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LAEGAIRE MAC CRIMTHANN'S VISIT TO FAIRYLAND

The following tale is found in the twelfth-century *Book of Leinster* [LL.] (*Facsimile*, p. 275, b, 22—p. 276, b, 25) and in the fifteenth-century *Book of Lismore* (167, r., a, 24—167, v., a, 32). Text and translation of the Lismore manuscript, which omits the verse, are given by S. H. O'Grady in *Silva Gadelica* (London and Edinburgh, 1892, I, 256 f.; II, 290 f.). Most of the verse has been translated by Kuno Meyer in the *Voyage of Bran* (London, 1895, I, 180 ff.) and in his *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry* (2d ed., London, 1913, p. 19). In the English rendering of the LL. version here offered, I have, wherever possible, followed the translations of Dr. Meyer, to whom I am also indebted for personal assistance. In translating the prose I have derived much help from the valuable, though inaccurate, rendering of the Lismore text given by O'Grady. Owing to the large number of errors in O'Grady's transcription, I reprint the Lismore version, which I was able to consult in 1912 through the courtesy of the Duke of Devonshire's agent at Lismore Castle. Summaries of the tale are given by Nutt (*Voyage of Bran*, I, 180 ff.) and by A. C. L. Brown ([Harvard] *Studies and Notes*, VIII [1903], 40, n. 2). The student of folk-lore will be interested in the story as an early example of the fairy world under water—a feature common in later Celtic popular literature (cf. this journal, XII [1915], 603, nn. 2 and 3).

BOOK OF LEINSTER

(Text)

Batar Connachta fecht and i n-dáil oc Énloch for Mag Aí. Cremthand Cass iss é bá rí Connacht in tan sin. Ansait inan dáil in aidchi sin. Otrachtatar matin moch arnabarach conaccatar in fer chucu triasin ciaig. Bratt corera coicdiabulta imbi. Da shleig coicrinni in a laim. Sciath co m-bualí oír fair. Claideb orduirn for a chriss. A moing órbuide dar a aiss. "Tabraid fáilti dond fhir dothét chucaib," or Laegaire Liban mac Crimthand. Mac-saide is afnem robói la Connachta, in Laegaire. "Fochen don laech nadathgenamar," or Laegaire. "Is bude lim," or se. "Cid immótracht?" or Laegaire. "Do chungid sochraide," or se. "Can duit?" or Laegaire. "Do fheruib side dam. Fiachna mac Retach m'ainm-se. Mo ben iarum 731]

rucad uaim .i. rofuc Eochaid mac Safl. Dorochair-side lim-sa i rróí chátha, condeochaid co mac brathar dó .i. co Goll mac nDuilb, rí duin Maige Mell. Doratusa secht catha doside, 7 romemdatar form uile. Forruacrad iarum cath lind indiu. Do chungid chobartha iarum dodechadsa.” IS and asbert:

“Aildiu maigib, Mag da Cheo,
imma luadet linní cró.
Cath fer side lán do gail,
ní éfan disíu inid fail.

“Tindsamar fuil fichda fland
a corpaib segda sóerchland.
For a collaib ferait brón
bantrocht dían derach dímór.

“Cet orggáin cathrach da chorr,
imma rabe tóeban toll.
Dorochair co cind fri cath,
Eochaid mac Sáil sirechtach.

“Trén ronbáig Aed mac Find
in n-irgail n-uallaig n-adrind.
Goll mac Duilb, Dond mac Nera,
ronbáig mór caemchenna.

“Maithi m’*eich*, áilli mo mná.
me fadéin ní *hed* namma,
Urrand argait 7 óir.
teit lim *cach* duine dian áil.¹A.

“Findne gela [i]na lláim,
co comarthaib argait báin,
Co claidbib glanaib glassaib,
cornáib cruachaib comrasaib.

“Co comarlib in chatha
ar beluib a find[f]latha
Ceñgait dar gáo glassa
buidni bana bar[r]chassa.

“Crot[h]ait irgala ecrat,
orcit *cech* tír fo-n-uapret.
Cáin ceñgait uili don chath,
sluag dian deligthe diglach.

“Deithbír dóib cid mor am bríg;
at meic² rigna 7 ríg.
Fil for a cennaib uile
moñga áille órbuide.

¹ As Meyer observes, the bad rhyme between *óir* and *áil* indicates that the stanza is corrupt. The letter A shows that the first of the two poems which are here pieced together ends at this point. The last poem also consists of two fragments, the first ending at the letter A.

² Leg. maic.

“Co corpaib mfnib massaib,
roscaib rélib rindglassaib,
fiacraib glain[id]lib glanaib,
belaib *de*rgaib tanaidib.

“It maithe fri guin [n-]duine,
binne fri uáir cormthige.
Sech it suitehe *for* rannaib,
iddera¹ *for* fidhellaib.” findne.

Lasin imsóí úadib. “Mebol dúib,” or Laegaire, “cen chobraid ind *fhir*.” Fonópairsíde .l. láech ina diaid. Gaibidsíde remib fon loch. Gabaitseom *dano* ina diaid. *Con*accatar an dúnad ar a cind 7 in cath in agid araile. Esseom rempo corranic an dúnad .i. Fiachra (*sic!*) mac Retach. *Cond*rancatar i suidiu na da chath. “Maith, a *Fhiachnai*,” or Loegaire, “*condricub*-sa frisin toesech anall .l. laech.” “*Roticub*-sa *immoro*,” or Goll mac Duilb. *Im*Mostuarcat andfb coicdaib cotulaid Loegaire ass a choicait im bethaid iar tuitim Guill *con* a choecait. Maidid in cath remib iarsin coralad a n-ár. “Cast i tá in ben?” or Laegaire. “Atá in dún Maige Mell,” ol Fiachna, “7 leth in t-*shlua*fg impe.” “Anaid sund *condarisa* mo chóicait,” or Laegaire. Luid *iarum* Loegaire corranic an dún. Robas *immoro* oc gabáil in dúine. “Bid bec torbai,” or Laegaire. “*Doro*chair far rí 7 *doro*chratar far cóim. Lecid in mnai *immach* 7 tabar slan dúib taris.” Dogníther on, 7 is and asbert si oc tuidecht *immach* .i. osnad ingen Echach Amlabair:

“Nip inmain lá negtar fuidb
fobíth corpáin Guill *maic* Duilb,
Nech rocharusa, romchar!
ni sceol Laegaire Líban!

“Ba mellechu lim dul [don] dáil,
íngnais Echada *maic* Sáil.
Meti ni badam béo
d’íngnais rig Maige da Cheo.

“Iarsain carsor Goll mac Duilb,
lasngontais, [las] scáiltis fuidb.
Fo reir nDé tiagsa *immach*
dochum *Fhiachnai maic* Retach.”

Luid Loegaire iarsin cotarat a lám i llám *Fhiachna*, 7 foid ra Loegaire ind adaig *sin* .i. *Dé*greine ingen *Fhiachna*, 7 dobreth .l. ban dá choicait laech. Anait leo co cend mhbliadna. “Tiagam do *fhis* scél ar tíri,” or Laegaire. “Dia tisaíd aridisi,” or *Fhiachna*, “berid eochu lib, 7 na tarliúgid dfb.” Dogníther ón. Tiagait corrancatar an óinach. *Conn*achta andsin bliadan lán oc a chaínisium.² *Con*dafairnechtar in oendáil ar a chind.³

¹ Meyer suggests a possible connection between the obscure *iddera* and *fhír*, which O'Reilly translates “a doctor, teacher.”

² Leg. caínisium(?).

³ Leg. cind(?).

Rolingset *Connachta* do fhailti friu. “Na táet,” or Loegaire. “Do chelebrad d’f dodechamar.” “Nachamfhácaib,” or Crimthand. “Rige teora *Connacht* duit: a n-ór 7 a n-argat, a n-eich 7 a sreín 7 a mna coema dot réir, 7 nachanfácaib.” Conid and asbert *Loegaire*:

“Amra sin, a Chrimthain Chais,
carma imthecht da *cech frais*!
Immáin catha céit míle,
techt arrige irrige.

“Ceol soer sirechtach side,
techt arrige irrige,
Ól a¹ stábaib glana,
acallaim neich nocara.

“Mesemai fairind oír buide
for fidchellaib findruine.
Donfairic ól meda mind
la fíanlaech n-uabrech n-imrind.

“IS í mo ben-sa féine,
ingen Fhiachna, Dergreine.
Iarsain *connécus*-[sa] duit
ben *cech oenfhir* dom choicait.

“Tucsam a dún Maige Mell
trichait core, *trichait* cornd.
Tucsam osnaid canair² muir,
ingin Echach Amlabair.A.

“Amra sin, a Chrimthain Chais,
ba-sa fiada claidib glais.
Ófn-adaig do aidchib³ side,
ní thibér ar do rige.”

Iarsin rosóí uadib is a síd doridise, *conidfil* i llethríge *int shída fri* Fhiachna mac Retach .i. in dún Maige Mell, 7 ingen Fhiachnai inna fharrad.

BOOK OF LISMORE

(Text)

Batur Condachta fecht ann an dáil oc Enloch for Maigh Ai. Crimthand Cass ba ri *Connacht* in tan sin. Ansat in aigthe sin isin dail. Atrachtatar matun mhoch arnamharach cunfhactatar an fer chuca triasin ciaich. Brat

¹ Meyer would read a[sa], “out of their,” to make up the requisite number of syllables.

² As Meyer suggests, *canair* appears to be miswritten for *canas*.

³ Meyer emends to *d’aidchib*.

corera coiediabuil imbe. Dá *shleig* coicrinn 'na laimh. Sciath co *m*-buail oir fair. Claidhiumh orduirn for a cris. Mong órbhuidhi dar a ais. "Tabhraidh failte don fhir dothoet chucaib," for Laeghaire Líbhán mac Crimthainn. Mac seide is aínemh bui la Connachta. "Focen don loech ná ataitghenmar," ol Laoghaire. "Is buidhe lem," ol se. "Cidh ima tudhchad?" ol Laeghoire. "Do chunghidh shochraiti," ol se. "Can duit?" or Loegaire. "Do fheruibh síthe dam," or se. "Fiachna mac Retach mo ainm. Mo ben rorfucadh dom *chinn* .i. rosfuc Eochaid mac Sail. Dorochairsidhe limsa a-raei catha. Condechaid side co mac brathar dhó .i. cu Goll mac Duilbh, rí duine Muige Meall. Doraduisa vii catha dho 7 romeabhutar form uile. Forfuacradh cath linn inniu, 7 do chuingidh chabhurtha dodheochadaisa 7 dober uarrann argait 7 uirann oir da gach aoinfher diand ail do chinn techta lem." Lasodhuin imsoi uadhaibh. "IS meabhul duibh" or Loeghuire, "cen cabhuir ind fhir ut." Forfhuabuirside coecat loech 'na dhiaigh. Gabhaidhsidhe reimheibh fon loch. Gabhaisiumh dono 'na dhiaighh. Atconncatar in dunad ar a cind 7 in cath aghaidh i n-aighaidh. Teitsiumh rempa corainic a dunad .i. Fiachna mac Retach. Confhacatar na da *chath* i suidhe. "Maith tra," or Loeghaire, "condricabsa frisin toisiuch anall coecat loech." "Rottincubhsa," ar Goll mac Duilbh. Imustuairect andibh coecdaibh. Doluidh Loegaire ais im bethaid con a coecat iar toitim Ghuill con a coecat ime. Maidhidh in cath reimibh iarsin cu raladh a n-ár. "Cait i ta in ben?" or Laoghaire. "Ata in dunad Muighi Meall," or Fiachna, "7 in t-sluaig immpe." "Anaidh sund contarossa 7 mo .i.," ol Loeghaire. Luid Laoghaire iarum co dunad Mhuige Meall. Robas immoro oc gabhail in dúine. "Bid bec tarbha," or Laegaire. "Dorochoir bhár rí 7 dorochratar bar coeimh. Lecid in mnai immach 7 tabar slan duib thairis." Dognither on. Is ann isbert oc(?) tuidecht imach .i. osnadh ingin Echach Amlabair. Luidh Loegaire iarsin cutard a laimh i llaim Fhiachnai, 7 rofoidhedh re Laegaire in aighthe sin .i. Dergreine, ingen Fiachna, ocus [tuc]ath(?) coecait ban da coecat laech, occus anaid leo co cenn m-bliadna. "Tighuimne do fhios scél ar tíre," oul¹ Loegaire. "Dia tisaigh doridisi," uol Fiachna,² "beridh eocha lib 7 na turlingidh dhíb." Dognither on. Tiaghait currancatar int aenach. Batar Connachta andsin oc cainedh in fhiallaig remraitti i cind na bliadna. Condasairnechtar ar a chind.³ Rolingset Connachta do fhailte friu. "Na toeit," or Laegaire. "Do cheileabhradh duibh dodhechamar." "Nachamfacoibh," ar Crimthann. "Rigiu teora Connacht duit: a n-or 7 a n-arcat, a n-eich 7 a sreín 7 a mna coemai dot reir, 7 nachamfacoibh." Iarsin rosoi uadhíbh isin síth doridisi, condofil i lethrígí int shídha fri Fiachna mac Retach, 7 ingen Fiachna 'na fhairad, 7 ní thainic as fos. Finit.

¹ On the margin is written "ar tíre oul."

² On the margin is written "doridisi oul."

³ Leg. cind (?).

BOOK OF LEINSTER

(Translation)

Once upon a time the men of Connaught were in assembly at Bird Lake upon the plain of Ai. At that time Crimthann Cass was king of Connaught. That night they remained assembled. When they arose next morning, they saw a man coming toward them through the mist: a purple five-folded mantle about him, two five-barbed spears in his hand, a shield with a boss of gold upon him, a gold-hilted sword at his belt, and a golden-yellow mane behind him. "Give welcome to the man who comes to you!" said Laegaire Liban son of Crimthann. The noblest youth among the men of Connaught was Laegaire. "Welcome to the warrior whom we have not known," said Laegaire. "Thanks!" said he. "Wherefore hast thou come?" said Laegaire. "To seek for a band of men," he replied. "Whence art thou?" said Laegaire. "Of the men of the fairy-mound am I," he answered. "Fiachna son of Retu is my name. My wife, moreover, has been taken from me; i.e., Eochaid son of Sal took her. He fell by me on the field of battle. She has gone to a brother's son of his; i.e., to Goll son of Dolb, king of the fort of Mag Mell.¹ I have given him seven battles and they have all gone against me. Moreover, a battle has been declared by us for to-day. To seek help, therefore, have I come." Then he said:

"Most delightful of plains is the Plain of Two Mists,
On which stir up pools of blood
A battalion of fairy men full of valor.
Not far hence is where it is.

"We drew foaming dark-red blood
From stately bodies of nobles.
Upon their corpses pour out grief
An eager, tearful, countless band of women.

"The first slaughter of the city of Dá Chorr,
Near (lit., around) which was a beloved pierced side
(i.e., body):
He with his head to the battle fell,
Eochaid son of Sal, the wistful.

"Stoutly boasted Aed son of Find
Of the proud spear-attacking(?) battalion,—
Goll son of Dolb, Dond son of Nera,—
Boasted of many noble-headed ones (or 'noble chiefs'?).

"Good are my steeds, delightful are my women.
As for myself, not that only,—
Abundance of silver and gold.
With me goes each swift man who likes.

¹ One of the names for the fairy world of the ancient Irish.

"White shields (they carry) in their hands,
With devices of pale silver,
With glittering blue swords,
With big stout horns.

"In well-devised fashion the hosts
Before their fair chieftain
March amid blue spears,
White curly-haired bands.

"They scatter the battalions of the foe,
They ravage every land which they attack;
Splendidly they all march to combat,
An impetuous, distinguished, avenging host!

"No wonder though their strength be great;
Sons of kings and queens are they.
On all their heads are
Beautiful golden-yellow manes.

"With smooth stately bodies,
With bright star-blue eyes,
With pure crystal teeth,
With thin red lips.

"Good are they at slaying men,
Sweet at the hour of the ale-house (?)¹
Apart from being masters in verse-making,
They are skilled at playing *fidchell*."²

Thereupon he turns from them. "Shame upon you," said Laegaire, "if you do not help the man." Fifty warriors betook themselves after him. He goes before them under the lake; then they follow him. They saw a fort before them, and a battalion face to face with them. He (i.e., Fiachna son of Retu) went ahead of them until he reached the fort. In it they came upon two battalions. "Well, oh Fiachna," said Laegaire, "I will make an attack upon the chief from the other side [with] fifty warriors." "I on my part will answer (lit., reach) thee," said Goll, son of Dolb. In their two fifties they smote each other until Laegaire came out of his fifty alive after the fall of Goll with his fifty. Then the battle breaks before them so that there resulted a slaughter of Goll's band. "Where is the woman?" said Laegaire. "She is in the fort of Mag Mell," said Fiachna, "and half the host around her." "Remain ye here till I reach her [with] my fifty," said Laegaire. Thereupon Laegaire went until he arrived at the fort. Moreover they were a-taking the fortress. "Little will be your

¹ This conjectural rendering I owe to Dr. Meyer, who in his *Voyage of Bran* (I, 181) translates the line: "At all times melodious are they." In *Ancient Irish Poetry* (p. 19) he gives it: "Melodious in the alehouse."

² A game apparently resembling chess.

profit [from resistance],” said Laegaire. “Your king has been slain; your nobles have fallen. Let the woman forth, and safety is granted you thereupon.” It is so done, and on coming forth she uttered [the following]: to wit, the plaint of the daughter of Eochaid the Mute:

“Hateful the day on which weapons are washed¹
For the sake of the dear dead body of Goll son of Dolb,
One whom I loved, who loved me!
Laegaire Liban—little he cares!

“It was very pleasant to me to go to the gathering
In the company of Eochaid son of Sal.
Feign would I not be alive (?)
Because of the absence of the king of the Plain of Two Mists.

“Thereafter I loved Goll son of Dolb,
By whom weapons were hacked and split.
Under the will of God let me go out
To Fiachna son of Retu.”

Thereupon Laegaire went until he gave her hand into the hand of Fiachna. And Dergreine, the daughter of Fiachna, slept with Laegaire that night, and there were given fifty women to his fifty warriors. They remained with them (the fairy-folk) to the end of a year. “Let us go to seek tidings of our land,” said Laegaire. “If you would come back,” said Fiachna, “take horses with you and do not get down from them.” It is so done. They went until they reached the assembly, the men of Connaught having been there a full year mourning for them, so that they came upon them in one assembly before them. The men of Connaught sprang to welcome them. “Do not approach,” said Laegaire. “To say farewell to you have we come.” “Do not leave me!” said Crimthann. “The rule of the three Connaughts shall be thine; their gold and their silver, their horses and their bridles and their noble women shall be at thy command, only do not leave me!” Then said Laegaire:

“A marvel this, O Crimthann Cass,
Beer comes [down] with every shower!(?)²
The driving of a battalion of a hundred thousand,
They go from kingdom to kingdom.

“The noble wistful music of the *sid!*
Going from kingdom to kingdom,
Drinking from crystal cups,
Holding converse with the loved one.

¹ That is, the day of battle, on which weapons are washed in blood. Meyer.

² Meyer (*Voyage of Bran*, I, 182) renders this line: “When it rains 'tis beer that falls!” He now suggests the possibility that *frais* means ‘attack,’ but even in that case the line is obscure.

“We mix chess-men of yellow gold
 Upon chess-boards of white bronze.
 There has come to us drinking of clear mead,
 With a proud spear-surrounded(?) warrior.

“My wife, my own unto me,
 Is Daughter of the Sun, Fiachna's daughter.
 Besides, I shall tell to thee,
 There is a wife for each man of my fifty.

“We have brought from the fort of Mag Mell
 Thirty caldrons, thirty drinking-horns.
 We have brought the plaint that the sea chants (?),
 The daughter of Eochaid the Dumb.

“A marvel this, O Crimthann Cass,
 I was master of a blue sword.
 One night of the nights of the *sid*
 I would not give for thy kingdom.”

Thereupon he turns from them back into the fairy-mound. Consequently he is now in joint kingship over the fairy-mound—i.e., the fort of Mag Mell—with Fiachna son of Retu, and the daughter of Fiachna [is] in his company (i.e., is his wife).

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