

PS
3515
U865H8
1917

HOW
JOY
WAS
FOUND
BY ISOBEL W.
HUTCHISON



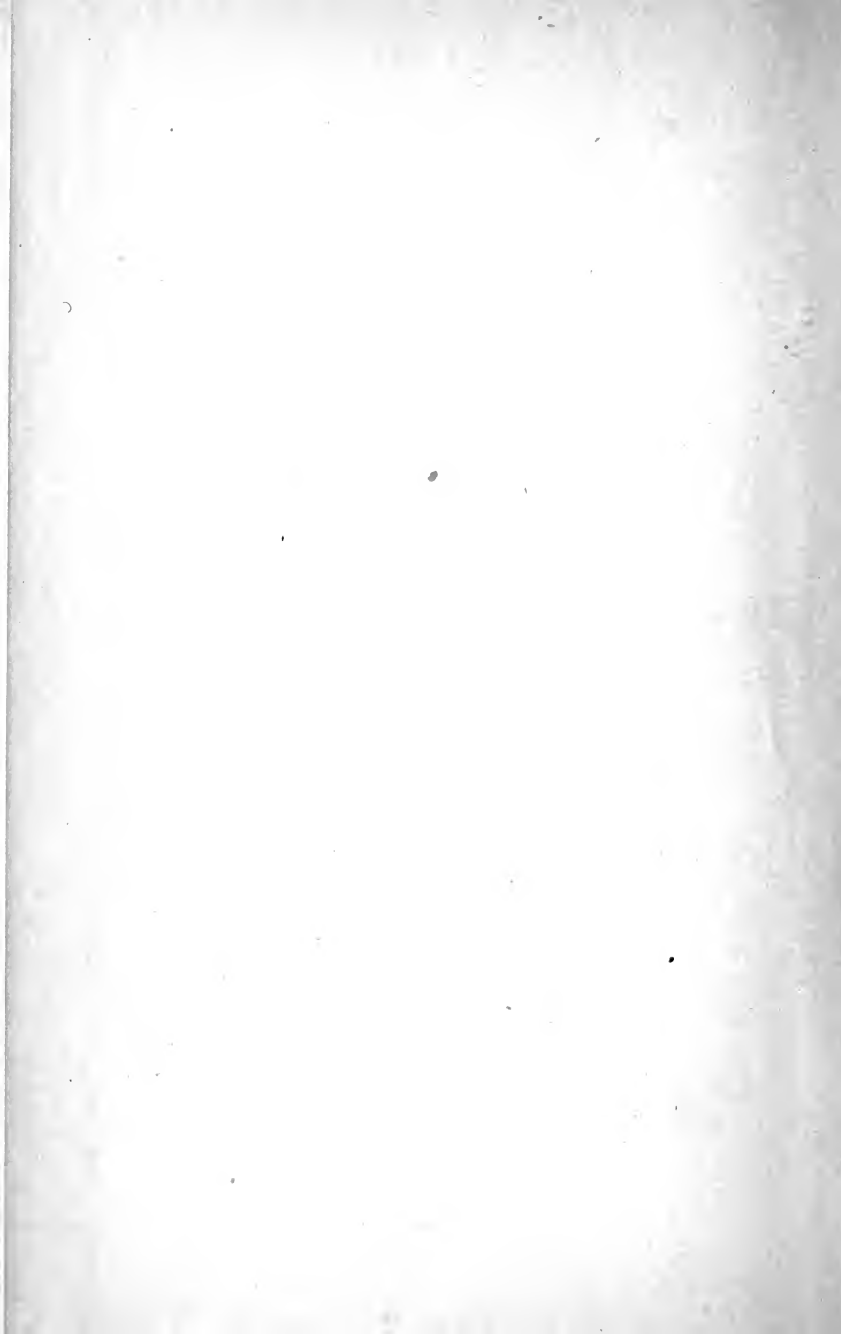
Class 20 2515

Book 1865H8

Copyright N^o 1917

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT





HOW JOY WAS FOUND



How Joy was Found

A Fantasy

BY

ISOBEL W. HUTCHISON



NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

7-3-17
71865 H8
1917

COPYRIGHT, 1917,
BY ISOBEL W. HUTCHISON

✓

SEP 13 1917

©CIA476044

no. 1

PREFACE

This study in the psychology of Faith is founded on an old Scottish folk-tale told me last year at Onich by Mr. Alexander Cameron, who, a good many years ago, had given it also to the Rev. J. Macdougall of Duror, in whose volume, *Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition*, now out of print, it is included. Mr. Macdougall's version is printed in full at the end of this volume.

I have used the story as the framework of an allegory, and have not tried to rival Mr. Macdougall's narrative, nor have I often kept very close to the text. Most of these beautiful Highland tales are in such intimate touch with nature that they lend themselves very readily to further development, and the story of *How Finn Kept His Children for the Big Young Hero* seemed to adapt itself wonderfully to my purpose.

I. W. H.

CARLOWRIE, WEST LOTHIAN,
June, 1917.

The Characters

THE BIG YOUNG HERO: One who goes out at the beginning, comes in at the end, and appears unexpectedly all through.

FINN: Humanity, a long-suffering man.

THE CARPENTER: Duty, a scientific man.

THE TRACKER: Obedience, a dutiful man.

THE GRIPPER: Constancy, a patient man.

THE CLIMBER: Faith, a girl who is more than quite all there.

THE THIEF: Love, an old woman wearing a chaperon.

THE LISTENER: Hope, a boy wearing a smile.

THE MARKSMAN: Truth, a straightforward man carrying a bow and arrows.

THE GIANT: A mere notion.

THE DOG: Fear (never visible).

HER PUPPY, BRAN: Joy. Given to Hope for the present.

THE BABY: The Rest of Humanity.

GONACHRY: The Heart-wounder, a sarcastic man.

ANGUS: A good-natured lazy man.

TORQUIL

CONAN

CONDHLA

} Unemotional men.

ACT I

THE GREEN ISLE. EVENING

This Earthly Paradise lies across the western main before you come to the sunset. It is seen imperfectly, like a thought not fully realized, and shimmers as if through a rainbow. It is thus described by one who has been there:

“Fair is that land to all eternity beneath the snowfall of blossoms. The gleaming walls are bright with many colours, the plains are vocal with joyous cries, mirth and song are at home on the plain, the silver-clouded one. No wailing there for judgment, naught but sweet song to be heard. No pain, no grief, no death, no discord, no sin, no decay, but ever we feast and need none to serve us, ever we love and no strife ensues. Such is the land.”

In this place the Big Young Hero, the most attractive person ever imagined, is seen vaguely as if through a radiant light. He is seated alone on the grass watching the flowers in the midst of great beauty. Far off across the sea the outline of the Hebrides is faintly seen, and presently a brown-sailed fishing-boat appears on the edge of the horizon and approaches the shore. As it nears, the figure of a girl is discerned kneeling up in the bows, shading her eyes with her hand, and gazing earnestly towards the shore. She carries a coil of rope over her shoulder. As she draws near her voice is heard saying:

CLIMBER

My anchorage was not as beautiful as I thought

And I have weighed anchor and sailed away.

I trust that my boat will be brought

Into haven before the end of the day.

I do not wish to voyage till sunset

In this yeasty fret.

Captain! there is no harbour that is beautiful save
Thine.

Why dost thou reserve it for the evening mariners?

Their eyes are old and full of brine,

They cannot see the stars.

But mine are young, and I can count them all,

I praise Thee, for they are full of light,

Therefore bring me into Thy harbour before the shadows fall,

That I may praise Thee louder—in the young night.

[As the boat nears the isle it comes into calm water. The big Young Hero goes down to meet it and helps the girl ashore, drawing up the boat.]

HERO

The end of all thought is peace,

And you have found ere night the day's increase.

The bright and radiant day is loath to die,

Even yet there are hardly any stars in the sky,

Only a soft dim radiance under the moon,

And dark trees on the brightness. Very soon

You will be gathered in a thoughtful rest,

And fall asleep like a bird up there in its nest.

Are you not glad at last to realize

Your insubstantial dream that never dies?

CLIMBER

Yes, but I'm wearied. I've had rather a fight

To get here all right,

The sea's so deep.

HERO

Take your sleep.

[He sits down as before and draws her on to his knee, and she falls asleep at once with her head on his shoulder, like a tired child. He also appears to sleep. Presently the shadow of a man carrying a rainbow falls across his face, and a dream is heard singing.]

DREAM

The gates of Heaven are pearls, and stand four-square,

And people enter in from everywhere.

But when the heather's on the ben

And the wind races down the glen

And in the wake of Highland ships

The creaking sea-gull wheels and dips,

And on the bogs, the hills below,

The cotton-grass and myrtle blow—

Bog-myrtle, with the spicy breath

Of bitter-sweet and life and death—

I'm glad to think that God has heard

The meaning of the unspoken word,

The stammering whisper of a tongue

That learned no speech the hills among,

The supplication of a hand

Too fierce for men to understand,

And that for such as me He'll wait

In silence by His northern gate.

[The shadow falls across the girl's face, and she stirs and smiles in her sleep, and a dream-shadow goes from her also, singing. The two shadows meet, and passing into each other, become one.]

GIRL'S DREAM

I love to think that, high in Heaven,
 Above the stars, the planets seven,
 Daybreak and darkness—if I'm there!—
 I'll feel the wind stir in my hair,
 And Heaven's steadfast floor will float
 Like water underneath a boat,
 And, looking down across the gold
 I'll see the sunset, fold on fold,
 Go tumbling down the sky's wild screens
 Beyond the Outer Hebrides.
 Then something in my heart will stir
 Like earth when spring remembers her,
 And I'll ask, firm but quite polite,
 If God will set my compass right,
 And if He'll aiblins help to bail
 My old boat with the tattered sail,
 And lend a hand to launch her clear
 Of Heaven, unless there's sea like here.

[The blended shadow falls across the face of the Big Young Hero, and he looks up.]

SHADOW

[Stirring restlessly.]

I need something.

HERO

Who touches me?

SHADOW

The shadow of a desire.

HERO

What do you require?

SHADOW

I don't know.

HERO

I have sent you a dream.

SHADOW

I will no longer go
After a dream.
I do not want to be a bore,
But I seem
Nowadays to need something more;
I feel
That I have need of something real.

[The girl stirs, and gives a little sigh.]

HERO

Hush! if you talk so loud you'll waken her
Before she's ready.
She needs her rest just now. She mustn't stir;
She's got to steady
Her head a bit, for she's spent hours
Filling her mind with things like flowers,
Till she had sucked out of earth's genial root
My name like a tender shoot
That was bound to put her in mind
Of something unconfined.

SHADOW

Oh, do be quick!
I'm sick
Of standing still.

HERO

There's no use getting ill
About it. I am with you now;
The very first step to Heaven's inside your brow.
Look there, and tell me your most dear desire,
For it is surely something you require.

[The shadow shifts to that of a carpenter.]

CARPENTER

I want something to do.

HERO

Who are you?

CARPENTER

I am a good carpenter.

HERO

How good are you?

CARPENTER

I had a sense of something due
To someone, though I scarce kent who
(It might have been myself or maybe you),
And so, just at my own expense,
I fashioned out of common sense
A ship that's bound to carry me

From earth to Heaven, and as far's I see,
Ought to bring God again to me.

HERO

I have need of you. Show me your ship.

[*The shadow of a large fine ship falls across the sea.*]

She is a very beautiful wide ship. Can you manage
her alone?

CARPENTER

I would be the better of another, to do my bidding
in her.

HERO

Send me your brother.

[*The shadow shifts to that of a tracker.*]

HERO

Who are you?

TRACKER

I am a good tracker.

HERO

How good are you?

TRACKER

I do what I am told,
I wait and look,
Silent, ready to hold.

It is not true
That I am idle. I am waiting for you.

I hook
Strange fish upon my individual line.
No other hand could take them, they were mine
From all eternity, and in the eternal sea
They would be lost for ever but for me.

HERO

You are good enough to take his telling.

TRACKER

Yes, but the clouds are swelling,
You might maybe lend us another man forby
To hold the tiller, in case that he and I
Are called to the sheets together
By a sudden change in the weather.

HERO

Send me a man off the heather.

[The shadow shifts to that of a gripper.]

HERO

Who are you?

SHADOW

I am a good gripper.

HERO

How good are you?

GRIPPER

You call me insisently,
Yet when I run blithely to the place

Where your voice deaves be, you bar the door in my
face.

What for do you treat me thus and hide?

For still I hear you calling me from the other side.

I am going to hold on to the sneck and wait.

I ken there is something behind the door; early and
late

You cry on me still.

If it be your will

Never to open, yet is it meet

That I come

For under the door I can keek at the shadow of your
feet

Moving in a larger room.

HERO

You are good enough then

To hold the tiller for these men,

In case they are called to the sheets together

By a sudden change in the weather.

GRIPPER

No earthly blast can overwhelm

The ship of which I hold the helm

If I have just a kenning more to grip,

Something that will not give me the slip

Like the rudder he has fashioned.

I need something more impassioned,

Something to which a mind can hold

For a body's apt to grow cold.

[*The sleeping girl stirs and smiles.*]

HERO

This is a shade sublimer.

GRIPPER

Who are you?

CLIMBER

[Talking in her sleep.]

I am a good climber.

GRIPPER

How good are you?

CLIMBER

I have climbed from the mind of man to the mind of
God on a nervous stair.

GRIPPER

[Astonished.]

Lassie, that's no canny! Were you no feared to
fall?

CLIMBER

[In her sleep.]

Some day I'll die, but how, or when, or where
I do not greatly care,
Because I know that with the flowers and weeds
My life proceeds,
If so I will, inside a gracious law.
No flaw
My death will be, nor mischievous accident,

Howe'er besprent
My blood upon the highway or the turf,
Or in the surf
Of thunderous combers on the ungathered sea;
But it will be
An obvious hint of a Supreme design,
A little clew of mine
Left huddled by the beach or cliff to tell—
"Pass, friend, all's well!"

HERO

Let him hold fast
The substance of your mind,
So that he'll find
The evidence of unseen things that last,
And that he'll still behold
Although his hand grows cold
And cannot any longer feel
The thing he thought was real.

CLIMBER

[*Still in her sleep.*]

I said I climbed upon a nervous stair
 Into the mind of God,
 Yet all the way I trod
 On air
Because great Love upheld me there.
I leaned and she resisted, gathering strength
 To toss me all that length
 Like some tall fountain-shower,

And I have power
 To return again and water all the earth,
 Giving her second birth,
 Weaving her flesh,
 Meseems,
 Out of the mesh
 Of mind,
 After the fashion of immediate dreams,
 If I can find
 And force
 All Love into her proper course.
 With such support it is quite true
 There's nothing that I cannot do.

HERO

Send me something I can see through.

[The shadow shifts to that of a bent old woman.]

HERO

Who are you?

SHADOW

I was old and perfect at the heart
 Ere human life could start.
 Before the mind conceived of life
 I was a wife.

HERO

[Joyfully.]

What are you good at?

SHADOW

I am a good thief.

HERO

How good are you?

THIEF

Joy in my heart grew strong and very bright,
Luxuriantly fed in the light of stars,
Planets, and suns, the speed of motor-cars,
Fire's untamed energy, the wireless might
Of telepathy, that burns between the bars.
I recognized her in the lofty spars
Of the rigging, hailing land far out of sight,
And as she leaned and peered entranced, I crept
Into God's mind, the while He slept,
And stole it bit by bit away,
And packed it in a brain of clay;
But unaccustomed ripples broke
On that calm surface. He awoke,
And I, all trembling to depart,
Was caught a prisoner in His heart.

HERO

You are good enough,
If that's the stuff
Your mind is made on.
Help her to climb higher,
Otherwise she'll tire,
For she must be stayed on
Such substantial matter
If she's to get fatter.

THIEF

Yes, but I need one to hold the rope
At the other end, to give us both more scope.
I need something full of joy.

HERO

Send me a boy.

[The shadow shifts to that of a boy, and leaps lightly about.]

HERO

Who are you?

SHADOW

[Sings.]

I am something always true.
I don't care twopence what they think;
I know the sky is always blue,
And the rest of life rose-pink.

HERO

[Affectionately.]

Stand still! Stand still! What are you good at besides singing, eh?

SHADOW

[Standing still suddenly.]

I am a good listener.

HERO

How good are you?

LISTENER

[With his hand cupped to his ear.]

Oh, well, by now I really think I'm able
To hear folk talking at the other end of the cable
When I lay my ear to the ground.
There's certainly some sort of sound
Like the noise I hear
In the early part of the year,
When underground the lilies
Whisper: "Hark! There still is
Life in us; don't look so blue.
To-morrow we'll be getting through,
If on your side you'll scrape away
As much earth as you dare to-day."

HERO

You are strong enough to hold the rope
At the other end, since they require more scope.

LISTENER

I know I am, quite well;
But they think I'm just a sell.
Can't you show them that I'm true?
Hullo! Why, who are you?

[The Big Young Hero has suddenly lifted his right hand, and lets fall from it the shadow of a man carrying a bow and arrows.]

MARKSMAN

[Placidly.]

I am one too simple to be understood.

HERO

At what are you good?

MARKSMAN

I am a good marksman.

HERO

How good are you?

MARKSMAN

From childhood I have had a single aim.
 I did not deviate,
 I just went straight
 Ahead, till, in the place
 Where I was standing, I beheld your face,
 And found I had transfixed your name.

LISTENER

[*With delight.*]

Then I should think he's good enough
 To show them that I'm not mere bluff.

HERO

[*Quietly.*]

He is good enough.

[*The shadows fade, and the girl stirs restlessly in her sleep.*]

CLIMBER

I have need of something more than dream.

HERO

I have given you something more:
Your dream was real.

[The Climber laughs suddenly in her sleep, and wakens up.]

CLIMBER

[Rubbing her eyes, and looking round with delight.]

I feel
Very happy, everything looks so bright.
I knew it would clear up before to-night,
Because I saw a rainbow very high
Up in the sky.

HERO

I am going out fishing before the sun sets.
Will you lend me your boat to gather
In my nets?

CLIMBER

[Eagerly.]

Rather!

Will you be long away?

HERO

I will be back with the first screech of day.
I pray you, if it does not trouble you,
Have breakfast ready in my house for two.

[They go down to the beach and launch the boat together, and the Big Young Hero sails slowly away in her towards the Hebrides, seen far off in the sunset.]

Soft twilight falls on the island, but a phosphorescence shines about the boat, outlining the figure of the Big Young Hero at the prow, who is leaning down towards the water setting the nets. Stars begin to come out in the sky, and on the distant shore a light suddenly twinkles out every few seconds on a buoy. The girl's voice is heard singing as the boat drifts away.]

CLIMBER'S SONG

To-night I saw a rainbow;
It hung my way before,
As if the hills were gate-posts
And it was the arch of a door.
The moor stretched all about me,
The heather and the bee;
I longed to trap that rainbow
For all the world to see.

Perhaps in distant cities,
Perhaps down in the glen,
The rainbow was the signal
Of rain for other men.
But high upon the hilltops
The clouds blow far and free,
And leave behind the rainbow
Blue sky for you and me.

ACT II

A MOUNTAIN-SIDE IN ARGYLLSHIRE: MORNING

A Scottish mountain-side covered with heather and bracken. In the crannies of the rocks oak fern and roseroot are growing. There is a pebbly brook running down to the sea; the sides are starred with sphagnum moss, Grass of Parnassus, and butterwort. In its bed the yellow marsh saxifrage is growing, and up the hill-side a silver birch hangs over it. Farther up the hill there are a rowan and an alder, and on the crest, against the sky, a Scotch pine. Low down, by a green mound, there is a yew-tree. In the distance the white breakers of the sea are seen, and they are heard regularly crashing in upon the shore. There is sunshine everywhere, and a breeze blowing the heather and chasing the shadows of clouds across the hill-side.

At the back of the wind, behind a great rock, Finn, a middle-aged man, is sitting, asleep. He is bowed down by a heavy pack containing a rainbow, whose light escapes from the corners and colours it all. Some distance off some other men are lying asleep on the heather.

Presently the Big Young Hero's boat is seen approaching from far out at sea. As it nears, Finn stirs from his sleep and perceives it, and, starting to his feet, watches it, with his hand shading his eyes. The Big Young Hero lands from the boat, and, pulling her well up on the beach, comes leaping over the mountain to Finn strongly and gaily. As he runs, flowers spring up under his feet. The other men sleep on undisturbed.

HERO

[*Saluting Finn.*]

Darling of all men in the world!
 I give you the greeting in grandeur and splendour!
 I bring you glad tidings of great joy!
 I publish peace!

FINN

[*Utterly bewildered.*]

Loveliest of all heroes that I have ever seen,
 I salute you frankly, fluently, and energetically
 With the equivalent of the same words,
 Though I do not know who you are.
 Your feet are beautiful as a star.
 I wish that I could sing like the birds,
 Or blossom like the green wet earth,
 For my heart is full of mirth.
 But I can only glower and gaze
 While my mind plays,
 And sings and tumbles up and down
 Inside me, like a clown
 That makes me feel quite silly,
 Laughing willy-nilly,
 Like a man in love.
 Do you come from above,
 Or round about, or below,
 Or anywhere I know?

HERO

I come through night-watching and tempest of sea
 where I am, because I am losing my children, and it

has been told me there is not a man in all the world
who can keep them for me but you.

FINN

[*Astonished.*]

Why, how can I do that when I must bear
This heavy rainbow with me everywhere,
And all the years
Have found my laughter through a mist of tears?

HERO

Since you alone were strong enough to creep
Into my mind, and fetch me out of sleep,
You have attained my stature, and I find
You are a man according to my mind.

FINN

[*Crying out, afraid.*]

It was a dream, only a dream I stole!
I never did as much
As touch
Your garment's hem.

HERO

No, but you clasped my soul.
Virtue went out of me immediately
The moment that your love was strong enough
To push aside the earth and find the stuff
That dreams are made on.
Up through the senseless clay
You sprang like some green sappy shoot,
And touched the nervous thoughtful root
That I am stayed on.

FINN

[*Dumbfounded.*]

It was a dream—I never knew—

HERO

I lay upon you
 As crosses and spells
 And seven fairy fetters of travelling and straying,
 To be with me before you shall eat food,
 Or drink a draught,
 Or close an eye in sleep.

[*At his words a delicate web of gossamer covered with dewdrops, spiders' webs, and flower seeds falls over Finn. The Hero leaves him spellbound, and, returning gaily to his boat, launches her and sails away. When the boat has vanished the web falls away, and Finn turns round with a cry which arouses the other men.*]

FINN

Where is he?

CONAN

Who?

FINN

The stranger that was here anon.

CONDHLA

I never knew.

CONAN

Is he gone?

ANGUS

Which way did he go?

FINN

I do not know.

GONACHRY

What was he like?

FINN

I can't tell.

I must find him; he has gone

Off with something I had on.

CONAN

You don't look very well.

GONACHRY

[*Sarcastically.*]

I saw him running up the ben,
As swift as a spot of sunlight when
The clouds bend with a cup
To pounce on him and cover him up
Like a wasp inside a glass.

ANGUS

Hush! I hear Mactalla pass,
He's surely singing in his sleep.
Since it's never very deep,
Let us rouse him up and speir
If the stranger is still here.

[*All cry aloud, against the rocks: "Mactalla! Mactalla! Mactalla!" The echo is returned mockingly: "Mactalla! Mactalla! Mactalla!"*]

ANGUS

Tut! He's in a teasing mood to-day;
 We'll get nothing out of him. I say!
 Answer, and I'll promise you fair,
 A big laugh to yourself off the back of Ben Y
 Bheithir.

MACTALLA *

[*Mocking from somewhere.*]

I say! I say! A big laugh off the back of Ben Y
 Bheithir?

ANGUS

Ha! ha! You're there, little fellow!
 Yes, at the back of Ben Bheithir, where the yellow
 Saxifrage grows out of the crannied rock,
 I'll give you a laugh to yourself that'll shock
 The natives, if you'll tell us now
 Which way the stranger went.

MACTALLA

Bow-wow!
 I'll have the big laugh out of you,
 But I cannot tell you true
 Which one way the stranger went,
 For he's left an echo pent
 In everything he came across.
 I'm entirely at a loss.
 Can't you catch it here and there?
 I think he must be everywhere.

[*The growing things are heard talking.*]

* The Highland "Echo."

ALDER-TREE

Is that you, Grass?

GRASS

Yes, I am growing
Under his feet,
If the heather will let me pass.

HEATHER

I'll try to, if you'll meet
Me half-way

SCOTCH PINE

[*Loftily.*]

I say,
There's no knowing
What she'll be up to next.
Take my text,
And scarcely let yourself be seen,
With anyone so very green.

YEW-TREE

[*Phlegmatically.*]

I am quite at a loss
To know what came across
My barrowful of withered leaves

ROWAN

[*Gently.*]

A bairnie couped it, coming home from school,
Among the sheaves.

BIRCH

[*Whispering.*]

Hush! hush! Softly, softly, my daughters;
I hear the sound of mountain waters.

BURN

[*Singing.*]

Bubble! Bubble! Bubble!
Hush! Let me down.
Bubble! Bubble! Bubble!
What a lot of trouble
There is in the world
Before you can get down
 To bed-rock,
 And stand stock
 Still
As reserved, as reserved, as reserved as can be,
 Not letting slip
 A word over your lip.
Oh! I say! Hurry! Hurry! I must get to the sea!
Bubble! Bubble! Bubble!
Hush! Let me down
Without any more trouble,
Bubble! Bubble! Bubble! Bubble!

[*All remain listening, wrapt in wonder. Even Finn, who since the spell has been laid upon him has been sitting in great heaviness of mind, looks up and listens to the song with growing delight. Suddenly Angus roars with laughter.*]

MACTALLA

[Mocking.]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Big Angus! Bow-wow!
I said I'd have the big laugh out of you the now.

ANGUS

[Unable to stop laughing.]

Did ever anybody hear the like of that?

[The others look at him half-angrily.]

CONAN

What's taken the fool!

CONDHLA

Pat him on the back.

TORQUIL

Can't you hold your tongue.

GONACHRY

Did you ever hear of anyone that could!

ANGUS

[In desperation.]

Hold my tongue! Will that do any good?

[He tries to do so. It makes him laugh all the more, and one by one they all gradually join in his laughter except Finn, till they are roaring fit to split the rocks. Above it all Mactalla is heard mocking. At last Angus subsides, wiping the tears from his eyes.]

CONAN

What on earth are you laughing at?

ANGUS

Nothing on earth. What are you laughing at?

CONAN

How should I know?

ANGUS

Well, how should I know what I'm laughing at?

CONAN

Because you began, you gomeril.

ANGUS

Not I.

GONACHRY

Well, then, who did?

ANGUS

Mactalla.

CONAN

What was Mactalla laughing at?

ANGUS

That's what I'd like to know.

GONACHRY

I never heard him.

ANGUS

That's because you've no sense of humour.

GONACHRY

[*Fiercely.*]

I have a sense of humour.

ANGUS

Where is it, then?

GONACHRY

Up my sleeve.

[*He looks up his sleeve and gives a sarcastic grin.*]

ANGUS

Well, nobody can see it there
But yourself, so you'd better take care.
If folk don't see what you're laughing at
They'll end by laughing at you.

CONAN

[*Stooping to pick up a button.*]

What's that?

A button. Is it anywhere off me?

[*He looks himself all over.*]

CONDHLA

What's it like?

CONAN

Greenish-white. No, it's not off me
As far as I can see.

ANGUS

[*Holding out his hand.*]

Here, it's mine. I burst it laughing.

[*Conan hands it over to him casually.*]

CONAN

[*Lighting his pipe.*]

Come on! It's time we were at work again.

TORQUIL

Are you taking the boat out to-day?

CONAN

Ay.

[*Exit Conan, Condhla, and Torquil.*]

ANGUS

[*To Finn.*]

Aren't you coming?

FINN

[*Abstractedly.*]

Not to-day, not to-day.

GONACHRY

[Laughing carelessly.]

He looks to me as if he had gone daft.

[He slouches off after the others with his hands in his pockets.]

ANGUS

It's very queer the way he never laughed.

[He goes up to Finn and gives him a hearty slap on the back.]

Come, man! What ails you?

FINN

[Throwing him off with sudden irritation.]

Get away, you gomeril!

ANGUS

[Aside.]

He's fey!

[He makes a sign to keep off the evil eye, and retreats hurriedly after the others, casting suspicious glances backwards at Finn.]

FINN

[Seeing himself alone, with a sigh of relief hoists his rainbow resolutely and tightens his belt.]

I will prick on my way

Far into the country of my God,

And if it be true, as they say,

That He is calm and unhurried,

Some day I shall break through a gap in the hedge

And come upon Him seated by the road-edge.

Then shall I say to Him these three things, baring
my brow:

“Wherefore art Thou, whence didst Thou come, and
whither goest Thou?

Answer, I pray, for I ask of Thee

As one traveller of another.”

[Enter the Carpenter, unperceived by Finn.]

CARPENTER

Good day!

FINN

[Starting violently.]

Good day!

CARPENTER

It's a fine day.

FINN

[Gloomily.]

It's fine as long as this breeze lasts, but I'm thinking
it'll not be long before there's a shower coming over
from Badenoch.

CARPENTER

Ay! It's soft; but it'll not be much with the sun
where it is.

FINN

The sun may be as high as it likes, it'll not make
much difference to the shadow on my mind.

CARPENTER

What sort of a shadow is on your mind?

FINN

A shadow like the one across the breast
Of Kinlochleven when the sun goes west,
And the Bidean, that great serious Ben,
Stoops to consider men.

CARPENTER

That's a long shadow.

FINN

It's a shadow of crosses and spells and seven fairy
fettlers of travelling and straying, to be with the one
that considers me before I shall eat food, or drink a
draught, or close an eye in sleep.

CARPENTER

It's a long shadow, but maybe I can help you to the
one that considers you if you'll consider me.

FINN

What are you good at to help me?

CARPENTER

I am a good carpenter.

FINN

How good are you at carpentry?

CARPENTER

With three strokes of this axe I can make a large
capacious complete ship of the alder-stock over yonder.

FINN

[*Eagerly.*]

You are good enough then, carpenter, for I am wanting a ship
To go on this trip.
Can you prove me your skill?

CARPENTER

Ay, with a will.

[*The Carpenter goes to the alder-stock, strikes it with his axe thrice, and, as he says, the ship is ready in the sea waiting for them.*]

FINN

[*Delighted.*]

It is a very beautiful wide ship; what can it do?

CARPENTER

It can take you to the one that considers you,
If rightly handled, and, as far's I see,
Brings such a one again to you and me.

FINN

[*Eagerly.*]

Will you lend her to me?

CARPENTER

[*Pawkily.*]

Ay, if you are willing to engage
My brother too for a trifling wage.
I'll not can manage her alone.

FINN

[Impatiently.]

Come on! Come on! Call me your brother;
He'll do as well as any other.

*[The Carpenter whistles shrilly on his fingers, and
the Tracker enters.]*

CARPENTER

You're wanted for the boat the now;
He needs you at the bow.

TRACKER

[To Finn.]

What is your will?

FINN

What are you good at?

TRACKER

I am a good tracker.

FINN

How good are you at tracking?

TRACKER

I can track the wild duck over the crests of the nine
waves within nine days.

FINN

Then you are good enough to track
The one that considers me, and bring him back.

TRACKER

That will I blindfold;
But I need another to hold
The tiller, in case we're called to the sheets together.
Call me that man there, coming across the heather.
[The Gripper is seen approaching over the hill-side.]

GRIPPER

Good day!

FINN

Good day! What are you good at?

GRIPPER

I am a good gripper.

FINN

How good are you?

GRIPPER

The hold I once get I will not let go until my two arms come from my shoulder, or until my hold comes with me.

FINN

Then you are good enough to hold until
The one that considers me comes with your hold?

GRIPPER

That will I, sitting still;
But as my hand's apt to grow cold,

I'll need that lassie there to keep my mind
Off thinking of it.

[The Climber has suddenly swung herself down by a golden rope at Finn's side.]

FINN

[Astonished.]

Why, how did you find
Your way down here?

[He takes off his cap politely.]

CLIMBER

I climbed down.

FINN

[Aside.]

I don't see any stair.
I wonder if she's quite all there!

CLIMBER

[Answering his thought.]

No, just at present I am mostly here.

FINN

[Aside.]

Her answer isn't very clear:

[Aloud.]

And what are you good at?

CLIMBER

I am a good climber.

FINN

I see that.

How good are you at climbing?

CLIMBER

I could climb on a filament of silk to the stars if you
were to tie it there.

FINN

[Looking at her dreamily.]

Will you be good enough then, please, to stare
Into each star and tell me if He's there.

[He collects himself, and adds hastily.]

The one that considers me, I mean.

CLIMBER

I'll be your go-between
With pleasure, but I'm young to come alone;
Call me that woman there as a chaperon.

*[The Thief and the Listener have entered hand in
hand. Finn beckons to the Thief, taking off his cap
again politely.]*

FINN

What are you good at, dame?

THIEF

I am a good thief.

FINN

How good are you at thieving?

THIEF

I can steal the egg from the heron while her two eyes are looking at me.

FINN

Then if you'll come with me and steal
The one that considers me, I'll feel
Greatly obliged to you, there is no doubt.

THIEF

I'll take you by a pretty roundabout
If you are also able to employ
My boy.

FINN

What is he good at?

LISTENER

I am a good listener.

FINN

How good are you at listening?

LISTENER

I can hear what the people are saying at the extremity of the uttermost world.

FINN

You are good enough, then. Maybe you can hear
Whether the one that considers me is near?

LISTENER

[Putting his hand to his ear.]

You're very hot!

[Finn, who has been standing beside the Climber, moves forward hastily.]

No, now you're colder!

I'll find Him ere I am much older,

Only some people are so narrow,

I'll need that man with the bow and arrow

[Enter Marksman.]

To bear me out ere they'll agree

That seeing's believing what I see.

FINN

[To Marksman.]

What are you good at?

MARKSMAN

I am a good marksman.

FINN

How good are you?

MARKSMAN

I could hit an egg as far off in the sky as bowstring
could send or bow could carry.

FINN

If you can hit the place where He
Is hidden who considers me,
We need no longer tarry.
For I am drawn by an insatiable desire,
I am consumed in an impetuous fire,
And I am denied all rest
Until my quest
Is ended. Would that I could find
A lodge for my soul, where I might leave behind
All longing for ever, slumbering complete
At His feet.
Would I could rest in that bright place where I
In spirit lie.
Its light has cast a shadow on the brow
Of this fair "Now."
Why did He make that garden-place so fair?
My soul, a bird, is there,
With limed wings fast to that apple-bough.

MARKSMAN

[*Putting his hand kindly on his shoulder.*]

Come, then, and let's be gone.
Your fellows will come after you anon.

[*They launch the ship, and the Gripper takes the helm. The Tracker, who is at the bow, is seen telling him now to go this way and now to go that way, and the ship obeys his hand beautifully. The waves begin to rise as the ship gets farther from sight, but the Tracker still finds a smooth path through the waters. The Listener leans over the side, and sings a song as the*

boat slips out to sea. It is a wild and beautiful song, haunting, sweet, and long-drawn-out.]

LISTENER'S SONG

I made a little song, and it was true,
Though nobody heeded it in the press of things;
I left it alone a thousand years, and it grew,
And I heard it again one day in the mouth of kings.

All as I went I joyed me a mighty joy.
They laughed at me; they said: "You're still very
young";
But I knew better than that when I was a boy,
And when I was old I found the song I'd sung.

ACT III. SCENE 1

A BEAUTIFUL HIGHLAND SHORE: AFTERNOON

In the distance up the glen there is seen smoke evidently rising from a house hidden somewhere in the trees. In the foreground there are heather and rocks and a beautiful alder-tree with thick foliage. Curlews and sea-gulls are crying, and a breeze is tossing the waves into white horses. At this moment Finn enters, looking rather wretched and storm-tossed. He sits down on a boulder, with a weary sigh.

FINN

[*Yawning.*]

Heigh-ho!—Hay-hum-harry!

This box is a weary weight to carry.

CLIMBER'S VOICE

[*Calling from the alder-tree.*]

I wish you'd let me take a share!

FINN

[*Starting violently, and looking up.*]

Certainly not! What are you doing up there?

CLIMBER

[*Pushing her head out through the leaves.*]

I went up after a squirrel.

FINN

At your age that's not proper for a girl.

CLIMBER

[*Singing.*]

Oh, to-day I'm twenty-seven!
What delight to rhyme with Heaven!
I'm as happy as can be,
Here inside the alder-tree.

All my life's a song that flows
With the river and the rose,
All my life's a song to me
Like the lovely alder-tree.

All the years I've left behind
Are translated in my mind
Into something new and free,
Like the seed-pod on the tree.

All that's past is unforgotten;
I have wrapped it up in cotton,
Like the larva that I see
In the leaf upon the tree.

It will grow and change and gather
Knowledge of a mind, its Father;
Some morning in its glee
It will float above the tree.

Oh, to-day I'm twenty-seven!
Just a little nearer Heaven

Than I ever used to be
When I climbed the alder-tree.

For I feel at last that I,
Like the larva, change and fly
Yet a grander, fuller me,
On the self-same alder-tree.

FINN

[Who has listened with delight to the song.]

You're a very eccentric sort of girl.

CLIMBER

[Coming down hastily.]

No! Eccentricity I hate!
It's just a name for off the straight;
And, if you'll only pay me more attention,
You'll find it's almost too far off to mention.

[Finn looks at her doubtfully.]

CLIMBER

[Coaxingly.]

I wish you'd let me take a share
Of that old box you're carrying there.

FINN

[Hastily.]

I wouldn't dream of such a thing!

CLIMBER

Take care! It needs a stronger piece of string.
And if you drop it, that would be a pity;

It looks as if the contents were so pretty.
What is inside it? May I know?

FINN

Guess!

CLIMBER

I can't. It seems to show
All bright about the edge.

[*She tries the weight.*]

I can't see quite
What makes it heavy when it looks so light?

FINN

Tears of all sorts, and colours to suit each eye.

CLIMBER

Then why
Is it so light when it feels such a weight?

FINN

Oh! that's just Fate.
A glint of laughter
Getting through each tear
A little after.

CLIMBER

[*Clapping her hands.*]

Oh dear!
How beautiful! I've guessed it—a rainbow!
You've got a rainbow there,
I knew last night the morning would be fair!

FINN

[*Astonished.*]

How did you guess?

CLIMBER

I saw the rain-clouds yesterday
Coming up Crianlarich way,
Black as peat and full of dark.
Suddenly God set His mark
Over them all in a rainbow,
And so
I knew

The sun was somewhere getting through,
And, turning, saw him come
Hurriedly over the hills above Tyndrum.

[*She turns and sees Finn looking at her with a wistful expression.*]

What are you thinking about?

FINN

Nothing at all. A dream.

CLIMBER

Look out! They are not what they seem!

FINN

They're harmless enough. They aren't real.

CLIMBER

They're made of stuff
That's very apt to steal
Intact

Into actual fact.
For instance, look at these.

[*She points to some mountain pansies in the grass.*]

FINN

Explain the connection, please.

CLIMBER

Don't you see it, sumph?

FINN

Umph!
They seem to give you a lot of pleasure.

CLIMBER

[*Sniffing delightedly.*]

Yes, without measure.
Don't they give it you?

FINN

Oh! Well enough.
Though, as a rule, I think
That I prefer a more substantial stuff,
Something to eat or drink,
Yet somehow now I feel dead beat;
I couldn't stand the sight of meat.

CLIMBER

[*Rapturously.*]

Oh, I could feed
On flowers for ever!

FINN

Well, then, you must be very clever.

CLIMBER

[Hastily.]

Oh no! there is no need.

It happened through a violet's power,
For that's my favourite flower.

[Shyly, in a burst of sudden confidence.]

I'll tell you how it came about
If you'd care to find out.

FINN

[Settling himself on the bank.]

All right, I don't mind if you do;
But it won't be the same for me as you.

CLIMBER

[Sitting up and clasping her hands round her knees shyly.]

I was attracted by a violet,
For purple's my favourite colour, and you get
Such a delightful perfume out of these
When the wind makes a breeze

Among the petals.

God said: "That settles
It. Now she'll come back here

Another year,

And look for me where she has found her pleasure."

I did not measure

God's far arrangement thus; but sure enough
 (Since purple's my favourite colour), when the puff
 Of spring cast up her wild young flowery wrack,
 I looked to see if the violet were blown back.

[She begins to lose her self-consciousness. Finn watches her interestedly.]

Sufficient she was there!
 I pushed my hair
 Back from my brow, and on my knees I went
 To catch her scent.
 Oh, it was joy
 I thought would never cloy!
 And God, who saw me on the grass beside
 That purple pride,
 Laughed softly to Himself, and said: "I knew
 She'd not resist My blue.
 Now I'll be bound she'll come again next year
 To find my fragrance here."

[She continues with increasing animation, having quite lost all self-consciousness.]

In very deed I came,
 But now a flame
 Of ultra-violet flickered on my thought.
 It wasn't just the scent that brought
 Me back like that, nor yet the lovely blue;
 It was because I felt that God was true.
 And that was how, having had my attention called
 To something that came back and never palled,
 But seemed each year more lovely than the last,
 I passed

To looking for the far-off deeper things
That God had tucked behind the violet's wings.
I said to myself: "This is some sort of sign
Of constancy divine,
And I expect there must be some such mark
Set on our ultimate dark;
For we are all just one material here—
My heart, the violet clear.

[*Dreamily, to herself.*]

Oh! Isn't it delightful thus to grow
Together yet apart a little while?
God needs this time to shape us to the style
Of His eternity, as, strong and slow,
The separate shadows of the flowery prime
Become one purple deep at evening-time.

[*She takes a violet in her hands and looks at it. To herself.*]

Here's all the evidence of things unseen,
Delicious substance of a life to be,
Where maybe I'll share His identity,
And we'll be One to all eternity.

FINN

What?

CLIMBER

[*Who has forgotten that she is not alone, blushing self-consciously and starting violently.*]

Nothing! It's not
Meant for you to hear.

FINN

Go on about next year.

CLIMBER

[Very shyly, with averted face.]

Well, in the spring I came, with joyous thirst,
 To find the violet where I found her first;
 Till, kneeling there one day, I felt my heart
 Quicken and start,
 And pushing back the lid, to look within,
 I saw a thin
 Long tongue of lavender amid the red,
 And God knelt there, and spread
 His strong white hands above the warm, bright stain,
 And laughed, and said: "I have found faith again
 On earth."

[She pauses, and adds in a whisper.]

But I, too much amazed for mirth,
 Could only gaze and stammer: "Sir, not yet,
 It was Your violet."

[There is silence. The Climber remains with shy averted face.]

FINN

[After an embarrassed pause.]

I don't see how a violet's shown
 You that. Tell me it all again.

CLIMBER

[Jumping up, with a nervous laugh.]

Oh dear! I wish I could explain
 Better. But it's the sort of thing

You'll have to find alone. I'm off to bring
The others. I'll be back in a minute.

[She runs away, with a very red face. Finn yawns, sighs, and, picking a violet, sniffs and sniffs again.]

FINN

Delicious! I believe there's something in it!

[He puts the violet in his buttonhole.]

Even if it isn't much

It's something I could almost touch

A morsel of just now.

[Enter the Listener, whistling, and chipping himself a whistle out of an alder branch.]

FINN

Hallo! Where are the others?

LISTENER

Patching up the boat a bit in smothers

Of spray. The wind seems blowing this way.

[He waves his hand in the direction in which the Climber has gone.]

Still feeling sick?

FINN

Certainly not. I wasn't sick!

LISTENER

Oh! I thought that was why

You wouldn't come down to tea,

When you said you wished we'd let you die.

FINN

[Hastily.]

Certainly not!

LISTENER

Then why——

FINN

[*Hurriedly.*]

There's a sort of spell on me.
I can't consider common stuff like tea
Until I have found the one that considers me.

LISTENER

[*Sympathetically.*]

I say! How beastly! Worse than being in love.

FINN

[*Indignantly.*]

Not at all! It's not the least the same.

LISTENER

[*Innocently.*]

Why? What's the difference?

FINN

[*Crossly.*]

Oh, go away! How should I know?

LISTENER

Would you like to hear what I heard up above
The tree-tops, before I came
Out of the wood?

FINN

[*Crossly.*]

Not unless it's easily understood.

LISTENER

[*Cheerily.*]

Oh yes!

It's the sort of thing that any child could guess.

[*He begins to pipe a very cheery little tune, and then stops and looks at Finn enquiringly.*]

FINN

[*Brightening.*]

That's not bad. Go on!

LISTENER

[*Beginning to sing.*]

Tiravee! Tiravee! Tiravee!

The year has heard the spring

In far recesses smouldering.

Tiravee! Tiravee! Tiravee!

The robins sing,

Daffadowndillies and lilies

And crocuses are hiding,

Under the garden abiding,

Soon you'll see! Soon you'll see!

Soon you'll see!

For along the west border,

All in their proper order,

Just like last year—

Look!—the tops of the snowdrops are here!

Tiravee! Tiravee! Tiravee!

Oh, how wonderful it is to see

The spring again just as she used to be!

Showing how the bulbs grow

Under the ground,
 Making a sound
 Where silence lay low.
 Displaying
 The beauty of the earth,
 Saying:
 "There is no death.
 For consider the lilies
 How they grow, and the daffadowndillies,
 Underground
 They have found
 The spring!"
 Oh, Robin, sing!
 Oh, come away and see
 The tops
 Of the first snowdrops!
 Tiravee! Tiravee! Tiravee!

[During the song the others, drawn by the sound of piping, all begin to come in one by one, with the exception of the Climber, beginning with the Marksman and ending with the Carpenter, dancing and humming the tune. When the Listener has done they all applaud him delightedly, and the Marksman lets fly an arrow seaward.]

LISTENER

[Astonished.]

What's that for?

MARKSMAN

You hit the mark that time.

LISTENER

[Running to look.]

Where? I didn't see!

MARKSMAN

Nobody did but me.

Who taught you that song sublime?

LISTENER

A robin back there in the wood;

I haven't got it very good.

FINN

You have a very fine ear.

Is there anything else you can hear?

LISTENER

[Putting his ear to the ground and listening intently.]

I can hear the voice of your mother.

FINN

[Eagerly.]

What is she saying?

LISTENER

She's saying she's unravelling

Your fetters of travelling

And straying;

She's saying

She's sending your father

To help you to gather

The children he's losing

Through none of her choosing.

FINN

[Bewildered.]

Talk sense!

LISTENER

[*Offended.*]

I do; but it's too immense
For you to comprehend
With your unenlightened end!

[*Aside.*]

There! didn't I tell you she'd send!

[*At this moment the Climber runs in excitedly.*]

CLIMBER

I've just met a woman in the wood
Who says she's losing
Her children through none of her choosing,
And that you are the only man
Who can
Help her, if you'll be so very good.

FINN

[*Amazed.*]

That's what the Big Young Hero said to me
This morning, brought him through the strife
Of night-watching and tempest of sea!
I wonder who this woman can be?

CLIMBER

[*Excitedly.*]

I believe she is his wife?

FINN

How is she losing the children?

CLIMBER

She says she's losing them in the night
That claps down on men,
For a Hand comes in at the window ere it's light,
And takes them all away ben.

FINN

[*After a pause.*]

I can't help that!

CLIMBER

Yes, she says you can,
If you were half a man.

FINN

Why, what must I be at?

CLIMBER

She says you must watch through the night
Within her house, until you see daylight.

FINN

[*Sighing wearily.*]

I want my supper now. I really couldn't keep
My eyes open; I'm sure I'd go to sleep.

CLIMBER

[*Very earnestly and impressively.*]

Although she has laid supper in her house,
Please do not touch it yet, or you'll arouse
The Hand
Before you understand
How you must use the body to discern

The proper system of the mind, and learn
 You were not built like the bewildered moon,
 To dwindle ere you've found another face,
 Revolving inwards like an old buffoon,
 Too much attracted by an earthly grace;
 But, on a nervous pivot justly hung,
 Bringing your mind to bear upon the clay,
 Can turn your sleepy body round among
 The starry systems of another day;
 For that is how I think we're meant to gather
 Her earthly treasure for a Heavenly Father,
 Till He recall us from her dewy field
 At evening-time, building a finer bield
 For souls returning mindful of earth's beauty,
 Not naked as they came.

FINN

I'll do my duty

If you'll show me the way
 To the place where I'm to stay.

CLIMBER

[*Delighted.*]

All right!

We must look sharp as long as there's this light.

[*She beckons the others to follow.*]

FINN

[*Pausing suddenly.*]

Why, what was that that fell?
 I believe it was the spell.

[*He looks about.*]

I feel hungry enough for two
All of a sudden. Aren't you?

CLIMBER

[*Warningly.*]

No, I had something to eat before I came,
And in the morning you will get the same
If only now you'll try not to eat double;
For if you do we'll all get into trouble.

[*Exit all after the Climber.*]

ACT III. SCENE 2

THE HOUSE OF THE EARTH-MOTHER: GLOAMING

The kitchen of the Earth-Mother's house. A big open fire in the middle of the room, with a hole in the thatch above it to let the smoke out. A child asleep in a cradle beside it. The remains of a lavish supper on a table in the corner. The men are all lying about the fire asleep. Finn alone is sitting in a low chair drowsing. The Climber is lying asleep on a settle in the corner, near the Thief, who is sitting quietly watchful by the child. She alone seems wide awake.

FINN

[*Nodding drowsily, starts and falls forward. Shaking himself up, he looks round, rubbing his eyes and yawning.*]

Heigh-ho!—Heigh-hum-harry!
This rainbow is a weary job to carry.

[*Looks round.*]

No one seems awake that I can see.

THIEF

[*Quietly.*]

You forget me.

FINN

[*Startled.*]

Oh! Are you awake?

THIEF

[*Quietly.*]

I'm always awake.

FINN

Then I can take

A nap.

THIEF

[*Calmly.*]

For Heaven's sake

Keep awake,

Or the child will be taken away in the cap

Of the Hand.

FINN

[*Drowsily.*]

Bother! I don't understand.

[*Pointing to the Climber.*]

Even she's sleeping.

THIEF

Yes, she has been weeping.

FINN

[*Uneasy.*]

Why, whatever's the matter?

THIEF

Everything.

You've eaten too much.

FINN

[*Defensively.*]

Why, I didn't touch

More than I ought,

Did I?

THIEF

You took a thought

More than she did, that's why

You have upset her.

FINN

[*Sulkily.*]

I wish to goodness I had never met her,

If she's so very easily upset.

THIEF

[*Quietly.*]

I fear she's very childish for her age.

It's apt to overbalance her at this stage;

She isn't up to all God's ropes as yet.

FINN

[*Crossly.*]

I thought she said

That she could climb upon a thread

Up to a star

Were I to tie it there.

THIEF

Ay! But it needs more care
 To return so far
 Trundling the star.

[Finn sits silent for a little while, and begins to nod again. At last he rouses himself with a start.]

FINN

I'm much too plastic;
 This needs something drastic.

[He snatches a brand of wood from the fire, and thrusts it through the bone of his palm. The Climber immediately starts up in her sleep with a cry of pain.]

[Startled.]

What's wrong? Why——?

CLIMBER

[Talking in her sleep, in great distress.]

You are in pain!

FINN

[Defiantly.]

Not I!

CLIMBER

[Half asleep.]

You're hurting yourself with trying to keep awake!

FINN

[Coldly.]

You're making a mistake.

CLIMBER

[Bewildered and dreamy.]

Oh, I'm sorry! I thought you called me.

FINN

[Stoically.]

No.

[The Marksman turns in his sleep with a groan.]

CLIMBER

I beg your pardon.

THIEF

[Quietly.]

Lie down. If he's in pain

I'll call you again.

[The Climber lies down again.]

THIEF SINGS:

I have a lover in my mind,
And there I stray.
He whispers dreams to me all night;
I dream with him all day.

We tell each other foreign things,
We dream strange dreams, we two;
Sometimes he whispers He is God,
And I dream I am too.

[Finn, nodding, repeats former process. Again the Climber starts up in her sleep with a loud cry of anguish.]

CLIMBER

[As before, talking half in her sleep.]

You are in pain?

FINN

[Wiping his brow.]

Not I, you're dreaming.

[The Marksman again groans in his sleep.]

THIEF

[Quietly.]

Lie down. If he's in pain

I'll call you again.

CLIMBER

[Bewildered and troubled, still asleep.]

I'm very sorry, indeed I meant no harm;

I feel as if I were under some sort of charm.

[She lies down again.]

THIEF SINGS:

Love seeketh not a Heaven's delight.

If her beloved inhabit there,

She is content with outer night,

And finds in Hell no deep despair.

Yet if the love of God divine

Feel lonely Heaven a grave mistake,

And say: "Is Hell not also mine?"

Love answers: "Yea, Lord, take."

[By this time Finn has fallen quite asleep. The fire dies low. Suddenly a strange light begins to play about

the Climber. She starts up half-awake, and looks round bewildered. Then she speaks to the Thief in an awed whisper.]

CLIMBER

Who called me? Was it you?

THIEF

I have been sitting quietly by the cradle all this time.

CLIMBER

Inside my brain

There's something tugging me, a sort of strain,

A terrible wistfulness, my mind's all bruised.

Something calls me that is not amused.

Is it God?

Or is it not God?

THIEF

[*Gravely.*]

It is God.

Lie down. He will call you again

If He is in pain.

[*The Climber lies down again. The fire dies quite low, but the radiance about her grows bright and brighter; she alone is left visible. Suddenly, for a moment, as through a veil, the face of the Big Young Hero is seen looking wistfully down on her. She starts up with her hands clasped to her breast, and speaks in an awed whisper.*]

CLIMBER

Did you call me, sir?

HERO

I sent Finn to call you.

CLIMBER

I heard him. Do you require us both?

HERO

Yes, urgently; make haste.

[The vision fades, leaving the Climber alone in the midst of a great brightness.]

CLIMBER

[Whispering.]

Always I have known Thou wert there,
But to-night Thou hast revealed Thyself utterly and
Thy face is bare.

I cannot tell how beautiful Thou art.

All of my heart

Is radiant with the fierce surprise

Of Thine eyes,

All of my soul

Stands shuddering at her goal.

Long ago she knew Thee, yet she feared

To name Thee, ever she peered

Into the darkness, whispering: "Not mine,"

To-night she doth divine

Wholly, and she is very bold, and boasts, and hath
good cheer,

Entertaining the love that casts out fear.

[The brightness fades, leaving darkness for a moment, then the fire leaps up again, illuminating the room. The Climber looks about her, bewildered with ecstasy.]

Oh, I have had such a wonderful dream!

Why, they all seem

To be asleep! .

THIEF

[*Quietly.*]

I am not asleep.

CLIMBER

[*Radiant.*]

Oh, did you see my dream?

THIEF

Yes; I stole it for you.

CLIMBER

Where did you get it?

THIEF

Out of the mind of God.

CLIMBER

It was most beautiful; can't you find
Another the same?

THIEF

Yes, from where that one came;
But it is not for you.

CLIMBER

[*Disappointed.*]

Oh! Who's it for?

THIEF

Never mind,
You'll find
When you make yours come true.

CLIMBER

[*Very eagerly.*]

Why, what must I do?

THIEF

You must make them believe it.
You must take it and weave it,
By a kind of story,
Into actual glory.

CLIMBER

[*Jumping up joyfully.*]

Where shall I begin?

THIEF

With Finn.

CLIMBER

[*Drawing back nervously.*]

Oh no, I can't! He'll think it very queer.
I—I haven't got the courage to reveal
A dream so very delicate and real.
They'll laugh at me. They'll all think I am queer.

THIEF

[*Indifferently.*]

I have nothing to do with fear.
Your business is to do just as I tell.

CLIMBER

[*Summoning up all her resolution.*]

Very well.

THIEF

[*Quietly.*]

If you're to carry out God's plan
You must pitch into every man.

CLIMBER

[*Trembling with nervousness.*]

All right! To make my dream come true
There's nothing I'm afraid to do.

[*She runs quickly over to Finn and takes him eagerly by the hand to wake him. He starts awake with a quiver of pain, withdrawing his hand.*]

CLIMBER

[*Overstrained and very nervous.*]

Oh, are you angry at me?

FINN

[*Gently.*]

Why should I be angry?

CLIMBER

[*Shyly.*]

For—for waking you up.

FINN

Was I asleep?

CLIMBER

[*Nervously.*]

Yes; but I've brought you something that'll keep
You awake for ever.

[*She laughs nervously.*]

FINN

[Politely.]

Never!

What is it?

CLIMBER

[Shyly.]

N—nothing; just a dream.

FINN

[Embarrassed.]

Better keep it to yourself.

Dreams are things some folk don't understand.

CLIMBER

[In distress, catching sight of his hand.]

Why, what have you done to your hand?

You've burnt it all!

You were in pain, I knew!

I heard you call.

Why did you say it wasn't true?

FINN

[Withdrawing his hand hastily]

It's nothing to do with you.

Go to sleep again;

I never felt the slightest pain.

[The Marksman groans in his sleep]

CLIMBER

[Embarrassed and shy.]

Don't you, really?

FINN

[Resolutely.]

No. I tell you it's quite numb.

CLIMBER

[Grieved and awkward.]

Then you didn't call me to come?

FINN

[Turning his head away with a groan]

No. I am in no need.

*[The Marksman groans in his sleep again. Finn turns and looks more attentively at the Climber, hesitating. She is pale and overstrained looking.]**[Kindly.]*

I really think you ought to feed

Yourself up a bit.

You're not looking very fit.

CLIMBER

[Hurriedly.]

I was asleep. I'm quite all right.

It's just a silly dream. Good night.

[Marksman groans.]

Be sure you keep awake.

[She retreats nervously.]

FINN

Good night. Be sure you keep

Asleep.

Don't worry about me for any sake;
I'm wide enough awake.

[The Marksman groans again, and Finn begins to nod heavily even as he speaks.]

CLIMBER

[To the thief, bursting into tears.]

They won't believe my dream.
You've made me feel an awful fool.
He's laughing now. I know I seem
Quite childish!

THIEF

[Aside.]

To keep cool,
The best way is by letting off some steam.

[To the Climber, very sternly.]

The fault was yours. You have betrayed your
dream.

CLIMBER

[Weeps silently for a little, then wipes her eyes and speaks as if to herself.]

They tell me that I have my birth
Some other where,
And though indeed I do not greatly care
If this be true or no,
I really think it must be partly so;
For no one understands me in this house,
I am not able all alone to rouse
Them up. They just ignore me everywhere.
I begin to think that I'm not quite all there.

[She sinks her head desperately between her hands.]

THIEF

[*Quietly.*]

I wasn't laughing at you.

CLIMBER

[*Lifting her head quietly and recovering herself.*]

No, I knew.

THIEF

Perhaps I've left you rather much alone.

CLIMBER

Oh no! I think I've just outgrown
My strength.

THIEF

[*Quietly.*]Then if you've got that length
You've come into your own. Lie down again;
I'll call you if he is in pain.

CLIMBER

No! No! This time I must lie still
Unless he comes himself. He'd take it ill
If I should offer him a change of diet
He's not accustomed to. I must lie quiet
Unless he says that he's prepared to try it.[*She lies down again. The stage gradually becomes quite dark, as the Thief sings this song.*]

THIEF'S SONG

God gave me a little fire,
And, as He did require,
I burnt it all away,
And He gave me more each day.

At last to one most dear
 I denied my fire in fear,
 And now the light's gone out,
 And God's nowhere about.

[At this moment the eight-day clock in the corner of the room strikes twelve slowly, and a great Hand comes in at the hole in the centre of the roof. All have fallen asleep except the Thief. She springs up with a cry and shakes the Climber, who does not stir, but all the others start up, and Finn calls loudly on the Gripper, who lays hold on the Hand and takes it in to the two eyebrows at the chimney. The Hand gives a pull on the Gripper, and takes him out to the top of his two shoulders. The Gripper gives another pull on the Hand and brings it in to the neck. The Hand gives a pull on the Gripper, and brings him out to the very middle. The Gripper gives a pull on the Hand, and brings it in over the two armpits. The Hand gives a pull on the Gripper, and takes him out to the smalls of his two feet. Then the Gripper gives a brave pull on the Hand, and it comes out of the shoulder, and when it falls on the floor the pulling of seven geldings is in it. All shout with joy.]

FINN

[Wiping his brow in unutterable relief.]

What an escape! I nearly lost the child!
 She'd have been wild!
 I knew I could hold out
 Without having to shout
 For aid.

[At this moment the Giant, unnoticed, puts in his other hand and takes the child with him in the cap of the hand. It screams, awaking the Climber.]

CLIMBER

Oh! You've let it go!
You've been asleep, I know!

FINN

[*Desperately, with his head in his hands.*]
What a mistake I've made!

[*Furiously, to the Gripper.*]

You fool! Why couldn't you
Hold on a little longer?

GRIPPER

[*Plaintively and with resignation.*]
Because I never knew
There was another Hand a little stronger.

FINN

[*Frantically, to Marksman.*]

You that's so good at marking eggs,
Why couldn't you tell other folk
About the yolk?

MARKSMAN

[*Tranquilly.*]

You never asked me, or I would have told.

Are you not old
Enough—have you not got two legs,
A pair of hands, a level
Enough head
(When all is done and said)
From which to deduce the devil?

FINN

[*Losing all control.*]

Liar! It was your duty to tell!

MARKSMAN

[Quietly and sorrowfully.]

Go to Hell.

[Finn rushes out. The Climber is all this time kneeling by the settle with her head buried in her hands, and does not appear to hear anything around her.]

CARPENTER

[Angrily, to Marksman.]

Didn't the woman tell her that the Giant
Who steals the children was just like a man?
If we had known we wouldn't have been so pliant.

MARKSMAN

[Turning to look at him with a strange smile.]

Why didn't you ask her about him? She never can
Tell you very much until
You ask her of your own free will.

CARPENTER

[Sneeringly.]

I don't believe she knew!

MARKSMAN

[Turning and looking at him.]

Don't you?

CARPENTER

[Trying to look him in the face, but getting very red, drops his eyes and mutters.]

Well, maybe she did. You needn't make a stir,
I don't pretend to understand folk like her.

MARKSMAN

[*As before.*]

Don't you?

CARPENTER

[*Defiantly and reluctantly.*]

Well, if I do it's not because I can't.

MARKSMAN

[*As before.*]

Isn't it?

[*Silence.*]

Come, answer me!

CARPENTER

[*Defiantly.*]

I shan't!

MARKSMAN

[*Letting him go with a contemptuous kick from behind.*]

Then follow Finn until you've learned compliance.

CARPENTER

[*Calling Tracker.*]

Come on! Let's show them we've some self-reliance!

TRACKER

[*To Gripper, who is still standing quietly holding the arm he has pulled out.*]

Come on! There's no use holding any more
To the sneck of that door.

[*Pointing to arm.*]

GRIPPER

Where are you going?

[He looks undecided.]

TRACKER

There's no knowing,
I'm bound to follow him.*[Points to Carpenter.]*

GRIPPER

*[Looking round doubtfully.]*The light is very dim,
Where is he taking us?

CARPENTER

[Pulling him by the collar.]

Come on without any more fuss.

TRACKER

[Pulling at the Hand.]

Drop it, I say, drop it!

MARKSMAN

[Intervening sternly.]

Stop it!

[The Tracker and the Carpenter fling out after Finn.]

THIEF

*[To Marksman.]*I'll follow them. I musn't be inhuman,
They'll certainly get lost without a woman.

MARKSMAN

Take care, they've gone to Hell.

THIEF

[Quietly indicating the Climber.]

Look after this child well,

And I will steal all Heaven before you can tell.

LISTENER

[Eagerly.]

What fun! May I come too?

THIEF

[Pointing to the Climber.]

Not yet, she's need of you.

[Exit Thief.]

LISTENER

[Coming forward and gazing up at the hole in the roof with his hands on his knees.]

Well, that was a clean sweep!

[To Climber.]

I say, don't weep!

MARKSMAN

[With his finger on his lips.]

Hush! She's saying her prayers!

LISTENER

[Abashed and embarrassed.]

Oh, sorry!

[He crosses to the window and leans out, and then softly beckons to the Gripper. The Marksman is sitting quietly in Finn's chair by the fire.]

LISTENER

[To Gripper, speaking softly not to disturb the Climber.]

Look at the sky, and that green stretch of clear
Behind the Bidean! There's really no night here.

[He sits astride the window whistling softly, and then begins to sing this song under his breath.]

I had a vision of Hope. She came to me
Long before morning came, long ere the day
Had folded night in her bosom and gathered away
The stars in her brightness;
I saw as it were a whiteness
Like a shimmer on the sea;
Long before morning broke
She awoke
And came to me.

There are some who never see her,
There are some who never hear
Her whisper at their ear.
I was awake and heard
Before the thrushes stirred.

Deep in her heart she showed me,
Long before it was spring,
A lovely thing.
All the April bulbs unsleeping,
Beneath the garden keeping
Watch for the dawn,
All the eyes of the daisies wide-awake under the
lawn.

There are some who will not trust her,
There are some who blindly thrust her

Out of sight

Into the solitary night.

Grievous souls! They do not know

That her lovely sign is true:

I listened and I knew.

MARKSMAN

That's good enough!

[Climber springs up lightly.]

CLIMBER

Why! Where's Finn?

LISTENER

[Coming down.]

Gone off in the huff

While you were saying your prayers.

CLIMBER

[Desperately, to Marksman.]

I don't believe it! Tell me there's

No truth in what he said.

MARKSMAN

[Quietly.]

Yes, for the present, Finn is dead.

CLIMBER

[Quietly steadfast.]

I don't believe it.

MARKSMAN

He has lost his head.

CLIMBER

[Looking round.]

Where are the others?

GRIPPER

[Sarcastically.]

They've followed him like brothers.

CLIMBER

Has the Thief gone with the rest?

MARKSMAN

Yes; she thought it best.

She said it was inhuman

To let them go without a woman.

CLIMBER

[Radiantly, with upraised face.]

Thank you!

LISTENER

[To Marksman.]

Who's she speaking to?

[The Marksman quietly shoots an arrow out of the window.]

LISTENER

Why did you do that?

MARKSMAN

Being under my protection
She looked straight in the right direction.

LISTENER

[Who has run to the window to look after the arrow.]

I say! They've put off in the boat
And left us all behind!

CLIMBER

[Anxiously.]

Has Finn got his coat?

LISTENER

No; there it is behind
The press.

CLIMBER

Is the Thief there?

LISTENER

Yes.

CLIMBER

Then never mind.

[To Gripper.]

Come! You must follow
And take the tiller, or the sea will swallow
Them all.

GRIPPER

[Plaintively]

It's no use; I would fall
Without something to grip.

CLIMBER

Are you afraid to slip
If I make fast
A rope to the mast?

GRIPPER

[Brightening.]

Oh no! not if you give me anything
To hold to, even the smallest bit of string.
But how will you get over there?
It's far too rough to swim. Take care!

CLIMBER

[To Listener.]

Can you hear
What the Thief is saying?

LISTENER

[Putting his ear to the ground and listening intently.]
I rather think she's praying.

CLIMBER

[Clapping her hands delightedly.]

Then come along, the danger's past,
I've tied a life-line to the mast!

[Exit all running eagerly, the Climber carrying Finn's coat.]

ACT III. SCENE 3

AT SEA: SUNSET

A stormy dark sunset, late in the gloaming. The ship is seen tossing wildly on a tempestuous sea. The Thief is sitting quietly in the stern with her head bowed; her face is invisible. The Carpenter and the Tracker are whimpering on the floor. Finn is alone at the helm, but the waves are driving the boat about at their mercy.

CARPENTER

[Terrified, from bottom of boat.]

I don't believe this boat is sound.

TRACKER

[Blubbing with terror.]

Boohoo! Boohoo! We's all going to be drowned!

[Clutches Finn's legs.]

FINN

[Spurning him suddenly.]

Be quiet, you fool!

[The Tracker collapses howling in a corner.]

CARPENTER

Cheer up! You'll soon be able to keep cool.

[A great shower of spray comes over and drenches them. The Tracker cries despairingly.]

CARPENTER

[To Finn.]

I had a sense of something due

To someone, though I scare kent who,
 And like a fool I lent my ship to you.
 Although I made her at my own expense
 I thought you had a little common sense.
 Didn't I tell you she was bound
 To carry you quite safe and sound
 From earth to Heaven, if you could handle
 Her properly. It's a fair scandal
 To see the way you hold the tiller.
 You'll sink her. Look! You'll sink and fill her!

[The ship heels and dips, the Tracker yells again, and even the Carpenter gasps and moans.]

I thought that she would even carry
 God back again to earth to tarry.
 Oh! If she'd had another master
 Than you, she would have got on faster,
 But with this God-forsaken mind
 No other body could I find.

TRACKER

[To Carpenter, blubbing.]

I'd like to tell you what I think
 Of you.

CARPENTER

I jalouse we must sink
 Our differences for a little;
 This boat won't stand it, she's too brittle.

[The boat gives a wild lurch and appears to founder. Both cry wildly to Finn. The Tracker clutches the Thief's knees, weeping loudly.]

THIEF

[Quietly.]

Have patience!

FINN

[Looking desperately up to the sky.]

If there is any Truth in what she said,
 If there is any Hope that answers prayer,
 If there is any Faith beyond her share
 That stretches nervous from a lovelier Head
 Than ours, and quickens in the brighter dead,
 I summon all my strong human emotion
 To stir that Brain to feel what I am feeling,
 And rouse a Thought of which I had no notion
 Into consideration of my healing,
 For though my mind is smaller than That Other
 I have enough of sense to call it Brother
 If It be there at all. If It be there.

[At his words a golden life-line is suddenly whirled on board and falls at his feet. The Carpenter and the Tracker cry wildly: "A rope! A rope! Oh, make it fast!"]

THIEF

[With a sigh of relief.]

The danger's past!

[She runs hurriedly and makes the rope fast to the mast, while Finn remains gazing at it as if dazed. In a moment the Climber is seen swinging along it, immediately followed by the Gripper, the Listener, and the Marksman. Finn remains as if spellbound, while the Gripper runs to the tiller, seizes it from him, and turns the boat completely round.]

FINN

[To himself, as if bewildered.]

This is more than any sense deserves!

CLIMBER

*[Shaking her head at him.]*Fancy going off like that in an open boat
Without your coat!

Your state of mind is preying on my nerves.

[She helps him into his coat, which he submits to passively, gazing at her as if dazed; then suddenly falling on his knees, he snatches her hand, crying exultantly—]

FINN

Before the sun shall rise upon the land
I'll shake all darkness by this other hand!*[The storm gradually abates, and as the ship slips away the Gripper leans back against the tiller and sings.]*

GRIPPER'S SONG

I saw above the straining shrouds
No rift nor hint of dawn,
I saw no light beyond the clouds,
But still I carried on.I saw the end of the world, Dear Heart,
And I believed it true,
But still I held to my small part,
And so she carried through.

ACT IV

THE GIANT'S CASTLE: MIDNIGHT

In a dim twilight of stars a castle is seen upon a rock. It is thatched with eel-skins, and there appears to be neither door nor window. The dark figures of Finn, the Climber, the Thief, the Marksman, and the Listener are presently seen stealing softly over the rocks. The other three have evidently remained with the boat. They talk in whispers.

FINN

[*To Climber.*]

Is this the place?

CLIMBER

I believe so.

FINN

It's very dark,
I cannot see your face.

LISTENER

Hark!

FINN

[*Nervously.*]

What is it?

LISTENER

I hear something inside,
It sounds like children's voices.
Have you tried
The door?

FINN

There isn't any door.

LISTENER

[*Positively.*]

I really hear
Something, I don't know what. It sounds quite near.

CLIMBER

If there's no front door there must be a stair,
I'm certain he has put the child in there;
And since it must have got inside somehow,
I rather think the door is in the brow.
At any rate, I'm going to climb and see.

FINN

[*Anxiously.*]

Take care! The thatch is very slippery!

LISTENER

[*Cheerfully.*]

If there's a way in, then there is no doubt
There must be just the same way to get out.

[*The Climber's figure is soon dimly seen silhouetted
on the roof against the stars.*]

CLIMBER

[With a delighted exclamation.]

Just as I thought!

FINN

[Nervously.]

What?

CLIMBER

I've found a door just where I thought.

FINN

Can you open it?

CLIMBER

Oh yes, there's not

Much difficulty there,

It comes away with prayer.

[She is seen kneeling.]

FINN

What's that you're saying?

LISTENER

Be quiet! Can't you see she's praying?

CLIMBER

[Presently.]

It's opening up!

FINN

[Eagerly.]

What is inside?

CLIMBER

I'm looking, but I haven't tried
My eyes yet in a night so deep.

[She calls down softly presently.]

The Giant is sound asleep!

FINN

Oh! Can you see if he's still got the child
Inside the cap
Of the other hand?

CLIMBER

[Delighted.]

It's there! It's still taking its little nap!

FINN

[Desperately.]

If only I were strong enough to creep
Inside and steal it while he is asleep!
But with this heavy box I can't get up.

LISTENER

Why don't you throw it away then altogether?

FINN

[Arrested.]

I wonder if I could? I don't know whether—

CLIMBER

[*Calling down.*]

There's a dog here too besides, and a little pup!

FINN

Abominable! They're sure to bark.

LISTENER

[*Delighted.*]

I say! A puppy! What a lark!
Please try and get it for me. Hark!

FINN

[*Nervously.*]

What is it?

LISTENER

I hear the Giant coming up out of his sleep.
You must be quick,
Or else you'll stick.

THIEF

[*To Climber.*]

I'm almost certain I could creep
And steal the child while he is sleeping,
Only I'm rather old to do much leaping;
You'd have to carry me a bit,
And let me gently down to it.

CLIMBER

All right! There is no difficulty there.
With your support I could go anywhere.

[She swings down, takes the Thief on her back, and is presently seen on the roof letting her gently down inside the castle. The Climber is seen again kneeling.]

FINN

[Anxiously, from below.]

Oh dear! How slow she is! It's very dark.
Why is she delaying?

LISTENER

Be quiet! Can't you see she's praying?
Hark!

FINN

[Nervously.]

What is it now?

LISTENER

[Joyously.]

I hear the child coming up out of his sleep.

CLIMBER

[Calling softly down to the Thief.]

It is so deep
Inside, I can't see where you are.

LISTENER

[Anxiously.]

Has she got the puppy?

CLIMBER

[Reassuringly.]

She'll get it all right, never fear!

LISTENER

[Whispering loudly.]

Good man!

I say! Can

You hand it down and let me hold its muzzle?

I guess to both of you it is a puzzle

To know at present where to put it,

And if Finn sees it probably he'll shoot it.

FINN

[Anxiously.]

Has she got the child? I can't endure

To wait like this.

CLIMBER

[A trifle hesitatingly]

I think so. I'm not sure.

LISTENER

Be quick! I hear the dog coming up out of her sleep.

THIEF'S VOICE

[From within, faintly.]

Oh! Lower me again to Mother Earth,

For I in spirit have been called as far

As the secret place where her lost children are,

And I now bring them back to second birth,
 Rescuing both the body and the soul
 Out of the Hand of death entire and whole,
 If you are strong enough to bear us back
 To the same side from which we came.

CLIMBER

[Reeling with the sudden relaxation of nervous tension.]

Alack!

I am as wearied as a falling star,
 I cannot do it alone.

[At this moment the Hand is seen emerging from the roof. It grips the Climber and takes her in.]

FINN

[With a frantic cry.]

Where are
 They? Oh! My God, what shall I do?

MARKSMAN

Put your finger underneath your wisdom tooth
 And find what it replies.

FINN

[Doing so.]

It says that I must tell the truth.

MARKSMAN

[Sternly.]

Confess your previous lies!

[Finn hides his face with a groan.]

MARKSMAN

[*Gently.*]

You need fear no disgrace
If you will look me in the face.

FINN

[*Trembling.*]

I'm thinking that there are not many here
Can look you in the face without some fear.

MARKSMAN

[*Quietly.*]

If you are too shy
I cannot help you at all. You must all die.

[*He turns away.*]

FINN

[*Clutching him by the shoulder.*]

No! No! No!

[*The Marksman turns and gazes at him. Finn remains upright, his eyes riveted on the Marksman's.*]

FINN

[*Steadily.*]

I told her I was wide enough awake.

MARKSMAN

[*Quietly.*]

That was a great mistake.

FINN

I told her I could quite well do
Without her aid.

MARKSMAN

[*Quietly.*]

That was untrue.

FINN

I told her that I did not feel
The slightest pain. Her dream was real,

[*He points to the box.*]

For overburdened with this weight
Of earth, I was in such a state
I really could not recognize
Myself reflected in her eyes.
I felt in such a deep disgrace
I could not look her in the face,
So when she brought her dream by and by
I put her off. Trying to deny
My God, I told a fearful lie.

MARKSMAN

[*Tranquilly.*]

She never believed it, and she marked it die
Dwindling slowly away
As the light grew stronger and the grey
Faded for ever from the windows.

[*He points to the faint line of green, which is now
showing on the horizon.*]

In the cottages they will soon be putting out all the
lamps
And going about their work in unreflected light.

FINN

[Springing up with a cry of joy.]

What! Is it really all right?

MARKSMAN

[Quietly.]

Yes, quite;
You've told me all that I require
To set you free.

FINN

[Now a different man.]

If God be true no man can be a liar.
Come, follow me.

LISTENER

Where are you going?

FINN

[Eagerly and joyously.]

I'm going after the Climber,
Her point of view's sublimer.
I'm going to throw away my bow.

[He casts the bow from him.]

MARKSMAN

[Picking up the box.]

Take care, you've not much yet on which to go!

FINN

[Radiantly.]

I cannot fall,
The way she chose is practical!

LISTENER

Since you have let her in for this, no doubt
You're bound to find a way to get her out.

MARKSMAN

[Turning on a little electric torch to light Finn.]

It's still a little dark to-night.
I've put things in the proper light
For you, but it strikes me
I'll have to clear up more before you'll see
Her way out of the difficulty.

[Finn reaches the roof in safety, and calls down anxiously.]

FINN

Are you there? Are you there?

CLIMBER

[Calling faintly from within.]

Oh! Have you come? I knew you'd not be long,
I'd noticed you were getting very strong.

He's tied me hand and foot. I cannot move,
I've found the Thief and he are hand in glove!

FINN

No matter! I'm entirely of your mind.
I'll find
My way inside and get you out just now.

CLIMBER

[Anxiously.]

The door is just behind your brow.

FINN

[Hitting his forehead.]

I've got it!

[His figure is seen against the dim twilight kneeling.]

LISTENER

Be quick! I hear the Giant coming up out of his
sleep!

[The Hand takes in Finn.]

CLIMBER'S VOICE

[With a muffled cry of despair.]

Too late! Too late! My God, what shall I do?

MARKSMAN

[Hurriedly, calling from below.]

Put your finger under your wisdom tooth and tell me
what it replies.

CLIMBER'S VOICE

It says that I must tell the truth!

MARKSMAN

[*Very sternly.*]

What! You as well! Confess your previous lies!

CLIMBER'S VOICE

It is so dark I cannot see your face,
I feel that I'm in very deep disgrace.
Alas! I told him that I was asleep!

MARKSMAN

Your error there was truly very deep.

CLIMBER

I thought that I was strong enough
To return alone.

MARKSMAN

What utter stuff!

CLIMBER

[*Desperately.*]

I said I thought he was in pain;
The pain was mine, for in my brain
I felt a tugging and a stress
I could not understand, unless
One in the likeness of a man
Had summoned me to Heaven. I ran,
I climbed, I reached the topmost stair,

And found that I was not all there,
For if I'd left the earth behind
I should have gone out of my mind,
Since God requires a soul and body too
To make the substance of His dream come true.
I understood God did devise
To make this earth His Paradise;
I saw our second birth was got
Just out of earth by happy thought,
But fearful that a Truth so glad
Would seem an impudence half-mad,
I made him think that God's design
Was just a silly dream of mine.

MARKSMAN

[*Quietly.*]

He always believed your dream;
He marked it grow
Out upon his sleep with bewildered joy,
Until at last, just like a little boy,
He put his hand up in the dark to feel
Her face, and found he had touched something real.

[*He opens the box and takes the rainbow from it.*]

In the cottages they have put out all the lamps,
And go about their work in unreflected light.

LISTENER

[*Excitedly.*]

The Giant is coming up out of his sleep for the last time, and he is bringing the dog with him!

MARKSMAN

[*Quietly.*]

I am not afraid of myself, you need not shout,
For I am strong enough to bear them out.

[At this moment the Hand rises again from the chimney. The Marksman is seen stringing the rainbow and letting fly an arrow, which transfixes the Hand. There is terrible darkness for a moment, the stars fall from the sky and the moon turns crimson, leaving pitchy night. With a loud crash the walls of the castle fall away, and in a serene silent splendour of purple and crimson the dawn rises over the sea, revealing the Big Young Hero standing upon the rock with the child in his arms. The Climber and Finn are in each other's arms, the Thief is holding the puppy.]

MARKSMAN

They have all come up out of their sleep for ever!

LISTENER

[*With a great cry of joy.*]

I always knew this would happen! She's got the
puppy too!

ACT V

THE GREEN ISLE REALIZED ON EARTH. DAWN

The same as Act I, but this time there is no rainbow haze between, only a great rainbow stretching in the sky across the Hebrides seen in the distance. On a table under the trees the girl has spread all sorts of delightful fruits and cakes. She is now decorating it with flowers, and singing as she works.

SONG

I love all lovely things—
The dragon-fly's wings,
The rainbow and the rain,
The light that comes again
Joyously like a smile,
When for a little while
God disposes the night elsewhere.

His sun is very fair,
I can catch it in my hair.
Look! It's there! And there! And there!
Oh! the earth's a lovely thing,
The mind of a Mighty King,
I cannot help but sing.

I cannot end my song,
God's thought is very long.
Many years He took to make
The bracken in the brake;
He was a long time building
The fragrant yellow gilding
On the early poplar tree
When no eye was there to see.

The clouds, the atmosphere,
My breath, the water clear,
How fair and sweet they are!
Oh! hate was very far
From God's divine intention
When these things He did mention;
When He canopied the earth
With cloud, and fire, and mirth;
When He set the privy shade
For the pheasant in the glade;
When He built the mossy nest
For the wren, His little guest;
When He taught the mind of man
By its love to find His plan.

For no one shall discover
His science, save the lover.
Oh! Life's a lovely thing,
The mind of a Mighty King!
Emotion, will, desire,
Earth, water, air, and fire,
The elements intertwined,

With these He built the mind;
The love of green things growing,
The shadows they keep throwing
Across man's fiery thought
Till they're fused and merged and wrought
Into the liquid union
Of one divine communion
With God, Who made his college
An earthly place of knowledge.

I cannot help but sing,
Life's such a lovely thing!
The catkin and the willow
God's chosen for His pillow.
I wonder why He fashioned
A Beauty so impassioned;
I wonder why it matters
Which way the raindrop patters,
Or why a God should care
To give His creatures share
Of this delightful song.
His love must be very strong.

I cannot end my singing,
For still the starling's winging
With a straw held in her beak
To build in the old tree-peak;
And still across the sky
The compacted clouds go by;
And when God thinks upon it
The lily's yellow bonnet

Nid-nods delightfully
 Beneath the walnut tree.
 And clear, and still more clear,
 In God's mind I read and hear
 That only Love shall learn
 The wherefore of flower and fern,
 That only Love alone
 Shall live to be full-grown,
 That merely Love and Wonder
 Shall bring all Heaven hereunder.

[Towards the end of the song the brown-sailed fishing-boat is seen approaching gradually under the rainbow. As it draws near, Finn and the Big Young Hero are seen in it with the puppy. It touches the shore, at first unperceived of the girl. The Big Young Hero leaps lightly from it, and helps Finn out.]

FINN

[Looking round bewildered.]

I recognize this place.

HERO

You have been here before.

FINN

Isn't that the Bidean's face?

[Pointing to the distant hills.]

Please tell me, for I can't stand any more.

[He staggers, but the Hero puts an arm round him.]

There must be some mistake,
I seem
To be asleep and yet I am awake.
Is this a dream?

HERO

No, it is real.
Put up your hand and feel
Her face.

CLIMBER

[Perceiving him, calls.]

The breakfast's ready, I have set your place.
*[Catching sight of Finn she puts her hand to her face
with a cry of amazed delight.]*

It is the man I dreamed about last night!
I didn't know! I'm looking such a sight!
I didn't know that you would bring a guest.
*[She puts her hand up to her head as if she were
going to fall, and the Hero puts his other arm
round her.]*

I'll be all right after a little rest.
What a beautiful rainbow!

[Pointing.]

I always knew the morning would be fine.

FINN

*[Putting his hand up in amazement to find the box is
gone.]*

It's mine!
How did it get up there?

HERO

You hoisted it on a prayer;
The Marksman's left it in the sky to show
The right direction to the folk below.
The others are not very far behind;
Presently they will all be of your mind.

[He points to where, far off under the bow, the sails of Conan's boat are dimly visible on the horizon.]

FINN

[Wild with delight.]

Oh! I feel strong enough to turn the moon
Right round upon his other face,
And I feel ready now to sup
The stars up with a spoon.

CLIMBER

[In an awed whisper, gazing at Finn.]

I only know I am aware
Of God for ever, everywhere.

HERO

[Who has still an arm round either, to Finn.]

It was the Gate of Heaven that you carried.
Now it is time that you and she were married.
Since I have found you strong enough to share
Her faith that I am more than quite all there,
Ask what you will, it shall be given you
As your reward. Tell me, what is your due?

FINN

[In a whisper.]

I am beginning now to understand!
Lord, I beseech, help Thou mine other hand.

HERO

*[Leading the two forward to the table, he takes the
Climber's hand and places it in Finn's.]*

It has spread breakfast in my house for two,
The other place was always meant for you;
I pray you, warm it at your hearth hereunder.
What I have joined let no man put asunder.



APPENDIX

HOW FINN KEPT HIS CHILDREN FOR THE BIG YOUNG HERO OF THE SHIP AND HOW BRAN WAS FOUND.

A day Finn and his men were in the Hunting-hill they killed a great number of deer; and when they were wearied after the chase they sat down on a pleasant green knoll, at the back of the wind and at the face of the sun, where they could see everyone and no one at all could see them.

While they were sitting in that place Finn lifted his eyes towards the sea, and saw a ship making straight for the haven beneath the spot on which they were sitting. When the ship came to land, a Big Young Hero leaped out of her on the shore, seized her by the bows and drew her up, her own seven lengths, on the green grass, where the eldest son of neither landowner nor of holder of large townland dared mock or gibe at her. Then he ascended the hillside, leaping over the hollows and slanting the knolls, till he reached the spot on which Finn and his men were sitting.

He saluted Finn frankly, energetically, fluently; and Finn saluted him with the equivalent of the same words. Finn then asked him whence did he come or what was he wanting? He answered Finn that he had come through night-watching and tempest of sea where he was, because he was losing his children, and it had been told him that there was not a man in the world who could keep his children for him but him, Finn, King of the Feinne. And he said to Finn, "I lay on thee, as

crosses and spells and seven fairy fetters of travelling and straying, to be with me before thou shalt eat food or drink a draught or close an eye in sleep."

Having said this he turned away from them and descended the hillside the way he ascended it. When he reached the ship he placed his shoulder against her bow and put her out. He then leaped into her, and departed in the direction he came until they lost sight of him.

Finn was now under great heaviness of mind, because the vows had been laid on him, and he must fulfil them or travel onwards until he would die. He knew not whither he should go, or what he should do. But he left farewell with his men, and descended the hillside to the seaside. When he reached that he could not go farther on the way in which he saw the Big Young Hero depart. He therefore began to walk along the shore, but before he had gone very far forward, he saw a company of seven men coming to meet him.

When he reached the men he asked the first of them what was he good at? The man answered that he was a good Carpenter. Finn asked him how good was he at carpentry? The man said that, with three strokes of his axe he could make a large, capacious, complete ship of the alder stock over yonder. "Thou art good enough," said Finn; "thou mayest pass by."

He then asked of the second man what was he good at? The man said that he was a good Tracker. "How good art thou?" said Finn. "I can track the wild duck over the crests of the nine waves within nine days," said the man. "Thou art good enough," said Finn; "thou mayest pass by."

Then he said to the third man, "What art thou good at?" The man replied that he was a good Gripper. "How good art thou?" "The hold I once get I will not let go until my two arms come from my shoulders or

until my hold comes with me." "Thou art good enough; thou mayest pass by."

Then he said to the fourth man, "What art thou good at?" He answered that he was a good Climber. "How good art thou?" "I can climb on a filament of silk to the stars, although thou wert to tie it there." "Thou art good enough; thou mayest pass by."

He then said to the fifth man, "What art thou good at?" He replied that he was a good Thief. "How good art thou?" "I can steal the egg from the heron while her two eyes are looking at me." "Thou art good enough; thou mayest pass by."

He asked of the sixth man, "What art thou good at?" He answered that he was a good Listener. "How good art thou?" He said that he could hear what people were saying at the extremity of the Uttermost World (Domhan Tor). "Thou art good enough; thou mayest pass by."

Then he said to the seventh man, "What art thou good at?" He replied that he was a good Marksman. "How good art thou?" "I could hit an egg as far away in the sky as bowstring could send or bow could carry." "Thou art good enough; thou mayest pass by."

All this gave Finn great encouragement. He turned round and said to the Carpenter, "Prove thy skill." The Carpenter went where the stock was, and struck it with his axe thrice; and as he had said, the Ship was ready.

When Finn saw the Ship ready he ordered his men to put her out. They did that and went on board of her.

Finn now ordered the Tracker to go to the bow and prove himself. At the same time he told him that yesterday a Big Young Hero left yonder haven in his ship and that he wanted to follow the Hero to the place in which he now was. Finn himself went to steer the Ship and they departed. The Tracker was telling him to keep her this way or to keep her that way. They sailed a long time forward without seeing land, but they kept

on their course until evening was approaching. In the gloaming they noticed that land was ahead of them, and they made straight for it. When they reached the shore they leaped to land and drew up the Ship.

Then they noticed a large fine house in the glen above the beach. They took their way up to the house; and when they were nearing it they saw the Big Young Hero coming to meet them. He ran and placed his two arms about Finn's neck and said, "Darling of all men in the world, hast thou come?" "If I had been thy darling of all men in the world, it is not as thou didst leave me that thou wouldst have left me," said Finn. "Oh, it was not without a way of coming that I left thee," said the Big Young Hero. "Did I not send a company of seven men to meet thee?"

When they reached the house, the Big Young Hero told Finn and his men to go in. They accepted the invitation and found abundance of meat and drink.

After they had quenched their hunger and thirst, the Big Young Hero came in where they were, and said to Finn, "Six years from this night, my wife was in childbed and a child was born to me. As soon as the child came into the world, a large Hand came in at the chimney, and took the child with it in the cap (or hollow) of the Hand. Three years from this night the same thing happened. And to-night she is going to be in childbed again. It was told me that thou wert the only man in the world who could keep my children for me, and now I have courage since I have found thee."

Finn and his men were tired and sleepy. Finn said to the men that they were to stretch themselves on the floor and that he was going to keep watch. They did as they were told and he remained sitting beside the fire. At last sleep began to come on him; but he had a bar of iron in the fire, and as often as his eyes would begin to close with sleep, he would thrust the bar through the bone of his palm, and that was keeping him awake.

About midnight the woman was delivered, and as soon as the child came into the world the Hand came in at the chimney. Finn called on the Gripper to get up.

The Gripper sprang quickly to his feet and laid hold of the Hand. He gave a pull on the Hand, and took it in to the two eyebrows at the chimney.

The Hand gave a pull on the Gripper, and took him out to the top of his two shoulders. The Gripper gave another pull on the Hand, and brought it in to the neck. The Hand gave a pull on the Gripper, and brought him out to the very middle. The Gripper gave a pull on the Hand and took it in over the two armpits. The Hand gave a pull on the Gripper and took him out to the smalls of his two feet. Then the Gripper gave a brave pull on the Hand, and it came out of the shoulder. And when it fell on the floor the pulling of seven geldings was in it. But the big Giant outside put in the other hand and took the child with him in the cap of the Hand.

They were all very sorry that they lost the child. But Finn said, "We will not yield to this yet. I and my men will go away after the Hand before a sun shall rise on a dwelling to-morrow."

At break of dawn Finn and his men turned out, and reached the beach where they had left the Ship.

They launched the Ship, and leaped on board of her. The Tracker went to the bow, and Finn went to steer her. They departed, and now and again the Tracker would cry to Finn to keep her in that direction, or to keep her in this direction. They sailed onward a long distance without seeing anything before them, except the great sea. At the going down of the sun, Finn noticed a black spot in the ocean ahead of them. He thought it too little for an island and too large for a bird, but he made straight for it; and it was a rock, and a Castle thatched with eel-skins was on its top.

They landed on the rock. They looked about the

Castle but they saw neither window nor door at which they could get in. At last they noticed that it was on the roof the door was. They did not know how they could get up, because the thatch was so slippery. But the Climber cried, "Let me over and I will not be long in climbing it." He sprang quickly towards the Castle and in an instant was on its roof. He looked in at the door, and after taking particular notice of everything that he saw, he descended where the rest were waiting. Finn asked of him what did he see? He said that he saw a big Giant lying on a bed, a silk covering over him and a satin covering under him, and his hand stretched out and an infant asleep in the cap of the Hand; that he saw two boys on the floor playing with shinties of gold and a ball of silver; and that there was a very large deer-hound bitch lying beside the fire, and two pups sucking her.

Then said Finn, "I do not know how we shall get them out." The Thief answered and said, "If I get in I will not be long putting them out." The Climber said, "Come on my back and I will take thee up to the door." The Thief did as he was told and got into the Castle.

Instantly he began to prove his skill. The first thing he put out was the child that was in the cap of the Hand. He then put out the two boys who were playing on the floor. He then stole the silk covering that was over the Giant and the satin covering that was under him, and put them out. Then he put out the shinties of gold and the ball of silver. He then stole the two pups that were sucking the bitch beside the fire. These were the most valuable things which he saw inside. He left the Giant asleep and turned out.

They placed the things which the Thief stole in the Ship and departed. They were but a short time sailing when the Listener stood up and said, "'Tis I who am hearing him, 'tis I who am listening to him!" "What art thou hearing?" said Finn. "He has just awakened,"

said the Listener, "and missed everything that was stolen from him. He is in great wrath sending away the Bitch, and saying to her if she will not go that he will go himself. But it is the Bitch that is going." In a short time they looked behind them and saw the Bitch coming swimming. She was cleaving the sea on each side of her in red sparks of fire. They were seized with fear, and said that they did not know what they should do. But Finn considered, and then told them to throw out one of the pups; perhaps when she would see the pup drowning she would return with it. They threw out the pup, and as Finn said, it happened; the Bitch returned with the pup. This left them at the time pleased.

But shortly after that the Listener arose trembling, and said, "'Tis I who am hearing him, 'tis I who am listening to him!" "What art thou saying now?" said Finn. "He is sending away the Bitch, and since she will not go he is coming himself."

When they heard this their eye was always behind them. At last they saw him coming, and the great sea reached not beyond his haunches. They were seized with fear and great horror, for they knew not what they should do. But Finn thought of his knowledge set of teeth, and having put his finger under it, found out that the Giant was immortal except in a mole which was in a hollow of his palm. The Marksman then stood up and said, "If I get one look of it I will have him." The Giant came walking forward through the sea to the side of the Ship. Then he lifted up his hand to seize the top of the mast, in order to sink the Ship. But when the Hand was on high the Marksman noticed the mole, and he let an arrow off in its direction. The arrow struck the Giant in the death-spot and he fell dead on the sea. They were now very happy, for there was nothing before them to make them afraid. They put about and sailed back to the Castle. The Thief stole

the pup again, and they took it with them along with the one they had. After that they returned to the place of the Big Young Hero. When they reached the Haven they leaped on land and drew up the Ship on dry ground.

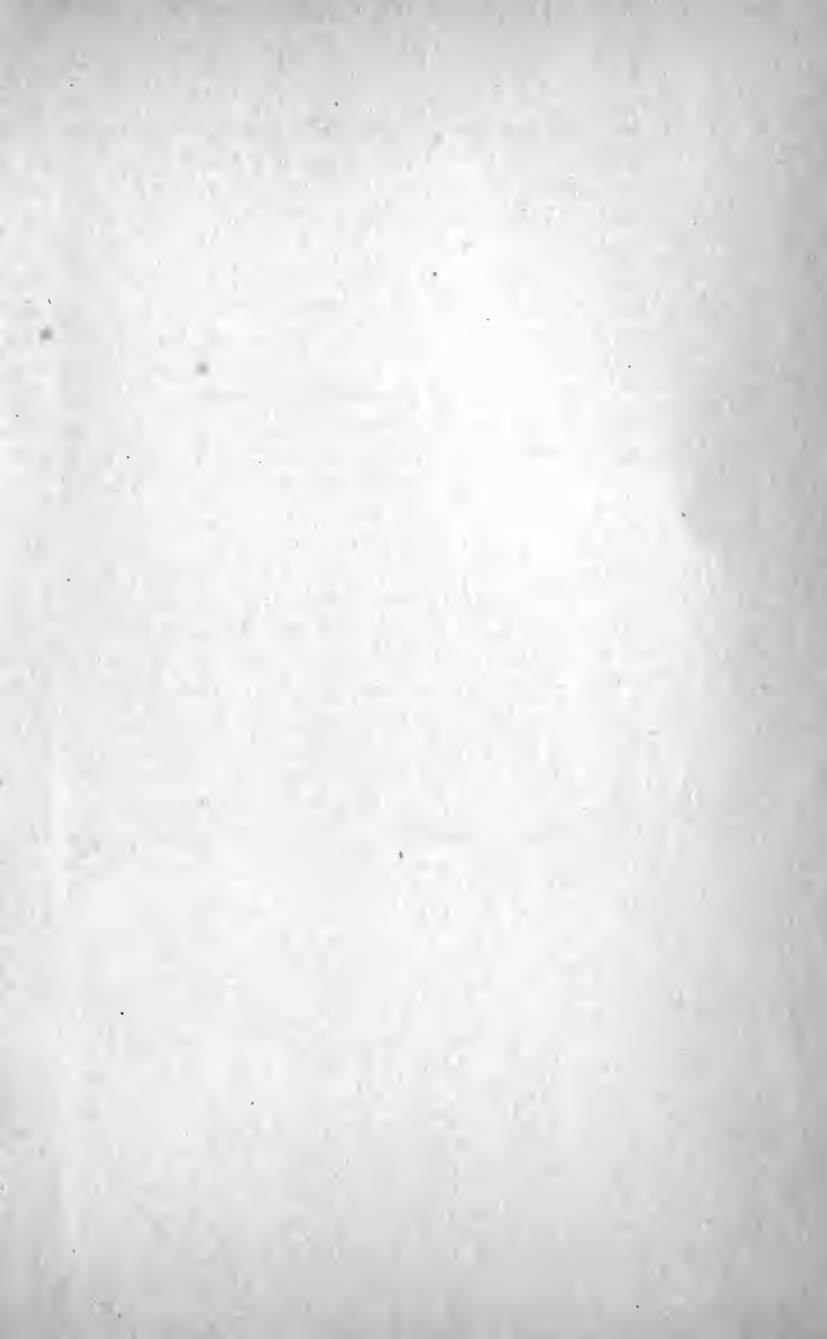
Then Finn went away with the family of the Big Young Hero and with everything which he and his men took out of the Castle to the fine house of the Big Young Hero.

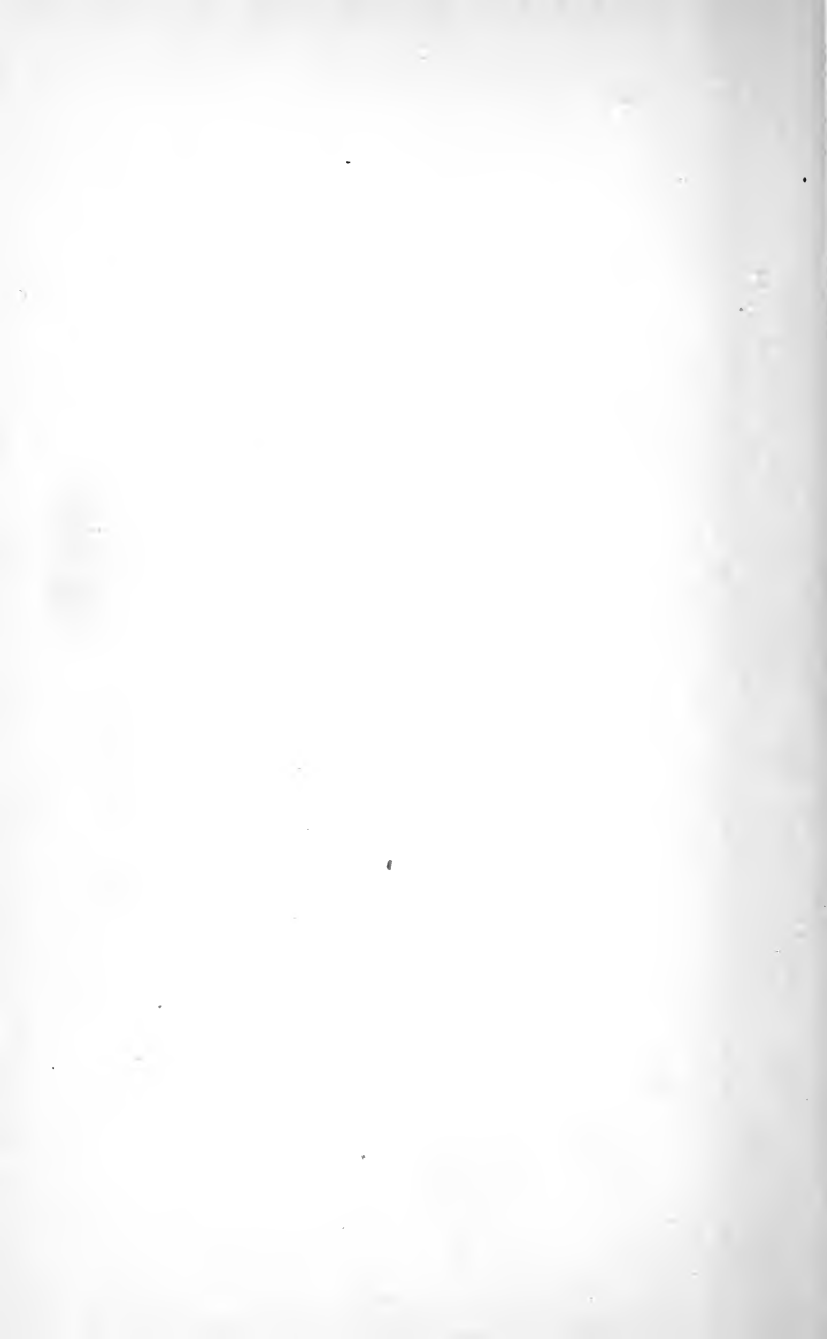
The Big Young Hero met him coming, and when he saw his children he went on his two knees to Finn and said, "What now is thy reward?" Finn answered and said that he was asking nothing but his choice of the two pups which they took from the Castle. The Big Young Hero said that he would get that and a great deal more if he would ask it. But Finn wanted nothing except the pup. This pup was Bran, and his brother, that the Big Young Hero got, was the Grey Dog.

The Big Young Hero took Finn and his men into his house and made for them a great joyous merry feast, which was kept up for a year and a day, and if the last day was not the best it was not the worst.

That is how Finn kept his children for the Big Young Hero of the Ship and how Bran was found.

Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition. Argyllshire series. Rev. J. Macdougall.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 235 016 A