. An instance is given from the introductory matter of the second volume, edited by Mr. O'Kearney.

"Seanchan and his troop of subordinate Ollamhs having paid a visit to Guaire, king of Connaught, who was celebrated for great liberality, the cross old man, becoming displeased with the treatment he received at court, refused to take the rations which had been dressed for his use. After a three days' fast his wife persuaded him to accept an egg, but by some neglect of the servants, the mice (we had then no rats) had devoured the contents. The Ollamh was so exasperated that he vowed to satirize the mice; but upon reflection, determined instead, to make the cats feel the venom of his satire, since they suffered the mice to live, and thereby do him the injury.

The royal cat was therefore condemned to suffer the effects of the bard's satire. This regal animal having felt the venom of the satire in his cave, told his wife and daughter that Seanchan had satirized him; but that he would proceed to the palace, carry the old man away, and tear his flesh to pieces. He kept his word; he found the Ollamh, and casting him on his shoulders, carried him off despite the guards. When he was passing near Clonmacnoise with the satirist on his shoulder, St. Kiaran being in a neighbouring forge, and seeing the position of affairs, snatched a red hot ploughshare from the fire, made short work with the marauder, and freed the poor Ollamh."

This noble brute kept high state in the cave of Cnobha, rejoicing in the name of *Dorasan*, son of *Arasan*, and enjoying the society of *Riachall* his wife, and *Rinn-gear-fhiaclach* his daughter. Before the Ollamh proceeded to hard measures with him, he had made a prentice essay on the mice, ten of whom fell lifeless from the venom of the cutting poetry.

We find another mouser suffering from the effects of satire administered by himself. He occupied a pillar stone, and gave true oracular answers to those, who in consulting him, adhered in their statements to strict truth. A man missing his mare, whom he supposed to be with foal, having asked her whereabouts, the cat answered from within :—

"Thou of the bare and toothless gums,
Thou of the peevish, drizzly nose,
Pursue down to Truach
Thy hoofy mare without a foal."

Then the stone split with a crash, and the guardian cat stepped out on the mound. The enquirer was so galled by the satire, that he killed the animal, who in dying, made a solemn request that he would repeat this quatrain to his own domestic animals when he reached home :—

"Inform the fire-raker
And Gleadaigh of the ash-pit,
That O'Cathalain has killed
The royal cat of Cruachan."

O'Callan was a man of his word, and very innocently repeated the rhyme to the watchers of his hearth, who incontinently tore him to pieces.

We find a horse giving oracles at *Samhain* (All Hallows) and several traces of supernatural gifts inherent in animals, among the old Irish legends. It is probable that they were supposed to be the abiding places of spirits either bad or good as the case might be. However, the highest form of worship among our ancestors seems to have been addressed only to the Sun and Moon, and perhaps to Crom and Mananan Lir. The boar seems to have exclusively enjoyed the privilege of possession by evil powers.

Places that got their names from animals are frequent through the island ; and it is probable that the circumstance is owing to some supposed manifestation of power in the possssed beasts, at an early period in the various localities.

The incidents, real or fictitious, recounted in the four volumes of the OSSIANIC TRANSACTIONS already published, took place during the reigns of Con of the Hundred Battles, of Art the Melancholy his son, of Cormac his grandson, and Cairbre his great grandson. These princes were of the line of Heremon, and generally on bad terms with the Munster kings of the race of Heber. During their reigns, extending from about the year A.D. 125, to A.D. 396, flourished the *Fianna Eirionn* or Standing Army of Ireland, which was made up of two bodies, not always friendly to each other,—the *Clan Boisgne* and the *Clan Morna*, the first embodying Leinster and Munster warriors, and the second, those of Connaught and Ulster. The Clan Boisgne favored the Munster or Heberian princes, and the Connaught Clan defended the rights of Con and his descendants, and were more commonly on the side of justice and legitimate rule than their brothers of Leinster. This is the genealogy of the Chiefs of the Leinster Fenians,—*Boisgne*, *Trenmor*, *Cumhail*, *Fion*, *Oisin*, *Oscur*. Every reader may not be aware that the hero of the hundred fights was obliged to cede the Southern half of the Island to the Munster chief, Modha Nuagat, who was aided by the Leinster Clans, and that in the battle of Castle Knoc near Dublin, Cumhail, father to Fion, was slain by Goll, Son of Morna, who thenceforth ruled for a long period the seven battalions of the Fenians, till at last Cormac, from motives of expediency, conferred the chieftancy on Fion.

It is our settled opinion that these legends and wild adventures were said or sung in the old raths of our grandfathers, before the tinkle of St. Patrick's bell was heard in our land; the spirit and local color of every one is so different from what a story devised by a Christian poet or romancer would possess. Mythological divinities have wonderful influence in the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Eneid*, but in the *Ossianic* lays they are scarcely recognised. From the Poems quoted and the Metamorphoses of Ovid a complete system of mythology might be put together, but from our own pagan fictions we can only gather that a festival of *Baal* or the Sun was kept on the first of May, and at the Summer Solstice, that *Samhain* (End of Summer) had its solemnity on 1st. of November, and that *Crom* was a patron of Agriculture. *Mananan Lir* the tutelar guardian of the Isle of Man, took sailors under his special care; the spirits of the just Firbolgs enjoyed bliss in the sunk island of O'Breasil; spirits of the learned Danaans still employed themselves in scientific

researches in their ancient Brughs or cavern-temples such as that at New Grange, and the Milesians enjoyed unvarying delight in the happy land of *Tir-na-n-Oge* under our beautiful lakes. The punishment of evil spirits was a tormented existence in the cold and stormy air above us, and the transmigration of souls existed to some extent.

In favorable contrast to the unfeeling and savage conduct of the Grecian men at arms, the Celtic warriors act with courtesy, forbearance, and mercy; and only for the total absence of the religious element, the composition of the tales might be truly ascribed to Christian poets or story tellers. According as the old pagan reciters died off, and their office fell to Christian minstrels, these last without changing the incidents or the spirit of the tales, formed a frame work or introduction to each, suited to the change in the religious views of himself and his audience. Thus *Oisin* was preserved in being for a hundred and forty years or so, and had the good fortune to fall into the hands of St. Patrick; and every legend is introduced by a religious discussion between the Apostle and the old hero. The objections and *crooked arguments* put into *Oisin's* mouth are simply detestable in many instances; and it appears to us from this circumstance, that these introductions and interpolations are not older than the twelfth or thirteenth century. The fervent devotion of the early Christians could not tolerate such bits of blasphemy however unintentional. Who on taking up the *Decameron* or the *Fabliaux* would not be induced to say that the inventors of these stories were debauched infidels, yet he would be wrong. Loose in morals they undoubtedly were, but they had faith such as it was, not that kind indeed which, united to a living spirit of devotion would exercise a beneficial effect on their practices.

In our own ages of infidel tendencies, the arguments and remarks of *Oisin*, so feebly combated by his Christian antagonist, would subject his publisher to a process for blasphemy, and the free-spoken Boccacio and the Fabliaux writers would be as obnoxious to the civil powers as the worthies of Holywell-st. But in those past ages of faith, the perverseness of the old infidel was looked on as the waywardness of a spoiled child, and the grossness of the Italian and French minstrels—but there is no profit or pleasure in handling pitch, and we have wandered a little too far from our subject.

Now we seriously exhort the editors of the future volumes

of the Society, to reflect that there has been more than enough of these objectionable passages preserved in the volumes already published, and to abstain from reproducing sentiments and opinions neither pleasurable nor profitable to con over in silence, nor read aloud to either young or aged listeners.

It were to be wished that the different poems and tales intended for publication, should be issued in accordance with the order of time of the supposed occurrences; but circumstances arising from the proprietorship of the manuscripts, and the more or less leisure-time of the gentlemen editing them, prevent that desirable consummation.

The first volume is occupied with the battle of *Gabhra* (Garristown) in Meath, A.D. 293, *Fion* being dead a few years at the time; the second, third, and part of the fourth, with the exploits of his manhood, and then we are made acquainted with his youthful fortunes. The incidents of the expected volume occurred more than 200 years before his birth. This is the reverse of that concatenation so much lauded by *Tony Lumpkin*.

The bards that furnished matter for the works under consideration, varied occasionally both as to circumstance and time, when relating the same events, but all agree in the character-outlines and abilities of their heroes. *Conan* is a somewhat better edition of *Thersites, Caoilte Mac Ronan, Fion's* nephew, is a poet and swift of foot. *Oisin* being the supposed narrator, gives us little insight into his own distinctive character: he is a good poet, and brave but unobtrusive. *Oscur* is peerless as to strength and skill in arms, generous to a fallen foe, and always ready to meet the most terrible champion from *Greece* or *Lochlan* that comes to exterminate his people. *Goll* is next to *Oscur* in prowess but is morose: he is never worsted, but never seeks danger for its own sake, or for the glory of the *Fenians*. *Diarmuid O'Duibhne* cannot be seen by woman without being loved: he is devoted body and soul to his brothers in arms, and at need can combine sleight of hand with heroic daring. *Fion* has been looked at from more than one point of view by his chroniclers. He is brave, but never risks his precious life agianst a redoubtable foe, when he can substitute *Faolan* or *Goll* or *Diorruing* for himself: he acts the prudent general and is averse to unnecessary blood-shed. In affairs of the heart he has no bowels of compassion for a rival; and his unfeeling and revengeful conduct towards the gallant *Diarmuid* is any thing but commendable.

But character-painting was no object with the bards, and local color and truth of costume were equally neglected. Wonderful exploits and adventures were to be sung, and they gave themselves as little trouble to present a truthful picture of the modes of life, the institutions, and the prevailing character of the ancient inhabitants of our country, as Shakespeare did to present a graphic picture of the Bohemians, after he had shipwrecked the old councillor and the royal infant on their *coast*.

Still we occasionally get in these wild fictions, a glimpse of the social institutions, of the habits, customs, and arms, and of the framework of the government of our ancestors; but it is not with the good will of the story teller. The information comes from him incidentally, and without his knowledge, as an Arabian poet, if he had never heard of or seen any country but his own, would give us sketches of the bare burning expanse of sand, of the cool shade of the tent or the palm tree, of the camel's appearance and his qualities, of the fleetness of the Arab steed, of the passage of caravans, and of the destructive Simoom, and all these as it were in his own despite, and from sheer inability to avoid them.

In the cycles of stories or poems, of which *Charlemagne*, *Arthur of Britain*, *Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest* and *Fion* of *Almhuin*, are the chief personages, these great people always play secondary parts, and when a truculent Saracen, or Saxon, or Sheriff, or King of Greece, approaches, surrounded with terrors, it is *Roland*, *Sir Launcelot* or *Sir Gawain*, *Little John* or *Will Scarlet*, *Goll or Oscur*, that steps forward to humble his pride. Indeed *Fion* and *Robin* have reason to object to the handling they receive from some of their laureats. *Robin* gets thrashed by the *Pindar* of *Wakefield*, by the *Tinker* and *Friar Tuck*; and *Fion* shirks some encounters he ought to have met half way. But it is time to let the readers and the old romancers come to a viva-voce conference.

The Boyish Exploits of Fion Mac Cumhall are taken from a fragment of the Psalter of Cashel preserved in the *Bodleian Library, Oxford*, and furnished to the Society by Dr. O'Donovan. From its obsolete style and fragmentary character, it must have presented no easy task, even to its eminent editor.

"There happened a meeting of valour and contention of battle respecting the chieftainship of the Fianns, and the head stewardship of Erin, between Cumhall, son of Treanmor, and Uirgrenn, son of Lughaidh Corr. * * The battle of Cnucha (*Castle Knoc*) was fought between them, i.e. between Cumhall and Uirgrenn. * * Cumhall

fell by Goll son of Morna in the battle, (*who*) carried off his arms and head; and from this there was a fundamental hatred between Fion and the sons of Morna.

Cumhall left his wife pregnant, i. e. Muirenn, and she brought forth a son, and gave him the name of Deimne. Fiacail the son of Cuchenn, and Bodhmall the Druidess, and Liath Luachra came to Muirenn, and carried away the son, for his mother durst not keep him with her. Muirenn afterwards married Gleoir the Redhanded, king of Lamhraighe, from which Finn is called the son of Gleoir. However Bodhmall and Liath taking the boy with them went to the forests of Sliabh Bladhma, where the boy was nursed secretly. This was indeed necessary, for many a sturdy stalwarth youth, and many a venomous inimical hero, and angry morose champion of the warriors of Luaighni, and of the sons of Morna, were ready to dispatch that boy and [also] Tulcha the son of Cumhall. But however the two heroines nursed him for a long time in this manner.

His mother came at the end of six years after this to visit her son, for it was told to her, that he was at that place, and she feared the son of Morna for him, *i. e.* [might kill him]. But however, she passed from one solitude to another, until she reached the forest of Sliabh Bladhma [Slieve Bloom], and she found the hunting booth [*hut*] and the boy asleep therein, and she afterwards lifted him, and pressed him to her bosom, and she then pregnant [from her second husband], and then she composed these quatrains caressing her son:

"Sleep with gentle pleasant slumber, &c."*

The woman afterwards bade farewell to the heroines, and asked them if they would take charge of him till he should be of heroic age; and the son was afterwards reared by them till he was fit for hunting.

The boy came forth alone on a certain day, and saw the [*pras lacha* with her brood of] ducks upon the lake. He made a shot at them, and cut off her feathers and wings, so that she died, and he afterwards took her to the hunting booth: and this was Finn's first chase. * * * *

He went forth one day alone [and never halted] till he reached Magh Life, and on the green of a certain Dun [*fort*] there he saw youths hurling. He went to contend in agility, or to hurl along with them. He came with them next day, and they sent the fourth of their number against him. He came again, and they sent the third of their number against him, and finally they went all against him, and he won one game from them all. 'What is thy name?' said they. 'Deimne,' replied he. The youths tell this to the owner of the dun [*fort*]. 'Do ye kill him if he comes again, if ye are able,' said he. 'We are not able to do aught unto him,' replied they; 'Deimne is his name.' 'What is his appearance?' said he. 'He is a well-shaped, fair

* The rest of this Lullaby is lost. Indeed it would appear from the shortness of the sentences, and the abrupt and flighty nature of the composition, that the whole story has been very much condensed, and in some places mutilated. (*Translator*).

[*finn*]youth,' replied they. 'Deimne shall be named 'Finn' therefore,' said he. And hence these young men used to call him 'Finn'

He came the next day to them, and joined them in their game: they attacked him all together, with their hurlets; but he made at them and prostrated seven of them, and [then] made off from them into the forests of Sliabh Bladhma.

He afterwards returned at the end of a week to the same place. What the youths were at [then] was swimming in the lake which was close by [the dun]. The youths challenged him to swim with them. He plunged into the lake to them, and afterwards drowned nine of them in the lake, and then made to Sliabh Bladhma himself. 'Who drowned the youths?' enquire all. 'Finn,' replied they [i. e. the survivors]. And for this the name of Finn clung to him [among all who heard of this deed of drowning].

He came forth on one occasion out beyond Sliabh Bladhma, the two heroines being along with him, and they perceived a fleet herd of the wild deer of the forest of the mountain. 'Alas!' said the two old women, 'that we cannot detain one of these with us.' I 'can [said Finn],' and he ran upon them, and catching two bucks of them, brought them with him to his hunting booth. After this he used to hunt for them constantly. 'Depart from us now, O young man,' said the female warriors to him, 'for the sons of Morna are watching to kill thee.'

He went away from them alone [and halted not,] till he reached Loch Lein, and over Luachair till he hired in military service with the king of Bentraighe. He did not go by any name here, but there was not at this time a hunter like him, and so the king said to him: 'If Cumhall had left any son, methinks thou art he, but we have not heard of Cumhall having left any son, but Tulcha Mac Cumhaill, but he is in military service with the king of Albain.'

He afterwards bids farewell to the king, and goes away from him to Cairbrighe, at this day called Ciarraighe [Kerry], and he staid with this king in military service. The king came one day to play chess. He [Finn] played against him, and won seven games in succession. 'Who art thou?' said the king. 'The son of a peasant of the Luaighni of Teamhair,' replied he. 'Not so,' said the king; 'but thou art the son whom Muirenn [my present wife] brought forth for Cumhall; and do not be here any longer, that thou mayest not be killed while under my protection.' After this he went to Cuilleann O g-Cuanach to the house of Lochan, a chief smith: he had a very comely daughter, Cruithne by name; she fell in love with the youth. 'I will give thee my daughter,' said the smith, 'although I know not who thou art.'

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'Make lances for me,' said the youth to the smith. Lochan then made two spears for him. He then bade farewell to Lochan, and went his way. 'My son,' said Lochan, 'do not go on the passage on which the boar called Beo is usually [to be] seen; it has devastated the [whole of] Middle Munster.' But the youth happened to go on the very pass where the pig was. The pig afterwards rushed at him, but he made a thrust of his spear at it, and drove it through it, so that he left it lifeless, and then brought the head of the pig with him

to the smith as a dower for his daughter. From this is derived Sliabh Muice in Munster."

He proceeds into Connaught, kills *Liath Luachra* who had given the first wound to his father in the battle of Castle Knoc, recovers the spoils then lost, and restores them to *Crimall*, his uncle, son of *Trenmor*. He then takes service with the Druid Finn-eges.

"Seven years Finn-eges remained at the Boinn [Boyne] watching the salmon of Linn-Feic, for it had been prophesied that he would eat the [sacred] salmon of Fec, and that he would be ignorant of nothing afterwards. He caught the salmon, and ordered [his pupil] Deimne to roast it, and the poet told him not to eat of the salmon The young man brought him the salmon. 'Hast thou eaten any of the salmon, O young man?' said the poet. 'No,' replied the young man, 'but I burned my thumb, and put it into my mouth afterwards.' 'What name is upon thee, O youth?' said he. 'Deimne,' replied the youth. 'Finn is thy name, O youth,' said he, 'and it was to thee the salmon was [really] given, [in the prophecy] to be eaten [not to me], and thou art the FINN truly.' The youth afterwards consumed the salmon, and it was from this the [preternatural] knowledge was given to Finn, i. e. when he used to put his thumb in his mouth, and not through Teinm Laegha [poetical incantation], whatever he had been ignorant of used to be revealed to him.

He learned the three compositions which signify the poets, namely, the *Teinm Laegha*, the *Imus for Osna*, and the *'Dicedul dicennaib*; and it was then Finn composed this poem to prove his poetry:

'May-day delightful time! how beautiful the color!
The blackbirds sing their full lay, would that Laighaig were here!
The cuckoos sing in constant strains, how welcome is the noble
Brilliance of the seasons ever! on the margin of the branchy
woods
The summer suail skim the stream, the swift horses seek the pool,
The heath spreads out its long hair, the weak fair bogdown grows.
Sudden consternation attacks the signs, the planets in their courses
running exert an influence:
The sea is lulled to rest, flowers cover the earth.'"

It may be supposed that when Cormac, King of Ireland, was informed of the gifts acquired by Fion, on tasting of the *Salmon of knowledge*, he became desirous of securing him as a partizan. So we next find him appointed leader of the Fianns: we will only slightly allude to the qualification, necessary for obtaining admission into that body. The postulant should defend himself with a hazel stick from javelins cast at him at once by nine men;—he should tie up his long hair, and run at full speed through a wood without letting it get into disorder;—he was to jump over a bough as high as his chin, and run under one as low as his knee, while chased through a thick forest.

To pull a thorn out of one's foot when running at full speed, or tread on a rotten stick without breaking it, requires good natural aptitude and some practice, and these were indispensable for admission into Fion's militia. Any man that had not music in his soul, or a facility in the composition of verse, was inadmissible; and every successful candidate made oath of some kind, that he would relieve the poor according to his ability, be loyal to king and chief, and never offer insult or wrong to a woman. His relatives were always to bind themselves not to seek for revenge or eric, in case of his falling in fight, but leave the care of his memory to his comrades.

These were severe ordeals, but look to the privileges of the body! They were cantoned on the inhabitants from *Samhain* to *Bealtinne*, and at liberty to hunt, and fish, and use all edible fruits from *Bealtinne* to *Samhain*. If an ordinary son of Eire wished to contract a marriage, he should get the consent of the Fenian chief in his district. The salmon, deer, and smaller game were rigidly preserved for their use; and if a simple mortal killed a stag, he should replace it by an ox, and a fawn by a milch cow. Let Miss Martineau write English *Forest and Game Law Tales* after this!

In morality and respect paid to women, the Celts and Teutons were far in advance of the far-trumpeted Greeks. In our own island in days of yore, the sex now called weak had terrible privileges, and some times abused them. If a lady put *Geasa* (obligation or prohibition) on a knight, he had no loop hole of escape;—he should obey her, however unreasonable the request. Thus at the wedding feast of *Fion* and *Grainne*, king Cormac's daughter, the bride lays *Geasa* on *Diarmuid O'Duibhne* to carry her off; and though this was highly repugnant to his loyal feeling and in direct contravention to his military oath, he was obliged to comply. When *Fion* was on his shifts in his youth, and had no better raiment than the skins of the animals he slew for food, he found one morning a fine assemblage of ladies on one bank of a great chasm, and a party of gentlemen on the other. A proud princess had insisted on her lover, that he should clear the chasm before she gave him her hand; but the poor fellow was merely clapping his arms round his body to screw his courage to the springing point. *Fion* modestly asked, if she would take himself for her wedded lord on his accomplishing the feat. Her answer was that he looked a personable man, though marvellously ill-clad, and she

would give him the privilege if he succeeded. He did succeed, but she laid *Geasa* on him that he should make the same leap every year. Another fair tyrant insisted on his leaping over a *dallan* as high as his chin, with a similar pillar stone of the same dimensions borne upright on the palm of his hand. *Fion* at a later period avowed in confidence to his father-in-law, that this was the most difficult exploit he had ever achieved, and his assertion appears to us worthy of belief. As children and fools should not be indulged with sharp-edged weapons, we may gather from the above facts, that ladies, even though of pure Gaelic blood, should not have their demands granted, when verging on the unreasonable, especially as *Fion* on one occasion, fell short and was nearly killed. It was of a Friday morning, and he had met a red-haired woman on the road.

In the second volume, which is taken up with *Fion's* visit to the house of *Conan* of *Ceann Sleibhe* in Clare, he is put under Geasa to relate several circumstances connected with the Fenians. The demand and supply went on in this wise.

"Tell me," said Conan, "which are the sweetest strains you ever enjoyed."

"I will tell you," replied Fionn. "When the seven constant battalions of the Fenians assemble on our plain, and raise their standards of chivalry above their heads: then when the howling, whistling blast of the dry, cold wind rushes through them and over them, that is very sweet to me. When the drinking hall is furnished in Almhuin, and the cup-bearers hand the bright cups of chaste workmanship to the chiefs of the Fenians, the ring of the cups, when drained to the last drop, on the tables of the *Bruighin*, is very sweet to me. Sweet to me is the scream of the sea-gull, and of the heron, the roar of the waves on Traigh-lidhe (Tralee), the song of the three sons of Meardha, the whistle of Mac Lughaidh, the Dord of Fearsgaradh, the voice of the cuckoo in the first month of summer, the grunting of the hogs on Magh Eitne, and the echo of loud laughter in Derry." And he sung this lay:—

"The Dord of the green-topped woods,
The dashing of the wave against the shore,
Or the force of the waves at Tralee,
When they meet the Lee of the white trout.

Three (men) who joined the Fenians,—
One of them was gentle, one was fierce,
Another was contemplating the stars,
They were sweeter than any melody.

The azure wave of the ocean,
When a man cannot distinguish its course,
A swell that sweeps fish upon dry land,
A melody to lull to sleep—sweet its effect.

Feargaill, son of Fionn, a man quick in execution,
Long and smooth the career of his glory,
Never composed a melody which did not reveal his mind:
A lulling repose to me were his strains."

"Win victory and blessings," said Conan, "and tell me now the names of all those whom you have ever satirised or dispraised—who was the man that, having only one leg, one arm, and one eye, escaped from you in consequence of his swiftness, and outstripped the Fenians of Eire, and why is this proverb used, 'As Roc came to the house of Fionn?'"

"I will tell you that," said Fionn. "One day the chief of the Fenians and I went to Teamhair Luachra, and we took nothing in the chase that same day but one fawn. When it had been cooked, it was fetched to me for the purpose of dividing it. I gave a portion of it to each of the Fenian chiefs, and there remained none for my own share but a haunch bone. Gobha Gaoithe, son of Ronan, presented himself, and requested me to give him the haunch; I accordingly gave it to him: he then declared that I gave him that portion on account of his swiftness of foot, and he went out on the plain, but he had only gone a short distance, when Caoilte, son of Ronan, his own brother, overtook him, and brought the haunch back again to me, and we had no further dispute about the matter. We had not been long so, when we saw a huge, obnoxious, massy-boned, black, detestable giant, having only one eye, one arm, and one leg, hop forward towards us. He saluted us; I returned the salutation, and asked him whence he came. 'I am come by the powers of the agility of my arm and leg,' responded he, 'having heard there is not one man in the world more liberal in bestowing, gifts than you, O Fionn; therefore I am come to solicit wealth and valuable gifts from you.' I replied, that were all the wealth of the world mine, I would give him neither little nor much. He then declared 'they were all liars who asserted that I never gave a refusal to any person.' I replied, that if he were a man, I would not give him a refusal. 'Well, then,' said the giant, 'let me have that haunch you have in your hand, and I will say good bye to the Fenians, provided that you allow me the length of the haunch as a distance, and that I am not seized upon until I make my first hop.' Upon hearing this I gave the haunch into the giant's hand, and he hopped over the lofty stockades of the town: he then made use of the utmost swiftness of his one leg to outstrip all the rest (of the Fenians). When the Fenian chiefs saw that, they started in pursuit of the giant, while I and the band of minstrels of the town went to the top of the dún to watch their proceedings. When I saw that the giant had outstripped them a considerable distance, I put on my running habiliments, and taking no weapen but Mac an Loin in my hand, I started after the others. I overtook the hindmost division on Sliabh an Righ, the middle (next) division at Limerick, and the chiefs of the Fenians at Ath Bo, which is called Ath-Luain (Athlone), and those first in the pursuit at Rinn-an-Ruaigh, to the right hand side of Cruachan of Connacht, where he (the giant) was distant less than a javelin's cast from me.

The giant passed on before me, and crossed Eas Roe (now Ballyshannon) of the son of Modhuirn, without wetting his foot: I leaped over it after him. He then directed his course towards the estuary of Binn-Edair, keeping the circuit of Eire to his right hand. The giant leaped over (the estuary), and it was a leap similar to a flight over the sea. I sprang after him, and having caught him by the small of the back, laid him prostrate on the earth. 'You have dealt unjustly by me, O Fionn,' cried the giant, 'for it was not with you I arranged the combat, but with the Fenians.' I replied, that the Fenians were not perfect, except I myself were with them. We had not remained long thus, when Liaghan Luaimneach from Luachar Deaghaidh came up to us; he was followed by Caoilte Mac Ronan, together with the swiftest of the Fenians. Each of them couched his javelin, intending to drive it through the giant, and kill him in my arms, but I protected him from their attacks. Soon after this the main body of the Fenians arrived: they enquired what was the cause of the delay, that the giant had not yet been slain. 'That is bad counsel,' said the giant, 'for a better man than I am would be slain in my *eric*.' We bound the giant strongly on that occasion; and soon after Bran Beag O'Buadhchan came to invite me to a feast, and all the Fenians of Eire, who were present, accompanied him to his house. The banqueting hall had been prepared for our reception at that time, and the giant was dragged into the middle of the house, and was there placed in the sight of all present. They asked him who he was. 'Roc, son of Diocan, is my name,' replied he, 'that is, I am son to the Legislator of Aengus of the *Brugh* in the south. My wife poured a current of surprising affection and a torrent of deep love upon Sgiath Breac, son of Dathcaoin yonder, who is your foster son, O Fionn. It hurt my feelings severely to hear her boast of the swiftness and bravery of her lover in particular, and of the Fenians in general, and I declared I would challenge him and all the Fenians of Eire, to run a race with me; but she sneered at me. I then went to my beloved friend, Aengus of the Brugh, to bemoan my fate; and he metamorphosed me thus, and bestowed on me the swiftness of a druidical wind, as you have seen.* This is my history for you; and you ought to be well satisfied with all the hurt and injury you have inflicted on me already.' The giant was there-

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* The wind was one of the deities of the pagan Irish.

The murmuring of the Red Wind from the east,
Is heard in its course by the strong as well as the weak;
A wind that blasts the bottom of the trees,
And withers men, is that Red Wind!

Old Poem.

Hence we see that there was a supernatural agency attributed to the Red Wind from the east by the Irish; in fact the wind being one of the pagan deities, it never lost any of its baneful influences in the popular superstitions of the Celtic race, and charm-mongers attributed much evil influence to its effects, and were wont to conjure it very menacingly in their spells. *(Translator).*

upon set at liberty, and we could not learn where he betook himself. The proverb, 'As Roc came to the house of Fionn,' has originated from that circumstance; and so that is the answer to your question, O Conan," said Fionn."

At pages 149 and following of second volume will be found a very curious allegorical tale for which we do not refer the readers to the original, as it is not to be procured, but we hope to see the early volumes reprinted. The ensuing extract, if true to what might have happened, gives us insight into a curious state of things as regarded marriage and divorce among our Pagan ancestors.

Recent proceedings in Parliament and pending proceedings in Doctors' Commons, force on us the belief that the restoration of this ancient custom would be acceptable to a section of English society of the present day.

"Win victory and blessings," said Conan, "and inform me what kindred have Bran and Sceoluing* to you, where it was you found them, and who were the three half brothers by the mother's side, that they had in the Fenian ranks?"

"I will tell you about that," said Fionn. "Muirrionn Mongcaemh, daughter of Tadhg son of Nuaghat, my mother, once paid me a visit, on which occasion she was accompanied by her sister Tuirreann, daughter of Tadhg: there were at that same time with me two princes, chiefs of the Fenians of Ulster, Iollann Eachtach and Feargus Fionn-mór, sons of Cas Cuailgne. Iollann Eachtach was paying his addresses to Tuirreann, and was deeply in love with her, and I gave her to him in marriage upon certain conditions, namely, that she should be restored safe to me, whenever I demanded her, and that the Fenian chiefs should become sureties for her safe return. The reason I demanded that, was, Iollann was attended by a familiar female spirit named Uchtdealbh (Fair-bosom), daughter of the king of Coillen Feidhlim, and being apprehensive she might destroy Tuirreann, I therefore gave her from my hand into that of Oisin; Oisin gave her into the hand of Caoilte: Caoilte gave her into the hand of Mac Luigheach; Mac Luigheach gave her into the hand of Diarmuid O'Duibhne; Diarmuid gave her into the hand of Goll, son of Moirne; Goll gave her into the hand of Lughaidh Lamha, son of Eoghan Taileach; and Lughaidh gave her into the hand of Iollann Eachtach, saying:—'I deliver to you this young woman upon the condition, that when Fionn thinks proper to demand her, you shall restore her safe, as in duty bound.' After that mutual engagement, Iollann conducted her to his own house, and she remained

* Bran agus Sgeolaing. Names of Fionn's favourite hounds. Sgeolaing is sometimes written ceólbinn, *sweet voice*, of which the name in common use is undoubtedly a corruption. (*Translator*).

with him until she became pregnant. That familiar spirit of Iollann paid Tuirreann a visit, under a disguised appearance, and said, 'O princess, Fionn wishes you long life and health, and desires you to exercise hospitality on a large scale; come out with me until I speak a few words with you, as I am in a hurry.' The young woman accompanied her out, and when they were some distance from the house, she took her dark druidical wand from under her garment, and having struck the young woman with it, metamorphosed her into a greyhound, the handsomest that the human eye ever beheld, and brought her along with her to the house of Feargus Fionnliath, king of Ath-cliath Meagraith.* Now, this was the character of Fergus: he was the most unsociable individual in the world, and he would not permit a hound to remain in the same house along with him. Nevertheless, the courier† said to him, 'Fionn sends to greet you, wishing you long life and health, O Fergus, and requests you will take good care of this hound against his coming here; she is heavy with young, therefore take particular care of her, and do not suffer her to hunt (after her foetus grows heavier); if you do otherwise, Fionn will not thank you.' 'I am much surprised at this order,' replied Fergus, 'since Fionn well knows that there is not in the world a more unsociable being than myself, yet I will not refuse Fionn's request respecting the first hound he ever sent me.'

As regards Fergus: he soon after brought out his hound to the chase to test her value; and made a great havoc in the hunt that day, and every other day, during a month, for the hound never saw a wild animal that she would not run down. At the expiration of that time she grew heavy with young, so that she was afterwards led to the chase no more; and Feargus was filled with love and a strong passion for hounds ever after. The wife of Fergus happened to be confined about that time; and she gave birth to an infant the same night that the hound whelped two puppies, a male and female. It so happened during the previous seven years, that whenever Fergus's wife was confined, a Fomorach used to come that same night, and

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* Ath Cliath Meagraighe. The ancient name of Galway harbour.

† Caelaidh, signifies a courier; and strangely enough, those couriers were, many of them at least, females, as in the present case. Leabharcam was the favourite courier of Conchubar Mac Nessa, King of Ulster, and Boghan was the courier of Cumhall. Iollann's Leannan Sighe assumed the character of a courier in order to deceive her intended victim. The Leannan Sighes always bestowed their affections on some mortal object, as appears from the account of them in our MSS. as well as in popular tradition. There is a curious story current among the people concerning the love which Cliodhna, the fairy princess, bore towards a Munster Chieftain. She is said to have assumed the appearance of Sighle Ni Mharranan, a swineherd's daughter, and to have become a servant in the house of the young chief's father, in which situation she managed, by industry and good conduct, to rise to the situation of a lady's maid in the family, and at last to win the affections of the object of her love. *(Translator).*

carry away the infant. However, Eithleann met Fionn at the end of a year, and having arranged a hospitable meeting at the house of Feargus Fionnliath, they delivered Fergus from the plague of the Fomorach.

As regards Fionn; when he learned that his mother's sister was not living with Iollann Eachtach, he insisted on the fulfilment of the pledge by which the Fenians were bound to restore her safely; the pledge passed (from one to the other) to Lughaidh Lamha the last. Lughaidh pledged his word that he would bring the head of Iollann to Fionn, unless he (Iollann) would deliver to him Tuirreann alive and safe, that he might restore her to redeem his own pledge. Iollann requested time to go in quest of Tuirreann, having pledged his word that if he was unable to find her, he would surrender himself, in order to free Lughaidh from his obligation. Lughaidh granted him that request; and Iollan immediately proceeded to the Sighe* of Coillean Feidhlim where Uchtdealbh, his Leannan Sighe, then was: he told her the purport of his visit. 'Well then,' said Uchtdealbh, 'if you will consent to give me a pledge and bond that you are willing to have me as your spouse to the termination of your life, I will free you from your difficulty.' Iollann gave what she required; and she went to the house of Feargus Fionnliath, to fetch the young woman, and restored her to her natural shape, at a short distance from the house. Uchtdealbh brought the young woman to me, and informed me that she had been pregnant before her metamorphosis into a hound, and had given birth to two puppies, a male and female. She told me also that whichever I chose them to be, either human beings or hounds, they should accordingly be such. I replied, that if they were to be given to me, I would prefer that they should remain hounds. In the meantime, Lughaidh Lamha requested that I should reward him for his guardianship by giving him Tuirreann to wife. I gave her; and she remained with him, until she gave birth to three sons, namely, Sgiath Breac, Aodhgan Ruadh, and Cael Crodha, and these are the three sons born of the same mother who gave birth to Bran and Sceoluing. Hence, this is the solution of your question, O Conan," said Fionn.

The *Eithleann* so obscurely mentioned is said to have been a *Leannan Sighe* that attended *Fion*. Watching the Fomorian giant, in the shape of a wolf hound, when he came to take away the infant, she bit off his arm and thus prevented the theft. She afterwards conducted *Fion*, *Fergus*, and the rest to the giant's cave, where they recovered the children that had been carried away.

We have in these volumes several proofs (if any such were wanted), that our Fairy lore and *undoubted* superstitions, have been bequeathed to us from our heathen forefathers. Here

* *Sighe*, residence of a fairy in an enchanted hill.

we have the *Leannan Sighe*, and elsewhere we can trace our May-bushes, bonfires on St. John's eve, and Holland-tide divinations up to Bealtinne (Sun's Fire), the Midsummer festival of the sun, and the Moon's festival at Samhain. The early missionaries had Christian festivals appointed at the same periods, to turn the people from idolatrous rites; but though the new converts were well disposed to adore God, and to pay due reverence to the *Baptist* and the Saints in general, they would mingle relics of the old superstition with the Christian solemnities. We are unwilling to believe that our Gaelic grandfathers sacrificed human victims in the Baal-fires: perhaps they preserved the memory of the horrid Phœnician rite by making their cattle, or prisoners, or young people pass through them: if so, it will account for our youngsters still jumping thro the May and midsummer bonfires.

If we can trust the author of *Fion's* visit to *Conan* of *Ceann Sleibhe,* the Danaans were a powerful party in Ireland in the third century. Enveloped in their *cloak of darkness,* the *Feigh Fiadh,* they surrounded the house during the marriage feast, to kill *Fion, Fion's* wife, and *Fion's* father-in-law, and every one connected with them, as the lady had been intended for the wife of one of their chiefs. Another instance of the terrible usage of the *Geasa* will be seen in the following extract.

"As for Fionnbharr* of Magh Feabhail; he despatched messengers to the different parts of Eire, to summon the Tuatha de Danaans from all quarters, for Fionnbharr was king over them. Six large well appointed battalions, from all parts, assembled on the margin of Loch Dearg-dheirc within the space of a month. This muster took place upon the very day that Conan had the wedding feast ready for Fionn and the Fenians. He (Conan) sent Soistreach, his own female courier, to Teamhair Luachra, to invite Fionn and the Fenians. When she had delivered her message to Fionn, she returned back by Loch Dearg-dheirc, and the Tuatha de Danaans having seen her pass, Failbhe Beag followed her, to ask her the news. She informed him

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* Fionnbarr Maigh Feabail. A powerful prince of the Tuatha de Danaans. The Connacht peasantry believe that he is the king of the fairies of their province: they call him Fionnbharra, others Flaiṫ-beartaċ Fionnbarr ríġ na b-fear m-beag. His residence is in Knockmadh, near Castle Hackett, County of Galway; and the neighbouring peasantry relate many strange stories about that being. To *Fionnbharra* they attribute the great success attending the family of Kirwan on the turf. Fionnbharra makes no scruple to supply any vacancies that may occur in his forces by the admission of some of his mortal neighbours: all these become síġe or long-livers. *(Translator).*

that she had been before Fionn Mac Cumhaill. Failbhe Beag asked her where Fionn then was, and how many men he had with him. 'I left him at Teamhair Luachra, and ten hundred is the number of his companions,' answered she. She also told him that Fionn was to spend that night with Conan of Ceann Sleibhe. When Failbhe heard that, he struck the female courier with his sword, and cut her in two: he then dragged her remains, and cast them into the (adjoining) river. Hence that stream is called Dubhghearthach from that time to the present. * * * * * *

With respect to Fionnbharr of Magh Feabhail and the Tuatha de Danaans; they enveloped themselves in the *Feigh Fiadh*, and marched forward invisibly, powerfully, with steadiness, and without delay—none contending for precedence—in sixteen armed, well-appointed, well-marshalled battalions, to the plain opposite the house of Conan of Ceann Sleibhe. 'It is little use for us to be here,' said they, 'since the service of the sword of Goll is engaged in the defence of Fionn against us.' 'Goll shall not protect him on this occasion,' said Eithne the druidess, 'for I will beguile Fionn out of the house, despite of the vigilant care that is kept over him.'

She proceeded on to the *town* (house), and stood opposite to Fionn on the outside. 'Who is he that is before my face?' asked she. 'It is I myself,' responded Fionn. 'The *geasa* by which a true hero never suffered himself to be bound be upon you, unless you come outside without delay,' said she. Fionn did not suffer the *geasa* to hang over him, but walked out without delay; and, though there were many persons inside, none of them noticed Fionn leaving the house, except Caoilte alone. He walked up to Eithne the druidess. At that same time the Tuatha de Danaans let fly a flock of dark birds with fiery beaks to the Dun (of Conan); and these (birds) perched on the chests and bosoms of all the people (within), and scorched and tormented them to such a degree, that the young lads, the women and the children belonging to the place betook themselves to flight from the Dun in all directions, and the wife of Conan, whose name was Canana, was drowned in the river outside the town. Eithne, the druidess, then challenged Fionn to run a race with her, 'for,' said she, 'it was for the purpose of running a race with you I called you out.' 'What shall be the distance?' asked Fionn. 'From Doire-dâ-thore in the west, to Ath-môr in the east,' said she. They arranged the matter so; but Fionn got across the Ath (ford) before her, while, in the meantime, Caoilte was following him. Fionn began to urge on Caoilte, saying, 'you ought to be ashamed of your running and of your (small) amount of swiftness, since a woman is able to leave you behind.' Caoilte thereupon sprang forward, and, making a very distressing bound, struck his shoulders against the hag's chest at Doire-an-t Seanaich in the south; and then, having turned about, he made a slash of his sword at her in the waist, so that he divided her into two equal parts.

'Win victory and blessings, O Caoilte,' exclaimed Fionn, 'for, though many is the good blow you have struck in your time, you never dealt a better one than that.' They then returned back to the green before the town, where they found the Tuatha de Danaans

drawn up in martial order before them, after having thrown off their *Feigh Faidha*. 'It seems to me, O Caoilte,' said Fionn, 'that we have fallen into the thick of our enemies in this Dun.' They thereupon turned back to back, and every warrior on all sides attacked them, so that groans of weakness from the unequal contest were wrung from Fionn. Goll, having heard them, exclaimed, 'It is a sorrowful case, for the Tuatha de Danaans have enticed Fionn and Caoilte away from us; let us arise with speed to their help.' They, thereupon, rushed out upon the green in a dense body, determined upon the performance of great feats and carnage, supported by Conan Ceann Sleibhe and his sons.* But now that proud, agressive, chieftain of champions, the body-mangling, fiery hero, the terrible loud thunderer, and the fresh blooming branch, invincible in battle, Goll, son of Moirne, son of Garraidh Glundubh, son of Aodh Dúnaidh, son of Aodh Ceannchlair, son of Conall, son of Saidhbhre, son of Ceat mac Maghach, son of Cairbre Ceanndearg, son of the king of Connacht, became enraged; like a towering mountain under his grey shield was he in battle! He laid prostrate the bravest of their leaders, he mangled the bodies of their nobles, and burst through the ranks of their chieftains; he shortened limbs and delved into skulls, until he reached their pillar of support, Fionnbhar of Magh Feabhail himself. They commenced to attack one another, until both the royal champions were mangled and disfigured, in consequence of the hard struggle which they maintained. The result of the combat was, that Fionnbharr of Magh Feabhail fell by the heavy, hard-dealt strokes of Goll. Failbhe fell by the hand of Caoilte. Eochadh Mòr, son of Lughaidh, the nimble hero of the quickly-dealt strokes, sprang into the midst of the enemy, and commenced to hew down and carve the troops, until he met the furious and valorous man, Donn Uatha: they engaged one another; and the end of the conflict was, that both fell foot to foot and face to face on the spot. Rachta Dearg was slain in the conflict by Sgolb Sgeine, son of Oisin. Rochan was slain by Garraidh Glundubh, and the two Sgails fell by the hands of each other. The three Domhnalls were slain by the hands of Conan the Bald, son of Moirne, without any assistance whatever. The two Cairbres were slain by Conan of Ceann Sleibhe and his son. But few of the battles of Erin were ever fought with such dreadful determination as was that battle; for no individual on either side wished, or was guilty of the dishonor, to yield or retreat a single step, from the spot on which he engaged his opponent; for they were the most hard-fighting bodies of men to be found in any of the four parts of the globe, namely, the manly, bloody, robust Fenians of Fionn, and the white-toothed, handsome Tuatha de Danaans; and they both were nearly annihilated in that battle."

During his visit at *Ceann Sleibhe*, *Fion* related how he was transformed into a decrepid old man at the lake of Slieve

* "Aċt ċeanna, do ḟeargaḋ an t-ard ṁíleaḋ uaiḃreaċ ionnsaiġṫeaċ, agas an laoċ leadarṫa loisgneaċ, agas an tonna uaṫṁar iongantaċ, agas an buinne blaḋmannaċ borb-ṫreasaċ, éaḋon Goll mac Móirne, &c."

Guillean in the north. The legend has been rendered into English verse by Dr. Drummond, Miss Brooke, and others, and is not here detailed, as it is perhaps the most widely known of all Fenian stories.

In the first and second volumes, edited by Mr. O'Kearney, there is a large mass of information conveyed in the introduction and notes, concerning the ancient mythological sources from which our Fairy lore has flowed down to us. Indeed his only embarrassment seems to have arisen from want of space to set his legendary stories in suitable order.

The third volume is chiefly occupied with the *Pursuit* of *Fion after Diarmuid and Grainne*. It is edited by Mr. S. H. O'Grady, who in the introduction, gives a list of the principal Fenian tales and poems. His remarks on the structure of the language, its aptitude for poetry, its richness in nearly synonymous epithets, and the abuses made by the poets of its facilities for alliteration and assonance, will be found most useful to Irish students; we have much pleasure in quoting the text of part of his sound, critical, and judicious observations.

"Whatever it may be that has given vitality to the traditions of the mythic and elder historic periods, they have survived to modern times; when they have been formed into large manuscript collections, of which the commonest title is "Bolg an t-Salathair," answering to "A Comprehensive Miscellany." These were for the most part written by professional scribes and school-masters, and being then lent to, or bought by those who could read, but had no leisure to write, used to be read aloud in farmers' houses on occasions when numbers were collected at some employment, such as wool-carding in the evenings; but especially at wakes. Thus the people became familiar with all these tales. The writer has heard a man who never possessed a manuscript, nor heard of O' Flanagan's publication, relate at the fireside the death of the sons of Uisneach without omitting one adventure, and in great part retaining the very words of the written versions. Nor is it to be supposed that these manuscripts, though written in modern Irish, are in the mere colloquial dialect—any more than an English author now writes exactly as he converses. The term modern may be applied to the language of the last three centuries, when certain inflections and orthographical rules obtained, which have since held their ground; and the manuscripts we speak of, though admitting some provincialisms, many of which are differences of pronunciation more than anything else, have retained the forms proper to the modern literate language.

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In some manuscripts, certainly, these distinctions have not been observed; but we here speak of good ones, among which we class the two, from which has been derived the text published in the present volume. The first is a book containing a number of legends and Ossianic

poems, and entitled "Bolg an t-Salathair;" written in 1780, at Cooleen, near Portlaw, in the county of Waterford, by Labhrais O' Fuarain or Lawrence Foran, a schoolmaster: and he apologises in a note for the imperfections of his manuscript, alleging in excuse, the constant noise and many interruptions of his pupils. The second is a closely written quarto of 881 pages, from the pen of Martan O' Griobhtha, or Martin Griffin of Kilrush, in the county of Clare, 1842-3. This manuscript, which a few years ago came into the Editor's possession, is called by the scribe "An Sgeulaidhe," i. e. The Story-teller, and is entirely devoted to Fenian and other legends, of which it contains thirty-eight: some having been transcribed from manuscripts of 1749.

From what has been said before, it will be understood that the language of these tales in their popular form, though not by any means ancient, is yet, when edited with a knowledge of orthography and a due attention to the mere errors of transcribers, extremely correct and classical; being in fact the same as that of Keating. Nor is it wise to undervalue the publication of them on the score of the newness of their language, and because there exist more ancient versions of some, providing always that the text printed be good and correct of its kind. On the contrary, it seemed on this account the more desirable to publish them, that there have hitherto been, as we may say, no text books of the modern language,* whilst there still are at home and abroad, many Irishmen well able to read and enjoy such, were they to be had. The Fenian romances are not, it is true, of so great an interest to those philologists whose special pursuit it is to analyse and compare languages in their oldest phase, such as the ancient Irish remains which have been edited with so much learning and industry during the last twenty years; but they will delight those who lack time, inclination, or other requisites for that study of grammars and lexicons, which should prepare them to understand the old writings; and who read Irish, moreover, for amusement and not for scientific purposes. It has been already said that some of these legends and poems are new versions of old; but it is not to be supposed that they are so in at all the same degree or the same sense as, for instance, the modernised *Canterbury Tales* are of Chaucer's original work. There is this great difference, that in the former, nothing has been changed but some inflections and constructions, and the orthography, which has become more fixed; the genius and idiom of the language, and in a very great measure the words, remaining the same; whilst in the latter all these have been much altered. Again, the new versions of Chaucer are of the present day; whereas our tales and poems, both the modifications of older ones, and

* Almost the only original work in correct Irish ever printed in the country, was a portion of Keating's History, published by Mr. William Haliday in 1811; which is both uninviting in appearance, and difficult to procure. Most other Irish works have been translations, of which the best undoubtedly is the translation of Thomas a Kempis, by the Rev. Daniel A. O'Sullivan, P. P. of Inniskeen, county of Cork, who is an accomplished Irish scholar and poet. *(Tr.)*

those which in their very origin are recent, are one with the other, most probably three hundred years old.

The style of the Irish romantic stories will doubtless strike as very peculiar those to whom it is new, and it is to be hoped that no educated Irishman will be found so enthusiastic as to set them up for models of composition—howbeit, there is much to be considered in explanation of their defects. The first thing that will astonish an English reader is the number of epithets; but we must remember that these stories were composed and recited not to please the mind only, but also the ear. Hence, adjectives, which in a translation appear to be heaped together in a mere chaos, are found in the original to be arranged upon principles of alliteration. Nor will the number alone, but also the incongruity of epithets, frequently be notorious, so that they appear to cancel each other like + and — quantities in an algebraical expression."

The Editor then adduces a pile of epithets applied to a king, occupying twelve lines of *Bourgeois*, and remarks how easily a more judicious arrangement might be made, but then as he observes,—

"The writer would have been compelled to break up his long chain of adjectives which fell so imposingly in the native tongue on the listener's ear, and to forego the alliterative arrangement of them, which is this:—The first three words in the above sentence, (a noun and two adjectives), begin with vowels; the next two adjectives with *c*; then follow three beginning with *l*; five with *f*; three with *c*; three with *s*; three with *m*; three with *r*; four with *c*; three with *g*; four with *m*; two with vowels; and four with *b*.

Alliteration was practised in poetry by the Anglo-Saxons, but this seems attributable rather to the embryo state of taste amongst them, and to an ignorance of what really constitutes poesic beauty, than to the genius of their language; hence the usage did not obtain in the English; and at the present day, alliteration, whether in prose or poetry, is offensive and inadmissible, except when most sparingly and skilfully used to produce a certain effect. It was, doubtless, the same want of taste which introduced, and a want of cultivation, which perpetuated the abuse of alliteration amongst the Celtic nations, and prevented the bards of Ireland and Wales from throwing off the extraordinary fetters of their prosody* in this respect; and it is a great evidence of the power and copiousness of the Celtic tongues, that even thus cramped, they should have been able to move freely in poetry. Impose the rules of prosody by which the mediæval and later Celtic poets wrote, upon any other modern European language, and your nearest approach to poetry will be *nonsense-verses*, as the first attempts of school-boys in Latin verse are called, where their object is merely to arrange a number of words in a given metre, without regard to sense. Alliteration was not only abused in poetry, but also in prose; and indeed it may be asked whether the introduction of it at all into the latter is not of itself an abuse. But differently from many other languages, the genius of the Gaelic, apart

* Which includes minute and stringent rules of assonance as well as of alliteration. *(Tr.)*

from external causes, seems to impel to alliteration, and its numerous synonyms invite to repetitions which, properly used, add strength, and being abused, degenerate into jingle and tautology. The Irish speakers of the present day very commonly, for emphasis sake, use two synonymous adjectives without a conjunction, instead of one with an adverb, and these they almost invariably choose so that there shall be an alliteration. Thus a very mournful piece of news will be called 'Sgeul dubhach dobronach,' or 'Sgeul dubhach doilghiosach,' or 'Sgeul buaidheartha bronach,' in preference to 'Sgeul dubhach bronach,' and other arrangements; all the epithets having, in the above sentences at least, exactly the same meaning. An obstinate man that refuses to be persuaded, will be called 'Duine dur dall,' and not 'Duine dur caoch;' 'dall' and 'caoch' alike meaning 'blind.' Besides the alliteration, the words are always placed so as to secure a euphonic cadence. And this would denote that the alliterations of the Irish and further proofs of their regard for sound, have other sources than a vitiated taste: but it is to this latter that we must attribute the perversion of the euphonic capabilities of the language, and of the euphonic appreciation of its hearers, which led to the sacrifice of sense and strength to sound; and this taste never having been corrected, the Irish peasantry, albeit they make in their conversation a pleasing and moderate use of alliteration and repetition, yet admire the extravagance and bombast of these romances. Another quality of the Irish also, their corrupt taste caused to run riot, that is their vivid imagination, which forthwith conspired with their love of euphony to heap synonym on synonym. It is well known how much more strongly even an English-speaking Irishman will express himself than an Englishman: where the latter will simply say of a man, 'He was making a great noise,' the other will tell you that 'He was roaring and screeching and bawling about the place.' Sometimes this liveliness becomes exceedingly picturesque and expressive: the writer has heard a child say of one whom an Englishman would have briefly called a half-starved wretch, 'The breath is only just in and out of him, and the grass doesn't know him walking over it.'

Had these peculiar qualifications of ear and mind, joined to the mastery over such a copious and sonorous language as the Gaelic, been guided by a correct taste, the result would doubtless have been many strikingly beautiful productions both in prose and verse. As it is, the writings of Keating are the only specimens we have of Irish composition under these conditions. Of these, two being theological, do not allow any great scope for a display of style; but his history is remarkably pleasing and simple, being altogether free from bombast or redundancy of expression, and reminding the reader forcibly of Herodotus. * * * * *

But, notwithstanding that so many epithets in our romantic tales are superfluous and insipid, great numbers of them are very beautiful and quite Homeric. Such are the following, applied to a ship, 'wide-wombed, broad-canvassed, ever-dry, strongly-leaping;'—to the sea, 'ever-broken, showery topped, (alluding to the spray);'—to the waves, 'great-thundering, howling-noisy.' Some of these are quite as sonorous and expressive as the famous πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης."

Through the body of the tale now under consideration run veins of the finest romantic poesy, intermingled with others which attract by the naïvété or the strange quaintness of the expression. *Fion* appears to great disadvantage, and *Diarmuid* except in one instance, exhibits the magnanimity and loyalty to his comrades, of a Chevalier of the Christian ages of faith. We suppose that in this and other legends, the editors have been obliged to use the knife, but (in our opinion) to a very small extent. A healthy moral tone (making due allowances) pervades the genuine Celtic legends as well as the fictitious literature of Spain. An English scholar can only arrive in the translation at the pleasure arising from feeling, or description, justness of expression, or conduct of the tale, but the reader skilled in Irish enjoys along with these, the charm produced by euphony, alliteration, and the vivid painting of the images or sentiments in the copious and sonorous poetry of the original.

Let sympathy be given to the poor hero on reading the evil chance he falls on at the opening of the poem. *Fion*, though not on very good terms with *Cormac*, is about to be married to his daughter, and high festival is held in the *Miodchuarta*, the banqueting hall of Tara of the kings.

"The king of Erin sat down to enjoy drinking and pleasure, with his wife at his left shoulder, that is to say, Eitche, the daughter of Atan of Corcaigh, and Grainne at her shoulder, and Fionn Mac Cumhaill at the king's right hand; and Cairbre Liffeachair the son of Cormac, sat at one side of the same royal house, and Oisin the son of Fionn at the other side, and each one of them sat according to his rank and to his patrimony from that down. * * * * *

'Tell me now,' said Grainne, to Daire Mac Morna of the songs, 'who is that warrior at the right shoulder of Oisin the son of Fionn?' 'Yonder,' said the druid, 'is Goll Mac Morna, the active, the warlike.' 'Who is that warrior at the shoulder of Goll?' said Grainne. 'Oscar the son of Oisin,' said the druid. 'Who is that graceful-legged man at the shoulder of Oscar?' said Grainne. 'Caoilte Mac Ronain,' said the druid. 'What haughty, impetuous warrior is that yonder at the shoulder of Caoilte?' said Grainne. 'The son of Lughaidh of the mighty hand, and that man is sister's son to Fionn Mac Cumhaill,' said the druid. 'Who is that freckled sweet-worded man, upon whom is the curling dusky-black hair, and [who has] the two red ruddy cheeks, upon the left hand of Oisin the son of Fionn?' 'That man is Diarmuid the grandson of Duibhne, the white-toothed, of the lightsome countenance; that is the best lover of women and of maidens that is in the whole world.' Who is that at the shoulder of Diarmuid?' said Grainne. 'Diorruing the son of Dobhar Damhadh O'Baoisgne, and that man is a druid and a skilful man of science,' said Daire duanach.

'That is a goodly company,' said Grainne; and she called her attendant handmaid to her, and told her to bring to her the jewelled-

golden-chased goblet which was in the Grianan after her. The handmaid brought the goblet, and Grainne filled the goblet forthwith, (and there used to go into it [be contained in it] the drink of nine times nine men). Grainne said, "take the goblet to Fionn first, and bid him drink a draught out of it, and disclose to him that it is I that sent it to him." The handmaid took the goblet to Fionn, and told him everything that Grainne had bidden her say to him. Fionn took the goblet, and no sooner had he drunk a draught out of it, than there fell upon him a stupor of sleep and of deep slumber. Cormac took the draught and the same sleep fell upon him, and Eitche, the wife of Cormac, took the goblet and drank a draught out of it, and the same sleep fell upon her as upon all the others. Then Grainne called the attendant handmaid to her, and said to her: 'Take this goblet to Cairbre Liffeachair and tell him to drink a draught out of it, and give the goblet to those sons of kings by him.' The handmaid took the goblet to Cairbre, and he was not well able to give it to him that was next to him, before a stupor of sleep and of deep slumber fell upon him too, and each one that took the goblet, one after another, they fell into a stupor of sleep and of deep slumber. * * * *

Then Grainne turned her face to Diarmuid O'Duibhne, and what she said to him was: 'Wilt thou receive courtship from me, O son of Duibhne?' 'I will not,' said Diarmuid. 'Then,' said Grainne, 'I put thee under bonds of danger and of destruction, O Diarmuid, that is, under the bonds of Dromdraoidheachta, if thou take me not with thee out of this household to-night, ere Fionn and the king of Erin arise out of that sleep.'

'Evil bonds are those under which thou hast laid me, O woman,' said Diarmuid; "and wherefore hast thou laid those bonds upon me before all the sons of kings and of high princes in the king's mirthful house [called] Miodhchuairt to-night, seeing that there is not of all those, one less worthy to be loved by a woman than myself?" "By thy hand, O son of Duibhne, it is not without cause that I have laid those bonds on thee, as I will tell thee now.

'Of a day when the king of Erin was presiding over a gathering and muster on the plain of Teamhair, Fionn and the seven battalions of the standing Fenians, chanced to be there that day; and there arose a great goaling match between Cairbre Liffeachair the son of Cormac, and the son of Lughaidh, and the men of Breaghmhagh, and of Cearna, and the stout pillars of Teamhair arose on the side of Cairbre, and the Fenians of Erin on the side of the son of Lughaidh; and there were none sitting in the gathering that day but the king, and Fionn, and thyself, O Diarmuid. It happened that the game was going against the son of Lughaidh, and thou didst rise and stand, and didst take his caman from the next man to thee, and didst throw him to the ground and to the earth, and thou didst go into the game, and didst win the goal three times upon Cairbre and upon the warriors of Teamhair. I was that time in my Grianan of the clear view, of the blue windows of glass, gazing upon thee; and I turned the light of my eyes and of my sight upon thee that day, and I never gave that love to any other from that time to this, and will not for ever.'

'It is a wonder that thou shouldest give me that love instead of Fionn,' said Diarmuid, 'seeing that there is not in Erin a man that is

fonder of a woman than he; and knowest thou, O Grainne, on the night that Fionn is in Teamhair that he it is that has the keys of Teamhair, and that so we cannot leave the town?' 'There is a wicket-gate to my Grianan,' said Grainne, 'and we will pass out through it.' 'It is a prohibited thing for me to pass through any wicket-gate whatsoever,' said Diarmuid. 'Howbeit, I hear,' said Grainne, 'that every warrior and battle-champion can pass by the shafts of his javelins and by the staves of his spears, in or out, over the rampart of every fort and of every town, and I will pass out by the wicket-gate, and do thou follow me so.'

Grainne went her way out, and Diarmuid spoke to his people, and what he said was: 'O Oisin, son of Fionn, what shall I do with these bonds that have been laid on me?' 'Thou art not guilty of the bonds which have been laid on thee,' said Oisin, 'and I tell thee to follow Grainne, and keep thyself well against the wiles of Fionn.' 'O Oscar, son of Oisin, what is good for me to do as to those bonds which have been laid upon me?' 'I tell thee to follow Grainne,' said Oscar, 'for he is a sorry wretch that fails to keep his bonds.' 'What counsel dost thou give me, O Caoilte?' said Diarmuid. 'I say,' said Caoilte, 'that I have a fitting wife, and yet I had rather than the wealth of the world, that it had been to me that Grainne gave that love.' 'What counsel givest thou me, O Dioruing?' 'I tell thee to follow Grainne, albeit thy death will come of it, and I grieve for it.' 'Is that the counsel of you all to me?' said Diarmuid. 'It is,' said Oisin, and said all the others together.

After that, Diarmuid arose and stood, and stretched forth his active warrior hand over his broad weapons, and took leave and farewell of Oisin and of the chiefs of the Fenians; and not bigger is a smooth-crimsoned whortleberry than was each tear that Diarmuid shed from his eyes at parting with his people. Diarmuid went to the top of the fort, and put the shafts of his two javelins under him, and rose with an airy, very light, exceeding high, bird-like leap, until he attained the breadth of his two soles of the beautiful grass-green earth on the plain without, and Grainne met him. Then Diarmuid spoke, and what he said was: 'I trow, O Grainne, that this is an evil course upon which thou art come; for it were better for thee have Fionn Mac Cumhaill for lover than myself, seeing that I know not what nook, or corner, or remote part of Erin I can take thee to now. Return again to the town, and Fionn will never learn what thou hast done.' 'It is certain that I will not go back,' said Grainne, 'and that I will not part from thee until death part me from thee.' 'Then go forward, O Grainne,' said Diarmuid."

The fugitives escape into Clanrickard in Galway, and *Diarmuid* fortifies a small grove in which they take shelter. Trackers from *Neamhuin* (Navan) find the grove, but their devoted friends *Oisin Oscur* and *Caoilte* send *Bran* to warn them. Bran understands his directions with "knowledge and wisdom," gets into the refuge, and thrusts his head into *Diarmuid's* bosom. His friends fear that their warning is not effective:

so *Fearghoir*, *Caoilte's* giolla gives three shouts that might be heard three cantreds off, and the fugitives find themselves fully awake to their situation.

"Diarmuid heard Fearghoir, and awoke Grainne out of her sleep, and what he said was: 'I hear the henchman of Caoilte Mac Ronain; and it is by Caoilte he is, and it is by Fionn that Caoilte is, and this is a warning they are sending me before Fionn.' 'Take that warning,' said Grainne. 'I will not,' said Diarmuid, 'for we shall not leave this wood until Fionn and the Fenians of Erin overtake us:' and fear and great dread seized Grainne when she heard that."

Aonghus of the Brugh on the Boyne was the son of Dagdae a Danaan king of Ireland, who had reigned over the country for eighty years (a circumstance truly magical). He was the devoted patron of *Diarmuid*, and had given him the dreadful arms (*venomous* is the Irish epithet), viz. the swords, *Moraltagh* and *Begaltagh*, and the javelins, the *Ga-dearg*, and the *Ga-buidhe*. He now appears to the besieged pair, and carries off *Grainne* in a fold of his mantle, but *Diarmuid* will not condescend to that safe and inglorious mode of escape.

"After that, Aonghus put Grainne under the border of his mantle, and went his ways without knowledge of Fionn or of the Fenians of Erin, and no tale is told of them until they reached Ros da shoileach, which is called Luimneach* now.

Touching Diarmuid; after that Aonghus and Grainne had departed from him, he arose as a straight pillar, and stood upright, and girded his arms, and his armour, and his various sharp weapons about him. After that he drew near to a door of the seven wattled doors that there were to the enclosure, and asked who was at it. 'No foe to thee is any man who is at it,' said they [who were without]; 'for here are Oisin the son of Fionn, and Oscar the son of Oisin, and the chieftains of the Clanna Baoisgne together with us; and come out to us, and none will dare to do thee harm, hurt, or damage.' 'I will not go to you,' said Diarmuid, 'until I see at which door Fionn himself is.' He drew near to another wattled door, and asked who was at it. 'Caoilte the son of Crannachar Mac Ronain, and the Clanna Ronain together with him; and come out to us, and we will give ourselves [fight and die] for thy sake.' 'I will not go to you,' said Diarmuid, 'for I will not cause Fionn to be angry with you for well-

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* Luimneach was originally the name of the lower Shannon, e.g.
"Ni beir luimnech for a druim."
The Luimneach bears not on its bosom,
(Poem in Four Masters, A.D. 662.)
but about the year 850 the name was applied not to the river but to the city. Ros da shoileach means the promontory of the two sallows, and was anciently the name of the site of the present city of Limerick (vide *O'Flaherty's Ogygia*). (*Tr.*)

doing to myself.' He drew near to another wattled door, and asked who was at it. 'Here are Conan the son of Fionn of Liathluachra, and the Clanna Morna together with him; and we are enemies to Fionn, and thou art far dearer to us than he, and for that reason come out to us, and none will dare meddle with thee.' 'Surely I will not go,' said Diarmuid, 'for Fionn had rather [that] the death of every man of you [should come to pass], than that I should be let out.'"

And so on till he has parleyed at five out of the seven wickets.

"He drew near to another wattled door, and asked who was at it. 'No friend to thee is any that is here,' said they, 'for here are Aodh beag* of Eamhuin, and Aodh fada† of Eamhuin, and Caol crodha‡ of Eamhuin, and Goineach§ of Eamhuin, and Gothan gilmheurach‖ of Eamhuin, and Aoife the daughter of Gothan gilmheurach of Eamhuin, and Cuadan lorgaire¶ of Eamhuin; and we bear thee no love, and if thou wouldst come out to us, we would wound thee till thou shouldst be like a *gallan*, without respite.' 'Evil the company that is there,' said Diarmuid, 'O ye of the lie, and of the tracking, and of the one brogue; and it is not the fear of your hand that is upon me, but from enmity to you, I will not go out to you.' He drew near to another wattled door, and asked who was at it. 'Here are Fionn the son of Cumhaill, the son of Art, the son of Treunmhor O'Baoisgne, and four hundred hirelings with him; and we bear thee no love, and if thou wouldst come out to us, we would cleave thy bones asunder.' 'I pledge my word,' said Diarmuid, 'that the door at which thou art, O Fionn, is the first [i.e. the very] door by which I will pass, of [all] the doors.' Having heard that, Fionn charged his battalions on pain of their death and of their instant destruction, not to let Diarmuid pass them without their knowledge. Diarmuid having heard that, arose with an airy, high, exceeding light bound, by the shafts of his javelins and by the staves of his spears, and went a great way out beyond Fionn and beyond his people without their knowledge or perception. He looked back upon them, and proclaimed to them that he had passed them, and slung his shield upon the broad arched expanse of his back, and so went straight westward; and he was not long in going out of sight of Fionn and of the Fenians. Then when he saw that they followed him not, he returned back where he had seen Aonghus and Grainne departing out of the wood, and he followed them by their track, holding a straight course, until he reached Ros da shoileach.

He found Aonghus and Grainne there in a warm, well-lighted hut, and a great, wide-flaming fire kindled before them, with half a wild boar upon spits. Diarmuid greeted them, and the very life of Grainne all but fled out through her mouth with joy at meeting Diarmuid.

Aonghus arose early, and what he said to Diarmuid was: 'I will now depart, O son of O'Duibhne, and this counsel I leave thee; not

* Short Hugh. † Tall Hugh. ‡ The slender brave one. § The wounder. ‖ The loud-voiced, white-fingered. ¶ The tracker. (*Tr.*)

to go into a tree having [but] one trunk, in flying before Fionn; and not to go into a cave of the earth, to which there will be but the one door; and not to go into an island of the sea, to which there will be but one way [channel] leading; and in whatever place thou wilt cook thy meal, there eat it not; and in whatever place thou wilt eat, there lie not; and in whatever place thou wilt lie, there rise not on the morrow.'"

"Wounding him like a *Gallan* (pillar stone)" probably means, cutting off his head, arms, and legs, and reducing him to a mere trunk.

All this time, *Diarmuid* is as guiltless as the Chevalier Bayard himself would be in similar circumstances. The fugitive pair pick up an invaluable squire, and passing from one refuge to another, they approach the west coast of Kerry; and there, bearing into land, are seen the war ships of *Fion's* allies from the coast of France. Nine times nine warriors come ashore, and *Diarmuid* enquires their business and country.

"'We are the three royal chiefs of Muir n-Iocht,' said they, 'and Fionn Mac Cumhaill it is, that hath sent there to seek us, [because of] a forest marauder, and a rebellious enemy of his, that he has outlawed, who is called Diarmuid O'Duibhne; and to curb him are we now come. Also we have three venomous hounds, and we will loose them upon his track, and it will be but a short time before we get tidings of him; fire burns them not, water drowns them not, and weapons do not wound them;* and we ourselves number twenty hundreds of stout, stalwart men, and each man of us is a man commanding a hundred. Moreover, tell us who thou thyself art, or hast thou any word of the tidings of the son of O'Duibhne?' 'I saw him yesterday,' said Diarmuid, 'and I myself am but a warrior who am walking the world by the strength of my hand and the temper of my sword; and I vow that ye will have to deal with no ordinary man, if Diarmuid meets you.' 'Well, no one has been found [yet],' quoth they. 'What are ye called yourselves?' said Diarmuid. 'Dubhchosach, Fionn-chosach, and Treun-chosach† are our names,' said they."

Fifty of our hero's foes are killed in contending with him in a trial of skill, such as neither Virgil nor Milton would have admitted into their epics: then follow two other games of a somewhat more dignified character. *He arose at early day and beaming dawn on the morrow*, and—

"Went himself to the top of the same hill, and he had not been there long, before the three chiefs came towards him, and he enquired

* Literally, weapons do not become red upon them.

† i.e. The black-footed, the fair-footed, and the strong-footed. (*Tr.*)

of them whether they would practise any more feats. They said that they had rather find tidings of the son of O'Duibhne than that. 'I have seen a man who saw him to-day,' said Diarmuid; and thereupon Diarmuid put from him his weapons and his armour upon the hill, [everything] but the shirt that was next his skin, and he stuck the Crann buidhe of Mananan* upright with its point uppermost. Then Diarmuid rose with a light, bird-like bound, so that he descended from above upon the javelin, and came down fairly and cunningly off it, having neither wound nor cut upon him.

A young warrior of the people of the green Fenians† said, 'Thou art one that never hast seen a good feat, since thou wouldst call that a feat;' and with that he put his weapons and his armour from him, and he rose in like manner lightly over the javelin, and descended upon it full heavily and helplessly, so that the point of the javelin went up through his heart, and he fell right down to the earth. Diarmuid drew the javelin, and placed it standing the second time; and the second man of them arose to do the feat, and he too was slain like the others. Howbeit, fifty of the people of the green Fenians fell by Diarmuid's feat on that day; and they bade him draw his javelin, [saying] that he should slay no more of their people with that feat, and they went to their ships.

Diarmuid rose on the morrow, and took with him to the aforesaid hill, two forked poles out of the next wood, and placed them upright; and the Moralltach,‡ that is, the sword of Aonghus an Brogha, between the two forked poles upon its edge. Then he himself rose exceeding lightly over it, and thrice measured the sword by paces from the hilt to its point, and he came down, and asked if there was a man of them to do that feat. 'That is a bad question,' said a man of them, 'for there never was done in Erin any feat, which some one of us would not do.' He then rose, and went over the sword, and as he was descending from above, it happened to him, that one of his legs came at either side of the sword, so that there were made of him two halves to the crown of his head. Then the second man rose, and as he descended from above, he chanced to fall crossways upon the sword, so that there were two portions made of him. Howbeit, there had not fallen more of the people of the green Fenians of Muir n-Iocht on the two days before, than there fell upon that day. Then they told him to take up his sword, [saying] that already too many of their people had fallen by him; and they asked him whether he had gotten any word of the tidings of the son of O'Duibhne. 'I have seen him that saw him to-day,' said Diarmuid, 'and I will go to seek tidings to-night.'

Diarmuid rose at early dawn of the morning, and girt about him his suit of battle and of conflict, under which, through which, or over which, it was not possible to wound him; and he took the

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* i.e. The yellow shaft of Mananan, a spear which Mananan had given to Diarmuid. Mananan was the son of Lear, one of the chiefs of the Tuatha de Danann, and Lord of the Isle of Man.

† So called from the colour of their armour or of their standards.

‡ i.e The great and fierce one.

Moralltach, that is, the sword of Aonghus an Brogha, at his left side, which [sword] left no stroke nor blow unfinished at the first trial. He took likewise his two thick-shafted javelins of battle, that is, the Ga-buidhe, and the Ga-dearg, from which none recovered, either man or woman, that had ever been wounded by them. After that, Diarmuid roused Grainne, and bade her keep watch and ward for Muadhan, [saying] that he himself would go to view the four quarters around him. When Grainne beheld Diarmuid with bravery and daring [clothed] in his suit of anger and of battle, fear and great dread seized her, for she knew that it was for a combat and an encounter that he was so equipped; and she enquired of him what he would do. '[Thou seest me thus] for fear lest my foes should meet me.' That soothed Grainne, and then Diarmuid went in that array to meet the green Fenians."

He approaches the foe, and after a short war of words,—

* "He drew the Moralltach from his sheath, and dealt a furious stroke of destruction at the head of him that was next to him, so that he made two portions of it. Then he drew near to the host of the green Fenians, and began to slaughter and to discomfort them heroically and with swift valour, so that he rushed under them, through them, and over them, as a hawk would go through small birds, or a wolf through a large flock of small sheep: even thus it was that Diarmuid hewed crossways the glittering, very beautiful mail of the men of Lochlann, so that there went not from that spot a man to tell the tidings, or to boast of great deeds, without having the grievousness of death and the final end of life executed upon him, but the three green chiefs and a small number of their people that fled to their ships.

Diarmuid returned back having no cut nor wound, and went his ways till he reached Muadhan and Grainne.

Diarmuid rose at early day and beaming dawn on the morrow, and halted not, until he had reached the aforesaid hill; and having gotten there, he struck his shield mightily and soundingly, so that he caused the shore to tremble with the noise [i.e. reverberate] around him. Then said Dubh-chosach that he would himself go to fight with Diarmuid, and straightways went ashore. Then † he and Diarmuid

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* Agus aga raḋ sin ro ṫarraing an Móralltaċ as a truail taisge, agus tug sgrios-buille ḟíoċṁar de fa ċeann an tí fa neasa dó, go n-dearna dá órdan de. Ann sin ro ionnsuig sluaġ na Glais-ḟéinne, agus ro ġab dá n-éirleaċ agus dá n-aṫċumaḋ go míleaḋta mear-ċalma, gur ġab fúta, tríota, agus tarsa, amail no raċfaḋ seabac fa mion-eunaib, nó macnṫíre tré ṁóirṫréud mion-ċaorac; gurab amlaiḋ-sin do ġearr-Diarmuid tarsna lúireaċa loinneaċa lánáilne na Loċlannaċ, go naċ n-deacaiḋ fear innste sgéil ina maoiḋte móirġníoṁ as an láṫair sin, gan brón báis agus time saoġail d'imirt air, aċt na trí glais-ḟéinniḋe agus beagán dá muintir ro ṫeiċ ċum a luinge.

† Ann sin do riġne féin agus Diarmuid ar a ċéile go corraṁail, fearaṁail, feiḋmeaċ, fuil-beartaċ, fearsaḋaċ, feiċreaṁar; mar a biaḋ dá ḋaiṁ ḋána, nó dá ṫarb buile, nó dá leoġan cuṫaig, nó dá ṡeabac urranta ar bruaċ aille. Gurab e sin tionsgnaṁ agus tuarasgabail an ċomraic ṫeiṫ ṫeinn ḃoiḋeaḋranna ro ba eatorra.

rushed upon one another like wrestlers, like men making mighty efforts, ferocious, straining their arms and their swollen sinews, as it were two savage oxen, or two frenzied bulls, or two raging lions, or two fearless hawks on the edge of a cliff. And this is the form and fashion of the hot, sore, inseparable strife that took place betwixt them.

* They both throw their weapons out of their hands, and ran against, and to encounter each other, and lock their knotty hands across one another's graceful backs. Then each gave the other a violent, mighty twist; but Diarmuid hove Dubh-chosach upon his shoulder, and hurled his body to the earth, and bound him firm and fast upon the spot. Afterwards came Fionn-chosach and Treun-chosach to combat with him, one after the other; and he bound them with the same binding."

Diarmuid by this time feels aggravated with *Fion* and his adherents, and deals rather remorselessly towards the three *Green Fenians*. He should have kept his own antecedents better before his eyes.

Female Couriers are often met with in our old stories: one is here presented to the reader.

"They had not been long thus, before they saw the female messenger of Fionn Mac Cumhaill coming with the speed of a swallow, or a weasel, or like a blast of a sharp, pure, swift wind, over the top of every high hill and bare mountain towards them; and she enquired of them who it was that had made that great, fearful, destroying slaughter of them. 'Who art thou that askest?' said they. 'I am the female messenger of Fionn Mac Cumhaill,' said she; 'and Deirdre an Duibh-shleibhe is my name, and it is to look for you that Fionn has sent me.' 'Well then we know not who he was,' said they, 'but we will inform thee of his appearance; that is, [he was] a warrior having curling, dusky-black hair, and two red ruddy cheeks, and he it is that hath made this great slaughter of us: and we are yet more sorely grieved that our three chiefs are bound, and that we cannot loose them: he was likewise three days one after the other fighting with us.'"

The three enchanted hounds are finally loosed on our hero, but they fare like his other foes, including a newly introduced chief with a green mantle.

"Then, since it is not usual for defence [i.e. resistance] to be made after the fall of lords, when the strangers saw that their chiefs and

* Teilgid anaon a n-airm as a láimhaib, agus ritid a g-coinne agus a g-coimdhail a chéile, agus snaidhmaid na dóidlama tar chaoldromannaib a chéile. Ann sin tugadar treunchorr tinnearnach da chéile, gur thóg Diarmuid Dubh-chosach ar a ghualainn, gur buail béim da chorp fa thalamh; agus ro cheangail sé go daingean dosgaoilte ar an láthair sin é. Iar sin tainig Fionn-chosach agus Treun-chosach do chomhrac ris a n-diaigh a chéile, agus tug an ceangal ceudna orrtha, &c.

their lords were fallen, they suffered defeat, and betook themselves to utter flight; and Diarmuid pursued them, violently scattering them and slaughtering them, so that unless [perchance] any one fled over [the tops of] the forests, or under the green earth, or under the water, there escaped not of them a messenger nor a man to tell tidings; but the gloom of death and of instant destruction was executed upon every one of them except Deirdre of Duibh-shliabh, that is, the female messenger of Fionn Mac Cumhaill, who went wheeling and hovering [around] whilst Diarmuid was making slaughter of the strangers."

Readers of the *Waverley Novels* will recollect the contempt bestowed on the "Man without a Chief." The position was sorely felt from our earliest times.

"At that very time and hour, Fionn saw [coming] towards him Deirdre of Duibh-shliabh, with her legs failing, and her tongue raving, and her eyes drooping in her head; and when Fionn saw her [come] towards him in that plight, he asked tidings of her. 'I have great and evil tidings to tell thee, and methinks I am one without a lord;'* and she told him the tale from first to last of all the slaughter that Diarmuid O'Duibhne had made, and how the three deadly hounds had fallen by him; 'and hardly I have escaped myself,' quoth she."

We have no room for further extracts; and besides we are not inclined to impair the reader's interest in the conduct of the story, which, making allowance for the marvellous element, is skilfully put together. There are a few episodes introduced of a very curious character. In correspondence with the cheerful tone of our ancient mythology, *Mananan* son of *Lir* the benevolent Lord of Man, and *Aongus* of the Brugh, the learned Danaan Seer afford protection to the deserving. The catastrophe is scarcely worthy of the plot.

The third volume likewise includes a metrical lamentation after the Fenians by Oisin, and a beautiful little tale of King Cormac, something of the character of Dean Parnell's *Hermit*, the *Son* of *Lir* comporting himself as the *Angel* does in the modern story.

* It was a misfortune and a reproach amongst the Irish for a plebeian to be without a lord or chief, since he would be thus liable to any insult or oppression, without having one to whom to look, to obtain redress for him; for a chief was bound, in return for the support and maintenance given him by his people, to protect them all. This relation between the chief and his tribe is expressed in the old Irish saying put into the mouth of a clansman, "Spend me and defend me." (Vide *Spencer's View of the State of Ireland.*) Deidre means to reproach Fionn by saying, that since he was unable to defend his own, they might as well be lordless. (*Tr.*)

HOW CORMAC MAC AIRT GOT HIS BRANCH.

"Of a time that Cormac, the son of Art, the son of Conn of the hundred battles, that is, the arch-king of Erin, was in Liathdruim,* he saw a youth upon the green before his Dun, having in his hand a glittering fairy branch with nine apples of red gold upon it. And this was the manner of that branch, that when any one shook it, wounded men, and women with child would be lullled to sleep by the sound of the very sweet fairy music which those apples uttered: and another property that branch had, that is to say, that no one on earth would bear in mind any want, woe, or weariness of soul when that branch was shaken for him, and whatever evil might have befallen any one, he would not remember it at the shaking of that branch.

Cormac said to the youth, 'Is that branch thine own?' 'It is indeed mine,' said the youth. 'Wouldst thou sell it?' asked Cormac. 'I would sell it,' quoth the youth, 'for I never had anything that I would not sell.' 'What dost thou require for it?' said Cormac. 'The award of my own mouth,' said the youth. 'That shalt thou receive from me,' said Cormac, 'and say on thy award.' 'Thy wife, thy son, and thy daughter,' answered the youth, 'that is to say, Eithne, Cairbre, and Ailbhe.' 'Thou shalt get them all, said Cormac. After that, the youth gives up the branch, and Cormac takes it to his own house, to Ailbhe, to Eithne, and to Cairbre. 'That is a fair treasure thou hast,' said Ailbhe. 'No wonder,' answered Cormac, 'for I gave a good price for it.' 'What didst thou give for it or in exchange for it?' asked Ailbhe. 'Cairbre, Eithne, and thyself, O Ailbhe.' 'That is a pity,' quoth Eithne, '[yet it is not true], for we think that there is not upon the face of the earth, that treasure for which thou wouldst give us.' 'I pledge my word, said Cormac, 'that I have given you for this treasure.' Sorrow and heaviness of heart filled them, when they knew that to be true, and Eithne said, 'It is too hard a bargain [to give] us three for any branch in the world.' When Cormac saw that grief and heaviness of heart came upon them, he shakes the branch amongst them; and when they heard the soft, sweet music of the branch, they thought no longer upon any evil or care that had ever befallen them, and they went forth to meet the youth. 'Here,' said Cormac, 'thou hast the price thou didst ask for this branch.' 'Well hast thou fulfilled thy promise,' said the youth, 'and receive [wishes for] victory and blessing for the sake of thy truth;' and he left Cormac wishes for life and health, and he and his company went their ways. Cormac came to his house, and when that news was heard throughout Erin, loud cries of weeping and of mourning were made in every quarter of it, and in Liathdruim above all. When Cormac heard the loud cries in Teamhair, he

* *Liathdruim.* This was the ancient name of Teamhair, or Tara. It means the *druim* or ridge of Liath, who was the son of Laighne leathanghlas.

shook the branch among them, so that there was no longer any grief or heaviness of heart upon any one.

He continued thus for the space of that year, until Cormac said, 'It is a year to-day since my wife, my son, and my daughter were taken from me, and I will follow them by the same path that they took.'

Then Cormac went forth to look for the way by which he had seen the youth depart, and a dark magical mist rose about him, and he chanced to come upon a wonderful marvellous plain. That plain was thus: there was there a wondrous very great host of horsemen, and the work at which they were, was the covering-in of a house with the feathers of foreign birds, and when they had put covering upon one half of the house, they used to go* off to seek birds' feathers for the other; and as for that half of the house upon which they had put covering, they used not to find a single feather on it when they returned. After that Cormac had been a long time gazing at them in this plight, he thus spoke: "I will no longer gaze at you, for I perceive that you will be toiling at that from the beginning to the end of the world.'

Cormac goes his way, and he was wandering over the plain until he saw a strange foreign-looking youth walking the plain, and his employment was this; he used to drag a large tree out of the ground, and to break it between the bottom and the top, and he used to make a fire of it, and to go himself to seek another tree, and when he came back again he would not find before him, a scrap of the first tree that was not burned and used up. Cormac was for a great space gazing upon him in that plight, and at last he said, 'I indeed will go away from thee henceforth, for were I for ever gazing upon thee, thou wouldst be so at the end of all.'

Cormac, after that, begins to walk the plain until he saw three immense wells on the border of the plain, and those wells were thus: they had three heads in them [i.e. one in each]. Cormac drew near to the next well to him, and the head that was in that well was thus: a stream was flowing into its mouth, and two streams were flowing from or out of it. Cormac proceeds to the second well, and the head that was in that well was thus: a stream was flowing into it, and another stream flowing out of it. He proceeds to the third well, and the head that was in that well was thus: three streams were flowing into its mouth, and one stream only flowing out of it. Great marvel seized Cormac hereupon, and he said, 'I will be no longer

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* The *Consuetudinal Past*, as it is called by the Irish grammarians, reads strangely in English in the above sentences, where however the tense could not be otherwise rendered than by periphrases of various kinds, such as, "They continually went off," "They kept going off," &c. The English, however, do not always, even by this method, express the continuity or repetition of an action, leaving it to be understood; but the Irish, having special tenses, present and past, for the purpose, are very careful in making the distinction, which they attempt in English also.

gazing upon you, for I should never find any man to tell me your histories; and I think that I should find good sense in your meanings if I understood them.' And the time of day was the noon.

The king of Erin goes his ways, and he had not been long walking when he saw a very great field before him,* and a house in the middle of the field; and Cormac draws near to the house, and entered into it, and the king of Erin greeted [those that were within]. A very tall couple, with clothes of many colours, that were within, answered him, and they bade him stay, 'whoever thou art, O youth, for it is now no time for thee to be travelling on foot.' Cormac the son of Art sits down hereupon, and he was right glad to get hospitality for that night.

'Rise, O man of the house,' said the woman, 'for there is a fair and comely wanderer by us, and how knowest thou but that he is some honorable noble of the men of the world?† and if thou hast one kind of food better than another, let it be brought to me.' The youth upon this arose, and he came back to them in this fashion, that is, with a huge wild boar upon his back, and a log in his hand; and he cast down the swine and the log upon the floor, and said, 'There ye have meat, and cook it for yourselves.' 'How should I do that?' asked Cormac. 'I will teach you that,' said the youth; 'that is to say, to split this great log which I have, and to make four pieces of it, and to put down a quarter of the boar, and a quarter of the log under it, and to tell a true story, and the quarter of the boar will be cooked.' 'Tell the first story thyself,' said Cormac, 'for the two should fairly tell a story for the one.' 'Thou speakest rightly,' quoth the youth, 'and methinks that thou hast the eloquence of a prince, and I will tell thee a story to begin with. That swine that I brought,' he went on, 'I have but seven pigs of them, and I could feed the world with them; for the pig that is killed of them, you have but to put its bones into the sty again, and it will be found alive upon the morrow,' That story was true, and the quarter of the pig was cooked.

"Tell thou a story now, O woman of the house," said the youth. "I will," quoth she, "and do thou put down a quarter of the wild boar, and a quarter of the log under it." So it was done. "I have seven white cows," said she, "and they fill the seven kieves with milk every day; and I give my word, that they would give as much milk as would satisfy them, to the men of the whole world, were they upon the plain drinking it." That story was true, and the quarter of the pig was therefore cooked.

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* Literally, he saw from him. This expression the Irish introduce into English, meaning that a person sees a thing at a distance, as if stretched before him. In the same way they say, "I saw him to me," i.e. approaching me.

† i.e., Of foreign parts. *Duine uasal*, here rendered a Noble, does literally mean a noble man, and was formerly applied to the gentlemen of a tribe, the class between the chief and the plebeians: in the spoken language it still remains a Gentleman, and *a dhuine uasail* is the equivalent for "Sir" in conversation, not *a shaoi*, as is found in various modern printed dialogues.

"If your stories be true," said Cormac, "thou indeed art Mananan, and she is your wife; for no one upon the face of the earth* possesses those treasures but only Mananan, for it was to Tir Tairrngire he went to seek that woman, and he got those seven cows with her, and he coughed upon them until he learned [the wonderful powers of] their milking, that is to say, that they would fill the seven kieves at one time." "Full wisely hast thou told us that, O youth," said the man of the house, "and tell a story for thy own quarter now." "I will," said Cormac, "and do thou lay a quarter of the log under the cauldron, until I tell thee a true story." So it was done, and Cormac said, "I indeed am upon a search, for it is a year this day that my wife, my son, and my daughter were borne away from me." "Who took them from thee?" asked the man of the house. "A youth that came to me," said Cormac, "having in his hand a fairy branch, and I conceived a great wish for it, so that I granted him the award of his own mouth for it, and he exacted from me my word to fullfil that: now the award that he pronounced against me was, my wife, my son, and my daughter, to wit, Eithne, Cairbre, and Ailbhe." "If what thou sayest be true," said the man of the house, "thou indeed art Cormac, son of Art, son of Conn of the hundred battles." "Truly I am," quoth Cormac, "and it is in search of those I am now." That story was true, and the quarter of the pig was cooked. "Eat thy meal now," said the young man. "I never ate food," said Cormac, "having only two people in my company." "Wouldst thou eat it with three others, O Cormac?" asked the young man. "If they were dear to me, I would," said Cormac. The man of the house arose, and opened the nearest door of the dwelling, and [went and] brought in the three whom Cormac sought, and then the courage and exultation of Cormac rose.

After that, Mananan came to him in his proper form, and said thus: "I it was, who bore those three away from thee, and I it was, who gave thee that branch, and it was in order to bring thee to this house, that I took them from thee, and there is your meat now, and eat food," said Mananan. "I would do so," said Cormac, "if I could learn the wonders that I have seen to-day." "Thou shalt learn them," said Mananan, "and I it was, that caused thee to go towards them that thou mightest see them. The host of horsemen that

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* Ar druim na talman, literally, upon the back or ridge of the earth, which is the Irish idiom.

† *Faiscin* to see. This in the spoken language is *feicsin*, always pronounced by metathesis *feiscin* or *feiscint*. The Irish language at the present day seems to have a repugnance to the sound of the letter *x* (which is nearly represented by the combinations *cs, gs*), so metathesis generally takes place, e. g. *bosga* for *bogsa*, a box; *buiscin* for *buicsin*, a boxing-glove; *foisge* for *foigse*, nearer; *tuisgin*, for *tuigsin*, to understand; *tuisge* for *tuigse*, the understanding; *tuisgeanach* for *tuigseanach*, considerate; but *Sagsanach*, an Englishman, and *Sagsana*, England, are pronounced *Sasanach*, *Sasana*. This peculiarity is sometimes introduced into English by those who speak it imperfectly, and who may be heard to say *eshkercise* for "exercise."

appeared to thee covering in the house with the birds' feathers, which, according as they covered half of the house, used to disappear from it, and they seeking birds' feathers for the rest of it—that is a comparison which is applied to poets, and to people that seek a fortune, for when they go out,all that they leave behind them in their houses is spent, and so they go on for ever. The young man whom thou sawest kindling the fire, and who used to break the tree between bottom and top, and who used to find it consumed whilst he was away seeking for another tree,—what is represented by that, are those who distribute food whilst every one else is being served, they themselves getting it ready, and every one else enjoying the profit thereof. The wells which thou sawest in which were the heads.—that is a comparison which is applied to the three that are in the world.* These are they: that is to say, that head which has one stream flowing into it, and one stream flowing out of it, is the man who gives [the goods of] the world as he gets [them].† That head which thou sawest with one stream flowing into it, and two streams flowing out of it, the meaning of that is—the man who gives more than he gets [of the goods] of the world.‡ The head which thou sawest with three streams flowing into its mouth and one stream flowing out of it, that is the man who gets much and gives little, and he is the worst of the three. And now eat thy meal, O Cormac," said Mananan.

After that, Cormac, Cairbre, Ailbhe, and Eithne sat down, and a table-cloth was spread before them. "That is a full precious thing before thee, O Cormac," said Mananan, "for there is no food, however delicate, that shall be demanded of it, but it shall be had without doubt." "That is well," quoth Cormac. After that Mananan thrust his hand into his girdle, and brought out a goblet, and set it upon his palm. "It is of the virtues of this cup," said Mananan, "that when a false story is told before it, it makes four pieces of it; and when a true story is related before it, it will be whole again." "Let that be proved," said Cormac. "It shall be done," said Mananan. "This woman that I took from thee, she has had another husband since I brought her with me." Then there were four pieces made of the goblet. "That is a falsehood," said the wife of Mananan. "I say that they have not seen a woman or a man since they left thee but their three selves." That story was, true and the goblet was joined together again. "Those are very precious things, that thou hast, O Mananan," said Cormac. "They would be good for thee [to have]," answered Mananan, "therefore they shall all three be thine, to wit, the goblet, the branch, and the tablecloth, in consideration of thy walk and of thy journey this day; and eat thy meal now, for were there a host and a multitude by thee,thou shouldst find no grudging in this place. And I greet you kindly as many as ye are, for it was I that worked magic upon you, so that ye might be with me to-night in friendship."

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* This is the Irish mode of expressing "three classes of men that exist."

† i.e. who is liberal according to his means.

‡ This is a mode, and certainly a strong one, of saying "who is more liberal than he can afford."

He eats his meal after that; and that meal was good, for they thought not of any meat but they got it upon the table-cloth, nor of any drink but they got it in the cup, and they returned great thanks for all that to Mananan. Howbeit, when they had eaten their meal, that is to say, Cormac, Eithne, Ailbhe, and Cairbre, a couch was prepared for them, and they went to slumber and sweet sleep; and where they rose upon the morrow was in the pleasant Liathdruim, with their table-cloth, their cup, and their branch.

Thus far then the 'wandering of Cormac and how he got his branch.'"

We find the influence of the ancient forms of expression still prevailing among our people who are acquainted with the English language only. The *consuetudinal* mood referred to in one of Mr. O'Grady's notes on this tale, is still used in a fashion by English-speaking Celts. Instead of saying, 'He is in the habit of strolling along the river-banks every day,' or, 'he is accustomed to stroll,' &c., thus making use of an infinitive mood or participle along with the principal verb, they say. 'He *does be* strolling along the river-banks every day.' To every one accustomed to hear English spoken with Irish idioms, this last sentence, though inelegant in form, is more expressive, and conveys a fuller notion of continuity than the ordinary phrase, 'He strolls along the river banks every day.' To this Celtic characteristic of attachment to old institutions, and dislike of change, is owing our tautology, and circumlocution, and the preservation of Irish and Anglo-Norman words and phrases. A peasant will still say, 'the fever is very *brief* (a mistake for *rife*) in such a place;' and on entering a company, he will use the old salutation, '*Sit ye merry*, or, *Sith ye merry*,' as if he was a Saxon of the reign of Edward IV. He does not renounce—he *reneagues* his bad ways; he calls his shelves for crockery and pewter ware after the old French *dressoir;* his son is not a boy or lad, he is a *gorsoon*. The inhabitants of the 'Big House,' are not ladies and gentlemen, they are the 'Persons of Quality,' or simply, the 'Quality' of Queen Anne's reign. Instead of saying, 'I had the good fortune to break my whiskey bottle,' he recalls the Anglo-French of the times of the *Pale*, and cries, 'I made *brishe* of my bottle of whiskey.' He translates the Gallic *mal* literally, and complains of being very *bad*, when he is only *sick*. Of a subtle nature, he will not call a 'spade,' a *spade;* he prefers the Irish equivalent *Fac*, and when dirt is very dirty, he calls it *Sal*. The gutturals and aspirations of Saxon, Irish, and old French, possess their old influence over him, he retains the pronunciation of ages before the Conquest, and in every dozen words he utters, one at least, is genuinely Irish.

Our substantial Irish folk are more wise in their generation, than to hold out extra encouragement to the productions of native poets, novelists, painters of historical pictures,—indeed, to merely literary products of every kind, music perhaps excepted. They know by instinct, how useless and burdensome to themselves and society in general, are middling professors or practitioners in letters and the fine arts. However, in withholding their patronage from the bad and the middling, the really gifted come to the wall along with the rest, unless they employ their talents or genius on foreign subjects, or get their wares marked with a British stamp: then indeed they enjoy the privileges accorded to all foreigners. No truly national periodical need hope for a long life or adequate support. In our Hibernian art-exhibitions, a cunning thief might remove the specimens of native artists without fear of detection; and if a writer unprovided with a strong purse, attempts to publish a work in any department of literature on an Irish subject, let him prepare to meet a heavy bill with small returns from the booksellers. There was a National Magazine published in Dublin about thirty years since, and conducted with ability, yet the proprietors lost about a thousand pounds by it in two or three years. An enthusiastic dealer in rare books, chiefly on Irish subjects, started a truly national and valuable historical work (a translation from the Irish) in numbers, had it ably translated and edited, and completed it in the very best style as regarded appearance. His reward was bankruptcy, and the result—the deaths of his wife and himself of broken hearts, and the dispersion of their helpless family. With natural good taste, and not bad judgment, we seem afraid to pronounce on the merit or demerit of any thing in the domain of art or literature, till we can ascertain what the people of England, or their artistic and literary Aristarchuses think or feel about it.

William Elliott Hudson was an honorable exception to many of his countrymen in this respect. By personal exertions and by great pecuniary sacrifices, he long aided every laudable effort to revive or preserve our ancient literary monuments.

To him we owe the national music preserved in the *Citizen*. The Celtic Society were under deep obligations to him, and one of his latest efforts was directed to the formation of the Ossianic Society. Mr. O'Daly, Editor of the fourth volume of its transactions, has not forgotten the friend of the "mere Irish" men of letters. His bust forms the vignette of the volume,

and a well deserved and grateful tribute is paid to his memory in the opening sheet. Let the owners of the yet-unpublished manuscripts, the past and future editors, and the annual subscribers, take no offence at our complaint of the apathy of our gentry and middle classes, but receive the praises accorded to Hudson and such as he, as indirectly given also to themselves.

The volume now under consideration begins with one of the everlasting dialogues between *Oisin* and our National Saint, in which, as usual, we are made to sympathise with the proud and carnal-minded old Heathen. Then we have the bloody fight of *Knoc-an-Air* (Hill of Slaughter) and its results, *Oisin's* visit to *Tir-na-n-Oge*, and the *Boyish Exploits of Fion Mac Cumhail* already discussed. Great judgment, and care, and sound knowledge of the old tongue, are evident in the translation, and the editor has not been niggardly in imparting information on every thing connected with the subject matter of tale or poem, as he renders it into English. Indeed Gælic literature owes him much. Were it not for his zeal in its cause, and his business aptitudes, many a valuable and interesting relic of the genius and fancy of our old bards and story tellers, would be lost to ourselves and those who succeed us; ay, and many an interesting ancedote of the provincial poets and learned *Trojans* of the past generation. His lines (we trust) have fallen in pleasanter places than those of poor Bryan Geraghty, who if not as profound a Gælic scholar, was full as enthusiastic for the literary glories of his native land.

From the dialogue we select a few stanzas. *Oisin loquitur.*

"I have heard music more melodious than your music,
Tho' greatly thou praisest the clerics,
The song of the blackbird of Letter Lee,
And the melody which the Dord Fiann made.

The very sweet thrush of Gleann-a-sgail,
Or the dashing of the barks touching the strand;
More melodious to me was the cry of the hounds,
Than of thy schools, O chaste cleric.

Little Cnu, Cnu of my heart,
The small dwarf who belonged to Fionn,—
When he chaunted tunes and songs,
He put us into deep slumbers.

Blathnaid, the youthful maid,
Who was never betrothed to man under the sun,
Except to little Cnu alone,—
O Patrick, sweet was her mouth.

The twelve hounds which belonged to Fionn,
When they were let loose through Glen Rath,
Were sweeter than musical instruments,
And their face outwards from the Suir."

* * *

'Twas the desire of the son of Cumhall of noble mien,
To listen to the sound of Dromderg,
To sleep at the stream of Eas Ruaidh,
And to chase the deer of Galway of the bays.

The warbling of the blackbird of Letter Lee,
The wave of Rughraidhe lashing the shore,
The bellowing of the ox of Magh-maoin,
And the lowing of the calf of Gleann-da-mhail.

The resounding of the chase of Sliabh-g-Crot,
The noise of the fawns round Sliabh Cua;
The seagulls' scream on Iorrus yonder,
Or the screech of the ravens over the battle-field.

The tossing of the hulls of the barks by the wave,
The yell of the hounds at Drumlish;
The cry of Bran at Cnoc-an-air,
Or the murmur of the streams about Sliabh Mis.

The call of Oscur going to the chase,
The cries of the hounds at Leirg na bh-Fiann;
To be sitting amongst the bards,
That was his desire constantly."

The *Battle of Cnoc-an-Air* (or *Aur*) is a very fair specimen of the old heroic poem of the Celts. The exploits of the chief heroes are indeed superhuman, but there is no ranting nor bombast. The slaughter of the men with or without names, is terrible, but the Fenians fight only in self-defence. *Fion* does not expose himself to personal risk, but he is not lavish of the blood of his own people nor of the invaders; and instead of a general melée, himself and his princess procure an engagement of a few warriors on either side to determine the victory. The authors of this poem and of the story of *Diarmuid and Grainne* did not consult each other as to little points of chronology. She did not become *Fion's* wife till some time after the other hero's death; but in the present poem, *Diarmuid* is fighting among the "Seven battalions of the standing Fenians," as lustily as if he had not been slain many years before, on the tulagh at *Sliabh Gulban*.* But if Homer and Cervantes have been caught napping at times, let needful slumber be forgiven to our own nameless bards.

* A Mountain in Sligo, now called *Ben Beelban.*

Oisin commences thus :—

" We were all, the Fians and Fionn,
Assembled on this hill to the west,
Practising feats of agility,
And we so mirthful casting stones.
* * *

Fionn gazed above his head,
And he beheld a mighty omen of blood.
' I greatly fear,' saith the sage,
' That a ruin of slaughter will come upon the Fians.'
* * *

Conan spoke with a loud voice,
Exclaiming haughtily and proudly,
' There is no one whose colour changed,
I confess, but a coward.'

' O Fionn, son of Cumhall,' saith the Druid,
' Call thy forces in thy presence,
And divide them into two separate bodies,
That they may watch the approach of the foe.'

Fionn sounded the Dord Fhiann,
And they answered by a shout,
Each man vieing to be first,
Noble, chief, and host."

After some discussions and false alarms :—

" A woman more beauteous than the sun,
The Fians beheld approaching on the plain;
Fionn Mac Cumhall, I tell thee,
Was saluted by the queen of the red mantle.

' Who art thou, O queen ?' saith Fionn,
' Of the gentlest mien and loveliest form:
Truly more sweet to me is thy voice,
Than all the strains of music.'

' Niamh-nuadh-chrothach, is my name,
Daughter of Garraidh, the son of Dolar Dein;
The chief king of Greece, my curse upon him!
Bound me to Tailc Mac Treoin.'

'Why is it that thou shunnest him ?
Do not conceal the fact from me now :
As thy protector till judgment's day,
I take thy hand against his will.'

'Not without cause did I hate him,
Black as the coal was his skin;
Two ears, a tail, and the head of a cat,
Are upon the man of repulsive countenance.

I walked [travelled] the world thrice,
And did not leave a king or lord,
That I did not implore, but thee, O Fionn,
And a chief never promised me protection from him.'

'I will protect thee, O youthful daughter,'
Saith Mac Cumhaill, who was never conquered,
'Or all shall fall for thy sake,
The seven battalions of the Fians.'

* * *

Soon we saw coming towards us,
The chieftain Tailc of the hard spear;
He did not salute, or pay homage to Fionn,
But demanded battle on account of his wife.

When *Tailc* had butchered a number of the Fenian host, he was taken in hand by *Oscur*, and,

For five nights and five days,
Were the two, who were not feeble in battle,
Without food, without drink, without sleep,
'Till Tailc fell conquered by my son.

* * *

Niamh-nuadh-chrothach, sad the tale,
When she beheld the extent of the slaughter,
Shame overcame her crimsoned face,
And she fell lifeless among the slain.

The death of the queen after all ills,
Was what preyed most upon us all;
This hill after the conflict,
The Fenians named Cnoc-an-Air."

A new terror now approaches, *Mergach* of the Green Spears. He comes evidently intent on mischief. He is as fell a champion as *Tailc*, but of better manners; he parleys before coming to blows.

M. "'Relate unto me, O son of mighty Cumhaill,
As thou didst promise at the commencement,
By whom, or how did fall
Tailc the strong and powerful, and his bright love.'

F. 'Tailc Mac Treoin the great fell,
By the power of the strong arm of Oscur the noble;
There fell by Tailc, at first of the Fians,
Full ten hundred of spotless men.'

M. 'Was it not shameful to thee, O Fionn,
To suffer the princess of the loftiest fame,
To be put to death by the Fians?
Her death will bring havoc among the Fians of Fail.'

F. 'Not I nor any of the Fenians,
Ordered the death of the woman;
But when she beheld the loss of the host,
Into the pangs of death she fell.'"

After much waste of breath, it is settled that some Fenian warrior shall meet *Mergach* in 'battle and conflict' next morning. Fion then proceeds to sound the loyalty and resolution of his forces:—

"He first addressed the front battalion, [fresh;
Who were named the battalion of heroes smooth and
He inquired of them in a loud tone,
Would they fight as usual in his cause?

They all at once answered Fionn
That for him they would ever fight;
The battalion of the chieftains said likewise,
That they would follow the battalion with most hands.

The battalion of the middle-sized men said,
In battle or conflict however desperate,
That they never deserted their noble king,
And would never flinch one step.

The battalion of the middle-aged men said,
They would not flinch till the day of death;
And the battalion of the stout men said also,
That they would follow him like the rest.

The battalion of the small men said,
And the battalion behind them, the rear guards,
That they were faithful in their acts,
And that they would follow him like the rest."

But when he demands a single champion to meet the terrible *Mergach*, neither will the *Smooth and Fresh* heroes, nor the *Chieftains*, nor the *Middle-sized*, nor the *Middle Aged*, nor the *Stout Men*, nor the *Small Men*, grant him the much-desired hero. However, *Caoin Liath*, the chief of the rear guard, offers to engage next morning one of the best men of the invaders; and,

"Caoin Liath took his armour and shield,
And fiercely struck the battle-blow;
Meargach of the blue spears came
With his host immediately to the spot.

* * *

Meargach called forth one of his own men,
Whose name was Donn Dorcain;
Then the two attacked each other,
Dexterous and stoutly on Cnoc-an-Air.

* * *

The twain, who were not feeble in battle,
Were freely cleaving bodies and limbs,
From the rising of the sun till evening,
Till Donn Dorcain fell, a headless corpse.

* * *

When Meargach of the blades beheld
That Caoin Liath laid Donn low,
He armed his well-proportioned, elegant body
In battle armour for conflict and death."

No one is judged meet to encounter *Mergach* but *Oscur*.

"Oscur went forth in battle armour,
And he took his arms and shield in his hand;
He went onwards to meet
Angry Meargach, the lion of bravery.

The two attacked each other on the second day,
In the morning with fierce blows,
Cleaving and wounding each the other,
And 'twas not long till the Fians shouted.

* * *

This was why the Fenians wailed,
O Patrick of the clerics, truly;
The third blow given by Meargach of the blades,
Left Oscur weak upon the ground.

When we beheld Oscur down,
We and the rest supposed him dead;
But 'twas not long till the valorous hero
Arose alive, and stood up.

* * *

'Remember Oscur' saith Conan Maol,
'Thy fall to the Fians will be a loss;
Remember every hard battle
Thou sustained for the hosts of Fionn.'

* * *

The two were of the fairest features,
Oscur and Meargach I say;
On the second day on the approach of evening,
That their form or appearance could not be distinguished.

There was not a spot of their smooth bodies
Without trace of scars and wounds of blades,
From the top of their heads to the sole of their feet:
To us and the rest it was not pleasant.

* * *

The two brave heroes relinquished the battle
For that night, and sorely wounded
Were their bodies, flesh and bone,
Without vigor, without fame, without force.

On the morning of the morrow,
The two encountered each other fiercely;
They were the strongest and mightiest of arm,
That ever came on earth.

* * *

In might, in strength, and in agility,
Without want of feats or deeds,
The two gave not up the action,
For day or night during ten days.

* * *

Not long were we on both sides,
Ministering and listening to them;
Till Meargach was behind his shield,
Prepared for Oscur of the severe blows.

Oscur did not give him rest or quarter,
But severely dealt each fierce blow;
At the close of the severe combat,
Of Meargach he cut his head."

The noble *Oscur* is at last allowed to repose on his couch of rushes, and look to the healing of his wounds, while *Mergach's* sons and chiefs engage in single combat with the Fians. *Conan* the foul-tongued, the bald, and the cowardly, is obliged to take his turn.

"Conan never potent in battle,
And who never sought fame for valour or deeds,
Went to meet Liagan, who when he came in his presence,
Said, 'silly is thy visit, thou bald man!'

When Conan came nigh to him,
Liagan fiercely raised his hand;
'More dangerous for thee is the man behind,
Than I before thee,' saith Conan.

Liagan the heroic looked behind,
And quick was the blow made by Conan:
Before he could look forward,
His head was severed from the neck!

Conan did not maintain his ground,
Nor did he ask any to take his place;
He ran with all haste towards the Fians,
And flung his blade from his hand."

* * *

At last it comes to the turn of *Faolan*.

"Faolan had hardly dealt the second blow
To Cian Mac Lachtna of the hard blades,
When we beheld approaching
A fair princess of noble features.

Cian Mac Lachtna fell by Faolan
Before the princess arrived;
The battle was relinquished on each side,
Waiting the arrival of that fair lady.

The enemy raised a wail of grief
On recognising the princess;
The Fians were silently gazing at her,
Whilst she incessantly shed tears!

* * *

The noble princess cried and wailed,
And wrung her hands in dismal grief;
She shed a bitter flood of tears,
And exclaimed, 'where are my Three?'

The bright princess went forth
Intensely wailing among the slain,
Till she reached the spot,
Where her husband and two sons fell.

The Fians mustered east and west,
The foe, in like manner, feebly came
From every side and peak of the hill,
Listening to the *caoin* of the woman.

* * *

Not long were we, O Patrick! thus,
Till she fell into the swoon of death;
The foe raised a bitter wail,
And the Fians themselves were in grief!

We and the foe imagined,
That she had there died without a moan;
But she assumed her own shape again,
And sung in tears the lay that follows!

'O Meargach of the sharp green blades,
Many a conflict and severe fight,
Amidst the hosts and in single combat,
Came off by thy hardy hand in thy time.

* * *

Long was thy journey afar,
From thine own fair land to Inis Fail,
To visit Fionn and the Fians,
Who treacherously put my Three to death!

Sorrowful! my husband—my chief!
I lost by the wiles of the Fians,
My two youths—my two sons,
My two men that were fierce in battle!

* * *

My grief! my Dun laid low,
My grief! my shelter and shield,
My grief! Meargach and Ciardan,
My grief! Liagan of the broad chest!

* * *

My grief! my riches all,
My grief! your absence in battle time,
My grief! my muster of hosts,
My grief! my three heroic lions!

* * *

I knew, by the mighty fairy host,
That were in conflict over the Dun,
Fighting each other in the chasms of the air,
That evil would befal my Three!

I knew, by the fairy strain,
That came direct into mine ear,
That evil tidings were not far from me:
Your fall was what it portended!

I knew, on the morn of that day,
On which my three noble heroes parted me,
On beholding tears of blood on their cheeks,
That they would not return victorious to me!

* * *

I knew, O noble Three,
In forgetting the leashes of your hounds,
That ye would not again return with victory,
Without treachery from the hosts of Fionn!

I knew, ye torches of valor!
By the cascade's stream, near the Dun,
Having changed into blood at your departure,
That this guile was ever found in Fionn.

I knew, by the eagle's visit
Each evening over the Dun,
That ere long I would hear
Evil tidings from my Three!

I knew, when the huge tree withered,
Both branch and leaves before the Dun,
That victorious you would never return,
From the wiles of Fionn Mac Cumhaill!'

'Do not decry Fionn, O noble princess (saith Grainne),
Nor yet decry the Fians;
'Twas not by treachery and craft,
That thy three [heroes] fell!'

* * *

'I knew by the sorrowful vision
That revealed my doom to me,
That my head and hands were cut off,
That it was ye who were bereft of sway!

I knew by melodious Uaithnin,
The favorite dog of my Liagan,
Howling each morning early,
That death was certain for my Three!

I knew, when in a vision I saw,
A pool of blood where the Dun stood,
That my Three were vanquished
By the wiles from which Fionn was never exempt!'

* * *

'Had they remained in their own country,
O mild princess,' saith Grainne of Fionn,
And not come to be avenged for Mac Treoin,
From the Fians they would have received no hurt!'

'Had they fallen in fair battle,
Without deceit or treachery, O gentle Grainne,
I would not reproach the Fians,
But they do not survive to bear me witness!'

'Had they survived, O noble princess,
They themselves would not decry the Fians;
'Twas by valour and might of arm,
They laid low thy Three!

* * *

O Ailne!' saith the pleasant Grainne,
I know that thou hast come from afar:
Come with me and with the Fians,
Till we together eat and drink.'

Ailne of the bright form declined
The invitation given her by Grainne of Fionn;
And she said it was beneath herself
To partake of cheer from people of their deeds.

'May my body be rent in two!'
Saith Conan, in a surly voice,
'But thou shalt pay, O Ailne bright,
For unjustly stigmatising our hosts!'

'O bald man of the ugliest aspect,
That I have yet met on any plain,
I apprehend I have sorely paid
For the stigma given, and how sad the tale!'

'Thou shalt pay more sorely,' saith Conan,
For the scandal thou hast given the Fians,
I will cut off thy head of the golden locks,
If I am permitted by Fionn of the Fians.'

'Though huge and bulky is thy body,
And though flat and bald is thy skull,
And tho' thou art thick-boned, tough-sinewed, swift,
These are marks which ill become a hero!'

We the Fenians, all raised
A shout of joy, so did the foe,
When the woman rebuked and reproached
The silly bald man [Conan].

* * *

He drew his sword from its costly scabbard,
And made a fierce dart towards the woman;
Oscur gave him a hard blow,
That made Conan shriek and roar.

Conan howled, and looked piteously
On Oscur of the sharp-tempered blades,
And he said, 'shameful is the deed:
Thou hast pierced my breast from side to side!'

'I would not pierce thy breast nor thy body,
But that I saw thy bad intent:
It was not meet for thee to unsheath thy sword,
On seeing the shape and beauty of the woman.'

* * *

In the morning the Fians came
On the hill where lay the slain;
And 'twas not long till we beheld approaching,
Ailne of the bright countenance, and her hosts.

Grainne advanced to meet them,
And took gentle Ailne by the hand;
They walked together on the one path,
And the two approached the front of the hosts.

At the time that they reached us,
Daire sounded the melodious music of battle;
Fionn sounded the Bar-buadh,
And called in haste his mighty hosts.

'O bright Ailne!' saith Grainne,
'Is it thy wish that two heroes
Should fight with their blades,
Or a general battle on each side?'

'O Grainne!' saith Ailne of the bright countenance,
It is thus it should be at either side,
Thirty of the Fenian heroes,
And thirty their match, to meet.'

'Call to thee thy thirty heroes (saith Grainne),
On the plain by themselves,
And I shall call thirty of the Fians,
Till they give severe battle on Cnoc-an-Air!

'O Thuardan!' saith Ailne, of the bright countenance,
There fell by thy hand in one day,
One hundred and three, mighty, swift men:
Come thou as leader in the fight!'

'O Giabhan!' saith Grainne aloud,
'There fell by thy hand in one battle,
Three hundred and sixteen men:
Stand thou by his side.'

'O Meanuir!' saith Ailne, 'go forth,
Thou that hast brought the swift deer from the hill,
By the swiftness of thy two fleet hardy legs:
Cowardice is not thy character in battle.'

'O Ruaithne!' saith pleasant Grainne,
'Thou wouldst not crush the withered grass,
When in pursuit [of the foe] by thy fleetness:
Thou shalt match him in the conflict.'

* * *

The two gentle women,
Ailne, and Grainne the wife of Fionn,
Were calling and choosing the men,
Until exactly thirty were mustered at a side.

The mighty men attacked each other,
Each two of them in hand to hand conflict,
At the close of the battle there only survived,
O Patrick! but two of the Fians!"

Ailne is still insatiable of blood, and will at any cost, have a general melée. *Fion* and *Grainne* do all in their power to avoid bloodshed, but in vain; at last, the chief loses his temper.

"Fionn then vehemently sounded,
The Dord with a call for vengeance to the fight;
They attacked each other at either side,
And the battle was fought furiously!

Alas, O Patrick! that was the battle,
The fiercest and the mightiest of hand to hand conflicts,
That was fought since the beginning of the world,
And to the stubborn princess 'twas disastrous!

* * *

O Patrick ! I relate but the truth :
Though the foe were hardy and fierce,
They all fell by the Fians,
Except three and the princess herself.

The princess and the three departed,
And we knew not whither they went;
Sorrowful they were at parting,
And, O Patrick of the clerics, 'twas sad!

Thus ended the severe contest,
O Patrick of the white croziers, lately come ;
Henceforth the Fians named
This hill westwards, the hill of slaughter.

* * *

And O my grief! 'twas there fell,
Luanan the wise, of the heavy spears,
Who would bring the wild boar from the hill,
By the great swiftness of his robust limbs.

'Twas there fell mighty Cruagan,
Who would devour a cow at one meal,
With forty cakes of bread.

* * *

'Twas there fell Caol the swift,
Who in swiftness was fleeter than the wind,
And Ciarnan inflicter of severe wounds," &c.

And then follows a bead-roll of the brave Fenians that perished, with a " touch at the quality" of each. The survivors, as soon as they are in condition, repair to Loch *Lene* (Killarney) to get the dread images of slaughter removed from their minds, and enjoy a stag hunt. We are favored with a list of the dogs of the chiefs, occupying four pages, headed by *Fion's* favorites.

" We had there Sceolain and Bran,
Lomaire, Brod, and Lom-luth ;
Five hounds foremost in chase and action,
That never parted Fionn."

The treasures belonging to the Fenians, lost or concealed under the fair waters of the lakes, are also enumerated. Let our antiquaries look to the matter in time.

"This is the lake—the fairest to be seen,
That is under the sun truly ;
Many treasures belonging to the Fians,
Are in it doubtless, secured this night.

* * *

There are there in the northern side [of the lake]
Fifty blue-green coats of mail;
There are in the western side,
Fifty helmets in one pile!

There are in the southern side
Ten hundred broad and glittering swords,
Ten hundred shields and the Dord Fhiann,
And the Barr-buadh likewise.

There is in the eastern side
Gold and raiment in plenty, and spoils,
Treasures too many to describe,
That came afar each day across the sea."

Describing the hunt gives *Oisin* an appetite, and he complainingly hints to St. Patrick :—

"I often slept abroad on the hill,
Under grey dew on the foliage of trees,
And I was not accustomed to a supperless bed,
While there was a stag on yonder hill!'

P. 'Thou hast not a bed without food;
Thou gettest seven cakes of bread,
And a large roll of butter,
And a quarter of beef every day.'

O. 'I saw a berry of the rowan tree
Twice larger than thy roll;
And I saw an ivy leaf
Larger and wider than thy cake of bread.

I saw a quarter of a blackbird,
Which was larger than thy quarter of beef;
'Tis it that fills my soul with sadness,
To be in thy house.'" * * * *

It is related in other poems that on St. Patrick refusing belief to *Oisin's* facts in natural history, he procured a rowan berry from Glan-a-Smoll, an ivy leaf from Chapelizod, and the quarter of a monstrous blackbird killed on the Curragh, even larger than those of which he made boast.

Grainne is interesting and loveable in the former tale: in this, she acts the kind *Ban Tierna* to her husband's tribe. She has the glory of her people and of their chief at heart, but she is averse from slaughter, and has a feeling heart even for their bitter enemies. The circumlocution observed in the ordinary phraseology of our peasantry comes from the old language of *Oisin's* days; specimens will be remarked in different places through our quotations.

But all human institutions come to an end, and the Fenians were no exception. *Fion* himself was assassinated at Ath Brea on the Boyne, A.D. 286; and a few years afterwards, the exactions and pretensions of the Clan Boisgne became so disagreeable to the reigning monarch, Cairbre, that he resolved to reduce their power even at the risk of his life. It is recorded that the Prince of Decies in Waterford wishing to espouse his daughter *Sgeimh Sholais* (Light of Beauty), the Fenians insisted on the tribute paid to them on such occasions; and this was the last straw that broke the back of the monarch's patience. The Clan-Morna came to his aid under the command of *Aedh Caemh*, and the tribes of Ulster also obeyed his call, but the Fenians of Britain and the Munster Hiberians, to whose prince,* *Fion's* daughter, *Samaar*, had been wedded, rushed to the standard of *Oscur* to whom the chieftaincy had fallen; and on the fatal field of Gabhra in Meath, the enraged forces met, and the fighting days of the Fions of Fail were ended. Some of the verses relative to the fight, as afterwards repeated to St. Patrick by the only survivor, *Oisin*, here follow.

"We numbered thirty sons
Of the tribe of Fionn of the Fenians,
Who bore shield and sword,
In front of conflict and battle.

When we marched from Binn Eadair,
This was the number of our whole force,
Ten hundred valiant Fenians,
In the bands of each man.

The bands of the Fians of Alba,
And the supreme King of Britain,
Belonging to the order of the Fians of Alba,
Joined us in that battle.

The Fians of Lochlann were powerful,
From the chief to the leader of nine men;
They mustered along with us,
To share in the struggle.

There was Cairbre Liffeachair,
And the great hosts of Erin,
Opposed to our power,
In the battle of Gabhra of the strokes.

---

* Cormac Cas.

There were Oscur,* son of Garraidh,
And ten hundred active warriors,
Augmenting the forces in that battle,
In opposition to my son.

* * *

The King of Erin
And Mac Garraidh Mac Moirne.
Led their brave hosts and their banner forward,
In the front of the battle of Gabhra."

Just as in the drama of the *Battle of Aughrim*, the Fenians before engaging the Royal troops, had like to destroy each other through rivalry for command: much blood was shed, and,—

"We then raised our war-cry
Commencing the battle of Gabhra;
Oscur and the Fians of Leinster,
Marched to oppose Mac Moirne.

There was Feargus the poet,
The prince's minstrel,
Cheering us in the struggle,
To advance to the battle.

We rushed against each other,
We and they;
Of a similar conflict
No mortal shall have to tell.

* * *

My son urged his course
Through the battalions of Tara,
Like a hawk through a flock of birds,
Or a rock descending a declivity.

Mac Garraidh* of the white skin came,
After having served in the battle,
To meet my son,
Fiercely and prince-like.

* * *

The men of Eire hearkened,
Though the cessation was painful;
To the sound of the strokes
That passed between the two Oscurs.

As many as two score shields,
In each contending struggle,
Mac Garraidh the pure, and my own son,
Broke in the battle of Gabhra.

---

* *Aedh Caemh* or the Connaught *Oscur*, grandson of *Morna*,

Three showers arose
Over their heads in the strife,—
A shower of blood, a shower of fire,
And a bright shower from their shields.

Mac Garraidh was worsted,
Though the task was difficult,
By Oscur, who never failed
In point of liberality to the learned.

The monarch of Eire hastened,
Who had poisoned (*deadly*) weapons;
To meet Oscur of the strokes,
And he wounded his heart.

Nor failed my son,
Whose career was never impeded:
He drove the nimble javelin
To the cross through Cairbre.

* * *

He slew the king of Munster,
Though great his deeds in conflict;
The son of the king of the world fell by him also,
And so did Mac Garraidh.

By him was slain Cairbre,
Who had the silken standard;
There fell by him in evil conflict
The despoilers of every country.

* * *

Until the grass of the plain is numbered,
And every grain of sand of the sea-coast,
All who fell by my son
Cannot possibly be enumerated.

* * *

My son was slain,
That caused the misfortune of the Fenians;
He fell in that battle,
Together with Cairbre."

From the discursive mode in which the fight is sung, and perhaps from the dovetailing of two separate poems on the same subject, there begins now a confused narrative. Even *Fion*, who had been murdered some years before, comes to bewail his grandson.* A few verses are subjoined in which no inconsis-

* The translator reconciles the incongruity by supposing the ghost of *Fion* to have visited the field of slaughter; but on giving the matter due consideration, and carefully examining the text, we have come to the conclusion that the poet meant otherwise.

tency occurs. The reader will scarcely fail to mark a true poetic spirit and genuine pathos even in the bald literal translation.

"When the carnage ceased, I came,
And stood over my successful son Oscur;
And Caoilte devoid of deception came,
And stood over his six gentle sons.

* * *

Many a mail of noble warriors,
Many a fair head-piece,
And shield lay scattered over the plain,
Together with princes bereft of life!

* * *

I found my own son lying down
On his left side by his shield,
His right hand clutched his sword, and he
Pouring blood through his mail.

I leaned the shaft of my spear on the ground,
And I raised a cry over him;
O Patrick, I then thought,
What I should do after him.

Oscur gazed up at me,
And the sight was pain enough for me (to bear);
He extended his two arms towards me,
Endeavoring to rise to meet me.

I grasped the hand of my own son,
And sat down by his left side;
And from (the time of) that sitting by him,
I set no value on the world.

My manly son thus said to me,
And he at the latter end of his life;
'I return my thanks to the gods
For thy safe escape, O father.'

* * *

Mac Ronan then cried aloud,
And feebly fell upon the earth;
He cast his pure body upon the ground,
He plucked his hair and beard.

* * *

We remained that night amidst the slaughter,
Watching his body till the day,
And conveying the male descendants of Fionn,
To pleasant and delightful mounds.

We raised the manly Oscur
Aloft on the shafts of our javelins
Bearing him to another pure mound,
To strip him of his garments.

A palm's breadth from his hair,
Of his body was not whole,
Until it reached the sole of his foot,
But his face alone.

* * *

From that day of the battle of Gabhra,
We did not speak boldly;
And we passed not either night or day,
That we did not breathe deep, heavy sighs.

We buried Oscur of the red weapons,
On the north side of the great Gabhra,
Together with Oscur son of Garraidh of renowned feats,
And Oscur, son of the king of Lochlann.

And he who was not niggardly of gold,
Mac Lughaidh, the tall warrior,—
We dug the cave of his sepulchre
Very wide, as became a king.

The graves of the Oscurs, narrow dwellings of clay,
The graves of the sons of Garraidh and Oisin,
And the whole extent of the great Rath,
Was the grave of the great Oscur of Baoisgne.

I beseech the king of blissful life,
And do thou beseech him too, Patrick son of Calphurn,
That weakness may come upon my voice;
My sorrow to-night is very great!"

It was scarcely judicious to admit into the collection, the prose account which follows the poem. It totally upsets the ordinary traditions of the tribe, making *Fion, Diarmuid O'Duibhne*, and others, perform deeds of valour on that day, despite of their having been wrapt in clay for several years; and the style of the piece is extremely turgid and unpoetical.

The residence of *Oisin* in *Tir-na-n-Oge* occupies a portion of the fourth volume. It is furnished by Mr. O'Looney, Dunreel, Enniskymon, and is ushered to the reader's notice by these remarks.

"The Council of the Ossianic Society do not hold themselves responsible for the authenticity or antiquity of the following poem; but print it as an interesting specimen of the more *recent* of the Fenian Stories. In the tract which follows it, will be found one of the most *ancient* of records that describe the exploits of Finn Mac Cumhaill."

This piece is the last in order of time of the Ossianic poems, and contains one of the discrepancies before mentioned. *Fion* must have been dead at the time about fifteen years, but our

bard presents him as still in the enjoyment of his hunting faculties.

"We were hunting on a misty morning
Nigh the bordering shores of Loch Léin,
Where were fragrant trees of sweetest blossoms,
And the mellow music of birds at all times.

* * *

'Twas not long 'till we saw, westwards,
A fleet rider advancing towards us,
A young maiden of most beautiful appearance,
On a slender white steed of swiftest power.

* * *

A royal crown was on her head;
And a brown mantle of precious silk,
Spangled with stars of red gold,
Covering her shoes down to the grass.

* * *

A garment wide, long, and smooth,
Covered the white steed;
There was a comely saddle of red gold,
And her right hand held a bridle with a golden bit.

Fion courteously enquires her rank and appellation.

"Golden-headed Niamh is my name,
O sage Fionn of the great hosts:
Beyond the women of the world I have won esteem,
I am the fair daughter of the King of Youth."

F. "Relate to us, O amiable princess,
What caused thee to come afar across the sea—
Is it thy consort has forsaken thee,
Or what is the affliction that is on thyself?"

N. "'Tis not my husband that went from me,
And as yet I have not been spoken of with any man,
O king of the Fianna of highest repute,
But affection and love I have given to thy son.

* * *

Obligations unresisted by true heroes,
O generous Oisin, I put upon thee,
To come with myself now upon my steed
Till we arrive at the "Land of Youth."

It is the most delightful country to be found,
Of greatest repute under the sun,
Trees drooping with fruit and blossom,
And foliage growing on the tops of boughs.

Abundant there, are honey and wine,
And everything that eye has beheld,
There will not come decline on thee with lapse of time,
Death or decay thou wilt not see.

* * *

Thou wilt get, without falsehood, a hundred swords;
Thou wilt get a hundred satin garments of precious silk;
Thou wilt get a hundred horses, the swiftest in conflict,
And thou wilt get a hundred with them of keen hounds.

* * *

Thou wilt get a fitting coat of protecting mail,
And a gold headed sword apt for strokes,
From which no person ever escaped alive,
Who once saw the sharp weapon.

Thou wilt get a hundred coats of armour and shirts of satin;
Thou wilt get a hundred cows and also a hundred calves;
Thou wilt get a hundred sheep with their golden fleeces;
Thou wilt get a hundred jewels not in this world.'"

* * *

"No refusal will I give from me,
O charming queen of the golden curls!
Thou art my choice above the women of the world,
And I will go with willingness to the 'Land of Youth."

* * *

I kissed my father sweetly and gently,
And the same affection I got from him;
I bade adieu to all the Fianna,
And the tears flowed down my cheeks.

Many a delightful day had Fionn and I,
And the Fianna with us in great power,
Been chess-playing and drinking,
And hearing music—the host that was powerful!

A hunting in smooth valleys,
And our sweet-mouthed dogs with us there;
At other times, in the rough conflict,
Slaughtering heroes with great vigour.

* * *

We turned our backs to the land
And our faces directly due-west,
The smooth sea ebbed before us,
And filled in billows after us.

* * *

We saw also, by our sides,
A hornless fawn leaping nimbly,
And a red-eared white dog,
Urging it boldly in the chase.

We beheld also, without fiction,
A young maid on a brown steed,
A golden apple in her right hand,
And she going on the top of the waves.

We saw after her,
A young rider on a white steed,
Under a purple crimson mantle of satin,
And a gold headed sword in his right hand."

Before reaching the "Land of Youth," *Oisin* rescues a distressed princess from the hated suit of a giant, and,—

"We buried the great man,
In a deep sod-grave, wide and clear,
I raised his flag and monument,
And I wrote his name in Ogham Craobh.
* * *
We turned our backs on the fortress,
And our horse under us in full speed,
And swifter was the white steed,
Than March wind on the mountain summit.
* * *
We beheld by our side,
A most delightful country under full bloom,
And plains, beautiful, smooth, and fine,
And a royal fortress of surpassing beauty.

Not a color that eye has beheld,
Of rich blue, green, and white,
Of purple, crimson, and of yellow,
But was in this royal mansion that I am describing.

There were at the other side of the fortress,
Radiant summer-houses and palaces,
Made all of precious stones,
By the hands of skilful men and great artists.
* * *
We saw again approaching,
A multitude of glittering bright hosts,
And a noble, great, and powerful king,
Of matchless grace, form, and countenance.

There was a yellow shirt of silken satin,
And a bright golden garment over it:
There was a sparkling crown of gold,
Radiant and shining upon his head.

We saw coming after him
The young queen of highest repute,
And fifty virgins sweet and mild,
Of most beautiful form in her company.

When all arrived in one spot,
Then courteously spoke the 'King of Youth,'
And said, 'This is Oisin the son of Fionn,
The gentle consort of 'Golden-headed Niamh!'

He took me then by the hand,
And said [aloud to the hearing of] the host,
'O brave Oisin! O son of the king!
A hundred thousand welcomes to you!

* * *

This is the gentle Queen,
And my own daughter, the Golden-headed Niamh,
Who went over the smooth seas for thee,
To be her consort for ever.'

* * *

I spent a time protracted in length,
Three hundred years and more,
Until I thought 'twould be my desire
To see Fionn and the Fianna alive.

In the unruffled enjoyment of a calm, waveless life, he yearns for the chequered existence of old, and the sight of his lost brothersin ar ms.

"I asked leave of the king,
And of my kind spouse—golden-headed Niamh,
To go to Erinn back again,
To see Fionn and his great host.

'Thou wilt get leave from me,' said the gentle daughter,
'Though 'tis a sorrowful tale to me to hear you mention it,
Lest thou mayest not come again in your life
To my own land, O victorious Oisin!'

'What do we dread! O blooming queen!
Whilst the white steed is at my service:
He'll teach me the way with ease,
And will return safe back to thyself.'

'Remember, O Oisin! what I am saying,
If thou layest foot on level ground,
Thou shalt not come again for ever
To this fine land in which I am myself.

I say to thee again without guile.
If thou alightest once off the white steed,
Thou wilt never more come to the 'Land of Youth,'
O warlike Oisin of the golden arms!

'I say to thee for the third time,
If thou alightest off the steed thyself,
That thou wilt be an old man, withered, and blind,
Without activity, without pleasure, without run, without leap.'

* * *

I looked up into her countenance with compassion,
And streams of tears ran from my eyes:
O Patrick! thou wouldst have pitied her
Tearing the hair off the golden head.

She put me under strict injunctions
To go and come without touching the lea,
And said to me, by virtue of their power,
If I broke them that I'd never return safe.

* * *

I kissed my gentle consort,
And sorrowful was I in parting from her;
My two sons, and my young daughter
Were under grief, shedding tears.

I prepared myself for travelling,
And I turned my back on the "Land of Youth;"
The steed ran swiftly under me,
As he had done with me and 'golden-headed Niamh.'

* * *

On my coming then into the country,
I looked closely in every direction;
I thought then in truth
That the tidings of Fionn were not to be found.

'Twas not long for me nor tedious,
Till I saw from the west approaching me,
A great troop of mounted men and women,
And they came into my own presence.

They saluted me kindly and courteously,
And surprise seized every one of them,
On seeing the bulk of my own person,
My form, my appearance, and my countenance.

I myself asked then of them,
Did they hear if Fionn was alive,
Or did any one else of the Fianna live,
Or what disaster had swept them away?

* * *

'There is many a book written down,
By the melodious sweet sages of the Gaels,
Which we in truth, are unable to relate to thee,
Of the deeds of Fionn and of the Fianna.

'We heard that Fionn had
A son of brightest beauty and form,
That there came a young maiden for him,
And that he went with her to the "Land of Youth."

When I myself heard that announcement,
That Fionn did not live, nor any of the Fianna,
I was seized with weariness and great sorrow,
And I was full of melancholy after them.

I did not stop on my course,
Quick and smart without any delay,
Till I set my face straightforward,
To Almhuin of great exploits in broad Leinster.

Great was my surprise there,
That I did not see the court of Fionn of the hosts;
There was not in its place in truth,
But weeds, chick-weeds, and nettles.

* * *

On my passing thro' the Glen of the Thrushes,
I saw a great assembly there:
Three hundred men and more
Were before me in the glen.

One of the assembly spoke,
And he said with a loud voice;
'Come to our relief, O kingly champion,
And deliver us from difficulty!'

I then came forward,
And the host had a large flag of marble,
The weight of the flag was down on them,
And to uphold it they were unable!

Those that were under the flag below,
Were being oppressed weakly,
By the weight of the great load
Many of them lost their senses.

One of the stewards spoke,
And said—'O princely young hero!
Forthwith relieve my host,
Or not one of them will be alive.'

* * *

I lay upon my right breast,
And I took the flag in my hand;
With the strength and activity of my limbs
I sent it seven perches from its place!

With the force of the very large flag,
The golden girth broke on the white steed;
I came down full suddenly,
On the soles of my two feet on the lea.

No sooner did I come down,
Than the white steed took fright ;
He went then on his way,
And I, in sorrow, both weak and feeble.

I lost the sight of my eyes,
My form, my countenance, and my vigour,
I was an old man, poor and blind,
Without strength, understanding, or esteem.

Patrick ! there is to thee my story,
As it occurred to myself without a lie,
My going and my adventures in certain,
And my returning from the 'Land of Youth.'"

Anxious for the success of the labors of this truly-national Society, we wish every care taken for the non-appearance of blemishes. They cannot prevent two mere stories or legendary poems from differing in the relation of the same circumstance, or from putting a warrior to death, or reviving him with no regard, each to the other's chronology. But granting *Fion* and *Goll Mac Morna* to have been real men and not myths,—a belief in which they are borne out by Tiernach and the Four Masters, let them not countenance such an inconvenient instance of longevity as that of *Goll* who was present in the battle of Magh Lena in A.D. 125, and lived down near to that of Gabhra, A.D. 296 or thereabouts. Begging them again by all they hold dear, to moderate the rancor of poor *Oisin* in his future (published) controversies with St. Patrick, our fault-finding ceases. We exhort them to reprint (if practicable) the second, third, and fourth volumes : they may use their own discretion as to the first. Furthermore, we exhort every man of literary or archæological taste, whether he rejoices in Celtic, Saxon, or Cumbrian *(Pictish)* descent, to get his name forthwith on the list of subscribers. The Irish language or a kindred branch of it was spoken in every country of South Western Europe from the time that the early colonies, migrating from the plains of Shinaar, were gradually occupying them. It is hence the most ancient of the cognate European languages, whether existing in books or on the tongues of living men, and traces of it may be still found in every one of the various resting places of the old colonists in the names attached to rivers, hills, old cities, harbours, and capes. The language itself is regular, copious, expressive, euphonious, peculiarly fitted for being moulded into verse, and adapted to every modulation of which the gamut is capable.

Next to Latin and Greek, the written remains of our language are the oldest in Europe; and we would be glad to see those archæologists who would give up all their worldly possessions for the recovery of the lost books of Livy or the plays of Menander, bestow a moderate interest on the preservation of the once common language of Italy, Gaul, Iberia, Britain, Caledonia, and Ierna. Let them fancy their extasy on the recovery of a manuscript of the language spoken in King Arthur's Court, copied in the tenth century from one nearly coeval with Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawin, or of a Welsh, Cornish, or Breton one, a couple of centuries later. Let them fancy this rather improbable circumstance, and rejoice that there are pieces of the ancient Celtic tongue extant in manuscripts of the ninth century, which themselves were compiled from manuscripts four hundred years older. If incredulity disturbs their archæological comfort, let them reveal their doubts to any of our excellent confessors,—Drs. Todd, O'Donovan, or Petrie, or our no less excellent Professor Eugene Curry, and we promise them perfect ease of mind on the subject.*

The French, Italian, and Spanish tongues being in some inexplicable way, moulded from the Latin by the northern nations, who made a kind of chemical combination of their own dialects and the sort of Latin spoken by the colonies, and which had been previously affected to some extent by the native Celtic of these countries, we need not look for much regularity in these languages, nor the existence of manuscripts as early by some hundreds of years as among the unconquered Celts or Teutons.

We regard with much interest a copy of the *Song of Rollo*, a Saxon legend in rude verse or prose of the days of Alfred, either of the *Eddas*, *Reynard the Fox*, or the *Nibelungen Lied*, and give up as fruitless, all hopes of ever discovering romance, poem, or history in the Celtic dialect spoken by Boadicea, or Caractacus, or the valiant Celtic Gauls who gave such trouble to Cæsar. Let then the literary world receive with welcome, those lays which delighted our ancestors, before

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* Besides our scholars already mentioned, we wish to express the obligations under which the Irish reading public stand to Messrs Graves, Hackett, O'Brennan, O'Connellan, O'Mahony, Windele, and to the deceased Bryan Geraghty, publisher of the *Annals of the Four Masters*.

La Belle Izoud bathed in the Liffey ;—which were committed to writing long before Alfred learned to read, and which have been since perpetuated by zealous family historians, by religious men in their cloisters, by poor schoolmasters, by farmers after their laborious day's toil, or by blacksmiths when their arms were reposing from wielding hammer or sledge. Many a valuable piece has been lost, and there are some which in part at least, are not worth preserving; but thanks to *Grinæus* our Celtic Apollo, many are now out of danger, preserved in legible type ; and thousands of manuscripts are still religiously watched in our College, our Academy, in the libraries of the English Universities, and those of the Continent. If it be objected by hypercritics or natives of *Bœotia* that the specimens given do not warrant our enthusiasm, we beg to cite one convincing proof of the injustice of their objection. We lately heard extracts read from the third volume, in a party where there was a sprinkling of dissipated young fellows, who, whenever they read at all, patronise the worst samples of the *fast* literature of the day, and all these to a man, either fell asleep, yawned, or stole away on some pretence.

We will not offer our readers the affront of attempting to prove to them, that the extracts given breathe a genuine poetic spirit, that they exhibit happiness of description, a picturesque beauty, originality, and vigour. In presenting even the bare literal translation deprived of the charms of rhythm, appropriate poetical idiom, and such conventional agreeability as arises from alliteration and assonance, we reckon on the consent of the body of our readers that the Ossianic remains are most worthy of preservation.

Our era is so far fortunate, that in our metropolis, and scattered through the country, at this present time, we possess a fair average number of sound Irish scholars, not only learned in the tongue, but anxious for its permanent endurance. We have called on literary people in general to join the ranks of the subscribers, but we call more emphatically on the masters of the old language, to use diligence about the editing and translating of such pieces as are really worth preservation, and not to be chary with any information concerning the old usages, laws, and modes of life, not yet dwelt on in the volumes published.

From the materials now collecting with such diligence, our sons may probably see that " History of Ireland " so long looked for, completed at last. It is a little despressing to think

that ourselves will not have the pleasure of reading it, but what good man planting an acorn, expects to sit under the shade of the future oak! The long shadows cast from our round towers have cooled or damped our zealous co-operation, and will continue to have that bad effect, till we know whether their architects were fire-worshippers or good Christians. The question will hardly be laid at rest in our time. So let our Seanachies, forgeting their differences, call to mind that they were *Gaels* before they were either *Heathens* or *Christians*, and vigorously continue to unearth our long-buried national treasures.*

Our mere English reader will feel small comfort from the appearance of some Irish names met in the present paper, especially when he finds three or four consonants without the interposition of a vowel. However, let him simply pronounce whatever one or two of them makes the most euphonious sound with the vowel going before or following, and in most cases he will not be far from the true pronunciation. *d* loses its sound in most cases when united with *h*, so he will sound 'Eochaidh,' as if written *Achy* or *Uchy*, and 'Aodh,' *Ee*. *c* is always hard, thus 'Ceann' (head) is pronounced *Kaoun*, and the final *e* is always sounded. '*Bh*' and '*mh*' are mostly sounded like *v*, for instance 'bhan,' *van*, 'mhor' (great), *vŏr*. Your mere Briton has some time in his life heard a real or a stage Irishman pronounce *Ochone*; let him remember, and apply his knowledge if he can, to words that have *ch* or *gh* in their construction. It has often struck us as singular, the difficulty English people find in achieving a guttural sound, whereas the German tongue, the base of their own, is full of such. The general aspiration of *d* and *t* in Irish, has influenced the sound of these letters in English words as pronounced by our peasantry. The diphthong *ea* gets the sound of *ai*, but *ie* is not incorrectly sounded by our people in any instance. It is very easy to know whether an Irish sketch is written by a native of England or Ireland, by the mode in which such words as 'Priest' or 'Chief' are written. They are always, (as already said) pronounced correctly, but under the Briton's

* The chief Bard owning a thousand tales is not to be *literally* received. Seven times fifty tales of the first rank, and three times fifty of the second rank, were his stint. In *Grainne and Diarmuid* towards the commencement, *Duibhne* is erroneously printed for *O'Duibhne* in two or three instances.

pen they come out *Praste* and *Chafe*. Ah! if Mr. Dickens or the Messrs Chambers could only be sensible of the pain they inflict on the eyes and ears of their Irish subscribers, by neglecting the travelling and other sketches of their contributors on Irish subjects, they would in pity employ as corrector of the press, some one born West of the Irish sea. In *All the Year Round*, August 13, among other atrocities laid at the door of the poor Connaught man, he is made to pronounce 'flying' *flaying*, 'thief' *thafe*, &c. Paddy usually makes use of the expression 'let them alone,' but the *Year Round* man makes him say, 'let them be,' and call a 'girl' a *gurl*. *Mike*, for the only time in his life, we are sure, mentions in presence of the sage tourist—'a pair of breeches *as* mightily takes his fancy.' The same *Mike* relates, how Bianconi was shipwrecked in a desert island early in life, with three shillings in his pocket, and how he incontinently purchased pictures in Dublin for these coins. We know that such things happen in dreams, but how the man, the Desert Island, and the Dublin picture shop, came in such close neighbourhood, is very difficult to be realized.

Our Solomon meets on his tour the mountain 'Benatola,' where *Benabola* formerly ruled over the twelve pins, and has the good taste to call the former member for Galway, '*Old Cruelty to Animals.*' He relates how a man went to cut turf, intending to boil his potatoes with it on the same day, though our peasants are so wayward as to leave it to dry some days before it is used for fuel. This man took a *log* on his shoulder, and a *kippeen* (twig or stick) at his back; he went into the bog, cut his *kippeen* full of the (wet) turf! tied it up in a cord, and carried it off to burn on the very day. We wondered what the man wanted the *log* for, till we recollected that in some parts of Ireland, a spade is called a *loy*, on purpose we suppose, for the mystification of foreign tourists. The use to which the kippeen was put, still remains a mystery. In one particular we do justice to our tourist's sagacity: he spells 'Sheebeen' *Shabbeen*, quasi 'shabby-inn'—an expressive title. Such is life: *Sir Anthony Absolute* gets angry with his son, his son reproves his valet, the valet cuffs the errand boy, and the errand boy kicks the house-dog. The great national taker of portraits, *A. Dumas*, entices *John Bull* into his painting-chair, and on pretence of making his portrait, he shortens his legs, adds a foot or so to the breadth of his body, where the

waistcoat ends, an inch or two to the breadth of his nose, claps a round hat jauntily on a pair of coquettish short horns, and is just at the moment called out of the room. *John* takes that opportunity to look at his 'counterfeit presentment,' and is far from flattered. His cousin *Pat* steps in at the moment; the annoyed sitter assumes palette, pencils, and maul stick, makes the new comer assume the chair, and takes revenge on him for the wrong himself had just suffered.

Any words used by the English, Spaniards, French, and Italians, that cannot be clearly traced to the Celtic, the Saxon, the Greek, or the Latin, may be looked on in the same light as those sprung up in later times in America or our distant colonies, and having strictly local or accidental significations. May we see published in our own times, at a moderate price, a Polyglot dictionary of the English, and those four early tongues of Europe, merely containing words common to three of them at least; something in this fashion:

English.	*Celtic.*	*Teutonic.*	*Greek.*	*Latin.*
Mother.	Mathair.	Mutter.	Mētēr.	Mater.
Father.	Athair.	Vater.	Patër.	Pater.
Nose.	Rinn.	Nase.	Ris or Rin.	Nasus.

A vocabulary follows of Celtic words, many of which enter into the composition of proper names, or are still used by English-speaking natives, while they fancy they are conversing in the pure Anglo-Norman dialect, a few only of the many words common to both languages being admitted. Let the English reader remember that *c* and *g* are always sounded hard, and *d* and *t* generally pronounced *dh* and *th*.

Aban, (*Avon*) Water, River (*Avonmore*, large river).
Aill, Cliff (*Albion*, white cliff).
Airgith, Silver.
Ard, High (*Armagh*, High Field).
Ath, Ford.

Baile, a Town (*Baile ath cliath*, Town on Ford of Hurdles, Dublin).
Ball, Spot.
Bas, Death.
Be, Life, Woman (Eve?).
Beal, *Beul*, Mouth.
Bealach, Pass.
Bearna, Gap.
Beg, *Beag*, Little.
Ben, Hill (*Ben a Dair*, Hill of Oaks, Howth).
Bo, Cow.
Boduch, Cow-keeper.
Both, Tent, hence *Bothy*, a Hut.
Brathach, a Banner.
Breac, Speckled, a Trout.
Breüth, a Judge, hence *Brehon*.
Brugh, Town, Residence.

Bunn, Foundation.

Caemh, *Caomh*, Crooked.
Calbh, Bald (*Calvus*, Lat.).
Caoch, Blind.
Caol, Short, Slender.
Capall, Horse.
Carn, Heap of Stones.
Carraic, *Corrig*, Rock.
Cathair (pr. *Caer*), Town (*Carlow*, Town on the lake).
Cath Battle.
Ce, *Tit*, the Earth.
Ceann, Head (*Kantire*, Cape of the Tower).
Cearc, Hen.
Ceir, Wax, (*Cera* L.)
Ceo, Fog.
Cil, *Cell*, Church (*Kildare*, Church of the Oak).
Cineal, Family, Tribe.
Cish, *Cias*, a Rent.
Cleach, *Cliath*, Wattle, Hurdle.
Clo, Nail (*Clavus*, L.).
Cloch, Stone.
Clogh, Bell, (*Clogher*, Golden Bell, or Stone of Gold, or Stone of the Sun).
Cluain, *Cluan*, Meadow (*Clontarff*, Bull's Pasture).
Cnoc, Hill.
Coilech, a Cock.
Coille, a Wood.
Col, an Impediment (*Cul*, Fr.).
Core, *Currach*, Bog, Marsh.
Cosh, Foot.
Craeb, *Craob*, Branch.
Craig, Gullet, Claw.
Creach, Booty, Spoil.
Croagh, *Croch*, Cross, Crook.
Crioicenn, Skin, Hide.
Cruit, a Harp.
Cu, Hound.
Cuisle, Vein.
Curadh, Knight.

Dair, *Duir*, Oak (*Derry*, Oak Grove, hence *Druid*).
Dal, Blind.
Daltha, Foster Child.
Daol, a Reptile.
Dearg, Red.
Delg, Thorn.
Deoch, a Drink.
Di, *Do*, Two.
Dia, God.
Dia, Day.
Doire, Grove.
Domnach, Sunday.
Donn (pr. *dhoun*), Brown.
Dorn, Fist.
Dorus, Door (*Deoch an Dorus*, Stirrup Cup).
Druim, *Drum*, Ridge (*Rathdrum*, Fort on the Hill Ridge).
Duan, Poem.
Duine, a Man.
Dun, a Fort.
Dur, Hard (Durus, L.).

Each, *Ech*, Horse (*Leim an eic*, Horse leap).
Ealt, Flock (*Moynalty*, Plain of Flocks of Birds).
Ealg, Noble (*Ethel* in Saxon).
Earr, Hero.
Eglais, Church.
Eilit, a Hind.
Eiric, *Eric*, a Fine.
En, *Ean*, a Bird.
Erc, Ox.
Es, a Waterfall (*Assaroe*, *Es Aodh Ruadh*, Cascade of Red Hugh, Salmon leap at Ballyshannon).

Facc, Spade.
Fadh, Tall, Long.
Failte, Welcome.
Fail, Ring, Stone, Blood, Name of Ireland.
Falc, Hook (*Falx*, L.).

Fasach, a Desert.
Far, Why? (*Warum* in German).
Fead, Whistle, Sword.
Feis, Parliament.
Fer, *Fir*, a Man.
Fesog, Beard.
Fiac, a Raven.
Fiacal, *Fecc*, Tooth.
Fian, a Hero.
Fib, Laughter.
Fiad, Deer.
Fid, Whistle.
Finn, Fair.
Fiodhga, Woody.
Flaith, *Flath*, Prince, Heaven.
Flann, Blood, Red.
Fledh, Feast (*Pleedogue*, Children's Feast of Easter Eggs).
Folt, Hair.
Fort, Strong (*Fortis*, Lat.).
Fraech, *Fraoch*, Heath, hence *Frauchans*.

Ga, Javelin.
Gab, Mouth.
Gad, Withe.
Gaill, Foreigner.
Ge, Goose.
Geal, White.
Gean, Woman, Daughter, Love (*Guné*, Gr.).
Gealach, the Moon.
Gen, Sword.
Gear, *Gar*, Short.
Giall, Hostage.
Giolla, *Gilla*, Servant (*Gilmour*, Mary's Servant).
Glac, Fist, Fork, (*Galloglach*, Armed Partizan; *Giolla*, Attendant, and the above).
Glas, Green.
Gleirr, White of Egg.
Gluin, the Knee.
Glib, Lock of Hair.
Gloir, Sunrise, Glory.
Glor, Voice.
Goban, Smith, hence *Gow*.
Gob, Beak.
Goil, Knighthood.
Gort, Garden.
Gorm, Blue.
Gradh, Love.
Graf, Scion, Sprout.
Graig, Manor.
Grian, the Sun (hence *Grange*).
Gril, Iron Grating.
Gris, Ashes.
Gruag, the Hair.
Gruin, Hedgehog.
Gug, *Gog*, Egg.

I, Island.
Iar, West (*Ireland*, West Land).
Inbher, a Rivers' Mouth; *Aber* in Welsh.
Inis (*Inch*), an Island.
Ir, Anger.

La, Day (*La Samhna*, Sun's Day, Lammas).
Laech, Hero.
Laith, Milk (*Lac*, Lat.).
Lamh, *Lav*, Hand.
Lann, Sword.
Laoi, Poem.
Leabhar, Book (*Liber*, L.).
Leacht, Bed.
Leanbh (hence *Llanna*), Child.
Leac, Flag, Stone (*Læca*, Saxon).
Lecht, a Grave.
Leith, Half.
Leim, a Leap (*Limavady*, Dog's Leap).
Linn, Pool (*Dublin*, *Dubh Linn*, Black Pool).
Ler, *Lir*, the Sea.
Lis, Fort, House.
Liath, Grey.
Lios, Cottage.
Loch, Lake, Pool.
Loinges, a Fleet.

Long, *Lüng*, a Ship.
Losc, Blind of one eye (*Luscus*, Lat).
Luachair, Rushes.
Luaidh, Ashes, Lees.
Luain, the Moon.
Lugnas, Lammas.
Luath, Sharp, Swift (Name of a Hound).
Lus, Herb, (*Lusmore*, Large Herb, Fox-glove).
Luim, New Milk.
Luin, Spear.

Mac, Son (*Mackay*, *Mac Hugh*, *Mac Kew*, *Mac Aodh*, Son of Hugh).
Madra, Dog (*Madra Rua*, Red Dog, Fox; *Madre*, Cunning, Foxy, Fr.).
Maer, Steward.
Magh, *Mathaire*, a Field.
Mairt, Execution.
Mala, Eyebrow.
Mam, *Breast*, *Mother*, *Mount*.
Manach, Monk.
Man, Haud.
Maoit, Moist.
Maol (pr. *Mul*), Bald, Hornless.
Maor, Earl, Baron, Sergeant.
Mathair, Mother.
Me, My, Me, I, Myself.
Meas, Yard, Measure Judgment.
Measg, Mixing.
Mer, Finger.
Mer, a Blackbird.
Mir, a Part.
Mion, Small.
Misnecht, Courage.
Moin, Bog.
Molt, Sheep, Wether.
Mor, *Mhor*, Big. (*Major*, L.)
Mos, Custom.
Muic, Pig
Muidh, *Moy*, Plain (*Moytuir*, Plain of the Tower).
Muinter, Tribe.
Muir, the Sea, (*Mare*, L.).
Muis, Pouting Lip.

Naemh, *Naomh*, a Saint.
Nead, *Nest* (*Nidus*, L.)
Neul, Cloud (*Nephele*, Gk.).
Noed, Naked, Nude.
Noi, Ship (*Navis*, L.).
Nuadl, Angelical voice (*Noel*, Christmas, Fr.).

Og, *Oig*, Young, Virgin.
Ol, Drink.
Olann, Wool.
Oir, the East (*Orient*).
Oll, Great.
Ollamh, Doctor.
Or, Gold.
Os, Mouth.

Pain, Bread.
Paisde Child, (*Pais*, Gk.).
Partan, a Crab, (*in use in Scotland*).
Piast, Worm, Serpent.
Pib, *Piob*, Pipe, Flute.
Port, Tune, Jig, Harbour.
Pus, Lip.

Rae, the Moon.
Rann, Verse.
Raom, *Rim*, Number, Rhythm (root of the word *Arithmetic*).
Rath, Fortress.
Ri, *Righ*, King.
Righan, Queen.
Rinn, Nose, Promontory.
Ros, a Green Plain.
Rosg, the Eye.
Roth, *Roit*, Wheel (*Rota*, L.).
Ruadh, Red.

Sa, It, It is.
Sagarth, Priest.
Sail, Willow.
Sal, Heel, Dirt.
Salthair, Chronicle.
Samh, the Sun.
Samhain, End of Summer, All-hallows.
Samhradh, Summer (pr. *Saura*).
Saor, *Saer*, Mason, Carpenter. Free.
San, Holy,
Scath, Shade.
Scaff, Ship, Skiff.
Sceall, Story, Shield.
Scealp, Cliff, Bite.
Sceath, *Sgat*, *Sge*, Hawthorn.
Sceul, *Scel*, Tidings, Story.
Scian, Dagger, Knife.
Sciath, Shield, Basket.
Scraith, Sod; Vulgo, *Scraw*.
Se, He, Six.
Sean, Old.
Sech, Dry (*Siccus* L.).
Seas, Heap of Sheaves.
Si, She, Her.
Sia, *Sighe*, *Sidhe*, *Siog*, Fairy.
Sinnach, Fox.
Siol, Tribe.
Sios, Down.
Siur, Sister, Country.
Slab, Mire.
Slainte, Health.
Slan, Health.
Sleg, Spear.
Sliabh, Mountain Ridge.
Sliochd, Tribe.
Slod, Puddle (hence *Sludge*).
Smaois, Nose (pr. Smuish).
Smoll, Trush.
Snathad, Needle.
Sneachd, Snow.
Snuad, Fair Head of Hair, hence *Snood*.
Soisgel, the Gospel.
Soalt, a Leap (*Saltus*, L.).
Solas, Comfort.
Soc, Beak, Plough Share, Nose.
Sul, the Eye.

Ta, I am, It is.
Tain, Herd of Cattle, Land.
Taim, I am.
Talamh, Earth.
Tarbh, Bull (*Taurus*, L.).
Tart, Thirst.
Tech, *Teach*, House.
Tea, Rope.
Teidhm, Death.
Teine, *Ten*, *Tin*, Fire.
Ti, Him or Her.
Tighearna, Lord.
Tir, Land Country.
Tlachd, Burying Place.
Tobar, a Spring Well.
Tonn, a Wave.
Tort, Cake.
Tra, *Traig*, Strand (*Bantry*, *Ventry*, Fair Strand).
Tradh, Fishing Spear.
Traill, Slave.
Trean, Strong (*Treanmor*, Very Strong—Proper Name).
Trus, a Girdle.
Tuath, People.
Tuc, a Rapier.
Tulach, a Hill.
Turr, a Tower.
Tus, Incense, (*Thus*, L.)

Ua, *O*, Grandson.
Uiagh, *Uaim*, Cave.
Uais, Noble (*Duine Uasal*, Gentleman).
Uan, Lamb.
Ucht, Breast.
Ui, *Hy*, District.
Ubh (pr. *Uv*), Egg.