

# The Colloquy with the Ancients

translated by

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When the battle of Comar, the battle of Gowra, and the battle of Ollarba had been fought, and after that the Fianna for the most part were extinguished, the residue of them in small bands and in companies had dispersed throughout all Ireland, until at the point of time which concerns us there remained not any but two good warriors only of the last of the Fianna: Ossian son of Finn, and Caeilte son of Crunnchu son of Ronan (whose lusty vigour and power of spear-throwing were now dwindled down) and so many fighting men as with themselves made twice nine. These twice nine came out of the flowery-soiled bosky borders of Slievefuad [county Armagh] and into the *lughbarta bána*, at this present called *lughmadh* [angl. 'Louth'], where at the falling of the evening clouds that night they were melancholy, dispirited.

Caeilte said to Ossian then: "good now, Ossian, before the day's end what path shall we take in quest of entertainment for the night?" Ossian answered: "I know not, seeing that of the ancients of the Fianna and of Finn's people formerly but three survive: I and thyself, Caeilte, with Cámha the she-chief and she-custodian that, from the time when he was a boy until the day in which he died, kept Finn son of Cumall safe." Caeilte said: "we are entitled to this night's lodging and provision from her; for it is not possible to rehearse nor to shew the quantity which Finn, captain of the Fianna, bestowed on her of precious things and of treasures, including the third best thing of price that Finn ever acquired: the *Anghalach* namely, or drinking-horn which Moriath daughter of the king of Greece gave to Finn, and Finn to Camha.

With Camha therefore they got hospitality for that night; their names she enquired of them and [at their sound] wept vehement showers of tears; then she and they, each of the other, sought to have tidings. Next, they entered into the bed-house disposed for them, and Camha the she-chief prescribed their refection: that the freshest of all kinds of meat

and the oldest of all sorts of drink be given them, for she knew in what fashion such as they used to be fed. She knew also how much it was that many a time before the present had constituted a sufficiency for Ossian and for Caeilte. Languidly and feebly she arose and held forth on the Fianna and on Finn mac Cumall; of Ossian's son Oscar too she deliberated, of *mac Lugach*, of the battle of Gowra with other matters; and by reason of this in the end a great silence settled on them all.

Then Caeilte said: "such matters we hold now to be not more painful than the way in which the twice nine that we are of the remnant of that great and goodly fellowship must perforce part, and diverge from each other." Ossian answered that: "they being gone [lit. 'after them'] in me by my word, and verily, is no more fight nor pith." Valiant as were these warrior-men, here nevertheless with the she-chief—with Camha—they wept in gloom, in sadness, and dejectedly. Their adequate allowance of meat and of drink was given them; they tarried there for three days and three nights, then bade Camha farewell, and Ossian said:

"Camha to-day is sorrowful: she is come to the point where she must swim; Camha without either son or grandson: it is befallen her to be old and blighted."

Forth of the town they came now, and out upon the green; there they took a resolve, which was this: to separate, and this parting of theirs was a sundering of soul and body. Even so they did: for Ossian went to the *sídh* of *ucht Cleitigh*, where was his mother: *Blái* daughter of Derc surnamed *dianscothach* [i.e. 'of the forcible language']; while Caeilte took his way to *inbher Bic loingsigh*, which at the present is called *mainistir droichid átha* [i.e. 'the Monastery of Drogheda'] from *Beg loingsech* son of Arist that was drowned in it: the king of the Romans' son namely, who came to invade Ireland; but a tidal wave drowned him there in his *inbher*, i.e. 'inver' or estuary. He went on to *linn Féic*, i.e. 'Fiac's Pool,' on the bright-streaming Boyne; southwards over the Old Plain of Bregia, and to the rath of Drumderg where Patrick son of Calpurn was.

Just then Patrick chanted the Lord's order of the canon [i.e. Mass], and lauded the Creator, and pronounced benediction on the rath in which Finn mac Cumall had been: the rath of Drumderg. The clerics saw Caeilte and his band draw near them; and fear fell on them before the

tall men with their huge wolf-dogs that accompanied them, for they were not people of one epoch or of one time with the clergy.

Then Heaven's distinguished one, that pillar of dignity and angel on earth: Calpurn's son Patrick, apostle of the Gael, rose and took the aspergillum to sprinkle holy water on the great men; floating over whom until that day there had been [and were now] a thousand legions of demons. Into the hills and 'skalps,' into the outer borders of the region and of the country, the demons forthwith departed in all directions; after which the enormous men sat down.

"Good now," Patrick said to Caeilte, "what name hast thou? "I am Caeilte son of Crunchnu son of Ronan." For a long while the clergy marvelled greatly as they gazed on them; for the largest man of them reached but to the waist, or else to the shoulder of any given one of the others and they sitting. Patrick said again: "Caeilte, I am fain to beg a boon of thee." He answered: "If I have but that much strength or power, it shall be had; at all events, enunciate the same." "To have in our vicinity here a well of pure water, from which we might baptise the *tuatha* of Bregia, of Meath, and of Usnach." "Noble and righteous one," said Caeilte, "that I have for thee," and they crossing the rath's circumvallation came out; in his hand he took Patrick's and [in a little while] right in front of them they saw a loch-well, sparkling and translucent. The size and thickness of the cress and of the *fothlacht*, or brooklime, that grew on it was a wonderment to them; then Caeilte began to tell its fame and qualities, in doing of which he said:—

"O Well of *tráigh dá bhan*, i.e. 'two women's strand,' beautiful thy cresses luxurious-branching, are! since thy produce is neglected on thee, thy *fothlacht* is not suffered to grow. Forth from thy banks thy trouts are to be seen, thy wild swine in thy [neighbouring] wilderness; the deer of thy fair hunting cragland, thy dappled and red-chested fawns! Thy mast all hanging on the branches of thy trees; thy fish in estuaries of thy rivers; lovely the colour of thy purling streams, O thou [that thyself art] azure-hued, and again green with reflection of surrounding copsewood!...."

"'Tis well," Patrick said: "hath our dinner and our provant reached us yet?" "It has so," answered bishop Sechnall. "Distribute it," said Patrick, "and one half give to yon nine tall warriors of the survivors of the

Fianna." Then his bishops, and his priests, and his psalmodists arose and blessed the meat; and of both meat and liquor they consumed their full sufficiency, yet so as to serve their soul's weal.

Patrick said then: "was not he a good lord with whom ye were; Finn mac Cumall that is to say?" Upon which Caeilte uttered this little tribute of praise:—

"Were but the brown leaf which the wood sheds from it gold—were but the white billow silver—Finn would have given it all away."

"Who or what was it that maintained you so in your life?" Patrick enquired; and Caeilte answered: "truth that was in our hearts, and strength in our arms, and fulfilment in our tongues."

"Good, Caeilte," Patrick went on: "in the houses which before our time thou didst frequent were there drinking-horns, or cups, or goblets of crystal and of pale gold?" and Caeilte answered that: "the number of the horns that were in my lord's house was as follows:

"Twelve drinking-horns and three hundred made of gold Finn had; whenever they came to the pouring out the quantity of liquor that they held was immense."

"Were it not for us an impairing of the devout life, an occasion of neglecting prayer, and of deserting converse with God, we as we talked with thee would feel the time pass quickly, warrior." Then Caeilte began to rehearse the drinking-horns, with the chiefs and lords whose they had been:—

"Horns that were in Finn's house, their names I bear in mind..."

"Success and benediction attend thee, Caeilte," Patrick said; this is to me a lightening of spirit and of mind; and now tell us another tale." "I will indeed; but say what story thou wouldest be pleased to have." "In the Fianna had ye horses, or cavalry?" Caeilte answered: "we had so; thrice fifty foals from one mare and a single sire." "Whence were they procured?" "I will tell thee the truth of the matter:—

"A young man that served with Finn: Arthur son of *Béine Brit*, his complement being thrice nine men. Finn set on foot the hunting of Ben-Edar (which indeed turned out to be a bountiful and a fruitful hunt). They slipped their hounds accordingly, while Finn took his seat on *carn an fhéinnedha* [i.e. 'the Fian's cairn'] between Edar's eminence and the sea;

there his spirit was gay within him when he listened to the maddened stags' bellowing as by the hounds of the Fianna they were killed rapidly.

"Where Beine Brit's son Arthur was stationed was between the main body of the hunt and the sea in order that the deer should not take to the sea and elude them by swimming. But Arthur, being thus on the outside and close against the shore, marked three of Finn's hounds: *Bran*, *Sceolaing*, and *Adnuall*, and he resolved on a plan, which was: himself and his three nines to depart away across the sea, he carrying off with him into his own land those same three hounds. This plot was put into action then; for well I wot that they, having with them those three hounds traversed the sea's surface and at *inbher mara gaimiach* in Briton-land took harbour and haven. They landed there, proceeded to the mountain of Lodan son of Lir, and hunted it.

"Touching the Fianna: after this occurrence they made an end of their hunting and of their sylvan slaughter, then camped at the eminence of Edgaeth's son Edar, and (as the custom was then) Finn's household hounds were counted. Now his hounds were many in number, as the poet said:—

"An enumerating of branches [on the tree] was that of Finn's full-grown hounds with his sleek melodious pack of youngsters: three hundred of the first there were, and puppy-hounds two hundred."

"Many men they must have been that owned those," said Patrick. "True for you indeed," Caeilte answered, "for the tale that used to be in Finn's house was this:—

"They that dwelt in the house of Finn were three times fifty of joyous leaders of the Fianna; three hundred confidential servitors as well, and two hundred fosterlings that were worthy [of their chiefs]."

"But when the hounds were told a great shortcoming was discovered in them: *Bran*, *Sceolaing*, *Adnuall* [were missing], and it was told to Finn. 'Have all three battalions of the Fianna searched out,' he said; yet though the search was made were not the hounds found.

"To Finn then was brought an elongated basin of pale gold; he washed his kingly face, put his thumb under his knowledge-tooth, truth was revealed to him, and he said: 'the king of the Britons' son has deprived you of your hounds; pick ye therefore nine men to go in quest of them!' They were chosen, their names being these: Dermot son of

Donn son of Donough son of *Dubhán*, of the *Erna* of Munster in the south: Goll mac Morna—"Was Goll a chief's son, or a simple warrior's?" Patrick enquired. "A chief's," answered Caeilte:

"He was son of Teigue son of Morna of the *magh*, that was son of Faelan son of Feradach son of Fiacha son of Art of the *magh* son of Muiredach son of Eochaid."

"There was Cael *cródha* the hundred-slayer, grandson of Nemhnann: a champion that Finn had, and endowed with deadly property (which property attaching to him was that his arm never delivered a cast that missed the mark, and that never was his hand bloodied on a man but the same would before a nine days' term were out be dead); there was Finn's son Ossian: he that, if only a man had a head to eat with and legs to go upon [and carry off his largesse], never refused any." "Caeilte," said Patrick, "that is a great character." "And though it be so it is a true one," Caeilte answered, and said:

"In the matter of gold, of silver, or concerning meat, Ossian never denied any man; nor, though another's generosity were such as might fit a chief, did Ossian ever seek aught of him."

"There was Ossian's son Oscar: the chief's son that in all Ireland was best for spear-throwing and for vigorous activity; also Ferdoman son of Bodhb Derg son of the Daghda; Finn's son Raighne Wide-eye, his son Cainche the crimson-red; Glas son of *Encherd Béra*, mac Lughach and myself. Now, saintly Patrick, we the aforesaid within ourselves were conscious [i.e. felt confident] that from Taprobane in the east to the garden of the Hesperides in the world's westernmost part were no four hundred warriors but, on the battle-field and hand-to-hand, we were a match for them: we had not a head without a helmet, nor shoulder without whitened shield, nor right fist that grasped not two great and lengthy spears. On this expedition we went our ways then, and until we reached Lodan mac Lir's mountain, where we had been no long time before we heard dialogue of men that hunted in the field.

"As regards Beine Brit's son Arthur: he just then, with his people, sat on his hunting-mound. Them we charge in lively fashion, kill Arthur's people all; but round about him Oscar knits both his arms, gives him quarter, and we bring off our three hounds. Here Goll mac Morna chancing to look about him saw an iron-grey horse, flecked with spots,

and wearing a bridle fitted with wrought ornament of gold. At another glance that he threw to his left he discerned a bay horse (one not easy to lay hold of) and having a reticulated bridle of twice refined silver fitted with a golden bit. This [second] horse also Goll mac Morna seized and put into the hand of Ossian, who passed him on to Dermot *ua Duibhne*. After successful execution and due celebration of our slaughter we came away, bringing with us the heads of those thrice nine, our hounds and horses too, with Arthur himself 'in hand [i.e. a prisoner],' and so back to where Finn was: in Edar's old *magh nelta* [angl. 'Moynalty']. We reached his tent, and Caelte said: 'we have brought Arthur.' This latter entered into bonds with Finn, and thereafter, up to the day in which he died, was Finn's follower. The two horses we gave to Finn: horse and mare, of whose seed were all the horses of the Fianna, who hitherto had not used any such. The mare bred eight times: at every birth eight foals, which were made over to the various detachments and 'good men' [i.e. notables] of the Fianna, and these in the sequel had chariots made."

"Success and benediction be thine, Caelte," said Patrick, "and tell us the names of the chiefs and mighty men that owned those horses." Then Caelte, telling it, said:

"The horses of the Fianna are known to me...."

"Success and benediction, Caelte: all this is to us a recreation of spirit and of mind, were it only not a destruction of devotion and a dereliction of prayer."

There they were until the morrow's morning came, when Patrick robed himself and emerged upon the green; together with his three score priests, three score psalmodists, and holy bishops three score as well, that with him disseminated faith and piety throughout Ireland. Patrick's two guardian angels came to him now: *Aibellán* and *Solusbrethach*, of whom he enquired whether in God's sight it were convenient for him to be listening to stories of the Fianna. With equal emphasis, and concordantly, the angels answered him: "holy cleric, no more than a third part of their stories do those ancient warriors tell, by reason of forgetfulness and lack of memory; but by thee be it [such as it is] written on tabular staffs of poets, and in ollaves' words; for to the companies and nobles of the latter time to give ear to these stories will be for a pastime." Which said, the angels departed.

From Patrick now messengers were despatched to fetch Caeilte, and he along with the nine that were his number were brought to the saint; whose names were these: Failbhe son of Flann; Eoghan Red-weapon, the king of Ulidia's son; Flann, son of Fergus king of Kinelconnell; Conall the Slaughterer, son of Angus king of Connacht; Scannlan, son of Ailell king of Ossory; Baedan, son of Garb king of Corcaguiney; Luaimnech Linn, son of the king of the *Erna* of Munster; Failbhe and Uainchenn, the king of Dalaradia's sons out of the north; with Fulartach, son of Finghin king of the *tuatha* of Bregia and of Meath.

Patrick said: "know ye why ye are brought to confer with me?" "In sooth we know it not," they answered. "To the end ye should make obeisance [i.e. conform] to the gospel of Heaven's and of Earth's king: the Very and the most Glorious God." Then and there the water of Christ's Baptism was by Patrick sprinkled on them preparatory to the baptism and conversion of all Ireland.

Then [with his right hand] Caeilte reached across him to the rim of his shield, and gave to Patrick a ridgy mass of gold [taken thence] in which were three times fifty ounces: this as a fee for the baptism of the nine with him. He said: "that was Finn's, the chief's, last wage to me and, Patrick, have it thou for my soul's and for my commander's soul's weal." The extent to which this mass reached on Patrick was from his middle finger's tip to his shoulder's highest point, while in width and in thickness it measured a man's cubit. Now this gold was bestowed upon the Táilchenn's canonical hand-bells, on psalters and on missals.

Patrick said again: "it is well, Caeilte; what was the best hunting that the Fianna ever had, whether in Ireland or in Scotland?" "The hunting of Arran." Patrick enquired: "where is that land?" "Betwixt Scotland and Pictland: on the first day of the *trogan*-month (which now is called *lughnasadh* i.e. 'Lammastide') we, to the number of the Fianna's three battalions, practised to repair thither and there have our fill of hunting until such time as from the tree-tops the cuckoo would call in Ireland. More melodious than all music whatsoever it was to give ear to the voices of the birds as they rose from the billows and from the island's coast-line; thrice fifty separate flocks there were that encircled her, and they clad in gay brilliance of all colours: as blue, and green, and azure, and yellow." Here Caeilte uttered a lay:—

"Arran of the many stags—the sea impinges on her very shoulders! an island in which whole companies were fed—and with ridges among which blue spears are reddened! Skittish deer are on her pinnacles, soft blackberries on her waving heather; cool water there is in her rivers, and mast upon her russet oaks! Greyhounds there were in her, and beagles; blaeberrries and sloes of the dark blackthorn; dwellings with their backs set close against her woods, and the deer fed scattered by her oaken thickets! A crimson crop grew on her rocks, in all her glades a faultless grass; over her crags affording friendly refuge, leaping went on and fawns were skipping! Smooth were her level spots—her wild swine, they were fat; cheerful her fields (this is a tale that may be credited), her nuts hung on her forest-hazels' boughs, and there was sailing of long galleys past her! Right pleasant their condition all when the fair weather sets in: under her rivers' brinks trouts lie; the sea-gulls wheeling round her grand cliff answer one the other—at every fitting time delectable is Arran!"

"Victory and blessing wait on thee, Caeilte!" said Patrick: "for the future thy stories and thyself are dear to us."

Straightway now forth from him Patrick saw a fort, a fair dwelling, and: "Caeilte," he said, "what is yon town?" "That is the proudest town that ever I was in, in Ireland or in Scotland." "Who lived there?" "The three sons of Lughaid Menn son of Angus, i.e. the king of Ireland's three sons: *Ruidhe*, and *Fiacha*, and *Eochaid* were their names." "What procured them that great wealth?"

"It was once upon a time that they came to have speech of their father, to *fert na ndruadh*, i.e. 'grave of the wizards,' northwest of Tara:—'Whence come ye, young fellows?' he enquired. They made answer: 'from *echlais banghuba* to the southward, out of our nurse's and our guardian's house.' 'My lads, what set you in motion?' asked the king again. 'To crave a country of thee, a domain.' For a space the king was silent, and then said: 'no father it was that on me conferred either country or domain, but my own luck and dazzling achievement. Lands therefore I will not bestow on you, but win lands for yourselves.' Thereupon they with the ready rising of one man rose and took their way to the green of the *brugh* upon the Boyne where, none other being in their company, they sat them down. Ruidhe said: 'what is your plan

to-night?' His brothers rejoined: 'our project is to fast on the *tuatha dé Danann*, aiming thus to win from them good fortune in the shape of a country, of a domain, of lands, and to have vast riches.' Nor had they been long there when they marked a cheery-looking young man of a pacific demeanour that came towards them. He salutes the king of Ireland's sons; they answer him after the same manner. 'Young man, whence art thou? whence comest thou?' 'Out of yonder *brugh* chequered with the many lights hard by you here.' 'What name wearest thou?' 'I am the *Daghda*'s son *Bodhb Derg*; and to the *tuatha dé Danann* it was revealed that ye would come to fast here tonight, for lands and for great fortune. But come with me, lads.' Simultaneously they rose, and entered into the *brugh*; supper was served them, but they ate it not. *Bodhb* enquired of them why it was that they took no meat. 'Because the king of Ireland, our father, denied us territory and lands. Now there are in Ireland but two tribes that are equal: the sons of Milesius, and the *tuatha dé Danann*; to the alternative one of which we are come now.'

"Then the *tuatha dé Danann* went into council, he that in such council was most noble in rank, and preponderant, being *Midhir* Yellow-mane son of the *Daghda*, who said: 'those yonder accommodate now with three wives, since from wives it is that either fortune or misfortune is derived.' Whereat were given to them *Midhir*'s three daughters: *Doirenn*, and *Aife*, and *Aillbhe*. Quoth *Midhir*: 'say, *Bodhb*, what gifts shall be given them?' *Bodhb* said: 'I will declare it. Three times fifty sons of kings we are in this sídh; from every king's son of whom be given them thrice fifty ounces of red gold, while from me they shall have [in addition] thrice fifty suits of raiment various with all hues.' *Aedh*, son of *Aedh na nabusach* from *cnoc ardmulla* out in the sea, which to-day is called *Rachrainn* [*angl* 'Rathlin'], and a stripling of the *tuatha dé danann*, said: 'from me too a gift for them, viz. a horn and a vat; regarding which it needs but to fill the vat with pure water, and of this it will make mead both drinkable and having virtue to intoxicate; but into the horn put bitter brine out of the deep, and on the instant it shall turn it into wine.' 'A gift for them from me,' said *Lir* of *sídh Finnachaid*: 'three times fifty swords, and thrice fifty well rivetted spears of length.' 'A gift from me to them,' said the *Daghda*'s son *Angus Oge*: 'a fort and stronghold, and a most excellent spacious town with lofty stockades, with light-admitting

bowers, with houses of accurate prospect and very roomy; all this in whatsoever place it shall please them between *ráth Chobtaigh* and Tara.' 'A gift for them from me,' said Aine daughter of Modharn: 'a she-cook that I have, to whom it is matter of prohibition to refuse meat to any; but according as she serves out, so too is her store replenished [of itself].' 'A gift from me to them,' said Bodhb Derg: 'a good minstrel that I have (*Fer-tuinne mac Trogain* is his name), and though saws were being plied where there were women in sharpest pains of childbirth, and brave men that were wounded early in the day, nevertheless would such sleep to the fitful melody that he makes. Yet to the dwelling in which for the time being he actually is he is not minstrel more effectively than to that whole country's inhabitants in general [for all they as well may hear him].' For three days with their nights they abode in the *sídh*.

"Angus told them to carry away out of *fidh omna*, i.e. 'Oakwood,' three apple-trees: one in full bloom, another shedding the blossom, and another covered with ripe fruit. Then they repaired to the *dún*, where they abode for three times fifty years, and until those kings disappeared; for in virtue of marriage alliance they returned again to the *tuatha dé Danann*, and from that time forth have remained there. And that, Patrick, is the *dún* concerning which thou enquiredst of me," said Caelite:

Caelite *cecinit*.

"Three things in great plenty, and O great plenty of three things, that out of Buide's high fort issued! a crowd of young men, a great troop of horses, the numerous greyhounds of *Lughaid*'s three sons. Three sorts of music, and O music of three kinds, that comely kings enjoyed! music of harps, melody of sweet timpans, humming of Trogan's son *Fer-tuinne*. A triple din, and O a din three-fold! sound of tramping ascending from that fort's green, uproar of racing, boom of lowing kine. Three noises, and O noises three! sound of its swine span-thick in fat and excellent, buzz of the crowd upon the palace lawn, [indoors] hilarity of revellers with mead-begotten clamour. Fruit crops in three stages, and O crops in stages three, that used to be there hanging on its boughs! a tree a-shedding, a tree in bloom, and yet another laden ripe. Three sons it was that Lughaid left (though their great deeds are passed away): Ruide, spacious Lughaid's son, Eochaid and manly Fiacha. I will testify to Eochaid that never took a step in flight: never was he without his customary music,

nor ever for any time without quaffing of ale (i.e. banquets were constant in his mansion]. I will testify to Fiacha (though the fame of his depredations be obscured): never he uttered expression that was excessive, and in his time was none that more excelled in valour. I will testify to Ruide, to whom those foresaid three things [i.e. young men, horses, hounds] in great plenty flowed in: that never a thing he denied to any man, nor of a man sought anything at all. Thirty chieftains, thirty leaders, thirty champions that might befit a king; while the strength of his centuple-compounded host was hundreds thirty-fold thrice told."

"Caeilte," said Patrick, "success and benediction! all this is a recreation of spirit and of mind to us."

Not long they had been there when they saw draw towards them as straight as might be, out of the south, a young man that made a brave show: about him was a crimson mantle, and in it a fibula of gold: next to his skin a shirt of yellow silk; he brought also a double armful of round yellow-headed nuts and of beautiful golden-yellow apples, which he deposited on the ground in front of Patrick, who enquired: "whence bringest thou this fruit, lad?" He answered: "out of the luxuriant-branchy Feeguile." "What is thy name?" "Falartach son of Fergus am I." "What is thy rightful heritage?" "The rule over Bregia's tuatha and Meath's, and over the Decies of Tara, is that which constitutes my right; but [instead of enjoying it] I am a freebooter and an outlaw." "Who is he upon whom thou doest depredation?" "An own brother to myself: Becan son of Fergus." "Thy right be to thee shortly," said Patrick. "Holy cleric, give it a definite term." "Within this same year in which we are it shall be; but whence bringest thou the fruit?" "Verily I know," Caeilte said, "whence it was brought: from *ros mic Triuin* beyond in Feeguile, a hunting preserve that one had who to Finn mac Cumall was a fighting man of trust: the lusty and prowess-performing son of Lugh." Patrick said: "it is well; there it is that a confidential of my own familia dwells, Oesan namely, the king of Scotland's son, that also is a chaplain to me." "That place," Caeilte went on, "was a hunting preserve to the Fianna; and whenever in both Ireland and Scotland scarcity of game befel them, in *ros mic Triuin* they always had their sufficiency of hunting for three days and three nights":—

Caeilte cecinit.

"As *cluain chesáin* it was heard of afar: to which mac Lughach would resort; but at the coming of the *Táilchenn* its designation became *ros mic Triuin*. Though in *cluain chesáin* of the clergy psalms now are sung in alternate strains, I have seen the gentian-bearing *cluain* all covered with the red deer in their sportiveness. Over the *linn* though reading there be now, there was a time when [*cluain chesáin*] contained no church; but a soil of apple-trees, a place in which was swimming of its streams [by the Fianna at their pastime] and a habitation of tribute the gentian-growing *cluain* was then. The propitious prophecy is come to pass, and *táilchenns* have made their dwelling in *cluain chesáin*: Finn the generous, the giver away of rings and bracelets, had said that it would be a repair of saints, of angels. Many a time we and our hounds by turns followed hard on the young and gallant deer: the while our warriors and their beagles at their own discretion preyed all the region around the fair *cluain*. It was three score queens that at one and the same time I had in truth; and all of them I used to entertain, for I was an artfully skilled beguiler."

Patrick asked: "what time of day is it now?" Benignus said: "it is near night." "Is our supper come to us yet?" the saint enquired. Benignus answered: "it is not indeed." Fulartach son of Fergus said now: "holy Patrick I could put thee in the way of a town in which to-night thou shouldst have supper and provision." "What place is that?" "In Becan's, in my own brother's house, in the *tuatha* of Bregia and of Meath."

Some clerics preceded Patrick to the house of Becan, who was so that he had thirty milch herds; yet he denied them meat. Benignus and the clergy return therefore, tell their story to Patrick, and he says: "all so many as the fellow has of cattle and of people, I ordain that by to-morrow there be not a single one of them escaped alive." The thing came true too, *ut dixit Patricius*:—

"Becan here and Becan there: be his fastings not many in number; so long as the sun shall travel right-handwise, let Becan not make mirth for them [his people]."

Then the earth swallowed up Becan with his people—with all his wealth, animal and human, simultaneously—and Fulartach mac Fergus said: "holy cleric, this night's lodging and entertainment I proffer thee: nine-and-twenty kine which hitherto I have had supporting my kerne while they marauded and were outlaws." Patrick said: "chief's power

from me to thee from mid-day to-morrow, and to thy seed after thee, until ye run counter to the Church." Thus then was Becan consigned to the earth, and Patrick committed the governance to Fulartach.

Next, Patrick enquired of Caeilte how many brothers Finn had, and he answered: "he had two brothers: Fithal and Dithran:—

"On this point of the three sons that Cumall had our antiquaries are obscure [but I can clear it up]: Finn and Dithran of the feasts, and Fithal of the bards were they."

"Whose son was mac Lugach: he concerning whom last night I enquired of thee?" Patrick said. Caeilte made answer: "for another that would be a problem, but not so for me. He was son to Finn's son Daire Derg.

.....

"So soon as the boy was born he was laid in Finn's bosom, and he again laid him in the bosom of Duban's daughter Muingfinn (wife to Finn: she that of the Fianna had reared eight hundred that now bore shield and weapon), and she nurtured the boy till his twelve years were complete. Then she gave him a sufficient complement of arms and armour; and so he went his way until he reached *carraig Conluain* and the mountain of *Smól mac Edlecair*, which to-day is called *sliabh Bladhma* [*angl.* 'Slievebloom'], where Finn and the Fianna were. He entered the presence of Finn the chief, who gave him very gentle welcome; the lad made his covenant of service and of fealty to him, struck his hand in Finn's, and for a year was in the Fianna. But among these for such space of time he showed great sloth, so that under that youngster's conduct not more than some nine of the Fianna had attained to killing whether of boar or of deer; together with all which he used to beat both his hounds and his servitors.

"Then the Fianna proceeded to *ros in fhéinnedha* [i.e. 'the Fian's point'] on swelling *loch Léin*'s edge in the south [i.e. Killarney]; and when the three battles of the Fianna were come so far, before Finn they laid complaint against mac Lugach, saying: 'take now thy choice, whether to have us or mac Lugach by himself.'

"Now was mac Lugach brought to confer with Finn, who enquired of him: 'good now, mac Lugach, what harm hast thou done the Fianna,

seeing that one and all they have a spite at thee?' 'I affirm upon my word,' he said, 'that I know not their reason; unless indeed it be that they are averse to my practice of athletic feats and of spear-casting among them.'

"To mac Lugach then the chief gave counsel, and his counsel had great virtue in it, and abode lastingly with mac Lugach; and Finn said:—

“Mac Lugach! if armed service be thy design, in a great man's household be quiet, be surly in the rugged pass. Without a fault of his beat not thy hound; until thou ascertain [her guilt] bring not a charge against thy wife; in battle meddle not with a buffoon, for, O mac Lugach, he is but a fool. Censure not any if he be of grave repute; stand not up to take part in a brawl; neither have anything at all to do with either a mad man or a wicked one. Two-thirds of thy gentleness be shewn to women and to creepers on the floor [i.e. little children], likewise to men of art that make the *duans*; and be not violent to the common people. With thy familiars, with them that are of thy counsel, hasten not to be the first into bed; perverse alliance shun, and all that is prohibited; yield not thy reverence to all. Utter not swaggering speech, nor say that thou wilt not render the thing that is right; for a shameful thing it is to speak too stiffly unless that it be feasible to carry out thy words. So long as in the universe thou shalt exist, thy lord forsake not; neither for gold nor for other valuable in the earthly world abandon thou thy guarantee [i.e. him that places himself under thy protection]. To a chief utter not strenuous criticism of his people; for it is not a 'good man's' [i.e. a gentleman's] occupation to abuse a great lord's people to their chief. Be not a continually tattling tale-bearer, nor a false one; be not loquacious, nor censorious rashly; be the multiplicity of thy chivalrous qualities what it may, yet have thou not the Irachts hostilely inclined to thee. Be not a frequenter of the drinking-house, nor given to carping at an ancient man; the conduct thou hearest recommended, that is the right [to prepon]: meddle not with a man of mean estate. Deal not in refusing of thy meat, and any that is penurious have not for a familiar; force not thyself upon a chief, nor give a chief lord occasion to speak ill of thee. Stick to thy raiment, hold fast to thine armature, until the stern fight with its weapon-glitter be well ended; never renounce to back thy luck, yet follow after gentleness, mac Lugach!”

"Success and benediction!" said Patrick: a good story it is that thou hast told us there; and where is Brogan the scribe?" Brogan answered: "here, holy Cleric." "Be that tale written by thee"; and Brogan performed it on the spot.

Then Patrick questioned Caelte: "had ye musicians in the Fianna?" and he answered: "we had so, the finest musician that was in either Ireland or Scotland." "What name was his?" "Cnú dheireoil [i.e. 'diminutive nut']." "Where was he acquired?" "Between *crota cliach* and *sídh na mban fionn* [angl. 'Slievenaman'] in the south." "What is his description?" "Four fists of Finn's they were that made up his stature, three in the instrument of music that he played; and the matter with him was this: that the *tuatha dé Danann*'s other musicians were grown jealous of him.

"On the day in question, Finn with design to hunt repaired to Slievenaman and there sat upon a certain turf-built grave. The chief, taking a look round then, saw a tiny man that close to him upon the green mound [lit. 'on the sod'] played and performed upon his harp; the manner of him being that he had on him long light-yellow hair down to his very loins. So soon as he perceived Finn he came to him and, the chief being the first man that was come in his way since he had emerged out of the *sídh*, laid his hand in Finn's; then in Finn's presence, and until the Fianna came up, continued to play his harp. They being there heard a superlatively sweet music and, 'good now, Finn,' they said: 'this is the third best windfall thou ever hadst.' The same tarried with Finn until he died." Then Caelte uttered a lay:—

"A dwarf it was that stalwart Finn obtained: such was the excellence of his memory that be retained by heart all whatsoever in both east and west be chanced to hear. Cnú deireoil was the man's name; in Ireland he was not unknown; beloved was the wee urchin that was expert of speech, whose cognomen was Cnú deireoil. I will relate to you how Finn procured the dwarf: a propitious offspring 'twas that was had then, for it was Lugh mac Eithlenn's only son. We were, along with Finn, betwixt the *crota* and Slievenaman; when on the green bank near beside us there we heard a perfect music. To him [the minstrel] we listened then—his melody admitted not of indifference—it lacked but little that the swelling music, well sustained, had lulled us all to sleep. Cumall's son Finn of

*Almha* spoke out clearly then, and said: ‘whence comest thou, small man, that with a touch so smooth and deft playest the harp?’ ‘Out of Slievenaman come I: a place where mead is drunk, and ale; and therefore am I come precisely, to be for a spell in thy companionship.’ ‘Thou shalt have precious things, and wealth, and red gold, and good servitors; for well I like the manner of thee, and thou shalt have full measure of my intimacy.’ In Finn’s hand he laid his own, and thereat we were joyous all; hither we conveyed him with us, and deemed our find to be a gentle one. Four fists were in the stature of the man, three in his harp so mild and dear: full-volumed was the sound of the soft delicate instrument, sweet the outpourings of his little harp. The five musicians of the Fianna were in a body brought to him; so that in those yonder parts from *Cnú* in gentle wise we learned a fairy music. Of these was Senach’s son, Senach himself and Daighres two; in noble style they learned from him, and Cuan likewise studied. To Finn of the Fianna ‘twas a sore perplexity to have his mannikin without a spouse: [as still he was] for the valiant man could not frame to stomach the gross huge women [whom we love]. Finn the great chief said that gold and silver too he would bestow on him that in Ireland should discover such a thing: a woman his dwarf’s counterpart. Quoth *Scí mac Eoghain* – a warrior with a lion’s nature – ‘I will name (and my story’s fraught with good event) a place where that is which shall match him just.’ ‘My blessing take, and hie thee to thy home, O son of Eoghan out of Munster! but first for friendship tell us forth the country in which such a thing exists to be reported of.’ ‘O Finn, the hardy, the triumphant, to *tech Duinn* [i.e. ‘Donn’s House’] in Munster make thy way: where there is (and she will fit thy purpose) a woman to whom *Bláthnait* is cognomen.’ In all haste then we and the chief of the Fianna skilled to ply the edge [i.e. in the use of all cutting weapons] take our journey to ‘Donn’s House’ to seek the woman: a proceeding by which our good spirits were much enhanced. Blathnait we found within the *sídh*, and of a truth brought her away; then in the great house yonder Blathnait and *Cnú deireoil* slept as man and wife. An ounce of gold a man we give – so many as we were of the Fianna – in dowry of the blameless woman that was bestowed upon the dwarf. Four fists, I say, were in the stature of the man, and in his smooth white harp were three; the wife was taller than the husband; they made a dear white-handed couple! All

mysteries of the broidering art the wife possessed: skill to manipulate the silver and the gold; the man's it was (and a stupendous gift) to gratify the whole world's throngs at once with minstrelsy. Among the Fianna there was not a queen, a leader, nor a chief endowed with sense, but to the couple so infantine [in bulk] they gave their love and divers gifts of price. Whenever hard foul weather would come on the Fianna, men of kingly mind, under his mantle Finn would have them both: Blathnait and the mannikin. When good was coming to the Fianna, Blathnait with wisdom would reveal it; and when evil awaited them, the dwarf would not conceal it from them. Upon the Earth there is not melody (such as a man's soul might desire) but in the banquet-house its strains were petty, except such as *Cnú deireoil* used to make [i: e. how excellent soever they were in themselves they would not stand comparison with his]. Three windfalls, best that Finn most generous Fian-chief ever had: his deerhounds Bran and Sceolan, the faultless; and Blathnait together with the dwarf."

After this they were no long time till they saw seven tall young fellows that came towards them. Patrick said: "whence come ye, striplings, and who are you?" "From *Eoghan Lethderg*, son of Angus and king of Munster's both provinces, we are come to fetch thee, holy Patrick." The saint said: "we will e'en go thither; for wheresoever endowments may be had, there it is a matter of duty to take them." "And what shall we do: these nine warriors here?" asked Caeilte. "A month's, and a quarter's, and a year's welcome to you to be with me," Patrick replied.

Then Patrick set out, and the way that he took was into Feeguile; into Drumcree, which at this time is called 'Kildare'; across the *sruithlinn* in Durrow, and over the Barrow; over *tóchar Léighe*, i.e. 'the stone causeway of Cuarnait's daughter Liagh,' where Liagh perished; into 'the old Plain of Dian mac Dilenn's daughter *Roichet*, now called 'Moyrua of Rechet;' into old Magh neo [*angl.* 'Moynoe' i.e. 'the plain of yews] now called 'the Plain of Leix'; over the spawning-salmon-full Nore; skirting Aghaboe of... the mighty striker, now called *achadh...*; into the way of *Dála mac ú-Móir*; past *ros an churad* [i.e. 'the hero's wood'] now called the very beautiful *ros cré*; with his right hand towards *lathach bó Lodáin mhic Lir* or 'the slough of Lodan mac Lir's cows,' now called the *clár*, or 'expanse,' of

Derrymore; past the Corroges of Cleghile; past *cuellenn ua cuanach* to the westward, where at Finn's hands Cuillenn mac Morna perished; past *léim in fhéinneda* or 'the Fian's leap'; skirting the assembly-place of Nechtan's wife Cuil, now called the heifer-carrying fair-green of Old Clochar; past *cenn febhrat* of *sliabh caoin*, i.e. 'the Ballyhowra Hills' and 'Slievereagh,' to the southward; by *tulach na féinne* or 'hill of the Fianna,' which now is called Ardpatrick: where was Angus's son Eoghan Lethderg, king of both Munster provinces, and the nobles of the same along with him.

Then his tent was unfurled over Patrick; the king of Munster came with the chief men of his people and laid his head in Patrick's bosom, and made obeisance to him. For a week the saint was there: raising the dead, healing them that had diseases and infirmities, and relieving every other affliction besides.

His own award was conceded to Patrick; after which Eoghan went his way to *rosach na rígh*: to his own strong place, and Munster's nobles sought their own several forts and good towns.

Patrick said: "good now, Caeilte, and wherefore was the name of *fionntulach* [i.e. 'white hill'] given to this eminence on which we stand?" "I will tell you the truth of it," answered Caeilte: "it was hence that we, the three battalions of the Fianna marched to deliver the battle of Ventry. Hither our spears had been brought to us, charmed withies also for our spear-shafts. Finn surveyed the hill round about him, and said: 'the hill is white; what better name then could it have than *fionntulach*?'"

Caeilte *cecinit*.

"O thou, this high and pleasant hill, to which the Fianna, white [with their peeled withies] did resort! a vast extended camp, a picked body of fine young men, were customary things upon thee. This was our portion to relate: we used to gain some eminence in a level land [and there would have] beautiful blackberries, haws of the hawthorn, nuts from the hazels of Cantyre. Tender twigs of the thorny bramble-bush, sprigs of the beneficial gentian; and every Beltane we used to consume both smooth shoots and head of the watercress. Birds out of trackless oaken woods would find their way into the Fianna's cooking pit; parti-coloured squirrels out of *Berramain*, and variegated nests from mountain pinnacles. Rapid salmons out of *Linnmhuine*, the eels of noble Shannon; woodcocks of Fidhrinn, otters out of the Deel's hidden places. Fish of the briny sea

from the coasts of Buie and Beare; *medhbán* of lightsome *Fáide*, and *duilesc* from the coves of Cléire. To swim the loch-forming *Loingsech* was a frequent habit with mac Lugach; upon thy yonder side, O hill, we used to come in a host of many numbers. I and Ossian of renown, we used to embark in currachs; as I frequented its waves and its [abutting] hills, I had the severities of the green sea.

“From this spot also it was that, as aforesaid, we marched to fight the battle of Ventry; and [as we did so] we saw approach us [out of another quarter] a young man of Finn’s people: the valiant and hundred-slaying Cael ua Nemhnainn. ‘Whence art thou come, Cael?’ asked Finn. ‘Out of the perilous *brugh* to the northward.’ ‘What sought’st thou there?’ ‘To have speech of Muirenn daughter of Derg, mine own nurse.’ ‘What was the motive of that?’ ‘It was because of a fairy sweetheart and of a splendid match propounded to me in a dream: *Créidhe*, daughter of Cairbre surnamed ‘Whiteskin,’ king of *Ciarraighe Luachra*.’ Finn said: ‘knowest thou, Cael, that of all Ireland’s women she is the arch-she-deceiver? few costly things there are but she has coaxed away to her own mansion and grand dwelling-place.’ Cael said: ‘and knowest thou what the condition also is which she requires of all [that would woo her]?’ ‘I know it,’ Finn answered: ‘[she will entertain none but him], whosoe’er he be, that of art or poetic skill shall have sufficient to make for her a *duan* setting forth a full description of her *cuachs*, her horns, her cups, her *ians* and all other her fine vessels, together with that of her various vast palaces.’ ‘All which I have in readiness: given to me by Derg’s daughter Muirenn, mine own nurse.’

“Then for that time we renounced the battle, and over regions of hills, of rocks, of *tulachs*, took our way until we came to *loch Cuire* in the west of Ireland. We reached the door of the *sídh*, and with the shafts of our long and gold-socketted spears there performed the *dórd fiansa*. Girls, yellow-haired, of marriageable age, shewed on the balconies of bowers; and Credhe, accompanied by three fifties of women, issued forth to speak with us. Said the Fian-chief to her: ‘to elect and to woo thee we are come.’ The lady enquired who it might be that sought to court her. ‘Cael it is, the valiant, the hundred-slayer, grandson of Nemhnann, son of the king of Leinster in the east!’ She said: ‘we have heard his report, albeit

we never have seen him. But has he my *duan* for me?' Cael answered: 'I have so,' then rose and sang his duan.

"A journey I have in hand on a Friday (if I go then am I a true guest) to Credhe's mansion (the effort is no trivial one) against the mountain's breast in the north-east. It is appointed for me to go thither: to Credhe, at the Paps of Anann; and that there I must remain exposed to difficulties, for four days and half a week. Pleasant is the house in which she is: what with men and boys and women, with both magicians and minstrels, with both cup-bearer and door-keeper, with both horse-keeper that never shirked his duty and dispenser to distribute meat, the command over all whom belongs to fair Credhe, the yellow-haired. What with coverlet and what with down, in her *dún* my lot will be a pleasant one; [of old] it hath been heard that, should Credhe but will it, my journey would be an auspicious one for me [i.e. the conditions of a quest such as mine have long been matter of notoriety]. A bowl she has whence juice of berries flows, with which she has been used to make her eyebrows black; crystal vats of fermenting grains, cups she has and goblets exquisite. The colour of her *dún* is as that of lime; coverlets and rushes [for the beds] abound among them there; silk is among them, and many a blue mantle; among them are red gold and the polished drinking-horn. Her bower by *loch cuire*, of silver and of yellow gold: its ridgy thatch is laid without defect, of ruddy birds' wings, crimson-red. Two green-hued door-posts which thou seest—their door has no deformity; silver taken as spoil from the slain ('tis of old renown) was the beam that furnished forth its lintel. Credhe's chair upon thy left [on entering] was more and more delightful [the longer one surveyed it]; an overlay of *Elpa*'s gold it had, and stood at her delicate bed's foot. A glittering bed laid out, that dominates the chair; that was made by Tuile in the east, of yellow gold and of precious stones. Yet another bed, on thy right hand, of gold and of silver wrought unerringly; with tent-like curtains having appearance of the foxglove's flower, and running upon slender copper rods. The household that is in her house, to them it is that above all their lines are fallen in pleasant places; their mantles are neither pale nor smooth [i.e. neither faded nor worn to a gloss], their redundant locks are curly and in colour fair. Wounded men losing heavy jets of blood would fall asleep to the fairy birds a-warbling on her bower's

radiant eaves. Should I have reason to be grateful to the woman, to Credhe for whom the cuckoo calls: her lays shall live on yet more numerous, if she but requite the loving service done her [in composing this]. To Cairbre's daughter if it pleasing be, she will not reduce me to terms of postponement; but may she rather say to me here now: 'thy journey is most welcome to me.' A hundred feet in Credhe's house there are from one angle till you reach another; and twenty fully measured feet in the width of her noble door. Her roof with its thatch of blue and yellow birds' wings; her parapet in front at a well, of crystal and of carbuncle gems. Four posts round every bed there are, of gold and of silver laid together cunningly; in each post's head a crystal gem: they make heads not unpleasant [to behold]. A vat is there, of princely bronze, out of which runs the juice of merry malt; over the vat stands an apple-tree, with the multitude of its heavy fruits. When Credhe's horn is filled with the vat's potent mead, at one time and with precision four apples fall down into the horn. Yon four that are rehearsed above, they set about dispensing [of the mead]: to four that sit there then they hand a drink apiece, likewise an apple. She that owns all these things, both at low water and at flood [i.e. in their entirety] Credhe to wit from the triple-pinnacled *tulachs*—hath by a spearcast's length excelled all Ireland's women. Here's at her with a lay—no bride-gift out of shape—no epithalamium rashly and perfunctorily made I here on the spot have at the lovely Credhe, in whose eyes may mine have been a smiling journey!"

"Then that couple were bedded, and there they [the Fianna] were for seven days: drinking and in all enjoyment, without lack whether of meat, of liquor, or of any good thing whatsoever, were it not that one other care oppressed Finn: the *allmarachs'* presence at Ventry. Then the woman presented to each one of them individually a special and sufficient battle-dress, and we took leave of each other.

"Let the woman come with us," Finn said, "that we may learn to which of us either good or ill shall befall in this present business." The woman brought with her vast numbers of cattle to supply their sick and wounded; and she it was that so long as the battle was a-fighting fed them all with lacteal produce, with new milk. In her house too it was that the invalids and sick of the Fianna lay. And even as in lavishing of jewels and of treasure the woman outdid the women of the Fianna, so also in

valour and in skill at arms her husband in that battle outstripped the three battalions of the Fianna. Truly a calamity was that which on the last day of the battle was effected: the drowning of Cael namely; and other beings too there were, of the brute kind, which had a life of length equal to his [i.e. that perished at the same time]. He being drowned then, the outside swell washed him in. The women and the gentles of the Fianna came to seek him; by them he was raised and carried to the southern strand (to the southward of Ventry that is to say), so that *trágh Chaeil* or 'Cael's Strand' is that shore's name ever since, and *fert Chaeil* or 'Cael's Grave.'

"The woman came and stretched her by his side; she raised a clamorous weeping and greatly wailed: 'why should not I,' she said, 'die of grief for my mate, when even the restless wild creatures die there of sorrowing after him!' Then Credhe said:—

"The haven roars, and O the haven roars, over the rushing race of *rinn dá bharc!* the drowning of the warrior of *loch dá chonn*, that is what the wave impinging on the strand laments. Melodious is the crane, and O melodious is the crane, in the marshlands of *druim dá thrén!* 'tis she that may not save her brood alive [lit. 'that saves not her live ones']: the wild dog of two colours [i.e. the fox] is intent upon her nestlings. A woful note, and O a woful note, is that which the thrush in Drumqueen emits! but not more cheerful is the wail that the blackbird makes in Letterlee. A woful sound, and O a woful sound, is that the deer utters in Drumdaleish! dead lies the doe of *druim silenn*, the mighty stag bells after her. Sore suffering to me, and O suffering sore, is the hero's death—his death that used to lie with me! that the son of her out of *doire dá dhos* should be now with a truss beneath his head! Sore suffering to me is Cael, and O Cael is a suffering sore, that by my side he is in dead man's form! that the wave should have swept over his white body—that is what hath distracted me, so great was his delightfulness. A dismal roar, and O a dismal roar, is that the shore's surf makes upon the strand! seeing that the same hath drowned the comely noble man, to me it is an affliction that ever Cael sought to encounter it. A woful booming, and O a boom of woe, is that which the wave makes upon the northward beach! butting as it does against the polished rock, lamenting for Cael now that he is gone. A woful fight, and O a fight of woe, is that the wave wages

with the southern shore! as for me, my span is determined; that my appearance [i.e. beauty] is impaired by this is noted. A woful melody, and O a melody of woe, is that which the heavy surge of Tullachleish emits! as for me: the calamity that is fallen upon me having shattered me, for me prosperity exists no more. Since now Crimthann's son is drowned, one that I may love after him there is not in being; many a chief is fallen by his hand, and in the battle his shield ne'er uttered outcry!"

"Then the young woman stretched herself out by Cael's side and, for grief that he was gone, died. In the one grave they both were buried there; and I myself it was that raised the stone which is over the resting-place, and hence is called 'the tomb of Cael and of Credhe.'"

"Success and benediction, Caeilte!" Patrick said: "'tis a good story thou hast told; and where is scribe Brogan?" "Here am I." "By thee be written down all that Caeilte hath uttered." And written down it was.

Not long they were now till they saw towards them a strong body of men that made a good show: girt about with a bulwark of shields locked, and having at their shoulders a very forest-grove of lofty-spears, gold-socketted. They [i.e. some of them] entered into the tent where Patrick was; in whose bosom their lord laid his head, while they made genuflection to him. Patrick said: "who art thou, young man?" He answered: "I am Bran, son of Derg king of Munster." Patrick pursued: "wherefore art thou come hither?" "It is the art and discipline of Fianry that I am fain to learn, holy cleric; for I have heard that in thy company is a warrior of Finn's people, and with him I would desire to study the *dord fiansa*."

"Caeilte, my soul, thou hearest that," said Patrick. "I hear it: good now, Bran, how use ye yourselves to manage the hunting?" "Some *tulach*, or cairn, or wood of mountain rising from a plain, we hem in and so for the whole day's space pursue the game. One while we kill a deer, another time he evades us." In Patrick's presence Caeilte wept then, tearfully, in sadness, so that his very breast, his chest, was wet.

Then Patrick and Caeilte, with all so many as they had of a company, went up into *cenn Febhrat* of Slieveriach, and the lie of that particular spot to which they attained was this: three glens there were about the mountain and betwixt them a loch, its name being *loch bó*; that of the

mountain, *osmetal*. [Caeilte said]: “westward of the loch is *cnoc na haeire*, and *finninis* is the easternmost hill’s denomination. But the name of this hill is *cnoc Máine*; and here was a notable rogue-stag called *liath na dtrí mbenn* or ‘the grey one of the three antlers,’ that for the space of seven-and-twenty years had ever eluded the Fianna, both man and deerhound. Now a warrior of the Fianna killed him, and that warrior am I.”

Caeilte rose now: eastward and westward of the loch he stationed his people, on the south and on the north, and Patrick sat him down; whence also *suidhe Pátraic* or ‘Patrick’s seat’ is the name of that place in *cenn Febhrat* of Slieveriach. Then on high he reared his waving signal of chase, of hunting, and of Fianlike venery. He uttered three mighty and formidable whoops: whereby neither in adjacency nor in proximity to him, nor whether in plain or on moor, on mountain or in wood, was there a free-roaming stag but in his career of headlong speed came up; and to cool themselves after their course they all plunged before the hunters’ faces into ample *loch bó*. Insomuch that, at that rushing noise and mighty resonance, horror and fear and apprehension took them: at the wild stags I say, at the roe deer frenzied, at the weighty-sided boars, regarding which it wanted but little of their having all perished on the spot with the length of their race and with distress of breath. The huntsmen extended themselves round the loch, and of the quarry a single beast escaped not away alive. They divided the fruits of the chase, there being up to eight hundred head for apportionment. Benignus said: “to us be given a tithe of the hunt.” But Bran mac Derg was not altogether well pleased to divide with any one else that which was fallen to his own share [i.e. proceeds of the hunt originated by himself and carried out by his men].

Hereat an inward disorder [in the nature of a flux] seized the king of Munster’s son, who cried: “holy cleric, lay thy hand on this!” Caeilte said: “by my word, until thou pay the fee he shall not go [to help thee].” Bran said: “what fee?” “Seeing that ‘tis in thy stomach the ailment is, be it the belly of every cow, of every swine and of every sheep [slaughtered in thy country] to be yielded by thee to Patrick for the Church’s use for ever.” Bran said: “that I will concede; so shall my son too after me.” Which then from that time forth became a continuous practice with all

Ireland. Then to Bran mac Derg's stomach Patrick put his hand, and on the instant he was whole.

"We must be going now," Caeilte said. Patrick enquired: "and what way is that [i.e. in what direction]?" "I remember, saintly Patrick, that for dread of the *tuatha dé danann* nor crowd nor host had dared sit upon these three *tulachs*:"

Caeilte *cecinit*.

"*Tulachs* three I bear in mind, that feel not age nor fade away; over which the 'grey one of three antlers' used to course from their one border to the other. Three churches too I have in memory, that once were holds of a good lord; within them was then no voice of bell, but rather the 'wizard's knot' surrounded them. *Caeilte* is my very name indeed: a captain of the truthful Fianna I have been; when we had to cross the glen we used not to make any halt. Finn the Fian-chief, when he was in life, would not endure to have the flighty young buck with the sprouting horn to bell over his capacious camp. I and Flann son of Failbhe, we used 'to redder' [i.e. hack and hew] many heroes of the Leinster men; this is my conscience verily [i.e I affirm it on my conscience], that many a battle I bear in mind."

And so the company, laden with their burdens of the chase, departed.

With a look that Caeilte threw around the mountain on his left hand he saw a fort, a fair town. He said: "on my conscience we never knew a fort to exist yonder; let us then make over for the town."

They took their way to the dwelling accordingly, but it was an amazement to them not to see either crowd or throng there but, [instead of that], nine she- and three men-slaves. Into a private bower apart that was in the town they entered, where were two women and they weeping and mourning. Here they were fed and ministered to, their travelling and wayfaring gear was taken from them, and Caeilte enquired of the women what fort this might be. "It is that of the chief of Fermoy's two sons: Lochan and Eoghan their names are." "And why are ye gloomy and melancholy?" "Good cause we have: we, that ourselves are two sisters, belong to two brothers; our husbands are gone tonight to bring home [other] wives, and of our stay in the fort therefore there remains no more than till such time as our husbands shall return, and new wives with them." With a glance that Caeilte threw around him and

into the inner part of the fort he perceived a huge mass of stone which a confidential warrior to Finn had once: *Senach mac Maeilchró*, of Finn mac Cumall's original people. Now this mass was so, that all whatsoever wage Finn had ever given to Senach (thrice fifty ounces of gold, thrice fifty ounces of silver and three times fifty ounces of white bronze) was shut up close, with said rock of stone covering them.

Caeilte said to the women then: "were I to succour and relieve you, and to bring you back your husbands, what fee would ye give me?" They replied: "had we but any fee in the whole world that might be pleasing to thee, we would give it thee." "Verily ye have such: that vast lump of stone at the fort's farther side." "Alas for thee to say it! for the whole country's multitude was occupied with putting of it in the site in which it is, and the setting of it fair took all their effort; yet shouldest thou alone [as it would seem] be able to control it!" "Myself it is that will be deceived in it," said Caeilte, "should I not be able." "It shall pass [i.e. is hereby conveyed] from us to thee, and with benediction," said the women.

Then he came forth of the town, and took back his right hand's fill of special fairy herbs known to him as having been had by the queens and noble ladies of the Fianna. These he gave to the women; who washed in a bath made of those herbs, and this compelled their own husbands to their love, insomuch that the wives whom they had brought home they dismissed away back again. The great stone was made over to Caeilte and he said:—

"O stone of *belach átha*...."

There, in that place, Caeilte abode and was well tended and ministered to. Early on the morrow he rose, and gave the flagstone a wrench towards him out of the earth. They came along, and so to *finntulach* which to-day is called Ardpatrick, where Patrick was. He questioned: "where wast thou last night, Caeilte?" and Caeilte told him the story from first to last.

Not long had they been there when they marked seven that drew near them. Patrick said: "whence are ye come, young men?" "Out of the province of Connacht to the northward." "What hath set you in motion?" "From Connacht's gentles we come to fetch thee, holy cleric, to convert

us (both man and woman) to thy Gospel." Patrick said then: "it is not right that the Church make any lagging but to disseminate it."

Patrick with his people set out, and away they came from the southward: through mid-Munster, past *luimnech uladh*, into *fidh na gcuán* which is called 'Cratlow;' into *sliabh aidhid in righ*, into *sliabh Echtge* or 'the mountain of Echtge' daughter of Nuada Silver-arm; by *cuaille Chepáin* in *Echtge*: the place in which Cepan mac Morna fell; past *loch na bó girre* which is called *loch Gréine* or 'the loch of Grian' daughter of Finn; into the *brecthír*, which at this time is called *tír Máine*, i.e. 'the land of Hy-Many' or 'O'Kelly's country;' past *loch linnghaeth* which is called *loch cróine*. There Muiredach More mac Finnachta king of Connacht was, expecting Patrick; whose tent was now spread over himself with his clerics. The chiefs of Connacht's province came then, made obeisance to Patrick, and laid their heads in his bosom.

As for the saint, he issued out of the tent and sat on a sepulchral mound compact of sods; Caeilte came with him, and said: "here it was, holy Patrick, that, Oscar fought his first battle." Patrick asked: "what cause had he?" "Soon said: it was about Niamh, daughter to Fergus Finn's son Aedh Donn king of Ulster, that was betrothed to Aedh son of Fidach son of Finntan, but was given to the king of Connacht's son. Which latter was not of numbers sufficient to stand a battle with Oscar and the Fianna, until from him to Conn's grandson Cormac, king of Ireland, had been sent a petition craving reinforcements in large quantity; and Cormac despatched with him the four [remaining] provinces of Ireland, to give battle to the Fianna. On this spot then the fight was fought for the girl, and Oscar's maiden exploits in that battle were these (as Finn said):—

"Rise up, Oscar! be it known that thou art [of] the true stock: sufficient [i.e. formidable] as is the stature of the good men arrayed against thee, nevertheless relieve us of a hundred of their heroes! Go through them and over them, that their trunks be shorn headless; take the resonant green shield, and take the sharp sword! From the weaponed warrior that shall have wounded thee win shield and win spears; win mail—may it serve thee—may they not boast thy trophies! A great event for me in the presence of witnesses is the devoting of my babe at his nine years completed! There has not, there never will, come one more

excellent whether of hand or of oath [i.e. of greater deeds, of veracity more pure]; there is no spearshaft that shall bore farther into a human. Woe to him upon whom with keen sword he shall charge, when once his arm's wrath is roused—his that when he stands up rages!"

Then Caeilte said:

"Oscar's maiden deeds victorious were: the towering haughty king of Ulster slain; Leinster's king, without any cavil, and Connacht's hardy king likewise. To him came then, after that, Aedh mac Fidach mac Finntan; but him he leaves without a head—seldom is hand-to-hand set-to so tough. Aedh Donn son of Fergus Finn—Ulster's king with the deadly point—by dint of shield, of sword so hard, Oscar killed at the same time. Baedan mac Fernarb, the virulent, that Leinster had for impetuous king—sufficient though his daring were—he killed at the one instant of time. Handsome kingly Oscar's own condisciple, that was gentle, that was prudent: Linne mac Lighne, who had deeds to show, Oscar slew in error. To view the battle Niamh of the many-coloured vesture came: the battle's rout bursts full upon her, and the tenacious queen is slain. Patrick that possessest truth, in this matter I tell thee that Oscar's royal fury was prodigious, and that his maiden exploits were not small."

"Success and benediction, Caeilte!" Patrick cried, "and where is Brogan? be that tale written down by thee, so that to the chiefs of the world's latter time it prove a diversion." And Brogan penned it.

"Good now Caeilte, my soul," said Patrick: "what [i.e. whose] grave is this on the hill upon which we stand?" "Soon said," Caeilte answered: "a warrior of the Fianna of Ireland that met his death there, Airnelach mac Admallan, the king of Leinster's son. For a man of verse came hither with a *duan* for him [i.e. composed on or addressed to him] and: 'it is well, man of verse,' he said, 'grant me so long grace until I have by me my jewels and my treasures.' The man of verse replied: 'truly, and by my word, I will not; but if I be not gratified will in this very day lampoon and satirise thee.' When the other heard that, he laid his face to the earth; nor ever lifted up his countenance [but kept it so] till he died for shame. The green-surfaced *tulach* was closed over him, his stone was reared over him; and 'tis against it thy back is now, holy Patrick." The saint said: "Heaven, and his release from torment, be to him from me in

recompense of his sense of honour." In which very hour his soul came out of pain, and in form of a white dove sat over Patrick on the pillar-stone.

Patrick enquired: "and who, Caeilte, is in this the tulach's southern end?" "Salbhvide, son of Feidhlecar king of Munster, that perished there in pursuit of a fairy deer: his number being thirty deer-hounds, thirty servitors, thirty warriors [who also died with him]; and the tulach was walled up on them." *Ut dixit Caeilte:*—

"In this end to the southward is Salbhvide's son, of the poets: fifty *conghlanns* of white silver were not accounted for a puny treasure."

Benignus said: "we would fain get at these precious things." "Thou shalt have that same," Caeilte said; and opened the grave, in which was his spearhaft's full depth of rings and bracelets. Quoth Benignus again: "to the man of a while ago thou grantedst Heaven for his honour's sake; and now for his valuables [here revealed to us] give Heaven to that other warrior [whose they were]." Patrick said: "it shall be granted."

Then Patrick enquired of Caeilte: "what was it that brought you, all the Fianna as ye were, to naught?" He made answer: "the two battles which we fought last, the battle of Gowra namely, and the battle of Ollarba. Three battalions strong we marched to fight the battle of Inverollarba, and saving six hundred of us none came off; neither had Finn's spirit, whether in battle or in fray, up to that point ever complained for the Fianna. But this time he took heed to the loss of such chiefs, and lords, and heroes, and champions, and confidential people as were fallen in those battalions:

"Find out, for us how many we be...."

"Success and benediction, Caeilte!" said Patrick.

Then Cainen, son of Failbhe son of Fergus son of Eoghan More, questioned Caeilte: "where was Olioll Olom son of Mogh Nuadat slain?" and he answered that: "on the summit of *sliabh Claire* to the southward he died, of an apoplexy brought on by grief; and Sabia daughter of Conn died in Tara, of sorrow for Maccon her well-beloved son": thus Caeilte. Cainen enquired again: "and where was Ferchis mac Comain, the poet, killed?" "It was a shot of a hardened holly javelin which on the top of *sliabh crot Ael* son of Dergdubh delivered at a stag, but with the same slew Ferchis unwittingly." "And Olioll Olom's seven comely sons, where

died they?" Cainen asked. "Beine Brit it was that in the great battle of *magh mucrama*, they being routed before Maccon's vast gathering, slaughtered them." "Ath ísel upon the smooth wide-spread plain, whence is it?" "Comla Derg from *cnoc den* that wounded Eoghan More's son *Fiacha muillethan* there; whence by rights it is called *áth tuisil* or 'ford of falling.'" And he said:—

"*Ath tuisil* is the ford's name; to all men this is a cognisance of the veritable cause: it was a fall that Connla of *cnoc den* caused worthy Fiacha Muillethan to make."

"And the battle of *samhain*," said Cainen, "by whom was it fought, and who perished there?" "Olioll Olom's son Cormac Cas it was that delivered it against Eochaid Red-brow, king of Ulster in the north. There Eochaid fell; and there was hit Cormac Cas, who for thirteen years lay under cure with his brain leaking away from him, and he for that period holding the rule of Munster. At *dún ar sléibh* or 'dún on mountain' he had a fort built, a good town, which was so that in its midst was a sparkling and translucent loch-well. About the spring he had a great and royal house made; but immediately at its brink three huge pillarstones were planted and there (with its head to the eastward and betwixt said three columns of stone) the king's bed was set, while out of a *cuach* or else a bowl a confidential warrior of his people splashed water on his head continually. There too he died, and in that fort was laid in subterranean excavations; whence *dún trí liag* or 'fort of three pillarstones' by way of name is given to it." Then Caelte uttered a lay:

"Pleasant assuredly is this *dún* in the east, which men denominate *dún Eochaid*; more pleasant still, when once the daylight comes, are Sabia's lying-place and Olioll's...."

To return to Muiredach mac Finnachta, king of Connacht, he had a beloved son: Aedh mac Muiredach. At this juncture a goaling match was promulgated by the young lads of Connacht, and upon them Aedh mac Muiredach without assistance won six goals. He sat down after it, an access of grave and fatal sickness took him, and there he died. This was told to his people and to his mother: Aeife, the king of Ulster's daughter. By the women of the province outcry of woe was made on account of the youth's demise; and his mother prescribed to lay him in the bosom of the *Táilchenn*: in his bosom namely to whom God had granted all Ireland,

and power of benefitting all that were in her. But the king of Connacht said: "such action were in my sight most reprehensible, unless indeed to the Saint himself as well it were acceptable."

Then out of the tent in which the king of Connacht was with his attendants (the dead also being there: with a fringed mantle thrown over him, and indued with a soft crimson hood) a message was sent to fetch Patrick. His mother, his three condisciples and his sister, said that they must die of grief for him [*lit.* 'of his grief']; which when saint Patrick heard he had compassion, and his heart yearned towards them.

A basin of pale gold was brought to the cleric now, with its fill of water in it; he blessed the water, and it was transferred to an exquisite *cuach* of fair silver. The holy cleric went, raised the soft crimson hood, and into Aedh mac Muiredach's mouth poured three drops of the water; at the third drop of which he rose sound and whole, drew his hand across his face, and got out of bed. At this the whole concourse were joyful and of good cheer, and believed in God; they laid their heads in Patrick's breast, and invested him with all power over them from great to small. Throughout that night they tarried there; next morning they quitted the town, and all together went on their way: into *gannmagh*, which now is called *magh Finn*; into *tóchar an bhanchuire*, which at this time men call *tóchar Finn*; right hand to *ros na fingaile*, which now is named *ros comáin* or 'Roscommon' (the occasion of its having been called *ros na fingaile* being nine sons of Uar mac Idhas that slew each other there), and past *ráth Ghlais* which now men style *ráth Brénainn*. There the king of Connacht's tent was pitched: Patrick and Caelite came and sat on a sodded mound that dominated the rath's outer limit; the king of Connacht with all his company joins them, and they sit down by Patrick and by Caelite.

Then Muiredach mac Finnachta questioned Caelite: "whence is *ráth Ghlais* applied to this rath?" "I will tell you," Caelite said: "it was Glas, son of Drecan king of Lochlann, that with a force numbering twenty-five battles came to win Ireland's royal power; the point at which they arrived being the *cathair* [i.e. 'cahir' or 'stone fort'] of *Damh dilenn*, now called *dún rosarach*. Now at this particular season Finn mac Cumall was in *Almha* of Leinster." Here Muiredach enquired of Caelite: "why was the place named *Almha*?" Caelite replied: "a warrior of the *tuatha dé Danann*

that lived in the teeming glittering *brugh*: Bracan was his name, and he had a daughter that was still a virgin: her name was *Almha*. Cumall son of *Trénmór* took her to wife; in bearing him a son she died, and this green-surfaced *tulach* was closed in over her. From her therefore it is designated now; whereas until then it had been *tulach na faircsena*, i.e. 'the look-out hill.' Or else it is that *Almha* was his name that had it in Nemhed's time. Or yet again it is that there Nuada the magician made a fort and place of strength, from which fortalice he produced an *almha* or 'herd of kine,' whence *Almha* [the place-name]." And Caeilte said:—

"Leinster's Almha—the Fianna's liss—the town which Finn most bountiful made his resort: here follows, according to every antiquary, that from which the name is taken. *Almha* was the man's name that in Nemed's time possessed it with vigour and with fame; upon the green hill yonder he expired of a sudden and immediate plague. A warrior of the Firbolgs that was no fool—*Iuchna* was the warrior's name—both east and west the fort was full of his cattle, of his herds. His droves, impelled by thirst, went to a well to drink water; such was the urgency of their drouth that they all fought and left their horns behind them. From these horns of the kine (that were some white, some flecked with other colours) which they had left about the *uarán*-well—from that, I say, we now have here [the place-name] *adarca bó abdal Iuchna* or 'the horns of Iuchna's mighty kine.' Daughters five had lofty Iuchna: that warrior skilled, and cheery, yet vehement [at need]; from whom it was that all the countries which they occupied extended far and wide [in course of time]. *Carmann* in Carmann's rough land, with whom for a season bards abode; Trega's wife in his potent house....

Liffey's plain of golden hue was that deft, fair, and tall young woman's share (as I opine this is no perverted lore), and the fifth daughter was *Almha* that was seated here. Nuada the wizard, an ill-conditioned fellow: by him a strong high *dún* was made in *Almha*, with bright crystal for his spacious fort's stockade. Pure white all over the *dún* was, as though it had had all Ireland's lime; from the *almha* or 'herd' that be brought from his mansion: from that, I say, the name of *Almha* cleaves to it."

"Well hast thou told that tale, Caeilte," said Muiredach mac Finnachta.

Caeilte resumed: "where we were then [at the point where you broke me off namely] was in this same *Almha* of Leinster, and thither intelligence of that invading fleet came to us: she that brought it being *Spré aithinne* or 'Firebrand-spark,' daughter of *Mughna mucraesach*, and the king of Ireland's she-runner. To Finn was summoned his own she-runner, to gather and to muster both Ireland's and Scotland's Fianna. Conn's grandson Cormac the king got together the *tuatha* of Tara, the bands of Bregia, and the great general army of all Ireland; and so they came hither, to this place, five-and-twenty battles strong. Between the Fianna and the settled [i.e. non-nomadic] folk lots were cast, for the determining to which of them it should fall to engage the *allmarachs* or 'over-sea men'; and the Fianna's chance it was to open the battle. Every day to a week's end a fight was fought; fifteen hundred *allmarachs* and *éirennachs* were slain, and then the main battle was delivered; in which Glas fell by Finn mac Cumall, and his seven sons by the Fianna. Thrice fifty warriors in number we marched with Finn to fight that battle, and by each one of us fell fifty fighting men. Three of us, of the Fianna, entered into the tent in which Glas mac Drecan was; there we found nine columns of gold, the smallest one of which was in bulk equal to a three-ox yoke. These we hid in this red moor northward of the rath, and here Glas mac Drecan was laid under ground. From him therefore this rath is called *ráth Ghlais*.

Patrick exclaimed: "victory and benediction, Caeilte, 'tis a good story thou hast told us! and by thee, Brogan, be the same written." And Brogan wrote it. For that night they tarried there, and on the morrow rose early; they came away into *roe carpait Fergusa*, i.e. 'the place, or arena, of Fergus' chariot,' which at this time is called *iomaire meic Chonrach*, i.e. 'mac Conrach's ridge'; touching *cnoc na rígh*, i.e. 'hill of the kings,' now named *uarán nGaradh* or 'Garadh's *uarán*-well,' where they halted and pitched camp. His tent was spread over Patrick; then he sang his hours. He blessed that rare hill with the beautiful sides, and said: "this shall be the eighteenth burial-ground that I shall hold most dear in Ireland [i.e. it shall be dearest in the eighteenth degree]." "What is the most unfortunate thing [i.e. the great objection to it] is that it has no water in its vicinity," said the king of Connacht.

Then Patrick rose and drew near to a jutting rock which he perceived just in the outskirts of the spot in which they were, and into the same thrust his staff so that it impinged on the ground and substratum underlying it; whereupon three jets of pellucid water burst out of the rock. Benignus cried: "Endow the well, holy Patrick!" "Prophylaxis for a certain space to every one that shall drink its water," said Patrick: "also by good leave of the Creator all Ireland's wells to fail in the world's latter time, and all Ireland to be comforted from this one well; yet again: this water to be thrice administered to any man, and there is no distress that may afflict him but it will relieve."

"Tell us a story, Caeilte," said Patrick. "A story I will tell thee of a case in respect of which the Fianna of Ireland, both man and dog, had well-nigh perished upon this very hill on which thou art, as thus: *Guaire Goll* and *Flaithes* were Finn's two bearers of the chess-board, and to play a match with Guaire upon this *tulach* came a warrior: Finn Bane, son of Bresal king of Leinster. Guaire Goll said: 'I will play with thee for a stake.' Finn Bane asked: 'what stake?' 'Three ounces of gold from each of us.' Now as a matter of fact Finn Bane was third best chess-player in the Fianna, coming as he did after Finn mac Cumall and *Diarmuid ua Duibhne*, but before Flaithes called *faebrach* or 'sharp-edged,' the *gilla na fidchille* or 'lad of the chess-board,' and Guaire Goll his fellow. These two therefore played for three days, during which Guaire won not a single game, and his stake lapsed from him. On the other then he heaped insult and abuse: saying that in *gilla*-duty he was no *gilla*, in military service no warrior, and in weapon-skill no man-at-arms. Finn Bane raised his hand and lent Guaire a fist so that out of his upper gum he knocked three front teeth and made Guaire to fall flat across the chess-board [dead]. This is reported to Finn, and he orders to kill Finn Bane with his people. Ossian however said: 'by my word he shall not be killed, but referred to the judgment of Caeilte, of Dermot, and of Fergus called 'True-lips' that to thee, Finn, is ollave in chief of the Fianna.' Which three delivered their judgment, and to this effect: 'wheresoever thou, Finn, shalt encounter Finn Bane's *gilla*, give him a fist; thou shalt have a donation [i.e. a solatium] moreover: from every leader of Ireland's Fianna an ounce of gold.' Thus peace was made by them.

"At twenty years' end we came to *coill choiméta*, i.e. 'wood of safe keeping,' in the land of the *uí Tairrsigh* of Leinster: now called 'Drumcree.' The Fianna proceeded to hunt, and left behind there a warrior of their number to safeguard the women; his name was *Garadh mac Mórna*, and his condition this: that the major part of his life was past, and his kinsmen all were slain. The women said to him: 'come on, Garadh, hast thou a mind to play chess with us?' 'By no means,' he answered. 'What means this?' the women said again. Garadh began: 'one day that we were at *tulach na rígh* or 'the hill of kings,' and at *loch an éin* or 'the bird's loch,' in the province of Connacht—' and so told them the story, which is this that ye have just heard, holy Patrick. A woman of them said then: 'the very purpose for which Garadh was left behind with us, was it not to make fire for us and to play chess with us, because he is gone off his lustihood and his spear-throwing, and because the condition in which he is is that of old age?' But Garadh said: 'this, by my word, is an utterance of women that are hostile; neither, how long soever I should persist in fellowship with the Fianna, would they ever be firm friends to me.'

"Then in the *bruidhen* he kindled a great fire, came out himself bringing his arms with him, shut to the seven doors that were to the dwelling, and chanted at them an old rhyme:—

"Lovely women of Finn's Fianna, play ye now chess for yourselves: the sapient king's junior ones are ye; I am a senior, and my play is old. The burthen of age weighs on me, wear and tear of my antiquity; I am coeval with your fathers, and every sting that vexes me is but rendered the more keen by this: that at an age such as mine I should have been marked out to play with you. A day at *loch an éin* I have in memory (an ancient man without an ancient legend is amiss) in which well-nigh took place the slaughter of them all, through quarrel begotten of a certain match. Guaire, Finn's *gilla*, and Bresal's son Finn Bane held at the chess-board scientific play, whence a contention sprang. Finn Bane as a player was better than Guaire from *glas bemann*; Finn Bane won four games, and Guaire but a single one. Against Bresal's green-mantled son huge anger grows in Guaire now; evil things he says to him in earnest, all for his straight and honourable play. Finn Bane's shame is very great, and speedily he lifts the hand; so that from Bresal's winning son a fist

landed on Guaire's mouth. Up rise the splendid Fianna, the generous, the famous, the all-valorous; it was a vexation to them to have the Chief's *gilla* stricken for a paltry cause. Up rise, I say, with one accord Finn Bane's Fianna and Finn mac Cumall's; Caeilte's Fianna and Conan's, Ossian's and Ferdoman's. Then it was that Finn himself said: 'see outside, my stalwart potent son, wherefore the Fianna's anger kindles—what may be their uprising's cause.' [But here a man of Finn's comes in and cries:] 'Guaire thy *gilla*, O Finn, a young man that was bearer of thy chessboard: no valid cause is that for which his slaughter by mac Bresal stands effected!' 'Be mac Bresal seized,' quoth Finn, 'nor ransom-gift accepted in his stead; neither be Ossian, Dermot, Caeilte, for a protection to him in the cause.' Ossian spoke then: 'by thine hand, O glorious Finn—by thy nobility and by thine honour-slain mac Bresal shall not be because he chanced into a broil. Father, O son of Cumall, stand fast by thy wisdom! straight judgment it is that befits a prince, not blustering words of menace. Were it we here that lacked self-restraint, from thee it is our admonishing should emanate: thy finger submit to thy knowledge-tooth; pass not rash judgment resting on one-sided evidence. Let take *Faelchú*, Fercrom's son and heavy-haired mac Bresal's *gilla*; if now mac Bresal hath slain Guaire, by thine own self be *Faelchu* killed.' From Cumall of the tender honour's son we come away after Finn Bane; and so bring with us Bresal's son to the Fian-chief of Ireland's Fianna. The one Finn—Almha's Finn mac Cumall—then questioned of another Finn: wherefore it was that he assaulted Guaire that now was gone, was passed away. Finn Bane answered: 'Finn! Guaire thy *gilla*, a carle that bore thy chess-board, he came at early morning and defied me to play one single game. Four games then I won on Guaire son of Beobertach; but because this was an irritation to him—and through anger—he 'scalded me,' gave me vituperation. By reason that in presence of all Ireland's Fianna he inflicted on me stiff contumely: I was no *gilla*—I was no *laech*—when the pinch came no *óglæch* was I—I lift up my straight right arm (no indilgence I make about it) and deal a fist across his mouth—nought tell I but a truthful tale.' 'A blessing on the arm that gave it to him,' Ossian surely said: 'thy *gilla*, Finn of the chiefs—not causeless is the slaying of him found to have been. Unless thou readily forgive the fist, Fian-chief, it shall be compensated to thee: a *screpal* of gold from each

man of us thou shalt have—wrongful it were now shouldst thou persist not to give ear to us. But if this [that I have set forth] please thee, belike 't will serve to check thy gillas in their ill-demeanour: Guaire, Coman, active Saltran, that practise to rail at all Ireland's Fianna. Guaire reviled Finn Bane; Coman has upbraided Glas; and more preposterous than aught that can be told is how the flippant Solam castigated Ferdoman. Finn mac Bresal from *ráth chró*—if to this *gilla* he have given a fist: O Chief possessed of many polished drinking-horns, give thou too a fist to mac Bresal's *gilla*! 'Take thou my blessing, and to thine own house repair [in peace],' said Finn to Finn son of Bresal: 'it was the guerdon of that which Guaire himself had uttered—outrageous speech must have outrageous blow.' Finn Bane made answer: 'chief of the Fianna, holders of the naked edge, the boon I crave of thee is this: that from this day forth and for ever it be not use and wont for the *gilla* to 'give language' to the *óglæch*.' Then hand to hand we, Fianna of high-punctilious Cumall's son, took oath that any *gilla* who would not show deference must not presume to continue in Finn's Fianna. 'Tis I to-night am *gilla* to you and, womanfolk, I yield you reverence; [besides] I have passed my word of a good warrior that never would I strive with womankind. How long soever we may be together, O womanfolk of Almha's Finn—so long as I live and have my memory—women, I will not play with you!"'

Patrick said: "success and benediction, Caeilte! grand lore and knowledge is this thou hast uttered to us."

Then the whole company rose and moved on to the cairn of Fraech son of Feradach [*carn Fraeich* i.e. 'Carnfree'], and Patrick went up upon the eminence. "Good now, Caeilte," he said: "believed ye in the King of Heaven and of Earth, or indeed knew ye that He existed at all?" To which Caeilte makes answer: "the Fian-chief knew it; for he was a magician, and a seer, and a prince. We all also, through one night's deadly event that we witnessed, understood that there was a God." "And what was that event?" "A great household that the king of Ireland—that Cormac son of Art—had: ten score sons of kings (of whom was none but was a king's son and a queen's as well), and at ros *na rígh* north-east of *áth na Bóinne* or 'the Boyne's ford' they used to be." "What ros is that?" queried Patrick. "Ros *cailledh* (for of every kind of tree there

are a thousand there), and there these youths had a vast and regal mansion; but their victual was never otherwise than served out and brought to them from Tara. One night accordingly there they were after banqueting and enjoying themselves; their beds were spread for them, and so they remained for the night.

"But now came the chief steward of Tara in the morning, (Binne ... he was), to speak with the king of Ireland's son that was in the *bruidhen*; the house was opened before him, and how were they but all dead. Hence then we understood that the True and most Glorious God existed: the One that hath dominion and power over us all." Caeilte said then: Town of the kings—*ros Temrach* i.e. 'Tara's wood'—there 'tis that many a time a great household was; upon its slopes with their smooth sward throngs of men and horse-herds were in numbers. Ten score so stately sons of kings made up that household worshipful; an equal complement of women it was that were there to furnish forth the same. Thus, O noble and pure Patrick, this was no long-drawn destruction; for all together and at once they passed away—that company that lived in the one town."

"Which ten score men, and women as many, were buried in that *tulach*, and therefore from that time to the present its name is *cnoc an dir* or 'the hill of slaughter.' As for the wood in which they had dwelt, before their [i.e. the other people's] faces the earth swallowed up the entire *ros*; and by this means we apprehended the King of Heaven and of Earth."

"Victory and benediction, Caeilte!" cried Patrick.

Then Caeilte said: "holy Patrick, my soul, I hold that tomorrow it is time for me to go." "And wherefore goest thou?" "To seek out the hills and bluffs and fells of every place in which my comrades and my foster-fellows and the Fian-chief were along with me; for I am wearied with being in one place." There they abode that night; next day they all rose, Caeilte laid his head in Patrick's bosom, and the Saint said: "by me to thee, and whatsoever be the place (whether indoors or abroad) in which God shall lay hand on thee, Heaven is assigned."

Then Muiredach mac Finnachta, king of Connacht, went his way to exercise his royal rule and regimen; Patrick also went his: to sow faith and piety, to banish devils and wizards out of Ireland; to raise up saints

and righteous, to erect crosses, station-stones, and altars; also to overthrow idols and goblin-images, and the whole art of sorcery.

Touching Caeilte now: on he went northwards to the wide plain of *lorg an Daghda* or ‘the plains of Boyle’; across *coirrléim na féinne*, which at this time is called *eas meic Néra* or ‘the waterfall of Nera’s son’; northwards yet into *sliabh Seghsa* or ‘the Curlieu mountains’; into *berna na gcét*, now called *céis Chorainn* or ‘Keshcorann,’ and out upon the Corann’s level lands.

Here they heard a great rushing sound that came towards them, and with a glance that Caeilte threw around him he discerned nine wild stags in swift career. At these they [Caeilte and his eight] delivered nine javelins, and so killed the nine deer; whereby they had that night’s provision. They pack the venison on them, and bring it along to *eas meic Modairn* or ‘the waterfall of Modarn’s son,’ now called *eas dara* or ‘Ballysodare’; into *críoch an chosnama*, which is called *críoch Chairbre* or ‘the barony of Carbery’; past the *rinn* or ‘point’ of Ebha daughter of Geibtine mac Morna: the place where a tidal wave drowned her; skirting *druim derg*, now called *druim cliabh* or ‘Drumcliff,’ and *áth an chomraic* or ‘the fighting ford,’ now called *áth an daimh ghlais* or ‘the grey stag’s ford.’ Thence they held on to *lecht na muice* or ‘the swine-grave,’ where once the wild pig killed Duibhne’s grandson Dermot; and to the *tulach*’s top where *leaba Dhíarmata*, ‘Dermot’s bed,’ is. There Caeilte laid his weapons on the ground, and himself lay down on his dear comrade’s grave and place of rest. Copious and very lamentable tears he wept, so that both breast and chest were wet with him, and said: “alas that my companion is gone from me!” From mid-day till the end of the day’s waning they tarried there and: “friends,” he said, “woe is me! with grief for Dermot and for his children I could be fain nevermore to depart from this the place in which they recline!” Failbhe said here: “how now, had Dermot sons?” “He had so, and here are their names:—

“The names of brown-haired Dermot’s sons by the daughter of Conn’s grandson Cormac: Finnchad, and Illann, and Uath; Selbach, Sercach, and Iruath.

“That ‘grey stag’s ford’ of which we spoke a while ago, there it was that Caeilte *coscair rígh* fought with Dithramach son of Eoghan’s son the

*Scál*, that was king of Munster and mother's son [i.e. half-brother] to Finn." And Caeilte said:

"In presence of the great and goodly host, hardly they fought a fight of two: in their wrath they tore up the very trees upon the path over the grey stag's ford. Caeilte it was that hurled his spear at first, such was his pretty weapon-play's perfection; but no more than dismissed it from his hand he had, when a well-aimed javelin stuck in him. His right hand and his left foot he shore from vehement Dithramach; but 'twas his own head that stern Caeilte left upon the north side of Drumcliff."

Thence they proceeded to *coill na mbuidhen* or 'wood of the companies,' now called *coill Muadnatan* or 'Muadnait's wood'; over the *benn* of Muiredach's son Gulban *gort*, or 'Benbulbin'; to *garbhros* or 'rough-grove,' now *daire na damhraidhe* 'the deer-herd's oak-grove.' There they make a capacious fian-booth for cooking; they roof it in with sedge green in the top, pale towards the roots, securing it with ties over all, and there the brandering and seething of their flesh is effected by them. Says a man of them: "is there water near us?" Caeilte answered: "surely there is—Ossian's well." "It is a dark night," said the others. "Not to me is it dark," said Caeilte: "for in Ireland's five great provinces is not a spot in which whether out of rock or out of river a *cuachful* is procured but by both day and night I am at home there." In his one hand therefore he took a silver *cuach*, in the other his thick-shafted solid-socketted spears, and walked straight to a well. He heard a sound of fluid mouthed, of water troubled, and what should be there but a long-flitched boar that drank. Into the rivetted well-poised spear's thong he put his finger, and at the swine delivered a cast which killed him; then with his *cuach* still in his hand he brought him away upon his back.

That night they spent there, and on the morrow went on across the falls of Assaroe, so to *sídh* of *Aedh* at Assaroe. Here on their advent they marked a young man that upon the green-clad *tulach* awaited them: a crimson mantle, fringed, enfolded him; in this, high on his breast, was a silver brooch, and he wore a white shield having ornament of interlaced creatures in red gold; his hair behind was rolled into a ball covered with a golden *cuach*; with a long chain of antique silver he held in leash two hounds of the chase; mighty weapons of weight too, glittering blue, he bore. Whenever Caeilte reached him, lovingly and warmly the young

man gave him kisses three, and on a mound he sat down beside him. "Warrior, who art thou?" Caeilte asked. "Derg *dianscothach* son of Eoghan out of the *tuatha* of Usnach abroad, and thine own foster-fellow." "And how goes thy life with thy mother's people: the *tuatha dé danann* in *sídh Aedha*?" The young man answered: "whether of meat or of raiment no item is wanting to us there, and yet: *Ligairne licon, Semenn sacaire,* and *Beg* that was *gilla* to the *bromhacs*, which three had the worst life of any that were in the Fianna—I had rather live their life than that which I lead in the *sídh*." "Solitary as thou huntdest to-day," said Caeilte, "in *comar na dtrí nuscedh* or 'the valley of the three waters' in the south, where Suir and Nore and Barrow come together, I have seen thee escorted with a great company: fifteen hundred young men, fifteen hundred *gillas*, and women fifteen hundred." Then he said:— "Of numbers few is this thy hunting, Derg: thou art parted from thy Fianna, companions of thy chase; but art thou well versed in their various deaths by violence?" "Well versed am I in all the places where they fell; for though my gentle hound [and myself consequently] dwell in the *sídh*, yet is my mind bent on the Fianna. Never yet at any time I was in any spot—or east or north, or south or west—where my time sped more quickly than among them, however few their number."

"Derg, my soul, it is well: which of the Fianna is in this sod-built grave-mound on which we are?" "Myself and thou it was that buried him," said Derg: "it were but right therefore though I knew it." Then he said:

"*Cuinnsleo* the *gilla*, son of *Ainnsleo...*" "Derg, against whom or what was the desperate and distressful race run?" "Against the black horse that Dil *mac dá creaca* had," answered Derg:—

"A black horse Dil *mac dá creaca* had: in all sports that they set on foot at the rock which dominates *loch Guir* [on the Hill of Doon over *loch Gur*] he clean swept off the three prizes of the meeting."

"Caeilte," said Derg, "in what house were we on the night in question?" "In Cahir mac Ailell's house: he having, upon his invitation issued, himself conveyed Finn and the Fianna thither; and in Cahir's house we were for three days and three nights, during which our numbers suffered no lack of meat, of fluid, nor of any good usage

whatsoever." "Gave we him anything at all?" continued Derg. "Finn gave him three hundred cows, as many mantles, and three hundred ounces of gold," answered Caeilte; and he said:—

"Three hundred kine, three hundred mantles, three hundred swords of solid temper, Finn gave (as honorarium for his liquor) to Cahir son of Ailill."

Derg questioned again: "who was it that actually gave the horse to Finn: was it Dil *mac dá creaca*, or was it Cahir mac Ailill?" "It was Fiacha called *muillethan* or 'broad-crown,' son of Eoghan More," Caeilte answered, and said:—

"Take thou here the headlong black horse,' quoth Fiacha to the Fianna's chief: 'here is my sword with its renown, and for thy charioteer here is another horse from me.' Off to the strand that's over *Berramhan* Finn went to make a trial of the black horse; and three times I ran clear away from him, for I was swifter than any [mortal] thing.

"The horse ran to the strand's westernmost end, and there died of over-galloping [lit. 'from puff of run']; wherefore *tráigh an eich dhuibh*, or 'the black horse's strand,' is the name of that shore which hitherto had been called *tráigh Bherramhain* or 'the strand of Berramhan.'"

Caeilte said again: "'tis the latter end of day that is here now; for the beautiful lustrous clouds of day are gone, and the night's dark shades are come to us."

Then for the purpose of telling Ilbhrec of Assaroe and Aedh *minbhrec* son of the Daghda all about Caeilte, Derg *dianscothach* passed over into the *sídh* and related all his colloquy from the time when first Caeilte came up to him until that instant hour's date. "He must be brought into the *sídh*," they said, "for we have heard of his honour and of his prowess." Derg went to fetch him, brought back himself with his people, and in the *sídh* they were set down in their rightful and befitting places. That was just the time when between Lir of *sídh Finnachaidh* and Ilbhrec of Assaroe there was great war. There used a bird with iron beak and tail of fire to come and perch at a golden window that was in the *sídh*, and there every evening shake himself till he would not leave sword on pillow, nor shield on peg, nor spear on rack without bringing it down about the *sídh*-folk's heads. These used to hurl missiles at him, but what happened was that every cast would land on the head of some boy, or

woman, or fosterling of themselves. That night of Caeilte's entrance their banqueting-house was set in order; the same bird arrived among them and wrought the same destructive mischief. They of the *sídh* fell to throwing at him, but could not effect the least thing against him. Caeilte enquired: "how long is the bird carrying on in this fashion?" Derg answered: "for the space of a year now, since we and they of the other *sídh* went to war."

Then Caeilte put his hand inside the rim of his shield and produced thence a copper rod that he had, with which he made a throw at the bird so that he came tumbling down to them and lay on the *sídh*'s floor. "Did ever any do casting better than that?" asked Ilbhrec. Aedh *minbhrec* of Assaroe enquired: "was there in the Fianna one that at throwing was equally good with thee?" "My word I risk for it," Caeilte answered, "that no one of them above another had any right to brag; for in every man of them was his full sufficient complement of martial vigour and of marksmanship, and so too there was in me."

Hereupon Ilbhrec reached up his hand and from its rack took down a sharp javelin with sheeny angles, which he put into Caeilte's hand, saying: "Caeilte, my soul, examine now what spear is that, and which of the Fianna he was that owned it." Caeilte took from the javelin its shoe and its wraps, and there in its socket were thirty rivets of Arabian gold.... "That is the spear of Fiacha mac Congha ... by means of which it was that at the first Finn son of Cumall acquired chief command of Ireland's Fianna; and out of Finnachadh's green-grassed *sídh* 'twas brought. For it was *Aillén mac Midhna* of the *tuatha dé Danann* that out of *sídh Finnachaidh* to the northward used to come to Tara: the manner of his coming being with a musical *timpán* in his hand, the which whenever any heard he would at once sleep. Then, all being lulled thus, out of his mouth Aillen would emit a blast of fire. It was on the solemn *samhain*-day he came in every year, played his *timpán*, and to the fairy music that he made all hands would fall asleep. With his breath he used to blow up the flame and so, during a three-and-twenty years' spell, yearly burnt up Tara with all her gear. That was the period when the battle of Cnucha was fought, in which fell Cumall son of Trenmor. Now he left after him a pregnant wife: Muirenn smooth-hair, daughter of Teigue mac Nuadat.

"Cumall being gone the Fian-chiefry was made over to Goll mac Morna, who held it for ten years. But a son had in due course been born to Cumall, which was Finn; and up to the age of ten years he was [perforce] a marauder and an outlaw. In this his tenth year Tara's Feast was made by the king: Conn *céadchathach* or 'of the hundred battles'; and as all Ireland drank and enjoyed themselves in the great house of the *Midchuart*, they never noticed anything until among them appeared there [lit. 'until there arrived to them'] one that was quite a stripling, and of varied aspect. In presence of Conn of the Battles and of Goll mac Morna he sat down, having Ireland's nobles round about him in the house. Note that one of the prerogatives attaching to the Feast of Tara was that for the space of six weeks [lit. 'a fortnight plus a month']—so long that is to say as men were busied with the Feast of Tara—none might dare to broach either feud or cross-feud. The king of Ireland looked at the youth; for whether to him or to any other that was in the *bruidhen* the same was unknown.

"His horn of state was brought to the king then, and he put it into the lad's hand. He enquired of him: 'whose boy is this?' 'I am Finn mac Cumall, son to the warrior that formerly had the Fianna's command in chief and, king of Ireland, I am come to procure my friendship with thee [i.e. to be reconciled with thee and to enter thy service].' Conn said: 'boy, thou art a friend's son and son of a man of trust.' Then the lad rose and as towards the king of Ireland made pact of service and of fealty. Conn took him by one hand, placed him at the shoulder of [i.e. next to] Art mac Conn, and for a space and season they devoted themselves to quaff and to enjoy themselves.

"Then with a smooth and polished drinking-horn that was in his hand the king of Ireland stood up and said: 'if, men of Ireland, I might find with you [i.e. among you] one that until the point of rising day upon the morrow should preserve Tara that she be not burnt by Aillen mac Midhna, his rightful heritage (were the same much or were it little) I would bestow on him.' To this the men of Erin listened mute and silent however, for they knew that at the plaintive fairy strain and at the subtle sweet-voiced notes produced by the wondrous elfin man that yearly used to burn Tara, women in the pangs and warriors gashed about would fall to sleep.

"Finn rose now and to the king of Ireland said: 'who will in thy behalf go security and be sureties to me for the fulfilment of this?' Conn answered: 'the provincial kings of Ireland, and Cithruadh with his magicians.' They all of them enter into the bond, and Finn takes in hand to safeguard until the morrow's daybreak Tara with all her substance. Now in the king of ireland's retinue was one that to Finn's father Cumall had been a young man of trust: Fiacha mac Congha, and: 'good now, my lad,' he said, 'suppose that I furnished thee a certain spear of deadly property, and with which no devious cast was ever made, what guerdon wouldest thou give me?' 'What fee demandest thou of me?' 'Whatsoever prosperous result thy right hand wins at any time, one-third of it to be mine; a third part moreover of thine innermost confidence and privy counsel [i.e. of thy three most privy counsellors I to be one].' 'It shall pass for thee [i.e thou shalt have it],' Finn said, and under his word took on him the obligation. Then Fiacha prescribed: 'whenever thou shalt hear the fairy melody: sweet-stringed timpan and dulcet-breathing tube, from the javelin's head strip its casing and apply the weapon whether to thy forehead or to some other of thy parts; so shall the noxious missile's horrific effect forbid that sleep fall on thee.'

"Then in presence of all Ireland Finn rose to ward Tara; unknown to the sons of Morna or to any other that was in Tara's mansion mac Congha gave him shield and spear, and he made the complete circuit of Tara. He was not long before he heard a plaintive strain, and to his forehead he held the flat of the spear-head with its dire energy. Aillen began and played his timpan till (as his use was) he had lulled every one else to sleep, and then to consume Tara emitted from his mouth his blast of fire. But to this Finn opposed the crimson and fringed mantle which he wore, so that [instead of speeding horizontally on its mission] the flame fell down [perpendicularly] through the air, carrying with it the fourfold mantle a twenty-six spans' depth into the earth; whereby *ard na teinedh* or 'fire hill' is the name of that eminence, and *glenn an bhruit* or 'the mantle glen' that of the glen adjacent. When Aillen mac Midhna was aware that his magical contrivance was all baffled, he returned to *sídh Finnachaíd* on the summit of *sliabh Fuaid*. Thither Finn followed him and, putting his finger into the spear's thong as Aillen passed in at the *sídh*'s door, delivered a well-calculated and successful throw that entered Aillen in

the upper part of his back, and in form of a great lump of black blood drove his heart out through his mouth. Finn beheaded him, carried the head back to Tara, fixed it upon a pole of sinister significance, and there it remained until rising of the sun aloft over the heights and invers of the land. To Aillen then his mother came and, after giving way to great grief, went to seek a leech for him:

“A lamentable case, O most admirable she-physician: by Fiacha mac Congha’s spear—by the fatal mantle and by the pointed javelin—Aillen mac Midhna is slain! Ochone, Aillen is fallen! three jets have spurted from him: here is his heart’s blood, together with the marrow of his back. Ochone, Aillen is fallen! fairy chief of *benn Boirche*: now are the numbing death mists come upon him—O *Boirche*, O she-physician, ‘tis a lamentable case! Ochone but he was joyous, and ochone but he was blithe, was Aillen son of Midhna of *sliabh Fuaid*! nine times he burnt up Tara, and to gain high fame was his constant endeavour.”

“Then with their king all Ireland came upon Tara’s green where Finn was, and he said: ‘King, thou seest that man’s head that used to burn Tara; his pipe also, his timpan and all his music; I opine therefore that Tara with all her stuff is saved.’

“Hereupon the place of assembly was filled by them, and a course of action proposed; the plan finally adopted being to confer Ireland’s Fian-command-in-chief on Finn. ‘Good now, my soul, Goll mac Morna,’ said Conn of the Hundred Battles, ‘what is thy choice: whether to quit Ireland, or to lay thy hand in Finn’s?’ Goll made answer: ‘I pledge my word that ‘tis my hand I will lay in Finn’s [rather than take the alternative].’

“By this time the charms used to procure luck and a good event had worked, and the chiefs of the Fianna rising struck their hands in Finn’s; but first of all Goll mac Morna struck his, to the end that others of the Fianna should be the less inclined to feel shame at doing so. In which command Finn continued until he died; and where he met his death was at *aill an bhruic* or ‘the brock’s cliff,’ in *luachair Degaidh*. Now the spear thou puttest into my hand, Ilbhrec, therewith was that beneficial deed done for Ireland; by its means also it was that Finn ever and always had all his fortune, and the spear’s constant original name was *birgha*, or

'spit-spear.'" Ilbhrec said: "keep thou the spear by thee, Caeilte, until we learn whether Lir will come to avenge his bird upon us."

Now were their horns and their cups raised, and they banqueted and had recreation of mind and spirit. Ilbhrec said: "good now, Caeilte, my soul, to whom wilt thou (should Lir come to avenge his bird on us) assign command of the battle?" "To the one to whom Finn used to commit his battle's chief command: to Derg *dianscothach* yonder." They of the *sídh* questioned: "takest thou it upon thyself, Derg?" He replied: "I do, with its pleasure and with its pain." Thus they passed that night; and in the morning were not long before they heard blowing of horns, rumbling of chariots, clashing of shields, with general uproar of a great host that came on, and it surrounded the *sídh*. Out of this were despatched some to spy out how many they were; and it turned out that they were three valorous battalions of equal bulk. Said Aedh *minbhrec*: "a sore vexation to me is that which will be wrought now: that we must violently perish and die, our fairy *brugh* too to be possessed by Lir of *sídh Finnachaíd*." But Caeilte said: "knowest thou not, Aedh, that from both hounds and wolves the mighty wild boar escapes often, and that when the stag at bay is roused to a last desperate charge he likewise escapes scot-free from the deer-hounds? and who is he whom, man to man, ye deem most formidable in the battle?" "The man that of all the *tuatha dé danann* excels in prowess: Lir of *sídh Finnachaíd*," they answered. Caeilte went on: "the thing which ever and in all battles I have undertaken, that is to say: hand to hand to meet the best champion that should be there, I will not suffer to fall to the ground this day." "What single combat dost thou promise us, Derg?" they asked. "Whose encounter is that which after the former ye hold to be most arduous?" "Encounter of Donn and of Dubh," they answered. Derg said: "I will manage them both." The forces of the *sídh* came out now to affront the battle, and from early day-rise to mid-day either side of them plied the other with handily missile darts, with small spit-like javelins, with broad- and blue-headed spears and with great stones. Caeilte and Lir of *sídh Finnachaíd* encountered, aggressively and bloodily, and in the end of the affair Lir fell by Caeilte. Then that pair of good warriors: Dubh and Donn, Eirrge *anghlonnach*'s two sons, advised concerning maintenance of the battle, and thus they ordered the fight: Dubh in the van of the phalanx, Donn to

make vigilant defence in the rear. This move Derg *dianscothach* marked; into his spear's thong he put his forefinger, and at the nearer man of them made a felicitous cast which broke his spine in twain and penetrated full into the farther one's carcase, so that they perished of the one throw. Ilbhrec said now:

"By Caeilte Lir is fallen: no deed undeserving of the paean; by Eoghan's son Derg, and with a single cast, are fallen Dubh and Donn. The battle, having gone against Lir with his great host, is dwindled away northwards; saving three only that were skilled to make their way from it, not one of them is scaped out of the field."

After victorious spoiling of the enemy and due triumph they re-entered into the *sídh*, and thenceforth for ever had forcible rule and domination over *sídh Finnachaíd*. Caeilte said: "here is thy spear for thee, Ilbhrec." "It is not beseeming for thee to say it to me," Ilbhrec answered: "for though upon Lir there had been no arms but that spear [to assign as his spoils], yet is it to thee it should have fallen, seeing that thou art a very and right heir to it." After which for three days and three nights they abode in the *sídh*.

"Good now, Caeilte, my soul," said Ilbhrec of Assaroe: "where was it that Finn believed actually, or did he ever?" Caeilte answered: "he did that." "But where? and what was the origin of his doing so?" "It was on *druim diamhair* or 'the secret ridge,' which now men call *druim dá én* or 'two bird ridge,' upon the Shannon; and the origin of his belief was the rehabilitating of Bodhbh's daughter Finnín, who [so 'twas said] had killed her own husband, Conan, whereas it was Conan and Ferdoman that had slain each other. The Fianna then arrived at *fidh énaigh* or 'bird wood,' which at this time is named *druim diamhair* [as above]; a bowl of pale gold was brought to Finn, he washed his white hands, splashed the clear water about his face, and under his knowledge-tooth put his thumb. The true was revealed to him, the false hidden from his ken; and it was shewn him that in the world's later time both the boon-bestowing *Táilchenn* should come, and Kieran *mac an tsaoir* or 'the carpenter's son' found a house [i.e. Clonmacnoise] that should influence half of all Ireland." Then Caeilte uttered:

"Beloved is the church....

"Thither to us came knowledge of that conflict [in which Conan and Ferdoman were fallen]; there it was that Finn made this act of belief, and by the same gained Heaven:—

"Woe for the Fian-warrior that heard the tidings when we came to *snámh dá én*: slaughter of Conan *mael* from the *magh*, Ferdoman's slaughter too. *Druim diamhair*, O *druim diamhair*, was this spot's name until the Fianna's time; *druim énaigh* or 'bird ridge' is its name ever since, from Finn's and the Fianna's fowling there. 'By His good will that is Lord of all the clans, an illustrious offspring 'tis shall be born there: a worthy son of Heaven's King, whom angels are expecting. Kieran the pure he shall be, he it is shall be born in the royal rath; he likewise shall appropriate half Ireland—son of the carpenter out of Murthemny. [They that shall dare to become] spoilers of his church shall undergo a sudden death by reddened points of spears: torment and execution deplorable, and lowest depth of Hell. I, even I, tell you now—the prophecy is true for me—I believe in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit all in One. Kingdom of Heaven's King [the dwellers in which] are better than any other tribe, I hold to exist: the King who hath granted me a respite [to this hour in which I believe] will not suffer me to fall under eternal woe."

After this again until expiration of six weeks they were in the *sídh*, and Caeilte said "it is time for us to depart, for we are now for a good while here within." "God's benison on thee, and that of the people inside here," said the *sídh*-folk: "and though it were for everlasting thou shouldst desire to abide with us, thou shouldst have it." Ilbhrec said: "since on going thou art bent, here for thee are nine gorgeous vestures comprising rich mantles; nine shields too, nine spears, and nine long swords with hilt and guard of gold; nine hounds besides for the pleasant chase." They took leave of each other: a blessing the departing left, and carried away gratitude; weary as the battle had been, more irksome yet to Derg *dianscothach* it was to part from his own familiar and condisciple, for the day in which he was sundered from Finn and from all the Fianna he had not found sadder than this.

With those nine warriors of his Caeilte took his way and visited *sliabh cuire*, *sliabh Cairbre*, *sliabhe céide* to the northward, and *cathair dhaimh dheirg*—or 'red stag's fort.' Soon they perceived, awaiting them upon a

cairn, a brilliant gaily-coloured pair: a handsome young man with a lady of his own age beside him. Of Caeilte he sought tidings, and Caeilte told him his story: "of Finn mac Cumall's folk am I, and Caeilte mac Ronan is my name; but of what cognomen art thou, warrior?" "Eoghan the princely hospitaller is my name: I am of the former people of Cormac's son Cairbre Lifechair; Becnait the she-hospitaller is this lady's name: she and I are of equal age, and ten-score years we have completed both of us." Caeilte enquired: "hadst thou not enormous wealth, young man?" "I had so," he answered: "for from mac Modharn's Assaroe northward to *cnoc an fhomorach* or 'the pirate's hill' (which now is styled northern Ireland's *torach* or 'Torry Island') were no countries but, as against every second or it might in some cases be against every third town of them, I had a milch herd." Caeilte asked: "and what did away with all that?" "A thieving monster and most hideous pirate, and a 'son of mishap,' whom Finn ruined [i.e. utterly discomfitted] once: he has wasted seven entire *triucha céts*, or 'baronies,' until there is none to take land or estate; and these being thus exhausted utterly, he has turned all to a desert. Me too in sooth he has minished and harried, all to seven-and-twenty milch herds of the last of my substance that I have still." Caeilte asked: "where bides this man?" "A strong fast rock of a stone that is to the north of us here, right on the spacious bay, that is his post; and he being as he is but three in company yet carries off his ship's full cargo [of booty and of captives], for he is himself a match for four hundred, his hound for three hundred, and his daughter for three more; neither can any hurt them." Caeilte asked: "at what point enters he the bay?" "Why, over against the town on the north-west." There Caeilte and his tarried for that night, and in all respects were served and tended.

Early on the morrow Caeilte rose alone. He took his sword, and shield, and spear, and made his way to the impregnable rock beside the bay. Here he was for a space and then saw a *curach* with three in it: a shag-haired dog of a dirty grey, that round his neck wore a rude iron chain; in the *curach*'s bow a great lump of a wench, bald and swart, that from a distance loomed like some jutting point of rock and in her hand held a substantial spit-spear; while in the after-part sat the hulking carle. Near hand to Caeilte they took the beach, and as they came a certain repugnance and fear affected him. The man of bulk said to his daughter:

"loose the hound and slip him at yonder tall man all alone, so that before the dog enters on expedition and excursion he may feed his cram-full of him." The daughter loosed the animal; before which Caeilte felt a loathing and a timidity which whether in battle or in single fight never had touched him yet, and he said: "my Creator and my *Táilchenn* both I put forth against [the three of] you!" Then with a small dart of copper that he had he delivered at the hound a most careful throw, in such wise that one end of the spike-dart stuck in its upper, the other in its lower palate, closing its mouth. Then it fell out of the *curach*, and after all it was in the sea's depth it perished. With intent on Caeilte the other two came ashore and boldly, hard-heartedly, fought with him. From his great toe to his hair the daughter inflicted on him thirty wounds; but to her Caeilte administered a sword-stroke with which be let out her very viscera and vitals. Against the great man now he fought more intensely and pressed him home; with three cuts he made three pieces of him (the third being his head) and, when he had taken from them their three heads, carried them back to the *bruidhen*. Eoghan and Caeilte's people came, recognised those heads, and gratefully acknowledged the deed. Feeble and strengthless Caeilte sat down, and upon him fell dimness and stupor-clouds. Balsamic herbs were applied to him, and for a fortnight he was under cure; by which means was made of him a smooth whole man without a scar.

Caeilte said: "we have to depart to-morrow, and a blessing it is we leave with you." Next day accordingly they gave Eoghan farewell, and thence came away to *tulach na gcét* or 'the hill of hundreds, now called *tulach dá ech* or 'two horse hill'; northward to *cúillios na féinne* or 'the Fianna's rear-fort'; to *currach na míolchon* or 'the greyhound curragh,' called *currach cuan* or 'curragh of wolves'; northward still to *both chnó* or 'the nut bothie,' where once the poet appeared to Lugh Long-arm mac Ethlenn, and where Columkill son of Felim was born; northward to *daire Guill* or 'Goll's oakwood' where, as they issued from the grove's edge, they saw a young man with his back leant against a massive pillar-stone. He wore a fringed mantle having a fibula of gold upon the breast, and [under that] a, tunic of soft silk; two wolf-dogs he held in hand, and in front of him were a pack of beagles. Caeilte greeted the young man, who returned the salutation and enquired: "who is he to whom ye belong?"

Caeilte answered: "our chief and lord lives no more; I mean Finn mac Cumall."

Then the young man wept copious and very lamentable tears so that breast and chest were wet with him, and: "who then art thou thyself, warrior?" asked Caeilte. "I will proclaim me to thee: Donn son of Aedh son of Garadh mac Morna am I." Thy father was good," said Caeilte; and he uttered:

"He was the disdainful one of lasting fame—the Fian-warrior of genuine audacity; he was the productive branch of good repute: one to sweep up the whole world's valuables."

"Good now, Caeilte, my soul: hast thou my father's spear?" asked Donn. "I have even to his shield and his sword," Caeilte replied. "By the virtue of thy valour and of thy weapon-play I adjure thee tell me the originating cause for which he was slain." Caeilte said: "that will I e'en tell thee, for well I remember it:—

"It was Dubhdithre then, chief of Ossory's Fianna, that had been slain by thy grandfather, by Garadh mac Morna, and *carraig Ghuill* or 'Goll's rock' to the westward was taken upon Goll mac Morna; for the three battles of the Fianna besieged him there during a six weeks' space, during [the last nine days and] nine nights of which he was without sustenance: whereby a debility infected his vigour and his spear-throwing. The son of Dubhdithre's son Smaile passed into 'the rock' [i.e. stone stronghold] now and in view of all Ireland's Fianna took Goll's head, which he brought to Finn. Then against Smaile's son thy father began to urge law and equity, claiming to have the award due in a case between one of chiefs rank and a simple warrior":—

Caeilte *cecinit*.

"Smaile's son said that to fair-skinned and fortune-favoured Aedh he would not tamely yield the thing that was just; but body to body would give him satisfaction for every mischief that his hand had wrought him.

"Thy father proposed next that between himself and mac Smaile a mutual settlement should be permitted. 'Aedh,' said the latter, 'I will give thee a donation [in atonement].' 'What donation is that?' 'I will give Goll mac Morna's two spears; shield of Conbhrón's son Cairell; Dubhdithre's horn, and Muirenn of Macha's sword that Goll had, with

Sigmall's hunting neck-torque.' I too it was," continued Caeilte, "that went with the message, in which matter was said:—

"From us to Aedh let messengers arrive: let them say to the noble chief that all that which [by way of remedy at law] is promised him shall never never be fulfilled. But promise him a certain collar of the chase that out of *sídh Nennta* once was brought to Finn; from which no stag (and that without ever a shot planted in him from behind a ditch) may scape unslain. Offer him Cairell's famous shield which in the cut-and-thrust work he was wont to wear; a grateful treasure is the ubiquitous buckler whose lord embraced the terror-striking quality of a hundred men. Offer him the battle-sword that Muirenn of Macha had; Dubhdithre's drinking-horn too offer him, which indeed hitherto I have kept hidden: the ransom of fifty slaves from over seas there is of gold in its circumference. Offer him certain two darts with shafts of very yellow wood [*lignum vitae?*]: how little soever the blood they draw and wound they make, every man into whom they enter is but dead.' Albeit these things I offered them, yet Garadh's children accepted not: such was the number of their own separate force in which they trusted—those tall, those generous, stern and bloody sons. By gentle Morna's children [formerly] fell the virile Fintan from the hazel woods: by Banbh, Sinna, *Sciath brec* or 'spotted shield' the bellicose, and Finn More son of Cuan. But because he had slain Goll, eric they demand of wrathful mac Lugach; of Caeilte with the trenchant glittering weapon, and of ... out of *luachair*. A warrior of Bregian Tara's *tuath* that had dared to fight with Goll himself: shorn of his head, all becrimsoned, there in the battle (and a manly piece of carving 'twas) lay he whose name was 'Flaithes the exceeding handsome.' Dubhdithre's son, mac Smaile, said again: 'had the accomplished and white-handed Goll had fifty sons thrice told, to all such his offspring together he had not been more dear than to me only my good father was. My sire, impetuous Dubhdithre, wise and most honourable member of the Fianna: never in battle was his complaining heard; his lustihood and spear-throwing were good! Tell the men—for true it is—that nothing else will I concede but nine hundred with their backs against his grave standing ready for them on the *tulach* toward which they march.'"

Donn said: "by the verity of thy valour and of thy skill in arms, Caelte, I adjure thee that thou give me my father's weapons." "That will I," returned Caelte, "for he I trow was delicately generous to answer a petition." Then Caelte gave him his father's weapons all, and said: "show us now the way, Donn." "To what place seekest thou to have guidance?" "To the house of Conall son of Niall, that is king of Kinelconall":

Caelte *cecinit.*

"O Donn! show us now the way, cheerfully and void of ill intent; for surely thou art all alone: a solitary survivor of thy Fianna, of thy band. The sons of Morna are departed—a cause of grief and constant heaviness; ten hundred warriors—that was their complement: a tribe that knew not weariness. I tell thee (and all that I say shall come true) that, with much silver and gold to boot, of me thou shalt have thy request, O Donn!"

"Thither then I will go before thee," said Donn: "for he is my mother's brother, and he 'tis that has nourished me; if moreover he it be that holds the government, 'tis I that have the reversion of it." Donn armed himself now, and took his way to Conall's house: to *dún na mbarc*. Conall mac Neill said: "tell us some news, Donn"; and he related how Caelte had given him the arms and even now was on his way to the king. "That [i.e. leave and licence to visit me] he shall have," said Conall: "both because he is of Ulster, and for all that he hath himself achieved of noble deeds." Donn exhibited to him the divers edged and other weapons which Caelte had given him, and: "'tis of a good man," said the assembly, "that those gifts have been had." "A good man he is in sooth," Conall assented, "seeing that to one better than he the designation of *mac ógláich* or 'son of warrior' never was given yet." Then when Caelte was discerned drawing near to the fort, Conall with the gentles of his host and of his people rose to make him welcome; Caelte for his part sets him down on a cairn in front of the *dún*, and the crowd sit round about him.

Conall questioned Caelte: "wherefore was this cairn styled *carn Gairbh daire?*" which query Caelte answered, for he it was that knew how: "a warrior of trust to Finn mac Cumall that was here, Garbhdaire mac Angus, son of the king of Munster in the south; and as he hunted one day he killed thrice fifty stags, as many does, and as many boars.

They of the country and of the land saw him; they set on him and violently deprived him of his game, of the produce of his chase, while of them he slew three hundred men of war. The denizens closed in about him and converted him into 'an apple on spear-points,' so killing him. But we, the three battalions of the Fianna, came up to avenge him; we emptied the whole country, killed its three kings, and others of the inhabitants made good their escape into islands:—

"By spacious Eoghan's race Garbhdaire is slain upon the strand; fifty warriors here we slaughtered all in vengeance of Garbhdaire.

"Now he it is that with his panoply complete is within this cairn; in whose possession was Lugh mac Eithlenn's chain also that used to confine the captives of Milesius' sons and of the *tuatha dé danann*." Conall said: "we would fain have these arms." "If it so please thee be the cairn dug into presently," answered Caeilte. "Not so, but to-morrow be it opened; for night is here, and in the same 'tis carousal and enjoyment that shall occupy us." Hereat they came and entered into the great *bruidhen*; Caeilte with his people was ushered into a retired and sequestered house apart, and there they were well ministered to. Now she that was spouse to Conall was Bebhionn, daughter of Muiredach mac Finnachta king of Connacht, and Conall said to her: "good now, woman: be it long or be it short that Caeilte shall be here, be rations for ten hundred given to him daily; also be eight score kine put into a fenced grass field over against him, the same to be milked every night for him."

There they abode throughout that night, and on the morrow proceeded to Garbhdaire's cairn. It was excavated, and Lugh mac Eithlenn's chain was found; the shield also was found perfect and whole, even as it had been deposited by his side. The weapons were brought up, and the warrior's head: within which the biggest man of the assembly found room in sitting posture. Conall said: "my soul, Caeilte, it is a huge head!" "Huge and good as well was he that wore it," Caeilte answered; and the weapons he made over to Conall, but reserved the chain to give it to Saint Patrick. After which the tomb was closed again.

Then Conall mac Neill enquired of Caeilte, saying: "right out before us in the sea is an island, and on it a fort; in this again a colossal sepulchre the origin of which we know not." At hearing this Caeilte wept. Conall went on: "by the reality of thy valour and of thy

weapon-play I adjure thee and come with us to view it." But Caeilte said: "by my word that is the third place in Ireland which, after them that have been there, I care not to see; to-morrow nevertheless I will go with thee thither."

For that night they remain in the dwelling; next day Conall, his wife, and the congregation of the town all rise, for in their eyes Caeilte was an augmenting of the spirit and an enlargement of the mind. These repair to the *dún* in which he was, and on the grave which it contained Caeilte took his seat: seven score feet of Conall's were in its length, and in its width twenty-eight. Conall said: "good now, my soul, Caeilte—nought that ever I have seen appears to me more marvellous than does this tomb: tell us then whose it is." "I will tell thee the truth of it," answered Caeilte: "the grave it is of the fourth best one of all women that in the one time with herself ever lay with man." Conall asked: "and who were those four pre-eminent women?" "Sabia daughter of Conn of the Hundred Battles; *Eithne ollarda* daughter of Cahir More; Cormac's daughter *Aillbhe*, called *gruaidbhrec* or 'of the variegated [i.e. red and white] cheek,' and woman of this grave: *Berrach*, called *brec* or 'freckled,' daughter of Cas Cuailgne king of Ulster in the north and Finn mac Cumall's well-beloved wife. Now if in any one woman of them was goodness in excess of the others, 'tis in her it was: in her mansion it was that the guest used to be from the first Monday in *samhain*-tide to the first one of spring, and then have his choice whether to depart or from that out to stay on there. Any man that could not elsewhere get a sufficiency either of arms or of clothing would from her have his all-sufficiency of both." Conall enquired: "and the cause of her death?" "I have it for thee," said Caeilte: "it was Goll mac Morna's father and mother that brought her up, neither had they any fosterling other than she. Finn craved her of her father, who however said that unless it were with Goll mac Morna's consent he would not give her to Finn. Of Goll then the latter solicits his fosterling, and he made answer: "conditions there are upon which I would bestow her: that for all time she never be dismissed; that she be to thee for third wife, and in the matter of aught that she may request of thee shall never have refusal." Finn said: "it shall be granted all." "Who shall be our securities?" "Have thou thy choice of such." Finally as trustees for her Finn put in his own three foster-sons:

Daighre, Garadh, and Conan. She for her part abode with Finn, whereby she brought him three sons: Faelan, Aedh *beg*, and Uillenn called *faebairdherg* or 'Red-edge'; and Finn had her for a loving wife until such time as her foster-brethren the *clanna Mórna* turned to be spoilers and outlaws upon Finn, their number being thirty hundred warriors." According to which Caeilte uttered a quatrain:—

"Ten hundred and twenty hundred there, that was the bulk of proud clan-Morna's rank and file; over and above which their chiefs' and their chieftains' tale was fifteen hundred.

"The sons of Morna went off to *daire tarbtha*, or 'oak-wood of bulls,' in the province of Connacht; there the three battles of the Fianna caught them before they were risen out of their camp, and in the wood fell fifteen assured and well-weaponed men of them. But now came that mighty man of valour, Goll mac Morna, and covered their retreat; after whose taking of this upon him we prevailed not to do them any the smallest hurt. The *clanna Mórna* then came to a determination that they would not spare to slay all whosoever they were that in friendship's bonds were attached to Finn and to the Fianna; and he that so counselled them was Conan *mael*, or 'the bare,' mac Morna: for he was a breeder of quarrel among followers, a malicious mischief-maker in army and in host. The sons of Morna came along to this green-grassed mead, where they considered of what they should do to Berrach Brec, to their own foster-child. They prescribed to offer her a condition: she to bring away all her jewels and other valuables, to forsake Finn, and that of clan-Morna then she never need stand in dread. She when this was conveyed to her cried: 'alas! is it to injure me ye would, foster-brethren of my heart?' 'Verily it is,' they answered; but the woman said: 'by no means will I to do you pleasure forsake my spouse, my first husband and my gentle love!'

"The sons of Morna in their entire battle-phalanx came to the town in which she was; round about it each put his hand into his fellow's, and from every airt of the four they fired it. Forth of the town issued the queen, having with her thirty of a woman-company, but from the *dún*'s balcony Art mac Morna marked her step on to the white strand and make for her galley; he put his finger into the spear's thong and sent it at her. The lady heard the javelin's hurtling sound, and turned her face to

the missile; full in her chest, in her very bosom, it landed and broke her spine in two; thus she died. By her own people afterwards, when they had harried the *dún*, she was carried up from the shore and laid in this grave." Thus Caeilte, and he uttered:—

"Berrach Brec, O Berrach Brec, Cas Cuailgne's daughter, whom I loved: she was a queen of yellow hair, a wife she was right worthy a good man. Upon the sea-shore she was slain: a deed that surely was not right; her *dún* was kindled with fire: that was a lawless deed with ill intent. Three hundred shields there were within her house, three hundred sets of chess-men and three hundred boards; beakers three hundred for drinking, to which red gold had been applied in ornament. Never had she refused the prayer of any; her corporal form was excellent, and her wisdom: there in the very place where her venerated grave is, to which men give the name of 'Berrach's tomb.'

"Under you here then," he continued, "is the woman whose sepulchre is this and whose story ye have heard."

After this Caeilte rose and in a northerly direction skirted the town, all following him. He laid his hand upon a huge stone that from the dwelling's side projected somewhat, and: "men," he said, "take ye hold on one end of the stone and leave me the other." The whole company went at it, but availed nothing against it. Caeilte said: "where is Donn mac Aedh mac Garadh?" "Here am I," he answered. "Go and face me, for a hero's and a battle-champion's son thou art; and should I find treasure beneath the stone, to thee I would give its third part." Both came and to the stone gave a vicious wrench, determinedly and with main strength dragging at it in such wise that they landed it fairly on the ground, on the earth's surface. "Success and benediction, Donn!" cried Caeilte, "better thy help alone than all Kinelconall's aid; and where are Conall, the queen, and Donn?" "Here we are," they answered. "Enter ye now right into the cavity disclosed to you, in which are three vats: one full of gold, another of silver, and a vat filled with *cuachs*, with horns, with cups. But of the precious things give not to me aught saving only the *craebghlasach*—sword of Finn's thigh—and the *escra* or goblet of his hand, that I may present them to Patrick; for in their ornament and chasings are ounces of gold thrice fifty, even so many of silver, and three times fifty crystalline gems." They as above went all three into the cave

and brought out their load apiece: one of each kind of treasure; the whole concourse too penetrating into the recess carried off their glut of the same, so that among them all was not a family of nine but was amply stocked with silver and with gold.

At this point his chariot came to Conall, and: "get thee into the chariot, Caeilte," he said. "And I stand in need of it," answered Caeilte, "for I am wearied in the assembly." They mounted the chariot and Conall let his horses have the goad westward to *tráigh chonbhice*, or 'Conbeg's strand,' where he enquired: "wherefore is this shore called by that name, Caeilte?" "Soon told," was the reply: "it was a favourite deer-hound that Finn had, and not in all Ireland might any stag whatsoever at which he was slipped find covert before he would head him off and run him back right up to the Fianna's main pack and to their attendants; neither did hound other than he ever sleep in the one bed with Finn. Here it was that Goll mac Morna drowned him; here also that a tidal wave washed him ashore, and so he lies under yon green cairn that thou seest abut upon the beach." Then Caeilte uttered:

"Piteous to me was Conbeg's cruel death! Conbeg of abundant symmetry: in wake of wild pig or of deer ne'er have I seen a more expert of foot! A pain to me was Conbeg's cruel death! Conbeg of the hoarse deep note: at expeditious killing of the buck ne'er have I seen a more expert of foot! A pang to me was Conbeg's cruel death! Conbeg drifting on the high green seas: his cruel fate, it gave rise to contention; his death, it wanted nothing that was piteous!"

That night they came on to *dún na mbarc*, and on the morrow Conall said: "hard by us here is a ridge (*druim Náir* or 'Nar's ridge' is its name), and in it a swine as against which both hounds and men are powerless." "I have seen the day," Caeilte answered, "that I was a hunter; but where is Donn mac Morna?" "Here," cried Donn. "Take then thy weapons, that we—so many as we are of the Fianna—proceed to hunt the wild pig." They went up into the ridge, and there saw the boar with nine tusks growing from each jaw of him. At sight of the colossal hounds and men the beast screamed, while in his presence a certain horror and fear overtook these. "Be it left between me and the swine," said Donn, "for whether I live or die is all one!" Caeilte said: "a hero's privilege is that thou claimest." Donn addressed him to the boar therefore; but as the

creature charged him Caeilte dealt it a spear-thrust from one armhole to the other, and in such wise it perished by them. Until Conall's contingent came to fetch the boar they could not convey him from the spot; but then he was brought into the presence of Conall, who said: "'tis a huge swine." "True," said Caeilte: "this is the *muc shlángha* or 'prophylactic pig,' in respect of just such another as which it was that the war and feud of clan-Morna and of clan-Baeiscne came about."

Not long they were there before they saw seven that came towards them. "Whence come ye, young men?" asked Conall son of Niall. "We are come from Calpurn's son Patrick, from Finn's son Ossian, and from Dermot son of Cerbhall, to fetch thee and Caeilte." The latter said: "after my hunting I indeed am impotent to go thither to-day; but thou, Conall, go and bear with thee yonder presents: for Patrick, the goblet that was Finn's; the *craebghlasach* – Finn's sword – for Cerbhall's son Dermot, king of Ireland; for the same king too (seeing that 'tis the prophylactic swine) the boar which but now is killed, so that all may see it, and the king divide it to them both high and low." Even so was the whole thing carried out: first of all the sword was put into the hand of Donn mac Aedh mac Garadh mac Morna, Caeilte saying: "until such time as thou reach the king of Ireland, both profit and peril of the sword all rest on thee, young man!" Conall himself took the *escra* for Patrick, the slaves bore the pig, and they progressed as far as *cnoc uachtair Erca* or 'upper hill of Erc,' which at this time is denominated Usnach. When they came up where should Patrick be but on Usnach's summit, with Dermot son of Cerbhall on his right hand, and on his left Ossian son of Finn, beside whom sat Muiredach mac Finnachta, king of Connacht; by him again was Eochaid *leithderg* king of Leinster, and next to him Eoghan *derg* mac Angus king of Munster's both provinces, who thus [for they sat in a circle] touched the king of Ireland's right hand.

Now came Conall mac Neill, laid his head in Patrick's bosom and made genuflexion to him. Dermot the king said: "come hither, Conall"; but he answered: "rather is it in Patrick's presence I will be [to serve him], so that as here on Earth so too in Heaven 'tis he shall be my superior." Patrick made answer: "regal power I convey to thee, and that of thy seed thirty kings shall reign; my metropolitan city and mine

abbacy moreover I make over to thee, and that thou enjoy all whatsoever I shall have out of Ireland's five great provinces."

Into Patrick's hand Conall put the *escra* of gold, and said "thine own friend, Caelte son of Ronan, it is that hath given thee that gift." "By my word he is a friend," Patrick said, and passed the *escra* into the king of Ireland's hand. Long time the king scanned it, then said: "never have we seen precious thing more excellent than this *escra*; and thou, Ossian, consider it well whose it may have been." "It was my own father's—Finn mac Cumall's—and he gave it to one that was a wife to him: to Berrach Brec, daughter of Cas Cuailgne, whom the sons of Morna slew. I hold it for a certain thing," he went on, "that he who got this found the second best treasure also that was in Ireland or in Scotland: where then is the *craebghlasach*, Finn's sword?" "Here I have it for the king of Ireland," answered Conall, "and 'tis a good recognition thou hast made; go, Donn, deliver it to the king of Ireland, for 'tis to him that Caelte hath assigned it." Donn placed the sword in Ossian's hand, and as he did so it was seen that the weapon's hilt filled his own grip [i.e. fitted it exactly]; whereupon Ossian said: "that the sword fills thy grasp is a wonderment to me; for never has it filled grip but that of a man either of clan-Baeiscne or of clan-Morna." "Whence art thou [i.e. what is thy descent], young fellow?" asked the king of Ireland. "I am Donn son of Aedh son of Garadh son of Morna." "By my word thy father and thy grandfather were good," quoth Ossian: "deliver now the sword into the king of Ireland's hand." "What is the sword's fee, king of Ireland?" asked Donn. "What fee seekest?" "thou Ireland's Fian-chiefry, even as my grandfather's brother Goll mac Morna had it." "If Ossian and Caelte license it, it shall be thine." "Aye do we," Ossian consented, "for my license is Caelte's; and the office is kind to Donn, of whose stock seven chiefs have held the high Fian-leadership of Ireland and of Scotland." "'Tis thus I confer it on thee," said the king: "nor tax, nor tribute whether of gold or of silver, such as was paid to every royal Fian-chief before thee, to be yielded thee in virtue of it; but privilege of Ireland's chase and venery to be thine." Then Donn took pledges and sureties for it, and for a score and seven years filled Ireland's and Scotland's high Fian-chiefry: up to the time namely when Dubh son of Dolar slew him in the battle of Cuire beyond in Scotland.

Lastly the boar was produced before the king of Ireland. "There," said Conall, "is the pig which Caeilte and Donn have killed and Caeilte presents to thee for distribution among the men of Ireland, on the supposition that for a portion of the prophylactic swine to fall in their way would be to them for a preservation." To the twenty-five battles which all Ireland mustered at the hill of Usnach the king portioned out the boar therefore, whereby they all were rendered blithe and purged of melancholy. Now this was the last prophylactic swine that was distributed among the men of Ireland.

Then Conall More mac Neill said to the king of Ireland: "what ordinance art thou pleased to make for Caeilte if he come to seek thee?" "That he is to have the rations of ten hundred warriors; eight score cows also to be put into a grass field fenced, and their produce nightly served to him and to Ossian his condisciple before they lie down." There then they all abode for that night and till the morrow's morn.

To return to Caeilte: for him Conall's horses as we have said were harnessed, his chariot made ready, and he took his way over the summit of *sliabh Fuaid*; past *caorthann ban fionn* or 'the rowan-tree of fair women,' which now is called *caorthann cluana dhá dhamh* or 'rowan-tree of the two-ox meadow;' past and to the northward of *árd an ghaiscidh* or 'height of the prowess-feat,' now named *fochard Muirtheimhne* or 'the throwing-place of Murthemny,' where at the hosting of *táin bó Cuailgne*, or 'the raid for the kine of Cuailgne,' Cuchullin did his heroic casting; northward of *áth na carpat* or 'ford of chariots,' called *áth Guill* or 'ford of Goll'; by *echlasc ech Conculainn* or 'the horse-rod of Cuchullin's horses [i.e. the place where they got the goad],' now named *lige an léith Mhacha* or 'grave of Macha's Grey [Cuchullin's favourite horse],' betwixt Dundalk and the sea; so past *sliabh na con* or 'the wolf mountain,' which men style *sliabh Bregh* or 'the hill country of Bregia.'

This was the very point and period of time at which Dermot son of Cerbhall (all Ireland's gentles accompanying him) occupied the top of Usnach, and he interrogated whether in propinquity to him there were any water. All cried: "there is not!" But Ossian heard that, and said: "bring me a *sithal* that I may go in quest of water." "Take with thee a *gilla*," said Dermot. Ossian answered: "nor *gilla* nor *óglæch* shall come with me."

Ossian went forth, but kept his face turned backwards on his track so as to see that in the men of Ireland's camp none watched him. In this fashion he attained to the well of Usnach, called *an fhinnlescach* or 'the white-rimmed,' which from the time when the battle of Gowra was fought to that present no man of all Ireland had ever gotten. He came on the well's gravelly brink, and in it saw eight beautiful salmon clothed in their diversely shaded hues; the intricacy of the place being such that there they needed not to fear anything. He pulled eight sprigs of watercress and eight of brooklime; the *sithal* he dipped into the pool, scooped up the eight salmon alive and plunging madly, then with the sprigs of cress and brooklime floating in the vessel came back to Usnach, where he set the *sithal* before the king of Ireland. All were amazed at the sight—the stalk alone of each sprig of them reached to Dermot's knee. "They must be divided into two portions," he said: "one half to Patrick, the other to ourselves." The Saint answered: "not so, seeing that ye are the more numerous; but be they separated into three, and one-third given to the Church, for that is her own peculiar share." So it was done, and: "It is well, king of Ireland," quoth Patrick: "but never let that pair [Caeilte and Ossian] dock thee of thy lot in Heaven." Dermot asked: "what is the drift of that, holy Patrick?" "It is directed at the so great intensity with which thou turnest thy thoughts to them."

Touching Caeilte again: he got as far as the *brugh of Aengus mac an Daghda* to the northward; across *féic* on the bright-streaming Boyne; right hand to the hill of *Tlachtga*, and left to the hill of *Tailte* daughter of *mac ú Móir*; ascending then by *ród na carpat*, or 'the road of chariots,' to the top of Usnach: the spot in which the men of Ireland were. Caeilte alighted in the assembly and came where Patrick was; he bowed to him and laid his head in his bosom. A decayed warrior (of Patrick's familia now), Muchua mac Lonan, rose before him and: "tis well, Caeilte, my soul," said Patrick, "tell us who is Muchua." Then Caeilte enunciated:—

"Muchua: son of Lonan of the tunics son of Senach (at whom we will direct no thrust) son of Angus of the iron-grey horse-stud son of .... son of Blath *brecdhorn* or 'freckle-fist,' son of Aedhan son's son (?) of Fergus son of Cinaeth son of Fiacha ... son of Eoghan's son Muiredach."

Muchua said: "what have I to do but to remember thee in all the eight canonical hours of the Church!"

"Come up hither, Caeilte," cried Dermot, "and be at my shoulder!" "No man of a king's shoulder am I, but one of a king's presence," he answered: "for I am but the son of a simple man of war, and he that now is at thy shoulder is better than I." "My word I pledge to it," said Ossian, "that never in all Ireland did a woman thy contemporary bear one that justly might have dubbed himself a better than thou!"

Then the men of Ireland welcomed Caeilte, and the king gave him a triple welcome; Caeilte gave Ossian three kisses, and sat down on one side of him. A fistful of watercress and of brooklime that was in Ossian's hand, and he put it into Caeilte's. "Cress and brooklime of the *flescach* this is," said Caeilte, "and hadst thou fish in it?" "I got eight salmon," Ossian answered, "and the eighth salmon of them we two have." Caeilte said: "by my word never was my portion in hand of woman or of man that I would prefer before thee."

Caeilte now put his hand into the rim of his shield and down on the ground before them threw the chain of Lugh mac Eithlenn. Ossian said: "Caeilte, it was in Garbhdaire's cairn thou foundest the chain." "Surely it was," he answered, and gave it to the king of Ireland. Five-and-twenty battles that the assembly mustered, and this chain would go round them all; supposing eight hundred warriors to fit within it and it to be locked on the first man, to open it was not possible until said first man should be freed.

The king said: "'tis well, Caeilte—it was a good four that at the one time were in Ireland: Cormac mac Art, and Finn, and Cairbre Lifechair, and Ossian." "Cormac was a fine warrior, Finn's excellence was known to all"; and Caeilte uttered:—

"Had his son come, and his enemy, to stand a verdict of assize: one of his virtues it was that as between them he would not have pronounced a lying judgment."

"Caeilte," said Dermot, "was Cormac better than Finn, and was Cairbre better than Ossian?"

"By the King that is over me, Cormac was not better than Finn; nor was far-famed Ossian inferior to Cairbre Lifechair."

Eochaid Lethderg, king of Leinster, enquired of Caeilte: "what cause had Finn and the Fianna that, above every other monster which ye banished out of Ireland, they killed not the reptile that we have in the

glen of *ros enaigh*?" Caeilte replied: "their reason was that the creature is the fourth part of Mesgedhra's brain, which the earth swallowed there and converted into a monstrous worm. Now this it was not fated that we should slay until the *Táilchenn* should arrive: a disciple of whose familia it is that in the latter end of time shall bind it with a single rush-stem, and in this bond it shall continue to the judgment." "To what end then used the Fianna come to have themselves and their hounds slain by the reptile in that loch?" "A fairy sweetheart that Finn had, whom for the multiplicity of various shapes that she assumed (for there was not an animal but she would enter into its form) renounced her. Now one day the Fianna came upon the cairn overhanging said loch, and a deer swam away out on the loch; but the *piaist* rose at us and killed a hundred hounds and a hundred men of us. I questioned Finn whether it were by us that the creature was to fall; which being so, then would we encounter it and so avenge our people on it. To his knowledge-tooth Finn submitted his thumb; verity of prophecy [i.e. a true presage] was revealed to him, and he pronounced:

"Glen of *ros enaigh* (this will come true for me) the bell's voice shall yet sound there sweetly and perpetually; though it should carry nought but the roedeer, yet manifold its precious virtues were....

Howbeit none may count up all that the ancient men related as having been by themselves and by the other chiefs of the Fianna performed in the way of great and valorous achievement, of mastery in use of arms; all this over and above the legendary lore of every hill and of all the lands concerning which the men of Ireland enquired of them.

Then came Trenbrugaid son of Treon, a principal *brughaid céitach* to the king of Ireland, and an emulous, accompanied with three times fifty men of stature. Every man of them had on a deep blue mantle; beautiful shirts of pure white they wore too, and in their hands they had three times fifty fork-spears distributed. They salute the king of Ireland, and he answers them. "King," they said, "we have a great banquet for thee: nine score vats of mead, and of clear fermented ale ten score, along with their sufficient proportion of diverse and varied meats." Which provant and liquor they had brought with them for the king. He enquired of Ossian: "is it together with the gentles of Ireland that ye, like the rest, will repair to the house of drinking and of pleasure?" Ossian answered: "be our

share of meat and fluid given to us apart; for they of the present are not people of one generation nor of one time with us." "How many are ye?" asked the king. Ossian said: "twice nine men; being nine to me, and to my comrade, to Caeilte, nine." "Twenty vats to you, with their sufficiency of meat," said the king. "Good now, King," objected Caeilte: "neither as regards meat nor in respect of liquor put us on the same footing; for where to me should be given ten vats, thirty vats it were right that Ossian should obtain." Thus then they spent that night mirthfully and of good cheer, without shortcoming whether of meat or of drink.

On the morrow they all rose, and on a *tulach* the king of Ireland's tent was spread over him: into which tent was admitted none but either chief or chief's heir-apparent; Patrick with his clergy being lodged in the tent's second half, whither in turn were suffered to enter none but bishop, priest, or the specially devoted to the King of Heaven and of Earth. Ossian sat before Patrick; Caeilte before the king of Ireland, who asked: "which of you is the elder?" "I am," Caeilte answered: "for when Ossian was born I had thirty years completed; for now seventeen years he has shared my bed, and out of my house it was that he got his first command of Fianna and a band of followers."

Then the king questioned farther: "what was the number of Ireland's kings by whom lands were granted to the Fianna?" Caeilte (for he knew it) made answer: "it was a king that attained to rule Ireland, Feradach Fechtnach, and he had two sons: Tuathal and Fiacha. Feradach died, and his two sons between them divided Ireland: her precious things, her various wealth and her treasures, her kine and cattle-herds, her *dúns* and hill-strengths, to the one; to the other: her cliffs and her estuaries, her mast and her 'sea-fruit,' her salmon beautiful in their graduated hues, her hunting and her venery." Dermot asked: "where made they this partition?" "At this hill upon which we sit now." "That partition was not an equitable [lit. 'a comparable'] one," said Ireland's good men. Ossian asked: "whether of the portions is that which yourselves had preferred to the other?" "Her feasts, her dwelling-houses, and all the rest of her good things," they said. "The portion which they contemn," said Caeilte, "that is the very one which in our eyes had been the better part." "Caeilte," said Ossian, "say and tell the truth of it;" and he uttered:

"Say, Caelte, for to this enquiry much good guidance appertains [i.e. much useful information will result from it], whence had Ireland's first half-and-half apportionment, that of all countries surrounding Usnach, its origin?" "Who 'twas that to the Fianna granted lands canst thou, Ossian, tell to us? who 'twas that resigned the post of *gilla con*, and who that waged him with a stipend? For I mind the cause of all, O son of straight-standing Derg: from the time when Fiacha beneficed the Fianna, till that in which thou, Ossian, wert abandoned. Ten years of prosperous command thou, Ossian, king-chief, didst enjoy: until over Bregia the Fianna were driven northwards so that perforce, Ossian, they deserted thee. Feradach's good son as I opine, whose cognomen was Fiacha Finn: Eithne daughter of Daire Dubh, that great queen, was his mother. Feradach and Fiacha Finn his brother: they divided Ireland share and share; and the men of Ireland flourished all, being free from war and emulation. Verily the younger son elected to cast in his lot with the Fianna: to have rivers, wastes and wilds, and woods, and precipices, and estuaries. Feradach, as I believe, assumed monarch's power over the men of Ireland: her feasts be took, her earthly fruits, her houses, her herds and all her sportiveness. Feradach's reign was good, up to the time when by the great chief Mál he fell: the perishing of a king that used to put to shame prowess of others, such was the death of prince Feradach. Auspiciously then, so soon as Feradach was fallen, Fiacha entered into Tara and from the great *Mál mac Rochraide* wrested the power of all Ireland. Hard upon this, to the magnanimous Morna Fiacha committed the Fianna, and after Morna four of his tribe had them. Morna, vigorous son of Cairbre, ten years he had of their commander-in-chief; ten years were Garadh's lot as well, till he was parted from his comely head. Garadh's son Daighre, vigorous too, had five years in the chieffry; a seven years' total was the spell of Donn Mac Morna, last of them. Eochaid son of Marcadh out of the east—out of Ulidia-was chief of Ireland's Fianna then: a year and a half he lasted in supreme power over them. Cas mac Cannan, a hardy blade and of Ulidia likewise, he enjoyed a single year; Dubhan his son, him I credit with two. Out of Munster, in guerdon of their wily machinations, Liath of Luachra and Labradh Red-band succeeded: these, that were sons of plebeian men of Ara, attained (no niggardly allowance) to ten years apiece. *Trénmhór ua*

*Baeiscne*: he was grandson to *Sétna sithbac*, grandfather to Finn, father of Cumall and of Crimall. Trenmor, the affection felt towards him being great, obtained all Ireland's Fianna in one mass: both north and south they made him chief, and seventeen years were his period. By virtue of the sword and shield Amall, so hardy in his vehemence, grasped the command: thirty determined battles he fought for it, and held it seven years until he fell in Cnucha's fight. Then Morna's sons (that were thirty warriors of great renown) felt grief and chronic sorrow for Daighre, Goll, and Garadh. Goll More, son to the last Morna, ten years he had in governance of all Ireland's Fianna. Then came 'the golden salmon,' Finn son of Cumall son of Trenmor: gift-bestowing noble leader of our hosts; our admirable diversely accomplished sage. Two hundred years in flourishing condition and thirty more free of debility (a lengthy term) were Finn's existence; which brought him to the point at which he perished in taking 'the leap of his old age.' The seventeen chiefs of whom I am certified as having had command of Ireland's Fianna: Finn—Almha's lofty champion—was better than the whole of them! Sorcerers five (a guild refractory to handle) the best that ever fell to the land of the west: these my memory accurately serves me to set forth with all their gramarye. Of whom was Baghna from *sliabh Baghna*, Cathbadh likewise (most admirable wizard), Stocan son of the gentle and hundredfold-possessing Corc, Moghruith, and Finn of Formoyle. Five physicians, wondrous set! the best that ever fell to Banba's land: long as it is that I am after them, I am well versed in their description. They were *Miach*, *Oirbedh*, and *Dianchécht* their father; *Gabhrán*, the oversea physician come out of the east [i.e. from Scotland]; Baeiscne's grandson himself, Finn of the splendid hair. Five poets, a noble company! the best that ever fell to Erin's land: my memory accurately serves me to detail them too in all their bardic skill. *Cairbre*, the poet whom Amergin of the Gaels' island procured across the seas; *Fercheirtne* along with *Labraiddh lorc*, *Moghruith* again, and Finn of the naked sword. Five that in acute intelligence were the most sagacious whom in all Ireland the one house contained: *Fithal* and *Flaithrí* his son, *Aillmhe*, *Cairbre*, and *Cormac*. The problem which these in their wisdom would propose, 'tis out of hand that Finn alone would solve; but that which Finn of the banquettings would moot, not one of the five could manage. Five warriors and men of

wrathful utterance (the best that ever fell to Elga's land), roughest in action and in mighty deed, rudest in battle and in dual fight: *Lugh* son of *Cian mac Cáinte* from beyond, *Cúchulainn*, *Conall*, *Lughaid lagha* (good hand at martial work) and Baeiscne's grandson *Finn* himself. Five the most generous that were ever found, and of the bright Gaels' race best for giving of raiment and of meat (well they spent their substance): Eithne's son *Lugh*, illustrious *Aenghus*, *Cúchulainn* (most warlike arm), the gentle *Conaire* of visage that never blenched, and *Finn mac Lugach* were of the one tenour all. Five chiefs that by me are verified (best that ever fell to Erin's land): accurately my memory serves me to recite them in their reigning order: *Eiremón* son of great Milesius, *Ughaine* after Heremon; *Aenghus tuirmech*, *Conn céadchathach*, and stout *Finn*: a *laech* in roughness and for desperate deed, an *óglach* for affectionate fidelity; a cleric for preaching God's Son, and for truthfulness a prince. By the King that is over me above! a fault I knew not in Finn's Fianna except, O God that visitedst the Earth, that they worshipped not the Son supremely. The good followers live no more; Finn the veritable chief lives not: in his house the troop no longer is, surrounding the commander and Fian-leader. Better than all others was their disposition of the chase, better than all lords was their captain; so great was the bulk of their bounds and of their men, the number of their shields and of their swords. He was a king, a seer, a poet; a lord with a manifold and great train; our magician, our knowledgeable one, our soothsayer: all whatsoever be said was sweet with him. Excessive as perchance ye deem my testimony of Finn, and though ye hold that which I say to be overstrained: nevertheless, and by the King that is above me, he was three times better still! Seven times the great chief made act of faith—Cumall's son Finn, of *Almha*; the seventh time, when he was well advanced, was that which was the occasion of his end and death. The Southern Half: 'twas Eoghan ruled it; and Trenmor, he was his lieutenant: Trenmor son to Cairell of *cnoc an scáil*, with whom all whatsoever be said was sweet."

"Success and benediction, Caeilte!" said Dermot grandson of Cerbhall: "and where are Ireland's sages and her antiquaries? in ollaves' diction be these matters written down upon the tabular staves of poets and in records of the learned; to the end that of all the knowledge, the

enlightenment, the hill-lore, and of all the doughty deeds of arms which Caeilte and Ossian have communicated to us, each and all may to their own country and to their land take back their share." Even so it was done.

Then Finn, son of *Faebarderg* chief of Hy-Kinsela, interrogated Caeilte: "the *giasach* Finn now, what is the reason that beyond every other spot in the country saints and righteous affect it?" Caeilte answered that, saying: "it was a hunting preserve that Finn had; and when from *inneoin* of Moyfemen to *benn Edair* the Fianna could not in all Leinster's fierce province procure their sufficiency of game, they would get it in the *giasach*."

Finn mac Faubar said again: "good now, Caeilte, and why is the name of *áth Ferna* or 'Ferna's ford' given to the ford that is in the midst of the *giasach*? This question Ossian answered: "it was Goll mac Morna that slew Ferna son of Cairell there as being a spoiler of clan-Morna; also he was son of the king of the *Déise* or 'Decies' in the south, and to Finn an *óglæch* of trust. When now he was thus laid in a dug-out cavity of the earth, under his knowledge-tooth Finn put his thumb, truth was revealed to him, and he said: 'well for thee, Ferna son of Cairell, that art buried where thou art! for many are the Mass-bells and the white books of Hours that shall be used, and much oblation of the Lord's Body it is that shall be made over thee where thou liest.'" Ut dixit:

"'Ferna's ford, O ford of Ferna, where virtuous Maedog shall be! many though its warriors be to-day, its heavenly canticles shall yet abound. Ferna's ford of the smooth sandy brink, virtuous will be the man that shall possess it; when 'soul friends' [i.e. confessors and spiritual directors] shall have made their way thither, thou [Ferna] shalt be the nearer to God. Across the ford of Finglas Maedog of the numerous familia will come into the land; Maedog of the numerous familia shall arrive: a splendour of the sun piercing through showers; the son of the star shall arrive: himself a star of everlasting precious property. For all it be to-day a place appointed in which the Fianna use to seethe their flesh: Maedog of the numerous familia shall come hither, and I congratulate the chief that has it for his burial-tulach. A mighty boar will he be whom I now prognosticate, an angry lightning-flash of Doom; Maedog of the

numerous familia will arrive, shall be a wave to sweep o'er many a ford."

"All this of a truth is good," said Faebarderg: "but I have another query which I fain would put to thee, Caeilte." He answered: "say on." "A place that we have here at the marching of both provinces [Leinster and Munster namely], in the plentifully manned valley of the three waters, where Suir and Nore and Barrow meet: the name of which spot is *ros broc* or 'word of brocks,' and I desire to learn of thee to whom was subjected the dwelling that is there."

"Two *óglæchs* of trust to Finn that occupied it: Cellach of *braenbile*, and Moling *luath* or 'the swift' of Leinster's province, either of whom owned two hundred *óglæchs*, two hundred gillas, two hundred wolf- and deer-hounds; and though the entire three battles of the Fianna had been searched out, hardly had there been found a pair which in athletic proficiency and in spear-throwing should have exceeded them. Another perfection yet there was in them, seeing it was in their mansion that for a whole year the Fianna might abide nor know shortcoming either of meat or of liquor." Here Finn mac Faebarderg interposed with: "to me the water of this town is a matter of wonder; which itself [i.e. the reservoir] lies on an eminence, its stream [i.e. its discharge] being directed down a precipice, and to every disease with which it has contact it affords relief." "The cause of such benign efficacy is this," said Caeilte: "that is the first water in Ireland which angels blessed, likewise the last, and *Taeide* is the river's name. But to proceed: there those two *óglæchs* dwelt until the sons of Morna turned out as depredators; and one night they never perceived anything until the sons of Morna, closing in from front and rear, had completely surrounded their town. For three days and three nights they assaulted the place, during which time they availed nothing against it until they got a chance to fire it. The town accordingly was both plundered and burnt by them; not an individual denizen, man or woman, escaping without being either consumed or slain with weapon. When they had made an end of harrying and of playing havoc with the town, straightway they drew off to the westward, crossing the Barrow at the shallows of *inbher dubhghlaise*, i.e. 'Inverdouglas' or 'estuary of the black burn.' Then we the three battalions of the Fianna reached the town, but to the dwellers there that was no help now. On the fort's green Finn and

all Ireland's three Fian-battalions set them down; tearfully and dejectedly he wept, for not often had there been wrought a slaughter that by the Fianna was esteemed more grievous than this. A long bowl of pale gold was brought to the chief, to Finn; he washed his hands, upon his kingly and most comely face he dashed water, under his knowledge-tooth he put his thumb, and the third greatest revelation that ever was shewn to him it was now that it took place. He said therefore: 'four chosen seers they are that after me shall arise in Ireland, who for the King of Heaven and of Earth [i.e. to His honour and glory] shall practise their confession and set forth their doctrine. As the fourth man of these [i.e. as one of these four] will come Moling son of Faelan son of Feradach son of Fidgha; and a battle which in the latter time will be fought in Ireland, that of *magh ráth* or 'Moira' namely: Suibhne (surnamed geilt or 'the madman') that shall escape out of that battle, 'tis in this town he will be slain and buried. The above cleric's mother will be a woman of the Munster-folk, whence they of Munster shall not dare to do this spot a mischief.' Then Finn said:—

"*Ros broc* to-day is a path for wolves, and a rushing sea betwixt two cliffs; be the time long or be it short until saints shall come hither, Moling is the name of him whose church it will be then. Turbulent *Taeide* of the eddying pools, along the margin of the rock she makes a flood; yet even hither shall great concourse flock bound on their pilgrimage for love of God. Hither out of the north, from Moira, the flighty man [Suibhne] shall come; unto the cleric on a propitious morning this shall be a glad occasion. The House of Moling son of Faelan son of Feradach Finn: one shall pay him an ounce of gold to have his house [i.e. his grave] within his [Moling's] cemetery. The shining saint's bell called the *bennán* Moling shall be rung at the Hours; his mother being a Munster-woman, the *laechs* of *Luimnech* or 'the estuary of the Shannon' shall not dare aught against him. Out of the north will come the men of Cualann, their host's advance shall be right to the church; from that time forth until the very judgment saint Moling's House will go from good to better. I tell it all to you beforehand, and the presage will be true for me; it helps to render Finn's soul acceptable here, does this prophecy of Moling's advent to the Ros."

Then the king of Ireland said to Patrick: "it is time now for me to go to Tara; and you, Ancients, come ye with me?" They replied: "till a year's end we will not go thither."

Then Eochaid *lethderg* king of Leinster said: "to spend this year I will convey Ossian to *dún Liamhna* or 'Dunlavin,' i.e. the *dun* of *Liamhain* called 'of the soft smock' and daughter to Dobhran of the Duffry. Conall More son of Niall said: "to spend this year I will take Caeilte with me northwards to *dún na mbarc*." Dermot the king, son of Cerbhall, said: "I will carry off Patrick to Tara, to baptise, to bless, and in his own law and rule to order the men of Ireland."

All broke up now to their own several countries, but so as that in a year's time they met again at Tara; and this that you have here [both above and to follow] comprises 'the Colloquy with the Ancients' at the pillar-stone on the top of Usnach, as well as all else that by way of knowledge and instruction they uttered to the men of Erin.

Touching Caeilte: in company with Conall mac Neill he made his way to *ráth Artrach* in the north, in the land of Kinelconall. The gentle nubile yellow-haired damsels and the small green-mantled boys of the residence came forth to give Caeilte welcome; and the company tarried at the festive banqueting until the sun being risen from his fiery pillow flooded the cliffs and waterfalls and estuaries of the Earth.

Caeilte and Conall with the gentles of his people issued from the town, and Conall enquired: "wherfore was the name of *ráth Artrach* given to that rath, *ráth Mongaigh* to that one to the northward, and *lios na néices* or 'liss of the poets' to this liss south of us?" Caeilte answered that: "it was three sons that Bodhb Derg son of the Daghdha had in the many-windowed *brugh* upon the Boyne: Artrach, and Aedh surnamed 'handsome,' and Angus, between whom and their own father a variance fell out. 'Come now, my sons,' said Bodhb, 'quit me the *tuatha de danann* and betake you to the king of Ireland, to Conn's grandson Cormac. There is good cause why it were just for you to give up the *tuatha dé danann*: of country or of land they have not so much as will support both themselves and all that Artrach has of wealth in cattle; Angus alone in *gillas* and in *óglæchs* outnumbers the whole *tuatha dé danann*, and in multitude of poets handsome Aedh exceeds the bardic fraternities of Ireland and of Scotland both.'

"Bodhb's three sons accordingly came to Cormac, who enquired what had set them in motion. 'Our own father that has given us notice to clear out from the *tuatha dé danann*, and we are come to seek land of thee.' 'That ye shall have,' answered Cormac: 'I will grant you four *triuchas* of the rough-land which to-day is called *tír Conaill* or 'the land of Conall' [otherwise 'Tirconnell'].' Now the eldest son of them, Artrach, had a *bruidhen* of seven doors, with a free welcome before all comers; Angus called *ilchlesach*, or 'of the many accomplishments,' was in *ráth Mongaig* and had with him the kings' sons of Ireland and of Scotland acquiring the art and craft of missile weapons; handsome Aedh was in *lios na néices* with Ireland's and Scotland's bardic bands by him. Thus they passed thirty years of Cormac's reign, until he died in *ráth Speláin* in Bregia. Then they returned back again to the *tuatha dé danann*; and [at that time], what with smooth crimson-pointed nuts of the forest and with beautiful golden-yellow apples, this was a liss pied and various with red [and with many other tints] although to-day it be but a blighted liss":—

Caeilte *cecinit*.

"Blighted this day is *ráth Artrach*, though once it was a fresh rath filled with many weapons; lightsome upon the south side and the north was this rath of manifold property. This stone northward of the liss, 'tis numbers that are in ignorance concerning it: three times fifty ounces thrice told be they that rest abidingly beneath its breast. The name of the rath lying north to us is 'rath of Mongach': of him that had an ample host; and but a little way from it to the southward 'tis to *ráth Aedha*, or 'Aedh's rath,' of the poets."

Conall enquired now: "where is the stone under which the gold and the silver are?" "It is not to find the stone that makes the difficulty, but to get it out of the ground." "No difficulty there," quoth Conall rising with four hundred men. In unison they all applied their hands to the stone to drag it from the earth; but in such mighty effort was no profit at all, neither availed they to stir it in the least. "Not a man to lend a hand or to hoist a load have we at this present," Caeilte said as under the stone he thrusted in his spear's head and thereby prised it from its bed. Into the place where the stone had lain he reached a hand and brought out Finn mac Cumall's *lia* or 'stone-coffer' in which were three times fifty ounces of silver, as many of red gold, thrice fifty golden chains, and a

sword of battle. Conall said: "divide the treasures, Caeilte." "The sword and the chains (sic) to thee; the coffer of red gold [and of silver] to holy Patrick, for he is the Gaels' casket of belief and faith."

Then Conall said: "we have here three tulachs, but whence are the names they bear we know not: *tulach na laechraighe* or 'grave of the laechs' one is called; *tulach an bhanchuire* or '*tulach* of the woman-bevy' another; and *leacht na macraighe* or 'grave of the boys' is the third *tulach*'s name: in which *tulach* is a well with a river flowing out of it, *glaise na bfer* or 'the stream of men' being the denomination of this latter. Caeilte said: "it was a wife that Finn took, Sabia daughter of the Daghda's son Bodhb Derg namely; and she required of him a marriage gift, which was that to her share must fall one half both of his matrimonial society and of his booty [the remaining moiety to be shared among his other wives]; and the reason of this demand was that from Taprobane to the Hesperides' garden scarce was there a woman better than she. To Finn then she was plighted at the *sídh* on Femen, at this time called *sídh na mban fionn*; which done he started on the track and trail of clan-Morna, that were out in depredation and outlawry upon him, and so reached this rath: *ráth Artrach*. Here he halted and pitched camp, then said to the young woman's brother Ferdoman son of Bodhb: 'in the eyes of Bodhb's daughter Sabia it must be all too long that I am abroad from her, and she will say 'tis affront and contumely that for a year now I have treated her to. Messengers I ought by rights to send to fetch her; but who were the fittest to despatch?' 'Why, her four own foster-brethren: Conan and Cathal, the king of Munster's two sons; Cathal and Crimthann, the king of Leinster's two; which make the four that she holds dearest in Ireland' (now when there was not a wife in Finn's bed,'tis they that kept him company). Finn asked them: 'men, which of you is it will go to fetch the woman?' The king of Munster's two sons answered: 'we are they that will undertake it; for it is in our country, in our land, she is, and she it is that of all Ireland's women is to us dearest and most preferable.' So they, being in number three hundred and having four hundred gillas together with their hounds, marched to *sídh na mban fionn* where they entered into the spacious lustrous *sídh*. A most gentle welcome, void of all guile and treachery, was offered them; the freshest of all kinds of meat and the oldest of all sorts of drink were served to them. There they abode for

three days and three nights, after which they said: "tis to fetch thee we are come from Finn mac Cumall." The young woman replied: 'what remains but to go to him?'

Then her woman-folk assumed their raiment and their burthens of travel and of wayfaring: one hundred daughters of chiefs and of chieftains in vesture of all colours; they came away to this *tulach*, where their horses were unyoked and ate grass. Here it was that a great thirst afflicted the woman and all her she-attendants. The king of Munster's son, Conaing son of Dubh son of Angus *tíreach*, said: 'here is no water at hand'; and there being on the hill's top an enormous rock of a stone, with mighty effort they one and all turned to at the same and got the huge block out of its cavity, whereupon out of its former berth there gushed water that formed a sparkling and translucent loch-well. 'In manly wise the water has been excavated for,' said the young woman: 'what name then better than *glaise na bfer* [i.e. rivulus virorum] could it bear?' So they drank their full fill of the water. Again she said: 'as touching Finn now, ye promised him to be here.' 'By our word,' they answered, 'here it is that he promised to be; but we know also that he was gone in pursuit of clan-Morna and into Ulidia's most glorious province, to *benna Boirche*.' It was not long now before they saw a phalanx in fighting array, in warlike guise, that straight out of the north came on with speed; there being in it eight hundred *óglæchs*. Sabia enquired: 'know ye those yonder?' 'We do,' said Conaing: 'yonder is Goll of the terrible deeds, son of Morna, and 'tis at us he comes.' By them then the young woman was placed in her chariot.

"Goll in his turn asked: 'know ye yon men?' Conan mac Morna answered: 'we do: yonder are the two sons of Dubh, son of Angus *tíreach* king of Munster, that are two men of trust to Finn mac Cumall.'

"Against Goll with his people now Finn's followers set knee to fight and face to fray, and either side hurled their spears at the other. Howbeit of the sons of Morna four hundred men that bore weapon fell by Finn's people; but these perished without the escape of a single one alive. As for the woman-folk, they laid their faces to the ground and for horror of the battle died; whence also this *tulach* has the name of *tulach an bhanchuire*.

"Now came hither Finn and the three battles of the Fianna, and they beheld the slaughter; then the king of Leinster's two sons laid their lips to the ground and for grief at their foster-brethren died. Finn saw that: his arms fell from his hands, and he wept copious very lamentable showers so that his very breast and chest were wetted. The Fianna also wept all, and Finn said: 'alas for him that [with these tidings] should reach the house of Conn of the Hundred Battles, soft-smocked Liamhain's *dún!* an ill tale it is that will be carried to the fort of *sliabh Claire*, and to the borders of *sliabh Cua*, and told to Dubh mac Angus *tíreach*, king of both Munster's provinces in the south! an evil tale it is that shall overtake Bodhb Derg at *sliabh na mbann fionn* to the southward: that of his daughter's death!'

Then Finn went and the carnage was searched out by him, but he found not Sabia. The Fianna came and in excavations of the earth buried those four hundred of Finn's people, the manner in which each one of these was found being with a man of the sons of Morna dead under him. Over them their names were written in Ogham, their funeral games were held, and therefore it is that this hill bears the name of *cnoc na laechraidhe* or the hill of *laechs'*; the other is, as aforesaid, 'the hill of women'; while this one to the north is *árd na macraidhe* or 'eminence of the striplings,' from the king of Leinster's sons that were there laid under earth. This then, Conall, is that which thou requiredst of me," said Caeilte.

Then Conall enquired of him further: "was Finn bound by *gesa* or 'prohibitions'?" Caeilte answered: "they were many, but it was not they that came against him; yet a trembling and a great fear fell on him at the laying under ground of those youths." *Ut dixit:—*

"A woful deed, and O a deed of woe, it was that Dubh's two sons, the two sons of the king, and four hundred *gillas* and hounds perished without one being missed by weapon. Great calamity, O great calamity, and cause of many tears round about *ráth Artrach*, was Conaing's death and Cathal's too: that both should lie at one field's end. *Glas na bfer*, O *glas na bfer*, 'tis it shall be a perennial ancient well; the story shall be a famous one with all, it shall endure to the Judgment of Judgments. Not to take a morning's walk in Bregia's moor; not to turn his back on any company of poets; not to take a night's rest at *dún ráth*, nor to give wages to their *óglæchs* there; not to sleep with Bodhb Derg's daughter upon the

longest eventide that falls upon the land [i.e. midsummer-night]; not to walk on the *sídh* of Femen by the new-kindled blaze of a red fire [i.e. at Beltane and on S. John's eve]: such were the prohibitory injunctions of him that never refused any man's petition (were it to his own detriment or not), of him whose bodily form and whose wisdom both were excellent: I speak of Cumall's son, Finn of Almha. Death of Cathal and of curly Crimthann: under the green-skinned *tulach* there they are; north or south who ever saw the like of them and theirs being slaughtered all at once? Finn of the Fianna [when his time came] was slain performing his heroic leap; that, alas! broke my heart in twain—brought my strength down to nothing!"

"Victory and benediction be thine, Caeilte!" said Conall: "great knowledge and lore thou hast left with us for recital to them of the latter time."

After that they passed inside the dwelling, where until the hour of repose they drank and were merry. On the morrow Caeilte rose and to Conall Derg mac Neill and all his people bade farewell, saying: "now must I go into some other quarter." That day therefore he journeyed eastward to *loch an daimh dheirg* in Dalaradia, where were two eminent presbyters of Patrick's familia: Colman of Ela and Eoghanan, and they performing all the order of the serene dominical Canon [i.e. the Mass] with mutual praising of the Creator.

Then came three young ecclesiastics of the clerics' familia and launched their currach to catch fish, they the while saying their prescribed Hours. Caeilte saw them, listened to them, and said:—

"A rare thing it was ever for the ear of my head to hearken to euphonious reading; there was a time when 'twas more frequent with me to give an ear to warbling of good women [i.e. high-born ladies]. Whosoever should possess a pen, long time he would be occupied in writing them: for miserable as I am here now, many are the wonders that I have experienced. Slow was my journey from Tralee, long time I have waited for it; and as for books of [clerkly] reading, for me to listen to such was a seldom thing."

Then Colman of Ela and Eoghanan came out and saw the great men with the huge wolf-dogs in their hands [i.e. in leash]. "Even so," Colman said: "yonder is Caeilte, who is of Finn's people and eke of Patrick's

familia." "Have him brought into the island to us," cried all. He [and his] were brought accordingly, and set in a secluded house apart where the oldest of every liquor and the newest of every meat was given them.

They having now made an end of their supper and refection, Colman enquired of Caeilte: "wherefore was the name of *loch an daimh dheirg*, or 'the red stag's loch,' assigned to this one?" Caeilte answered that: "it was a red stag that haunted in the open lands of well-watered Luachra in the south, and four times a year used to get clear away from hounds and men of the Fianna; but at last they followed him to this spot. We, four of the Fianna to wit, came up with him: *Diarmait ua Duibhne*, and mac Lugach, and Glas son of Encherd of *Beirre*, and it was I that as we neared this ford was next to him. All together we flung our spears at him and he fell by us; I secured one antler, Dermot the other, and he carried it off to Tara-Luachra, to Finn. He set the butt of it on one of his feet, and the topmost tine was on the crown of his head; now he was the tallest man of the Fianna. The other antler I deposited [in the loch] close against this island, and I take it that did but the light serve me I could make my way to it." And he uttered:—

"This loch is the red stag's loch, to which we came from path to path [i.e. every step of the way from our starting-point]; until the very ultimate generation henceforward that shall be its name. If indeed it be light for me, and broadly light athwart the land at large, the antler whole and perfect I will deliver to you on your floor. We four that made our number when we came from the west and out of Munster of the many captives: our vigour and our fame were good until we reached the loch."

"Success and benediction, Caeilte!" said Colman: "that is great knowledge and true guidance to have survived with any one." Caeilte said: "look now, thou young ecclesiastic, whether the moon be risen in her pavilion of the air;" and a seminarist answered: "she is risen, so that both land and sea [i.e. the world's entire surface] are illumined by her." So Caeilte proceeded to the hindermost nook of the island, thrust his hand down by its brink and brought up the antler, then carried it off and laid it on the floor of the house in which the clerics were.

He that at this time was king of Ulidia was Eochaid, called *faebhairdherg* or 'Red-edge,' and he was in close proximity to them on *tulach na narm* or 'the hill of arms,' now called *magh ráth* or 'the plain of

raths,' i.e. 'Moira.' Colman and Eoghanan with six students rose right early, and took the antler to exhibit it to the king of Ulidia and to the Ulidians in general, who were there two hundred armed men in number. The seminarist brought the horn into the king's presence, and under it the whole of them might have fitted to shelter against foul weather or storm. The king asked: "who got the antler, and where was it found?" "In the red stag's loch Caeilte got it," they answered. "Happy would I deem myself," said the king, "if he should come my way; for he would leave with us the ancient lore of all our borders, of all our hills, and the discrimination of all our countries."

As for the clergy, after leaving the antler with the king of Ulidia they returned to the island. Caeilte said: "good now, Colman, my soul, what is the reason of those eight Hours for the purpose of which ye both daily and nightly rise?" "The reason of them is a weighty one," said Colman, "and is this: eight faults there be that cleave to body and to soul of every man; now those eight Hours purge them." Then Colman uttered:

"The eight carnal imperfections, that gnaw us to the bone; the eight choice Hours, that vehemently banish them: Prime, against immoderate gluttony; Tierce, against anger born of many causes; cheerful lightsome Noon we constantly oppose to lust; Nones against covetousness so long as we are on the breast of weary Earth; pleasant and profitable Vespers we oppose to sore despair; Compline, against perverting weariness: this is a fair partition; cold Nocturns that equally divide [the night], against inordinate boasting [i.e. pride]; Matins of God's atoning Son, against enslaving sullen pride. Mayest thou, O judicial King, O Jesus, save me for sake of the eight!"

Caeilte said: "success and benediction, Colman; well hast thou resolved that question! and what hinders me that I should not practise to observe those eight Hours, seeing that God hath prolonged [lit. 'delayed'] me to be contemporary with them?"

Then Colman questioned Caeilte: "what is the cause that the name of *tipra an bhantracha* or 'the well of women' is given to this well close against the loch?" Caeilte answers that: "it was *Niamh*, daughter of Angus *tíreach* king of Munster, that from *dún na mbarc* in the province of Munster eloped with Finn's son Ossian and came to this well; here he was with her for six weeks, enjoying the hunting and venery of Ulidia;

the damsel too with her thirty women used to come every morning, and in this blue-surfaced water they would wash their faces and their hands.

That his daughter was stolen away with Ossian lay very heavily on the king of Munster; both provinces of Munster were mustered by him: five hardy battles equal in bulk, and in pursuit of the Fianna they came hither. just then Niamh washed herself at the well, and she saw the five battles on the *tulach* right over her. "Alas for it," the young woman cried: "and happy she that had died, or been slain, ere her guardian, her father, her three brothers and Munster's nobles had seen her thus!" She laid her face to the ground and, with the thirty her companions, died; as for her, her heart as a lump of black blood passed from her mouth, and hence it is that from that time to this *cnoc an dir* or 'the hill of slaughter' is this *tulach*'s name." Then Caeilte uttered:

"In this hill lies the queen....

"When both provinces of Munster saw the woman-folk's death their king said: 'an evil undertaking hath been this of Ossian's and of the Fianna's against us!' and he enjoined his she-runner Muirenn daughter of Muiresc to seek out Finn and challenge him to battle. The runner went her way to *ráth chinn chon* or 'rath of the wolf-dog's head' in Dalaradia, where the Fianna were. Finn sought her tidings, and she told him the errand on which she came. 'Until this day,' said Finn, 'it has been a rare thing to challenge me to battle! go, Garbchronan, summon the Fianna to the fight.' He went out and, standing over the Fianna's leaguer, emitted three wrathful larum-cries which were heard in the heart of their camp; and the Fianna answered, for they knew that some great motive urged him to haste. They rose therefore and stoutly arrayed themselves in order of war; then of Finn enquired the cause of battle, and he told it them. Now said Fergus True-lips to Finn: 'Fian-chief, for giving battle to the king of Munster in the matter of his daughter whom thou hast slain thou hast not right on thy side.'

"Then by Finn and the chiefs of the Fianna a course was determined on, pursuant to which he said to Abartach's daughter Smirgait: tell Angus *tíreach* and Munster's nobles that I will pay them the award of Cormac grandson of Conn, of Eithne *ollardha* daughter of Cahir More, and of Cithruadh son of Fercaecait. The runner departed and delivered what she had to say. 'It shall be accepted,' Angus said, 'if bondsmen and

sureties for its fulfilment be put in.' 'What sureties requirest thou?' 'The son of him that hath done me wrong: Oscar son of Ossian, and Ferdoman son of the Daghdha's son Bodhb Derg, and Dermot son of Donn son of Donough.' Finn yielded that and both parties repaired to Tara, where the judgment given them was this: the girl to be raised out of the tulach in which she lay, and put into scales; her own weight of gold and again her own weight of silver to be given to the king of Munster in eric of her; a separate eric to be paid for every chief or chieftain's daughter that perished there. 'Fianna of Ireland how shall we apportion such eric?' said Finn. They answered: 'one-third from clan-Baeiscne; from us the Fianna, two.' And this, Colman," ended Caelte, "is the only eric that ever Finn allotted among the Fianna."

At this point it was that from *ráth Aine* to the red stag's loch Eochaid Red-edge sent a message to fetch Caelte. This latter bade Colman and Eoganan farewell therefore; while to him the saints promised eternal happiness, to entertain his complaint, and for his welfare to supplicate Heaven's King and Earth's. Then in the king of Ulidia's chariot Caelte journeyed to *ráth Aine* in that country's easternmost part, where with their king the nobles of the Ulidians were. Now our Eochaid Red-edge was virtuous and was worshipful; for without justice on his side he never harried any, nor from any man was taken that which in virtue of original racial right was his own.

Three battles by the way, that was the king's strength on this day. Caelte in due course reaches them; he leaps from the chariot, and the king of Ulidia in concert with all his host gives him ardent welcome. "Good now, Caelte, my soul," said the king: "what thing could we enquire of thee which should profit us more than the lore of this rath: *ráth Aine*?" Caelte answered: I possess its origin:—

"It was Aine, daughter of Modharn king of Scotland across the sea; to whom the men of Alba kept saying: 'what ails thee, lady, that with some good man [i.e. one of high degree] in either Alba or Erin thou matest not?' The young woman affirmed that, Finn mac Cumall excepted, in those lands was no man that might match her; and her words being reported to Finn he commissioned Finn, called *fer an champair* or 'man of quarrel,' and Ronan the royal óglaech, Scotland's two Fian-chiefs, to go and to crave her of her father. 'What conditions shall we take with us?'

they asked. 'Promise her power over all that I possess both in Ireland and in Scotland.' 'Fian-chief, it is well: but send with us now two confidentials of thine own people, to the end the lady may the more readily believe us.' Finn told me and mac Lughach to accompany them, saying: 'although in my behalf ye shall undertake never so much, yet will I give it to her.'

"We four free-born *óglæchs* therefore took our way to *dún mónaidh*, or 'Edinburgh,' in Scotland; there we were quartered in a special house apart, in which Modharn king of Scotland, and together with him his daughter Aine, came to visit us. He questioned us anent our expedition and our journey; we told him all our charge. 'Thou hearest that, daughter,' said the king: 'that the best man in Ireland and in Scotland solicits thee.' The young woman answered: 'I will go with him' and, upon condition that all she asked of him were given her, was betrothed to Finn mac Cumall. We and the girl with us (she furnished with all sorts of precious chattels in abundance) returned to Ireland and came to this rath where we are; Finn too and the three battles of the Fianna arrived hither from Tara-luachra to meet and to fall in with us. Here she caused to be constructed a mansion, a proper town and a lodge of her own, in which for a year she [of her own substance] ministered to and entertained the Fianna's three battles in such style that neither they nor our guests lacked meat or liquor at all.

"At a year's end then mac Lughach said to Finn: 'by way of country and of lands Modharn's daughter Aine is all-sufficient for thee.' Finn answered: 'by my word, mac Lughach, I know not what I could require, whether in Ireland or in Scotland, that the Fianna have not in Aine's house.' Subsequently this queen was with Finn for seven whole years, during which she abundantly gratified all Ireland and Scotland; she bore Finn two sons: Illann of the red edge and *Aedh Beg*, but died in childbirth of *Aedh*":

Caeilte cecinit.

"Empty to-day is Aine's rath, in which once young men laughed many a laugh; frequent were men in crowds, horses in studs, upon its slope with the smooth sward. Three hundred ladies were in the liss (many are they that are in ignorance of it); three hundred men of trust were there, three hundred fosterers of befitting quality. Better than all

other women that woman was; and such the multitude of her guests—one and all are dead together now—that she made her town to be all empty [i.e. exhausted it].

"Here she was laid in excavations of the earth," continued Caelite, "her stone was reared over her resting-place, her funeral ceremony was performed, and her ogham-name inscribed."

"Victory and benediction be thine, Caelite!" cried the king of Ulidia: "a good story it is that thou hast told us; and be it by you others written on the tabular staves of poets and on monumental stones of the Fianna."

The king of Ulidia with his force now proceeded to *ráth na sciath* or 'the rath of shields,' standing over the boisterous *tréacht Rudhraighe* or 'Rury's strand': the present *tonn Rudhraighe* or 'Rury's wave.' They entered the dwelling, and a sequestered house apart was assigned to Caelite; he was served well, and the whole town from small to great committed to his discretion.

Again the king of Ulidia questioned Caelite: "here are two graves on Rury's strand: what is their origin?" "It was two that were sons to Aedh mac Fidach mac Fintan, king of Connacht, and were buried there; these were dear to Finn and to the Fianna all, the cause of whose love for them was this: that whatever the paucity or whatever the copiousness of art and mystery possessed by any it never would come unrewarded away from them [i.e. their generosity to artists was not regulated by their degree of proficiency in art]; neither was any ever in dispute with Finn and the Fianna but they would for a year's time make peace between them. A single-handed match for a hundred *óglæchs* either of them was, and they would have made a worthy pair of sons whether for Cormac son of Art or for Finn; seventeen years they were in the Fianna. Now once upon a time Finn and the three battles, in exercise of their privilege to hunt all Ireland, came hither to Rury's strand and Finn prescribed to keep watch and ward. Two sons of kings with their people it was that nightly mounted guard over Finn and the Fianna, and on the night in question the duty fell to the king of Connacht's two: Art and Eoghan. They moved off, four hundred *óglæchs* all told, with four hundred gillas, and marched to the head of this strand; there they had not been any time when up came two kings of the kings of Lochlann in the north: Conus and Conmael were their names, whose fathers had been slain by Finn

mac Cumall in the battle of *druim derg* over in Scotland. Both which kings, being two valiant and equal battalions strong, gained this shore in order to the avenging of their father upon Finn, but saw four hundred that bore shield and weapon drawn up ready before them on the beach; the manner of the king of Connacht's son Art being that he had a sharp glittering-edged spear of special deadly virtue which Finn had a twelvemonth before given to him: the *órlasrach* or 'gold-flaming' was its name; another spear too there was, that Finn had given to Eoghan: the *muinderg* or 'red-neck' it was called.

"Then the *allmarachs* enquired who warded the shore, and Art returned that they were of Finn's people. 'Happy he that should drop on so many as these of his folk, for not one of you shall escape alive!' said they. 'If ever a set of them were caught in a quandary, 'tis not we that are so taken now,' answered Art. The others landed, and those eight hundred *óglaechs* found it a huge strain to make head against the two valorous and equal battalions; at it they went however, hand to hand, and from the fall of evening's shades until midnight the hacking and the hewing went on apace. That was the hour in which Finn had a vision, and what he saw was this: a pair of grey seals that sucked his own two breasts. The Fian-chief awoke and: 'where is Fergus True-lips?' he asked. 'Here,' said Fergus: 'what hast thou seen?' 'A couple of ocean seals that sucked both my breasts.' The poet said: 'it is the king of Connacht's two sons, whom this night thou sentest to stand sentry for the Fiann, that are overmatched by *allmarachs*.' 'Rise, men,' cried Finn, 'for what the poet says is true!' Simultaneously, at the one instant, the Fianna rose out and came to Rury's strand, where of their own they found but the king of Connacht's two sons alive, and they with the slings of their shields about their necks; nor of the *allmarachs* lived there a man at all. Here is the plight in which the king of Connacht's sons were found: their bodies full of bloody gashes, their shields and spears propping them in standing posture still. No two of the Fianna had ever maintained personal conflict thus. By the Fianna the ships which had been the Lochlannachs' were hauled ashore, and they proceeded to pillage them; the king of Lochlann's two sons, Conus and Conmael, were laid in excavations of the earth. The king of Connacht's sons died within a very brief space; for here over Rury's wave the Fianna lifted and bore them off, and Finn

enquired of the wounded: ‘friends, are ye perchance curable?’ They answered: ‘alas that thou, thine own perception also being so good, shouldst say it! for round about either of us came nine hundred *laechs*; who all are fallen indeed, but we too are fallen. Be our grave made therefore, and our stone reared over the place of our rest; the arms likewise with which we have played the men, and which thou gavest us in stipend, be the same buried along with us.’ Body parted from soul with them and they, two brothers as they were, were there laid in excavations of the earth. This then is the cause for which their fame and high repute have endured after them.”

Eochaid Red-edge said: “by thy valour and by thy weapon-skill, Caelte, I adjure thee that those arms thou bring up for us out of the sod-covered grave.” He made answer: “for sake of Finn mac Cumall and of the great and gallant company that buried them, loath I am to do it; nevertheless ye shall have them.” They set to and opened the tomb; the weapons were taken out: the *órlasrach* and the *muinderg*; this latter spear of which was now given to Angus the king of Ulidia’s son, the former to that king himself. This done the dead were returned to the grave and their stone restored over their resting-place; *cath trágha Rudhraighe* or ‘the battle of Rury’s strand’ is this battle’s name therefore, and it is one of the special articles of Fian-lore.

The king of Ulidia cried: “have success and benediction, Caelte! great information is this that thou hast deposited with us.” They passed into the dwelling, a banqueting-house was disposed for them, and in it they passed that night mirthfully.

But as regards Caelte: next day he was weighed down with a fit of inertness and of old age; wherefore the king of Ulidia came to visit him and, when he was set down beside him on the couch, said: “Fian-chief, how goes it with thee to-day?” “Might I but get to hunt Ben-Boirche, ‘tis all the better I should be.” The king answered: “verily thou shalt have it.” His wolf-dogs and other hounds were gathered to Eochaid, and he went northward to *benna Boirche* or ‘Boirche’s peaks,’ i.e. ‘the Mourne mountains’; Caelte accompanied him and for that day ordered the hunt in such wise that from *ethach* to the tidal wave due north of Ben-Boirche each man could put the dog-thong into the other’s hand [i.e. reach him the leash].

Now where Caeilte and the king were was at the Wave actually, where in scrutiny of the sea they gazed far and wide; then abroad upon the surface they perceived a quite young woman and she at one time swimming on her back, then doing the side-stroke, and anon the 'foot-stroke' [i.e. treading water]. Right in front of them now she sat on a wave as though she sat on some *tulach* or on a rock; she lifted her head and said: "is not that yonder Caeilte son of Ronan?" "Truly it is I," he answered. "Many a day we saw thee upon that rock, and in company of the best man that was in Ireland and Scotland: Finn son of Cumall." "Woman, who art thou so?" "I am *Líbhán*, daughter of Eochaid mac Eoghan mac Ailill, who for now a hundred years am in the water, nor since the Fian-chief departed have till this day appeared to any; and what moved me to shew myself to-day was to see Caeilte." Hereupon the deer, flying before the hounds and taking the water, swam out into the sea: "Caeilte," cried Liban, "a loan of the spear to me till I kill the deer and send them ashore up to you!" Into her hand Caeilte put the *coscarach*, with which she slew the deer; and the most copious hunting that Finn ever made in that spot, that which Caeilte and the king of Ulidia had this day was as large. Touching the young woman, she then darted the spear upwards and ashore to Caeilte and so departed from them. They that know all about it say that to every five men of the Ulidians on that day fell a wild pig, a stag and a doe; while to the king of Ulidia and to Caeilte for their aliquot share came thirty deer. After which they went on to *ráth na sciath* which at the present is called *ráth imill* or 'the external rath'; and so far then we have 'the Hunting of Ben-Boirche,' with 'the Colloquy of Liban and Caeilte.'

They went into the rath, where a feasting- and a pleasure-house was set out for them, and in the same Caeilte saw a thing that surprised him: a gentle yellow-haired damsel in the Fian-seat, dispensing jewels and treasure in lieu of all the poems and other artistic efforts that were put forth within. Caeilte questioned the king: "who is the young woman to whom above all the rest, reverence and great honour is rendered?" "Daughter she was to an *óglæch* of mine of whose seed now live none but this girl; and the manner of her, Caeilte, is this: she has a half-quatrain, and in all Ireland she cannot find one to compose a half-quatrain that

shall fit it as its own." Caeilte said: "I am no man of verse; howbeit, lass, pronounce the half-quatrain." The girl uttered, and Caeilte after her:—

"A dark man's *dún*, and O a dark man's *dún*, that is the mansion which our blood imbrues!"

dixit Caeilte:

"All the Fianna are decayed away, not a munificent one lives of the last of them."

Caeilte laid the horn out of his hand and wept copious tears, very lamentable, so that breast and chest were wet with him. "That quatrain's meaning, Caeilte, my soul?" exclaimed the king. "Its meaning I have," said Caeilte, "but alas for me that I have to moot that to which it refers. For knowest thou, king of Ulidia, the four that of all such as in Ireland and in Scotland lived at the one time and in the same epoch with them excelled in generosity: Finn mac Cumall and Ossian his son, and Dubh son of Treon of the Ulidians here, with his son Fial mac Dubh? In which two latter was even a degree of bountifulness in excess of the others; for though all that was in Ireland and in Scotland had been bestowed on them yet, had they but found one to crave it of them, they would have given away the whole of it. Wherefore to Cormac and to Finn it seemed a pitiable thing that they should be affected with this degree of liberality, and lack adequate great substance to give it effect.

"Then came all Ireland once to the Convention of *Taillte*: the Fianna's three battles, and all the folk of settled habitation as well; Dubh son of Treon and his son Fial mac Dubh arrived, and sat before the king of Ireland, to whom (saving that he had heard of them) they were unknown. He that was at Cormac's shoulder was Finn mac Cumall; Ossian at Finn's hand, and Cairbre Lifechair at Cormac's other side. 'Good now, my soul, Cormac,' said Finn: 'is the warrior in thy presence known to thee?' Cormac replied: 'surely he is not.' 'Those are Dubh son of Treon out of the province of Ulidia in the north, and his son Fial mac Dubh.' Cormac enquired: 'is that latter the needy *óglæch* of whom we hear much mention made?' 'That is he just,' said Finn. Again Cormac enquired, saying: 'where is Fial mac Dubh?' 'Here by me,' answered Dubh. 'What occasions this generosity that is in you both father and son, and ye but *óglæchs'* sons?' 'Noble sir and monarch,' said Fial, 'were we to deny or refuse a thing to any man we should, as we suppose, die: both

father and son.' Cairbre Lifechair and Ossian said: 'men of Ireland, a pity 'tis for you not to give Dubh mac Treon and his son some succour and relief!' Cormac, Finn, and all Ireland's chiefs said: 'we will administer to them that comfort of which ye speak; for it is upon the men of Ireland that all whatsoever shall be given to them will be expended.' Cormac pronounced: 'yearly I will give them one hundred of every kind of cattle.' 'Yearly will I give them even so many,' said Finn; and the nobles of Ireland promised them yet other great riches. So Dubh mac Treon betook himself to his own dwelling, where for full seventeen years he continued to spend that substance; nor were it possible to recount all the good which he did during that interval, and until upon the green of his own mansion one night there befel him an accident and a mischance: the advent to *ráth Dhuibh* or 'Dubh's rath' of a bewitching fairy troop of horsemen, who enquired what town it were. Some one or another said to them: 'this is the town of Dubh mac Treon; that is to say of that special *óglæch* who, whether of the sons of Milesius or of the *tuatha dé danann*, is for generosity pre-eminent.' Says a man of the new-comers: 'pity forsooth that of the *tuatha dé danann* we have not one to match him!' and another, taking a deadly javelin that he had, threw and hit Dubh in the pale of the nipple, so killing him; then Fial his son took his place and held it for the space of ten years and three score. But good now, young woman, and inasmuch as their story thou requiredst of me, what relationship hadst thou with these?" "A daughter to that latter *óglæch*, to Fial mac Dubh, am I,' she answered, "and of that great fellowship which thou hast seen, saving me only there lives none; wherefore also it is, Caeilte, that Ulidia's king hath given me the charge over his jewels and his treasure to dispense them." "What is thy name?" "Uaine daughter of Fial." "It is indeed a fitting thing for the king of Ulidia to give thee the discretion of his precious things and of his wealth."

Then the king of Ulidia said to his son, to Angus mac Eochaid: "Angus, my soul, take that girl to wife; for not in another province in Ireland wilt thou find one having a father's and grandfather's record better than hers"; whereupon the young man wedded her, and so long as he lived had her for only wife. Following upon all this they remained feasting and enjoying themselves till the end of three days.

Again the king of Ulidia said to Caeilte: "in order to hunt and to have sport of venery I would fain go to *foradh na féinne* or 'the Fianna's seat' here." Early on the morrow then they took their way, three battles of them, to *foradh na féinne*; which when they had reached the gentles and Caeilte entered into the great liss that was there, and Caeilte seeing the place said: "many indeed were they that out of this precinct had their hunger and thirst assuaged, and were paid for their art and science, by Finn mac Cumall." There Ulidia's king and nobles, Caeilte also, set them down; nor were they long there before they saw draw near them a *scológ* or 'non-warrior' that wore a fair green mantle having in it a fibula of silver; a shirt of yellow silk next his skin, over and outside that again a tunic of soft satin, and with a timpan of the best slung on his back. "Whence comest thou, *scológ?*" asked the king. "Out of the sídh of the Daghdha's son Bodhb Derg, out of Ireland's southern part." "What moved thee out of the south, and who art thou thyself?" "I am *Cas corach*, son of Cainchinn that is ollave to the *tuatha dé danann*, and am myself the makings of an ollave [i.e. an aspirant to the grade]. What started me was the design to acquire knowledge, and information, and lore for recital, and the Fianna's mighty deeds of valour, from Caeilte son of Ronan." Then he took his timpan and made for them music and minstrelsy, so that he set them slumbering off to sleep. "Good now, Caeilte, my soul," said Cascorach, "what answer returnest thou me?" "That thou shalt have everything to seek which thou art come and, if thou have but so much art and intellect as shall suffice to learn all that the Fianna wrought of valorous deeds and exploits of arms [thou shalt hear the same]. In this town once was an *óglæch*: Finn mac Cumall, and great would have been thy wealth and stipend from him in lieu of thy minstrelsy, although to-day the place be empty!" and Caeilte uttered:—

"This night the Fianna's seat is void, to which Finn of the naked blade resorted; from death of the chief that knew not melancholy, Almha the noble and the great is desert! The goodly company live not; Finn, the very prince, lives no more; no longer the cohort manifest to view, nor champions, accompany the Fian-chief. Finn's Fianna, though once they roamed from glen to glen, are dead one and all; a wretched life it is to be as I am now: left after Dermot and Conan! after Goll mac Morna from the plain, and after Olioll of the hundreds! after that Eoghan of the

bright spear perished, and Conall, at the first discharge! Once for all I tell you, and all that which I say is true: great were our losses yonder (even without Dubhdirma) at *tech drumann*. The cohorts and the hundreds thus being gone, pity but 'twere there I had found death! gone, for all they once ranged from border to border, and though the Fianna's seat was crowded once!"

To his heed and mind Caelte then recalled the losses of all those warriors and great numerous bands among whom he had been; and miserably, wearily, he wept so that breast and chest were wet with him. After which they came on to *tulach an trír* or 'hill of three persons,' upon which the king of Ulidia and Caelte and all the rest as well sat down.

"This is a beautiful hill, Caelte," the king said: "but wherefore was the name of *tulach an trír* conferred on it, and *abhann déise* or 'river of two persons' on this river; also *lecht cinn chon* or 'grave of the wolf-dog's head' upon yonder tomb?" Caelte answered: "I will tell thee, although the origin of them be not new and that I myself was not old [i.e. was very young] when those names clave to these spots:—

"It was a king that was in Scotland: Iruath mac Alpine, and had daughters three: Muiresc and Aeife and Aillbhe were their names. These fell in love with three *óglæchs* of the Fianna of Ireland: Encherd of Beare's three sons Ger and Glas and Gabha; which *óglæchs* also fell in love with them, and for twenty years there was reciprocal affection between them. But once upon a time [i.e. at length] the women eloped and came to this *tulach*, where a fit of sleep and slumber fell on them. That was the very hour and time at which by the son of Macnia's son Maccon, and in the province of Leinster, a fearsome *bruidhen* was set in Finn mac Cumall's way; nor may poets attain to recount all that fell there of the Fianna and of Fatha Canann's folk. There moreover perished those three pinks of valour: Encherd of Beare's three sons. Concerning the three damsels: they awoke out of their sleep and saw towards them three *óglæchs* of the Fianna; they enquired of them, and these told them how the *bruidhen* was come off: with slaughter made of the Fianna, and fall of Encherd of Beare's three sons. Upon this *tulach* the girls uttered their loud woe and lamentation, and for grief of those three died. Which young women had two own foster-brethren, sons of the king of the Catti in the north: Uillenn and Eochaid were their names. These had made a

stout and vigorous attempt in pursuit of their foster-sisters, and so reached this river; the stream however was in spate against them, but on the yon-side they saw rich and marvellous vestures [i.e. on the young women as they lay], whereupon with all boldness they took the ford and the river's flood drowned them. These then are they that are beneath those two green mounds which are at the ford's edge.

"*Lecht cinn chon now*," continued Caeilte: "it was a favourite wolf-dog that Finn mac Cumall had, the name of which was *Adhnuall*, and from the aforesaid *bruidhen* he wandered aimlessly away northwards and was all astray. Thrice he scoured all Ireland, and at last gained this ford where he emitted three howls and there died; which hound, king of Ulidia, was the third [i.e. one of the three] best that Finn ever had."

"As touching Ulidia's two Fian-chiefs, Goll of Gulban and Cas of Cuailgne: they hunted this plain, and saw three young women having upon them raiment of the rarest, of all colours, and they dead upon the *tulach*. For a long space they made lamentation for them, then under ground laid all three sisters. They entered the ford and in it saw the two *óglæchs*, drowned; these two they laid beneath sods of the earth."

His tale being told, Caeilte bids the king of Ulidia farewell and up the face of hills and crags takes his way to the summit of green-grassed Slievefuad, to the rowan-tree of *cluain dá damh* or 'two-stag lawn,' and to *rae na gcarpat* or 'the space of chariots': the spot in which formerly the Ulidians marching here after the battle of *gairidhe* and *ilghairidhe* [i.e. the final encounter of *táin bo Cuailgne* or 'the raid for the kine of Cuailgne'] abandoned their chariots. When he got so far, thither also (to the same *rae na gcarpat*) Patrick was just come with thrice fifty bishops, as many priests, as many deacons, and three times fifty psalmologists. There they sat down, and Patrick performed his Hours with praising of the Creator. At this instant, I say, Caeilte and his nine, together with Cascorach mac Cainchinne, the minstrel, joined them. They greeted him with welcome, the clerics fell to question him for news, and he told them all his doings for that year past.

"Where is scribe Brogan?" Patrick cried. He responded: "here am I." "By thee be written down and amended all that Caeilte hath enunciated concerning the interval since at the pillar-stone on the top of Usnach he parted from us and to this very present hour."

"Good now, my soul," queried Patrick: "who is yonder handsome curly-headed dark-browed youth along with thee, and he having an instrument of music?" "Cascorach mac Cainchinne that is," answered Caeilte, "son of the *tuatha dé danann*'s minstrel, who is come to me to acquire knowledge and Fian-lore." "A good road it is that he hath chosen and, Caeilte, thou hast been spared for signal privilege: to see the time of faith, of saints, of righteous, and to be in fellowship with the King of Heaven and of Earth. And thou, Cascorach, play for us somewhat of thy minstrel's art and craft." "Verily it shall be done," Cascorach answered. "and never before thee, saintly cleric, have I done so for any whom I gratified more willingly than I will thee." He took his timpan, tuned it, and on it played a volume of melody the equal of which for sweetness (saving only the dominical canon's harmony and laudation of Heaven's King and Earth's) the clergy had never heard. Upon them fell a fit of slumber and of sleep and, when he had made an end with his minstrelsy, of Patrick he requested its recompense. The Saint said: "what guerdon seekest thou, my soul?" "Heaven for myself," he answered, "which is the best reward that is; good luck also to go with my art and with them that shall exercise my art after me." Patrick said: "to thyself be Heaven, and be that art of thine the third [i.e. one of the three] for sake of which in Ireland one shall to the latest time procure his own advancement; how great soever be the grudging surliness which shall greet a man of thy science: let him but perform minstrelsy, let him but recite tales, and such penuriousness shall vanish before him; everlastingly may thine art number to itself the chief's bed-fellow, and to them that profess it be all happiness, only so as they in their function show not slothfulness." Then to its case Cascorach restored his implement of music.

"A good cast of thine art was that thou gavest us," said Brogan. "Good indeed it were," said Patrick, "but for a twang of the fairy spell that infests it; barring which nothing could more nearly than it resemble Heaven's harmony." Says Brogan: "if music there be in Heaven, why should there not on earth? wherefore it is not right to banish away minstrelsy." Patrick made answer: "neither say I any such thing, but merely inculcate that we must not be inordinately addicted to it."

They were not long there when they saw a sedate silvery-grey warrior draw near to them: a crimson mantle with a brooch of gold

wrapped him round, to his neck was slung a gilded sword and in one hand he had a staff of white hazel. He laid his head in Patrick's bosom, and made genuflexion. "Of what cognomen art thou?" asked the Saint. "Eoghan the arch-hospitaller is my name, and I am of the king of Ireland's people: of Dermot mac Cerbhall's." "Are thine the hands in which we have heard that such great substance is?" "Even mine," he said. "This very night we quarter ourselves on thy resources," cried bishop Soichell, who was Patrick's head dispenser. Eoghan enquired: "and what night may this be?" "Samhain-eve," replied Patrick. "From to-night until Beltane-eve ye as many as ye are, both your familia and your guests, shall have welcome with me." Benignus said: "a fat monk it is that the cleric hath recruited"; but Patrick pronounced: "he shall go to serve Macha [i.e. Armagh] in the north; and if fat he be, so too shall his son be and his grandson after him." Benignus rejoined again: "what name then could be conferred on them that were better than *úi mhéith Mhacha* or 'the descendants of Macha's fat one'?"

Then they marked fifty tall men having iron fibulae in their mantles that approached them. "Who be these?" Patrick asked. Eoghan answered: "my hospitallers and my *biatachs*"; and these all made obeisance to Patrick, who cried: "your posterity both living and dead be assigned to Macha!"

Upon the whole province now distress of cold settled and heavy snow came down so that it reached men's shoulders and chariots' axle-trees, and of the russet forest's branches made a twisting together as it had been of withes, so that men might not progress there.

Caeilte said then: "a fitting time it is now for wild stags and for does to seek the topmost points of hills and rocks; a timely season for salmons to betake them into cavities of the banks." And he uttered a lay:—

"Cold the winter is, the wind is risen, the high-couraged unquelled stag is on foot: bitter cold to-night the whole mountain is, yet for all that the ungovernable stag is belling. The deer of Slievecarn of the gatherings commits not his side to the ground; no less than he the stag of frigid Echtge's summit catches the chorus of the wolves. I, Caeilte, with brown Dermot and with keen light-footed Oscar: we too in the nipping night's waning end would listen to the music of the pack. But well the red deer sleeps that with his hide to the bulging rock lies stretched—hidden as

though beneath the country's surface—all in the latter end of chilly night. To-day I am an aged ancient, and but a scant few men I know; once on a time though in the cold and ice-bound morning I used to vibrate a sharp javelin hardly. To Heaven's King I offer thanks, to Mary Virgin's Son as well; often and often I imposed silence on [i.e. daunted] a whole host whose plight to-night is very cold [i.e. they are all dead now]."

"It is time for us to depart to our mansion and good town," said Eoghan. They took their way therefore and soon saw the dwelling before them; at which when they arrived Caeilte with his people was ushered into a secluded lodge apart, the town was laid at their own discretion and (saving only such length of time as the clerics took to give Mass, to say their hours and to laud the Creator) there they all were for three days and three nights, quaffing and taking their pleasure.

Then came Eoghan the head hospitaller to confer with Patrick, and he began to tell him how that there was no water near at hand to them; for people were wearied with bringing water to the town. And a wonder it was [to the new-comers to see] that day how the same town lay, it being as it were an occult hole in the earth: for round about it over and hither was a mountain, nor was it furnished with any opening but a single one, out of which egress took place; so that all the men in the world however much they had ambitioned it would not have availed to ravage or to spoil it. Patrick enquired of Eoghan: "found ye traces of any band or company that should have preceded you into the place?" Eoghan replied: "we got a spear, a sword and an iron vessel." "Knowledge of the well will be found with Caeilte," said Patrick; a messenger was sent to fetch Caeilte, and he was brought to the Saint.

"Good now, Caeilte, my soul," said Patrick: "knowest thou who it was that before Eoghan occupied this seat?" An easy thing it is for me to know it," he made answer, "seeing that I was one of the eight that were at the giving of this town to the man on whom Finn mac Cumall conferred it: the solitary warrior that ever by use of compulsion effected his fellowship with Finn, Conan namely, son of the *liath Luachra* or 'grey man of Luachra,' out of the west. For it was befallen him to have worked Finn great mischief: as to have from one *samhain*-tide to another slain a wolf-dog, a *gilla* and an *óglæch* of the Fianna, besides the killing of one among the three best men appertaining to clan-Ronan: Aedh *rinn mac*

Ronan, together with his three sons Aedh and Eoghan and Eobhran. [Conan's device was executed thus:] the Fian-chief being come to *carn Luighdech* or 'Lughaid's cairn' in the west, in the province of Munster, and he after the chase sitting down there, here came Conan at him from behind, and round his shoulders outside of all his armature clasped the chief captain before he was aware. Finn recognised who he was that thus had taken him, and: 'what wouldest thou, Conan?' he said. 'To make my covenant of service, to have fellowship, to cement fealty with thee; for I am now seven years in exercise of marauding and of outlawry upon thee, and may no longer shift to endure thy wrath.' But Finn said: 'even though I took thee, yet so great is the evil and iniquity thou hast wrought all Ireland's Fianna that I cannot deem they would admit thee to peace.' 'Do but thou receive me, Fian-chief, and leave the rest between the Fianna and myself.' 'I will,' said Finn, 'although for my part it is a service-contract extorted forcibly.' Thus did Finn receive him, and Conan enlisted with him and became one of his people. Then in detachments and in companies the Fianna arrived, and to each band of them as they came up it was an astonishment to behold in one and the same place those two that in all Ireland and Scotland had been the greatest enemies.

"Conan," said the Fianna, 'it is well; but in lieu of the great injuries thou hast done us what hast thou to offer?' 'Every strait peril, every extremity, every great harm that shall overtake you, be it I that first shall adventure myself against it—but on these terms: that if I fall in the matter [and ye suffer] your enmities be heaped on me; if I fall not [and ye be rescued], the fame and lustre of it to be mine.' Ossian answered: 'verily, and by our words, never have we had conditions better than these.' Whereupon peace was made with Conan.

Finn enquired: 'how many of a following art thou, Conan?' 'Five hundred *óglæchs*, five hundred *gillas*, and as many hounds.' 'Thou being so many in force,' said Finn, 'search out Ireland for thyself, and whatsoever *triucha céid* in her thou shalt choose I will give it thee.' We therefore," continued Caeilte, "eight *óglæchs* of us, accompanied him hither to this town in which we are; nor till he gained it had Conan, for all that the Fianna had admitted him to peace, felt confidence in any other. But when he saw this spot that it was an obscure refuge, strong and impregnable, he was in love with it; with all his force and following

he came therefore, for a space of thirty years the place was possessed by him, and every battle and bicker that occurred during that time he continually affronted the first hazard of them all."

Patrick questioned: "what was the manner of that Conan's death?" "He was one of the four men of the Fianna that died in his bed [lit. 'on pillow']: a venomous worm it was that settled in his head; and in the same interval, between one canonical hour and another, he perished."

Again Patrick asked: "what served him for water here?" Caeilte said: "a well of spring-water that is in the town." "'Tis a mysterious place where it is then," said Eoghan, "for on the earth's surface we cannot find it." "But a few of the Fianna were they to whom it was familiar until such time as a certain *óglæch* of them hit upon it, and I after him, lastly the man of the place himself." "Who was the first *óglæch*?" said Patrick. "Aedh son of Finn; and I affirm that in all Ireland was not a spot in which, whether from cliff, from river, from estuary or from any fastness, human being had ever drawn beaker- or bowl-ful of water but he would at midnight make his way to it. Now where the well is," added Caeilte, "is in the rugged-headed rock's very side, and covered in with a most solid hermetically-fitted lid of stone. Many a day Smirgat and Derdubh from *dubhsliabh* or 'black-mountain' found it!" and he uttered:—

"I know a well upon the southern side which shall procure you your especial weal; within the which, right in its midst, for you a sparkling perfect water is. 'Water the *dún* will never have,' quoth Eoghan innocent of ill intent, 'unless the King of Heaven help us, and gentle radiant Mary's precious Son.' Good my prowess in the battle was against the men from over sea: fifty thrice told that made a gallant show fell by me there. Smirgat daughter of the generous Fathach, Derdubh from the mountain black: a pair beloved and that would range afar to spy out and deliver their enemies to the Fianna. I was the Caeilte that was endowed with form; many were they whom I forced to pant out *uch!* when by virtue of my running only I got together a couple, male and female, of all wild creatures in existence. A good folk Finn's people were—alas for him that in Ireland survives them! much of alacrity the impetuous brotherhood possessed, and many were the lands in which &y knew their way about!"

Says Patrick: "the thing is to go now and to find the well." "I dread to find it," said Caeilte: "for nine warriors they were that used to lift off its cover, and even so many that used to put it on again; I fear lest the well's water [being released] drown the town." But the Saint rejoined: "God is well able to mete it out as shall be expedient." Caeilte proceeded, they went with him; and a mighty block of stone that projected from the town's side [i.e. from the natural wall of rock that hemmed it round]—Caeilte clasped both his arms about it and dragged it to him, whereby out of the rock leaped a very vehement burst of clearest water, most delicious to the view, and straightway began to completely swamp the town. Here however Patrick raises the mild hand of faith that ever relieved all stress and all straits on which it was brought to bear, and into the rock and mountain the water is swallowed back again: all but the fill of Patrick's hollowed palm that trickled gently out. Benignus cried: "*bas Phátraic* or 'Patrick's palm' be the well's name for the future!" "I license it to be so," Patrick said, "until in the latter time fratricide shall by them of its country be committed in the town."

They, Patrick and Caeilte and so many as they had with them in the dwelling, came out upon the green; and soon they saw come towards them a solitary *óglæch*, whose description was this: next to his skin he had a shirt of yellow silk, a handsome green mantle round him, and in the same a brooch of gold surmounting his breast "Who art thou, young man?" asked Caeilte. "Aedh son of Aedh *na nabasach* from *cnoc árdmhulla* abroad in the sea, which at this time is called *rachlainn* or *rachrainn*, i.e. 'Rathlin' or 'Raghery' island. I am leading youth of the *tuatha dé danann* in general, and to enquire somewhat of thee I am come now." "Young man, what wouldst thou enquire of me?" returned Caeilte. "There is not anything of which I would interrogate thee sooner than of the reason why the name of *carn Manannáin* or 'Manannan's cairn' is given to this one." Then Caeilte began:—

"It was a warrior of the *tuatha dé danann*: *Aillén mac Eogabail*, that fell in love with the wife of Manannan mac Lir; while Aillen's sister, Aine daughter of Eogabal, fell in love with Manannan, to whom again she was dearer than the whole human tribe besides. Aine asked of her brother now, of Aillen: 'what is it that hath wasted [lit. 'made to ebb'] the king-like stately form that clothed thee once?' 'By my word and verily,

young woman,' Aillen said, 'thine only self excepted there is not of the human race one to whom I would disclose the matter'; and he told her: 'it is that I am enamoured of *Uchtdelbh* or 'Breast-shape,' i.e. 'of the shapely bosom,' Angus Finn's daughter and wife of Manannan.' 'In my hand lies the remedy for that!' cries Aine: 'for Manannan is in love with me and, if he give thee his wife, I will as the price of procuring thee relief yield him my society.' They, Aillen and Aine, came away as far as to this *tulach*, whither Manannan too (his wife with him) arrived. Aine took her seat at Manannan's right hand, and gave him three loving passionate kisses; then they sought news one of the other. But when Manannan's wife saw Aillen she loved him—" Here Patrick interrupting said: "why this is a complicated bit of romance: that Aillen mac Eogabal's sister should love Manannan, and Manannan's wife fancy Aillen"; whence the old adage: 'romancing is a complicated affair.' Caeilte resumed: "so Manannan handed over his own wife to Eogabal's son Aillen, himself taking Aillen's sister Aine; and these, Aedh, my soul, are the two complementary answers to the question [lit. 'are the two queries'] which thou hast put to me."

In that town they abode the length of a week; then they bade farewell to chief-hospitaller Eoghan and, in guerdon of all that this latter had done by way of compliance with his will, the Saint granted him Heaven.

Then they progressed eastwardly to *glenn an scáil* or 'glen of the champion,' which at the present is called *muinter Dhiughra*: (the place where to *Mílchú mac ú-Buain* king of Dalaradia Patrick once had been in bondage), and they see before them a flourishing church in which were thirty young ecclesiastics that fervently glorified the Creator. Upon looking away in the other direction they perceive again a church having beside it a fair green close, and: "to the King of Heaven and of Earth we give thanks for it," said Caeilte: "an habitation of [profane] crowds and of [armed] throng this hath been, yet is it now a place of saints and of righteous." Patrick enquired: "which of the Fianna were in yon town?" "In the one was Raighne Wide-eye son of Finn, and his son Cainche the crimson-red in the other; but the clan-Morna slew Raighne mac Finn: from whom is *magh Raighne* or 'Raighne's plain,' and the other son as well: from whom is *sliabh Chainche* or 'Cainche's mountain.'" "

It was but a short time they had been there till they saw towards them a gentle maid of pubescent age and with flowing yellow hair. Among them she sat down upon the sodded mound, and: "who art thou, girl?" asked Patrick. "I am *Edáin* Fair-hair, daughter of *Baedán* king of Dalaradia." "And wherefore art thou come?" pursued the Saint. "In order to dedicate to thee our kin both quick and dead; for of my seed [i.e. race] lives none now but myself and my own brother." With that she thrust her hand between herself and her smock and produced fifty ingots of gold with as many of silver (in which were fifty ounces of each metal), and to Patrick gave the whole as a *screpall* soiscéla, i.e. 'scripulum evangelii' or 'gospel penny,' then made genuflection to him. "What name bears thy brother?" he asked. "*Loingsech* mac Baedan," she answered. "Ireland's royal rule I grant him," Patrick said, "and three of his seed to reign after him." "All that ever we shall possess of Ireland we assign to thee, holy Cleric." Then she bade them farewell, but they continued on the tulach.

Now along with Patrick was one that to Muiredach mac Finnachta king of Connacht was an *óglæch* attached to his person: Corc mac Dairine, son of the king of *corca Dhuibhne* or 'the barony of Corcaguiney' in Kerry, and he said: "Caelte, my soul, there is a question I would fain put to thee: why is a certain wave called *tonn Chlíodhna* or 'of Cleena,' and another one *tonn Téide* or 'of Teide'?" Caelte said then:

"It was an *óglæch* of trust that Finn had: *Ciabhán*, son of Eochaid Red-weapon king of Ulidia in the north; and he was so that, as the moon in her twelve provinces exceeds in brilliance all stars of heaven, even such was the measure in which for form and feature that young man outshone all kings' sons in the world. With him the Fianna grew to be discontented however, the cause of their discontent being this: among them was no woman, mated or unmated, that was not in love with him. Finn renounced him therefore; yet was he loath to have him go, only that for the greatness of their jealousy he feared the Fianna of all Ireland. Ciabhan went his way accordingly, and to *trágh an chairn* or 'strand of the cairn' (which now is called *trágh na dtréinfher* or 'strand of the strong men') in the province of Ulidia, between *dún Sobhairce* or 'Dunseverick' in Antrim and the sea. There he saw a high-prowed currach having a narrow stern of copper, and in it two young men that wore each one a

robe wrapping him to his shoulders. Ciabhan salutes them and they return it: 'whence are ye, youngsters?' he asked them. Says one of them: 'I am Lodan the king of India's son, and yonder other is Eolus son of the king of Greece; the sea has drifted and the wind driven us, nor know we what land or what race of the world at large is that in and among which we are.' 'He that should fancy to sail the sea with you,' said Ciabhan, 'would ye give him a berth in the currach?' 'Wert thou all alone we would do so,' they answered. 'Come now, Ciabhan,' his people said, 'is it Ireland thou hast a mind to leave?' 'Even she it is,' he replied, 'for in her I find neither shelter nor protection.' Ciabhan stepped into the currach and bade farewell to his men, who were gloomy and discouraged: for to part from him they felt to be a divorcing of soul and body; then with the two young men in the boat he ratified amity and friendship.

"Now rose at them white and bellowing waves, insomuch that each huge ocean billow of them equalled a mountain; and that the beautiful variegated salmon wont to hug bottom sand and shingle touched the currach's very sides; in presence of which phenomena horror affected them, and fear and affright, Ciabhan saying: 'by our word and verily, were it but on land we were we could whether on battle-field or in single combat make a good fight for ourselves.' In this great extremity they continued until they saw bear down on them an *óglæch* having under him a dark-grey horse reined with a golden bridle; for the space of nine waves he would be submerged in the sea, but would rise on the crest of the tenth, and that without his breast or chest wetted. He enquired of them: 'what fee would ye give him that should rescue you out of this great strait?' They made answer: 'is there in our hand the price that is demanded of us?' 'There is so,' said the warrior: 'that yourselves be by conditions of service and of fealty bound to him that should so succour you.' They consented and struck their hands into the *óglæch*'s.

"This done he drew them all three to him out of the currach on to the horse, abreast and alongside of which the boat on its beam ends swam till they came into port and took the beach in *tír tarrngaire* or 'the land of promise.' There they dismounted and went on to *loch luchra* or 'loch of the pigmies,' and to Manannan's *cathair* or stone fort in which an end was just made of ordering a banqueting-hall before them. All four of them

were served then: their horns, their *cuachs*, their cups were raised; comely dark-eyebrowed *gillas* went round with smooth-polished horns; sweet-stringed timpans were played by them, and most melodious dulcet-chorded harps, until the whole house was flooded with music.

"Then there appeared a set of long-snouted spur-heeled lean-hammed carles, foxy and bald, full of ribald quips, that in Manannan's mansion used to practise games and tricks, one of which was this: to take nine straight osier-rods and (the while they stood on one leg and had but one arm free) to dart them upward to rafter and to roof-tree of the building, he that did this catching them again in the same form. The purpose for which they practised this was the putting to shame of such free-born scions of noble race as out of far foreign borders from time to time arrived there. On the present night therefore the performer, according as previously he was wont, executed his feat and, coming to Ciabhan then (for in form and gait, as in fame, he excelled all such as both of *tuatha dé danann* and of Milesius' sons were in the house of Manannan), put the nine rods into his hand. Ciabhan stood up and before Manannan and all chiefs of the land of promise did the trick as though that had been his one and only study always. He handed the things to Eolus son of the king of Greece, who promptly and accurately achieved the matter, passed the implements to the king of India's son Loden, and in like wise he too managed it.

"Now in the land of promise Manannan possessed an arch-ollave that had three daughters: *Clíodhna* or 'Cleena,' Aeife and Edaein Fair-hair, the *tuatha dé danann*'s three treasures of spinsterhood and chastity, whom in fact it was not to be feared that aught else but pernicious effects of continence would ever kill. Yet upon our three warriors these at the one instant cast their affections, and appointed to elope with them on the very next day. To meet said three the girls sought the landing-place, where the king of India's son Loden and Eolus son of the king of Greece [with their damsels] got into one currach, Ciabhan son of Eochaid *imdherg* and Cleena entering another. From this point they sail away to *trágh Théite* or 'Teite's strand' in the south of Ireland, a spot on which that name was conferred thus: it was Ragamain's daughter Teite *bhrec* or 'the freckled,' that with thrice fifty young women resorted thither for 'a

wave-game' [i.e. surf-riding], and they all were drowned; whence trágh Théite.

"As regards Eochaid *imdherg*'s son Ciabhan, he landed upon this shore and went off to hunt in the adjacent country; but the outer swell rolled in on Cleena, whereby she was drowned there, and from her it is called *tonn Chliodhna* or 'Cleena's Wave' [in *cuan dór* or 'Glandore harbour']. Now came after her Manannan's own special household: Ildathach and his two sons, who also were enamoured of the girl, and on the same beach were drowned." As Caeilte said:

"Cleena Fair-head—a lasting calamity it is—upon the shore her death took place; a cause sufficing for her mother too to die was the event from which the old name is derived. When they of the promised land once had a general convention made, Eochaid *imdherg*'s son Ciabhan it was that by contrivance carried off his wife. Across the wide ship-carrying sea Ciabhan with the curly mane abducted yonder distant gathering's queen, whose name was Cleena. Afloat he left her there, and went upon a careless enterprise: in quest of game—a seemly employment 'twas—Ciabhan passed in under the forest's tangled tresses. He being gone the wave came in—to Ciabhan it was no propitious incident; a disaster at which we felt grief and displeasure was the fair-headed Cleena's drowning. Wave of Teite's *dún* that was a haunt of chiefs: such was the name the spot had borne until that billow drowned the woman to whom 'Cleena' was cognomen. On this shore to the north ye have *lecht Téite* or 'Teite's grave' [where she was laid], surrounded by a numerous company; upon the southern side *lecht Clíodhna*, 'Cleena's tomb,' lying close up against the *sídh* of *dorn buidhe* or 'the yellow fist.' Dornbuie's locks are drenched with the rollers of that mighty deluge; but many a one though there be there, yet Cleena is she whom they drown. Across the salt sea fifty ships in number Manannan's own especial household come—that was not an uncomely assemblage—and are drowned all in Cleena's Wave. Ildathach and his two sons—the three are drowned upon their wooing expedition; alas for them that trusted in the ship which found no mercy from the Wave of Cleena.

"Then Ciabhan *casmhongach* came to us at the *druim* or 'ridge' of *Asal mac ú-Móir*; in which same night died Eochaid *imdherg* king of Ulidia, and Finn invested Ciabhan with that kingdom's rule after his father. This

then, Corc mac Daire, is the narration thou soughtest of me," ended Caeilte.

After this the whole company, Patrick with them, moved on to *ráth Mhedhba* or 'Meave's rath,' and: "Caeilte," said the Saint, "who was the Meave from whom this rath is denominated?" "She was *Eochaid feidhlech*'s daughter Meave." "Was this it that served her as a principal residence?" "By no means was it so; but hither on the high festival day of *samhain* she would resort to confer with her magicians and her poets in order to learn that which during the coming year should turn out either well or ill for her; and the manner of her coming was in chariots by nines, as: nine in front of her, nine behind, and on either side of her nine." Patrick asked: "for what purpose did she that?" "To the end neither miry spattering of the way nor froth from the horses should reach her, nor her fresh clean vesture be defiled." "This is material for merriment," said the Saint.

"Caeilte," he said again, "what is this field's name?" "*Gort an fhosdóidh* or 'the field of staying.'" "What staying was that?" "It was *Druimdherg* or 'Red-back,' called *dána* or 'the bold,' son of *Duibdheichelt* or 'Black-raiment' of Connacht here, that was an *óglach* to Finn and had all but deserted from him on account of his wage which he thought was too long in coming to him. The three battles of the Fianna went about to detain him, but with them he rested not; to stay him therefore came Finn, in whose manner of staying an *óglach* were special properties, one of them being that if on the mutineer he made but three quatrains he would incontinently become reconciled. Finn said now:

"Thou, *Dhruimdherg dána*, pre-eminent in the encounter, if this day thou shalt depart from me with credit to thyself, then is our leave-taking a matter of rejoicing to us. But at *ráth chró* thrice fifty ounces once I gave thee in a single day; and at *carn Ruidhe* the fill of my *cuach*, of silver and of yellow gold. Rememberest thou at *ráth Aei* when we got the two women, and when we ate the nuts, that I was there and likewise thou?"

Again and the whole company drew forward to *ros na hechraighe* or 'the grove of horses,' which now is named *ail fionn* or 'the white stone,' i.e. 'Elphin' [where Caeilte explained]: "the reason of its being called 'the horse grove' was that when the provincial kings of Ireland banqueted in Cruachan here it was their horses used to be in fenced paddocks."

"Victory and benediction be thine, Caeilte," said Patrick: "that is great experience thou possessest!"

There they had been but a little while when they saw come to them a lone woman robed in mantle of green, a smock of soft silk being next her skin, and on her forehead a glittering plate of yellow gold. Whence art thou come, young woman?" challenged Patrick. Out of uaimh *Chruachna* or 'the cave of Cruachan,'" she replied. Caeilte asked: "woman, my soul, who art thou?" "I am *Scothniamh* or 'Flower-lustre,' daughter of the Daghdha's son Bodhb derg." Caeilte proceeded: "and what started thee hither?" "To require of thee my marriage-gift, because once upon a time thou promisedst me such." "What then was it that hindered thee from coming to *carn Cairedh* away south in Leinster's province to seek -it, seeing it had been promised that there thou shouldst have it?" "Untruthfully thou sayest that," she rejoined, "considering the separation one from the other that was forced on us." Here Patrick broke in with: "it is a wonder to us how we see you two: the girl young and invested with all comeliness; but thou, Caeilte, a withered ancient, bent in the back and dingily grown grey." "Which is no wonder at all," said Caeilte, "for no people of one generation or of one time are we: she is of the *tuatha dé danann*, who are unfading and whose duration is perennial; I am of the sons of Milesius, that are perishable and fade away." Patrick said: "give the woman her answer, Caeilte." "That will I indeed," he answered, and took his way to *carn soghradhach* on the north-west side of Cruachan; he put his left elbow to the cairn, pushed aside some of it, thrust in his hand and brought up the *lughbordach*: a crannoge which for purposes of rent and tribute had been given to Finn, and which Finn gave as wages to Conan *mael* mac Morna, who hid it in the cairn. The crannoge was on this wise: stuffed with its fill of gold; and Caeilte gave it to the young woman as her bride-gift. "It is but a short distance off the road and track of chariots that thou hast gotten that, Caeilte," said Patrick; and the other answered:—

"People have been that heretofore were here, for all the precious quality and vastness of whose gear they are but very few [i.e. none at all] that ever have come at it, though not remote it be from public ways. In Slievefuad there is a hidden hoard would set all Ireland on the move: three hundred ounces of the ruddy gold, together with the *duille dherg* or

'red leaf' [a spear's name]. Four vats full of gold there upon the very pinnacle of Slievesmole: the least vat of them being too wide for two, yet somewhat strait to hold three men. Son of Calpurn endowed with sanctity, this much I tell thee in the matter: still the treasures do endure, but not so the people."

When Patrick had made an end of his hours, of Mass, and of all the order of the Canon, Caeilte was brought to him and he interrogated him: "why was the name of *glenn na caillighe*, i.e. 'glen of the caillech or hag,' given to this one below?" and Caeilte said:

"It was of a day that Finn and the Fianna were here, and we saw a daft thing of a crooked-shinned grimy-looking hag that made for us. She challenges us to run a race with her on condition that the Fianna risk their customary stake on the event, and the terms concluded accordingly are that from him who shall be left behind his head be taken. We, three of the Fianna, ran against her: Ossian and *Diarmuid ó Duibhne* and myself; and we ran to *áth móir*, which at this time is called *áth mogha*. I was first crossing the ford westwards; I turned therefore to face the beldam behind me and lent her a sword-cut that put her head from her carcase, since which time to the present 'tis from her that glen is named." The clerics passed into the mansion, it was blessed by them, and after such benediction a legion of angels hovered over it; there then they tarried for a fortnight beyond the month.

Upon a certain day during their sojourn in this place they were aware of a young man whose general form and pleasurable aspect were excellent. "Who art thou, stripling?" Patrick asked. "I am Aedh son of *Eochaid lethderg*," he replied, "son of the king of Leinster in the south. Now it was a goaling-match that was got up by us at the *sídh* of Liamhain Soft-smock; and at the hurling were present my father and my mother, Bebhinn daughter of Cuan mac Fintan king of Connacht, that have no offspring but myself alone. Against the youths my opponents I [i.e. my side] took seven goals; but at the last one that I took, here come up to me two women clad in green mantles: two daughters of *Bodhb derg mac an Daghda*, and their names *Slad* and *Mumain*. Either of them took me by a hand, and they led me off to a garish *brugh*; whereby for now three years my people mourn after me, the *sídh*-folk caring for me ever since, and until last night I got a chance opening to escape from the *brugh*, when to

the number of fifty lads we emerged out of the *sídh* and forth upon the green. Then it was that I considered the magnitude of that strait in which they of the *sídh* had had me, and away from the *brugh* I came running to seek thee, holy Patrick." "That," said the Saint, "shall be to thee for a safeguard, so that neither their power nor their dominion shall any more prevail against thee."

Then Caeilte said to Patrick: "it were time for us to travel south into Leinster's province in order to restore his son to the king, to sow the faith there, and to acquire benefactions to the Church." Patrick called: "where is Cascorach mac Cainchinne?" "Here am I, holy cleric," answered the minstrel. "Be the king of Leinster's son in the one bed and in the one condition with thee until we reach his province."

Towards Leinster they journeyed now and so gained *fert Raeirinne*, or 'the grave of Raeire' daughter of Ronan *ruadh* or 'rufus,' in the great plain of Leinster; and here Caeilte told them how that grave came by the name: "it was an only sister that I had," he said: "whose name was Raeire, and who was wife to Goll mac Morna; upon this *tulach* she died in childbirth of a son, the infant also perishing with her; and now would I dearly like to crave a boon of thee, holy Patrick." "Caeilte, my soul, what boon is that?" "To have my own sister brought out of torment, since now I have attained to thy fellowship and to thy love." Patrick answered him: "for thy sake be thy father also, thy mother, and thy lord Finn mac Cumall taken out of pain, if it be good in the sight of God." For this thing Caeilte returned thanks to God and to the *Táilchenn*, and it was the richest prize that he had ever had. After which they proceeded to *earn na gcuradh* or 'the cairn of heroes,' at this time called the *garbthanach* or 'cruel burial,' in Hy-Murray.

"Tell us, Caeilte," said Patrick, "for what reason the name of *an gharbthanach* or 'the cruel burial' was conferred on this spot?" and Caeilte answered that:

"It was a monarch that swayed Ireland: *Tuathal techtmhar* son of *Fiacha findolach* son of *Feradach finnfechtnach* (which Tuathal it was that from the provincial kings of Ireland took their heads; so that from this *techtadh* or 'appropriation' that he made of Ireland, and exercised upon her provincials for Tara to serve himself, men called him *Tuathal techtmhar* or 'the acquisitive'), and he had two daughters: Fithir and Dairine were

their names. The king of Leinster, Eochaid son of *Eochaid ainchenn* came to sue for one of them, and Tuathal questioned him: ‘whether of the two girls wouldest thou?’ ‘I would fain have Fithir,’ said the king of Leinster. But the king of Ireland replied that the younger he would not give away before the elder, therefore to the king of Leinster Tuathal’s daughter Dairine was given; for whose bride-gift he assigned of every kind of stock an hundred. In this place for a year she was by him, but he loved her not; one night therefore in his bed he framed within himself a snare and artifice, which was this: to carry the king of Ireland’s daughter into mid-forest, to fell it round about her and, nine foster-sisters that she had being with her, to construct for her a secret and secluded house; then to say that she was dead. His horses were harnessed for the king, his chariot was made ready, and he reached Tara to confer with the king of Ireland. The latter asked him for news, and he said: ‘great and evil tidings I have—that the daughter thou gavest me died last night with us.’ ‘Wherefore then art thou come to seek me?’ asked Tuathal; ‘for a tale more grievous than that is to me I have not heard.’ The king of Leinster said: ‘I am come to solicit of thee the other daughter, for I would not be severed from thine alliance.’ ‘By my word,’ exclaimed Tuathal, ‘the giving of my daughter to thee augurs me neither peace nor pleasure.’ The king of Leinster answered: ‘not I it was that had power of her life.’ So the other daughter was given to him,” Caeilte went on, “and he brought her to this town; to which when the girl was come, there her sister was before her

Caeilte *cecinit.*

“Her mouth Fithir laid to the ground (no perfect alliance this for Leinster’s king); and so her heart was broken into three, for her strength was vanished into nothing.

“And when the other daughter saw that she too died, for sorrow of her sister:—

“Fithir and Dairine, jovial Tuathal’s daughters twain: Fithir expired for very shame, Dairine died of grief for her.”

“By the king of Leinster their laying out was performed here, and the king said: ‘it is a cruel burial,’ whence the name *garbthanach* cleaves to this place; and in this sodded grave, holy Patrick, they were laid together,” ended Caeilte.

"Success and benediction be thine, Caeilte, my soul," cried Patrick: "that is a good story!"

Hard by them now they saw a *brugh* with a fenced field of grass; in it a youth affable and of distinguished presence, and in the pasture-field before him thrice fifty horses. Patrick approached the stripling, who rose before him, and the Saint said: "a king's supporters be about thee and appertain to 'the man of thy place' [i.e. thy representative]; what name hast thou?" "I am Muiredach, son of Tuathal mac Finnachta king of this country." "What is that mansion which we perceive?" asked Patrick. "That of a hospitaller belonging to the king of Leinster's people: *Coscrach na gcét* or 'Coscrach of the hundreds' is his name." "Why is that name imposed on him?" "His stock and herds it is not possible to number until they be reckoned by hundreds." Patrick asked: "shall we there find this night's entertainment?" "Thou shalt," the young man answered, "for in the town I have charge and authority, the *óglæch* of the place not being there himself." So they came to the town, and he lodged Patrick with his familia in a most spacious royal house that was in it, where with all reverence they were ministered to.

As regards Caeilte he took his way to *clock na narm* or 'the stone of arms' to the southward of the dwelling: the spot where yearly the Fianna practised to grind their weapons upon a certain great mass of stone; and he standing there over the stone wept copious very lamentable tears as he remembered the great and brave company which many a time had stood over it along with him. But he had not been there long before he discerned a single *óglæch* that came towards him: around him was a crimson mantle with a brooch of gold in it; he wore the semblance of a good man and had a princely port, smooth curling hair too; and before Caeilte well knew it the young man sat on one end of the stone by him. "Warrior, what is thy cognomen?" asked Caeilte. "*Coscrach na gcét* is my name," he answered, "and art thou he for whom I take thee?" "And who may that be?" "As I suppose," said Coscrach, "thou art Caeilte mac Ronan." Caeilte answered: "true it is that I am so." "I rejoice that thou hast chanced towards me," Coscrach said. "And why is that?" Coscrach says: "I have nine-and-twenty *seisrecha* or 'plough-lands'; and when it is fitting time for reaping of the crop here comes a most impetuous wild deer that spoils and ruins it all to such pitch that we have no profit of the

same. I adjure thee therefore, Caeilte my soul, lend me some succour and relief in the matter of averting that stag from me." "When I was in vigour and in fettle I would have fended off that same from thee," said Caeilte.

Here they marked the approach of a swift-marching phalanx, hostile in array of battle, with a grove of tall spears reared at their shoulders, a bulwark of well-turned red shields protecting them. "Coscrach, my soul, who are they?" asked Caeilte. "Tuathal mac Finnacha, king of this country," said Coscrach; and with that the *óglæch* sat down upon the green where they were.

Then Caeilte said to Coscrach of the hundreds: "couldest thou but find messengers to *cluain chaoin na fairche* or 'Clonkeen' in the province of Munster, to *doire na finghaile* or 'the oak-grove of fratricide,' my seven hunting nets are there." The messengers went to fetch the nets therefore, and brought them back. Caeilte ordered this hunt, disposing the bulk of the men and greater part of the hounds in the direction from which he supposed that the stag would come. Upon the precipices and waterfalls and invers of the country he stretched his nets, and the great deer (as his habit yearly was) came at them. Caeilte, seeing him come to *áth an daimh* or 'the stag's ford' on the Slaney, grasped the *coscrach* or 'the slayer,' his spear namely, and as the deer was entangled in the toils smote him with a mighty throw so that of the spear's shaft [besides the head] a portion equal to the length of a warrior's hand shewed through him. Coscrach said then: "in good sooth I think the deer's blood is drawn"; whence from that time to this *áth deargtha an daimh* or 'ford of bleeding the stag' is its name. His chine they carried to *druim leathan* or 'broad ridge,' which at this time is called *druim ndearg na damhraighe* or 'red ridge of the deer.' "Caeilte, thine advent to usward is a lucky one," said Coscrach of the hundreds. They gained the mansion in which Patrick was, and Coscrach laid his head in the Saint's bosom, as did his seven sons also and his seven daughters, and all made genuflexion to him; for on this night two benefits were befallen Coscrach: Patrick's ministration to his soul's weal, and Caeilte's salvage of his crops by slaughter of the stag that wasted him. That night then they passed with quaffing and all enjoyment, and on the morrow the whole company together with saint Patrick issued forth on the fort's green.

Then Coscrach questioned Caeilte: "why was the name of *cloch na narm* given to this solid block of stone?" "That," Caeilte answered, "is the stone on which yearly at *samhain*-tide the Fianna used to grind their arms; and on that stone was exposed the best official test of peace [prevailing in the land] that during the reign of Conn, of Art, of Cormac and of Cairbre Lifechair was in either Ireland or Scotland: an arm-ring of red gold which, there being a hole in the pillar-stone, was passed through the same, and so excellent was the rule of those kings that none dared take it away; while the magicians' divination was so acute that therefore, as well as for the said kings' discipline, none ventured so much as to move it with a touch. Howbeit those former kings successively passed away until Cairbre Lifechair arose, who fell in the battle of Gowra; then we (so many of the remnant of the Fianna as we were) retreated to this ford, and with putting of that which had been its upper part downwards I inverted the stone so that it was as ye behold it." The company said: "could we but see the hole and the token we would believe the thing." "Grant me a little spell—for the Gael is a perfervid being—till I lift the nether and make an upper end of it," said Caeilte; whence the adage: 'a perfervid being is the Gael.' But the whole of them as many as they were there went at it presently and all together, yet even so availed no jot with it. Then came Caeilte and with his two fore-arms embraced it, hove it out of the earth, and it proved to be thus: with its bangle of gold through a hole at the lower end, so that all in general saw it. Caeilte addressed himself to the bracelet and divided it in two: one-half he gave to Patrick, the other to them of the town in which they were, and its name therefore from that time to this is *cluain fhalach*, i.e. 'lawn of the *fail* or armlet'; that of the stone being *lia na narm* or 'the monolith of arms.'" Whereupon Caeilte uttered a quatrain:—

"Many a spear of the kind with which grief is wrought, many an accomplished hero's sword, was sharpened by us here upon the pillar-stone, O Coscrach, on each recurring *samhain*-day."

"Success and benediction attend thee, Caeilte; that is good antiquarian lore thou hast imparted to us!" said Patrick.

For Coscrach of the hundreds his horses were harnessed now, his chariot was made ready, and away he came eastwards to *druim leathan* or 'the broad ridge' of Laeghaire mac Ugaine, in order to confer with

Eochaid *leithdearg* king of Leinster, and to tell them there all about Caelte. "Coscrach," said the king, "in that thou never advisedst me that Caelte was with thee my displeasure at thee is great."

To seek Patrick and Caelte then the king of Leinster rose out three battles strong to Rathmore of Moyfea, which at the present is termed Rathmore in the great plain of Leinster. Patrick with his familia sit in front of the rath (whence *suide Pátraic* or 'Patrick's seat' is the spot's name), and the king of Leinster with all his numbers sits likewise. "Though I be come to thee, saint Patrick my soul," says the king, "yet were we at the time already oppressed with a sore emergency: inasmuch as Ailill mac Scanlann mac Dunghal, king of the Decies, had challenged us to battle at *coill an chosnamha* or 'the wood of contention,' now called *magh Raighne* or 'Raighne's plain'; but him I have suffered to burn the country, and am come to do thy will and to have speech of thee." Patrick answered: "with thee in guerdon of it be the burial-place of Ireland's kings, if only thou make the circuit of this flagstone on which I sit"; and Caelte uttered:

"At Laeghaire's broad ridge a flagstone lies; the which if [on the eve of battle] Leinster's king of the wide territories but go right-handed round, the defeat shall be in front of that good man."

Now said Patrick: "I command that where he [Ailill] stands in *magh Raighne* there the earth swallow him up"; which also was effected on the spot: for by efficacy of Saint Patrick's word the earth engulfed him, and it was decreed that never should his successor prevail against a king of Leinster.

The king said: "greatly I welcome thine advent, Caelte, though it were trusting to thy face alone thou camest [i.e. on thine own merits apart from Patrick's support]! and good right too why thou shouldst come, for thy mother was Teigue's daughter Eithne. But tell me, Fian-chief, why the well which we have here before the rath was called *tipra na scайдheirce* or 'the mirror well.'" "It was *Scáithdearc* or 'mirror,' daughter of Cumall, who as she tried the bramble-bush of loch Lurgan was drowned in that well; for out of that same bush the swelling cold-lymphed loch Lurgan rose and spread from *an chorrabhall* or 'the odd apple-tree' that is against Slievesmole or 'the mountain of Smól mac Eidhlecair' (now called Slievebloom) even to this spot, and was in process

of extending over the whole province. Then it was that Finn brought into play the most powerful and pre-excellent defence that ever any contrived, whether before or since: the *súghmaire* or 'sucker' out of the land of India, the wizards out of the land of Almayne, the Amazons out of Saxon- and out of Frank-land, and absorbed that swelling cold-lymphed loch."

"Those original Fianna of Finn's were a noble set," said the king of Leinster. "No worse than each man of us their survivors was each man of them, except in so far as they attained not to be in the one epoch and time with you; and a thing that served shepherds and herdsmen for a pastime was to practise here the gathering up of their weapons and of their raiment that once were the three battalions of the Fianna: Finn mac Cumall's, and those of Ferdoman mac Innoman from *láthrac caein* or 'pleasant site,' of the Galianic province." Eochaid king of Leinster said: "by the reality of thy valour and of thy skill at arms, Caeilte, I conjure thee to recite for us in their companies and in their cohorts all such as loch Lurgan's bramble-bush drowned of them." Then Caeilte said:—

"Faelan of Finnloch out of the province of Connacht in the west; Angus and *Dobarchú* or 'waterdog,' i.e. 'otter,' out of Leinster's province; *Druimdherg* or 'red-back' of Derry, and *Dubh dhá dét* or 'black one of two teeth,' of Kinelconall in the north; Iubhar and Aicher, Aedh and Art, the four kings of *coill an chosnamha* at this present called Ossory; Cairell, Caicher, Cormac and Caemh, the king of Dalaradia's four sons out of the north; Maine and Art and Aralt or 'Harold,' the king of Scotland's three sons from beyond; Eobhran and Aedh and Eoghan, the king of Britain's three sons; Uai king of Isla and his two sons: Cerna and Cernabroc, the two kings of *innse gall* or 'the isles of strangers,' i.e. the Hebrides, in the north; Diure and Barrac and Idae, the king of northern Lochlann's three sons; Luath and Innell and Eoghan, the three kings of the *Mairtine* of Munster in the west; Glas and Delga and Duibhne, three sons of the king of the *tuatha* of Bregia and of Meath; Illann and Aedh and Eoghanan, three sons of the king of Kinelowen in the north; Samaisc and Arthur and Inbeir, three sons of the king of the *gallghaedhel* or 'Norse-Gael' from beyond; which make up the names of the chiefs and lords and men of territory which the bramble-bush drowned of Finn mac Cumall's original Fianna. And though my vigour and my spear-throwing be done for, yet

have I known this plain that it was a swelling and cold-lymphed loch the water of which was blue and clear." He uttered now:

"Water of a pellucid rill...."

Then he brought to mind and took heed that this day he lacked his Fianna, his band, his own very people, and was reft of his strength and spear-skill; whereat he fell to grieve mightily. "Good now, Caeilte, my soul," said Patrick, "it is not just for thee to grieve; for thy desire [gratified] and thy state now are better than all the rest, inasmuch as I have found thee, and that to thee above any other one of the Fianna God's good things, as faith, and piety, and fervent prayer, are come."

The end of day, and night's first beginning, came upon them now and Coscrach said to the king of Leinster: "I have for thee a large and dainty banquet, eight score vats of ale fit to drink and of a fine flavour." "Never," returned the king, "has there been offered me a feast with which I was pleased better than with this." As many as they were therefore, both of laymen and of clerics that accompanied Saint Patrick, they started for said feast and entered into the mansion.

Then stood up a cup-bearer to pour out, a door-keeper to do the office of the door, a dispenser to make out portions; from their own proper vats of red yew the spigots were taken by them, servitors arose with goblets of white gold, and to all in general meat and liquor were served out.

But the king of Leinster said to Patrick: "saw we not a minstrel with you?" "Surely thou sawest one," answered Patrick: "Cascorach, that with Caeilte acquires knowledge and instruction, Where," he continued, "is the acolyte?" "Here am I, holy cleric." "Get thee out," said the Saint [privily], "and let Aedh son of Eochaid king of Leinster carrying Cascorach's timpan for him come back with thee, but with a dark and ample hood upon him." In which wise he was brought to Patrick and to the king of Leinster.

Cascorach played his timpan, inspiring it with a certain fairy cadence; whence it is reported that to the marvellous magic music which he made for them wounded men would have slept. Which done, jewels and things of price were given to the minstrel, who continually put them into his *gilla*'s hand [as though to keep for him]; but the latter as regularly distributed them to all. These questioned: "which of the three excels in

generosity—whether they that in the first place bestow the jewels, or the minstrel, or the *gilla*?" "The *gilla*'s liberality is the best," said the king, "for he it is that to the general gives away all that he gets." Cascorach said: "everything that I shall get let him give it out; for not to gather pelf am I with the *Táilchenn* and Caeilte, but to gain knowledge and instruction with Caeilte, and from Patrick to win Heaven for my soul." The king asked: "minstrel, my soul, where gottest thou the *gilla* that in generosity exceeds thyself?" "Away north in the province of Ulster," Cascorach answered. "What name has he?" "He is just a *gilla* that we got hold of, concerning whom it is unknown whether he have a name, or even a father and mother."

The king of Leinster stood up with a great horn that was in his hand, and said: "good, my soul, holy Patrick, it was once when we were at soft-smocked Liamhain's *sídh*, and to us came a pair of delicate yellow-haired damsels that out of the midst of the meeting carried off my only son; neither know we whether it was up into the firmament or into earth downwards they took him. I after my only son am as a solitary tree opposed to wind; and from that time to this want him, not knowing in the world how he fares. From thee therefore, holy Patrick, I would learn whether he be alive or whether he be dead." The Saint said: "if it be God's good pleasure knowledge of that shall be had for thee." There they were until rising time on the morrow, and until the sun went up out of his fiery zone.

Then said the king to Patrick: "for hunting and for the chase I desire to go eastwards to *tulach an mháil* or 'the hero's hill,' in the plain of Leinster; and it were right thou camest with me, for it will divert thee more than will the being at home: the whole throng and multitude of Leinster will congregate to us there." Hereupon two great companies went with them: one set, whose occupation was devotion and the faith, with Patrick; another, that were busied with the Fianna of Ireland's many deeds of valour and of arms, with Caeilte mac Ronan and the king. Thus they went their way to *tulach an mháil* in Leinster's plain.

There the king questioned Caeilte: "wherefore was that name given to this hill, and *cnoc Aeife* to that one below?" and Caeilte began:—

"It was a monarch that swayed Scotland: Aiel son of Donald of the fleet, and he had a son: *Mál* mac Aiel, who again had a spouse: Aeife,

daughter of Scoa's son Albh king of Lochlann to the northward. Now of Finn's people was a warrior, mac Lughach, and in every laudatory composition whatsoever that in both Ireland and Scotland was made for Finn, mac Lughach's praises were recited. What then—why when the king of Lochlann's daughter heard the great testimonies that authors and ollaves bore to mac Lughach she loved him for his reputation.

"Mal mac Aiel, three hundred *óglæchs* strong, went to hunt *sliabh mórr monaidh* in Scotland; who being gone the lady in her bower framed a design: to take with her over to Ireland nine own foster-sisters that she had; and such nine women accordingly came over the 'sea's mane' [i.e. wave-crests] to Ben-Edar, where the nine women, the queen tenth, landed.

"That was the day on which the hunting of Ben-Edar was made, its extent being from the little field of Meille mac Lurga Lom's house against Slievebloom up to Ben-Edar; and where Finn was was in his hunting-seat, with his gentle loving fosterling by him: Duibhrinn, son of the king of Kinelconall out of the north:—

Caeilte *cecinit*.

"Brown-haired Duibhrinn that could fight the fight many a time I summon to the flowing ale; my pleasant right-spoken little fosterling and my very heart the sportive Duibhrinn was.

"Far and wide on every side the youngster looked about him and there before him saw a vessel that took the haven's beach, there being in her after part a modest-eyed queenly lady with nine women in her company. With great store of all rich things such as they had brought with them they joined Finn, by whose side Aeife sat down. The Fian-chief looks upon her and requests an account of herself, whereupon from first to last she tells him all her doings: that she, being fallen in love with mac Lughach, was come over the sea to seek him. Then Finn welcomed her, for close was his kinship with him to whom she came: his daughter's son.

"The hunting had an end and the gentles of the Fianna by bands and companies repaired to Finn, each party as they came up enquiring who might the queen be. Finn told them her name and style, and the errand on which she came to Ireland. 'We greet her that has taken such a

journey,' they made answer: 'for in Ireland or in Scotland, save only Finn the chief, is no better man than he to whom she is come.'

"It was to mac Lughach that the hunting of Slievebloom's western side was fallen that day and [that being the farthest point] he last with all his number reached us. Finn's tent was spread over him, and into it were brought the lady and the chieftains of the Fianna; mac Lughach entering sat on one side of Finn, she took the other. As all the rest had done, so too mac Lughach questioned concerning her, and Finn gave him her whole history from the beginning to the end, saying: 'to thee she is come, and out of my hand into thine here she is, together with all her battle and her strife; yet upon thee will not that lie more heavily than on the Fianna at large [who will have to back thee].' That same night Finn (and with him the Fianna bringing the lady with her woman-folk) came to Almain, where mac Lughach and she were bedded, and for a year and a month she was with him unclaimed. But then," continued Caeilte, "we the three battles of the Fianna being upon this hill saw before long three bold divisions equal in size that marched on us. We demanded who was there, and they answered: 'it is Mal son of Aiel son of Donald of the fleet, to avenge his wife upon the Fianna.' 'A good time it is at which he comes,' said Fionn, 'just when we are all in one spot.'

"Then the battalia advanced on each other: Aiel son of Donald of the fleet grasped his arms, came, and ten times charged through and through the Fianna, of whom at each rush fell a hundred warriors. In the battle's centre he and mac Lugach fought: past the smooth hard spears' necks either towards other took four paces, and with the broad-grooved swords laid on: each one upon his fellow's head. Be it a long time or a short that they were at it, at all events Mal fell by mac Lughach, and was buried in this *tulach*," Caeilte said, and uttered:

"*Tulach an mháil* this is: a *tulach* where much carnage was; there warriors lay in their blood, and strength in martial strokes there was. Seven score of ships in number Mal came o'er the glittering and foaming brine; of which save only a single vessel's crew no soul escaped alive. In virtue of shield and battle-sword, of many-coloured raiment, gallantly Mal crossed the sea: whose hand in action was a hero's. Many a cliff and many a famous inver, many a river and many a burn [he faced], many a

hazard and tribulation [he endured, and emitted] many an *uch!* or ever he won to the *tulach*!

"Hence that name belongs to the *tulach*, and we have *cath tulcha an mháil* or 'the battle of *tulach an mháil*'; but *tulach Aeife* is the name of yon hill farther down, for upon that one the lady stood so long as the battle was a-fighting. From which time forth she belonged to mac Lughach, and to him became a mother of children."

Patrick and the whole company together rose now from the hill on which they were, and progressed as far as *tulach na bfiadh* or 'the hill of deer' to the westward thereof. Here Caeilte spied two raths that were on that *tulach*, as *ráth Spelán* and *ráth an mháil* 'or the hero's rath,' and the king of Leinster [when they were pointed out to him] said: "Caeilte, my soul, the one rath is a large one; and who were in them both?" "Two hospitallers to the king of Ireland, to Cormac," answered Caeilte: "and in them it was that, from the first of the month *troghan* now called *lughnasadh* or 'Lammas' to the day of *samhain* or 'All-Hallows,' yearly those two hospitallers: *Begán* the stock-master and *Spelán* son of *Dubhán*, had the pledges of all Ireland, feeding them."

Yet another *tulach* they saw near to them, and: "Caeilte," said the king of Leinster, "why has this been called *caeilesna* or 'the short rib?'" "I remember that," Caeilte answered: "it was Milid out of the east, son of Trechosach king of the continent, that with thrice fifty *óglæchs* came to win Ireland's sovereignty. He fell to require pledges of Finn mac Cumall; but the latter said that to any such number (though picked from the whole world's humans) he would not yield so much as a *gilla*, or other captive whatsoever. Milid defied Finn to single combat; but I rose," said Caeilte, "for that day there was in me the capacity to handle a good man, and by me he perished sheerly wearied out with fight. Now so hugely pleased at his fall the men of Ireland were that a portion of him was bestowed on every *tulach* of note, two of his short ribs being left on this one, and hence that appellation."

Again they moved on and as far as Rathmore of Moyfea, even to the king of Leinster's mansion. That night he had a banqueting-house set in order, and prescribed to furnish Cascorach with his timpan to the end he should make minstrelsy for the company. Patrick said: "let the *gilla* whom we found, his own *gilla*, deliver him his timpan." The *gilla* brought

the instrument, handed it to the minstrel, and Cascorach received it into his hand.

At this instant it was that the roof-tree took fire: all in unison were staring at the flames, and the musician made a motion to lay the timpan out of his hand and into its case; but the *gilla* said to him: "never let that hinder thee of thine art nor of thy minstrelsy; leave it but to me to save the house." A lump of a stone that he had, rolled in a corner of his shirt, he took then and hurled so excellently well that both roof-tree and fire it carried away and out over the town's lofty palisade; whence *árd féice* or 'roof-tree eminence' has from that day to this been the name of the place. "Success attend thy throwing, my son," cried Patrick: "good luck go with thy distributing and with thy cutting up!" All they of the house said: "never have we seen minstrel have *gilla* better than is that one for strength, for address, for generosity." Here they abode for that night and, all being on the morrow risen with Saint Patrick, went upon *cnoc na rígh* or 'the hill of kings,' which now is called *Maiste* or 'the hill of Mullaghmast,' where Patrick sat down. As for the king of Leinster, by him a hunting-match was set on foot in the spot now called *árd na macraidhe* or 'the hill of lads' (a present alternative name also being *árd scol* or 'hill of schools'), extending to *lios na móirrighna* or 'liss of the great queen,' as also *Maiste* is named. Of Patrick's familia were none in the king's company at this hunt excepting the musician and his *gilla*; but at the hands of these two, master and man, not a soul of the king's people attained to draw first blood whether of wild swine or of stag; nor since the Fianna died out had there been held a chase more productive than this.

Then Patrick stood up and to them all delivered admonition and a sermon; the province of Leinster dedicated to the Saint a third part of their children, and of their wealth a *trian* or 'third,' whereby *cnoc na dechmaidhe* or 'the tithe hill' is its name ever since; *magh an trín* or 'plain of the third part' is that of the wold; and *árd an phróicepta*, i.e. 'eminence of the *próicept'* or 'preaching,' that of the rising ground on which Patrick held forth.

After the sermon a great thirst took Patrick. Close to them they saw a town (the name of which was *tech cruinn* or 'round-house') and in the same a great feast laid; a drink for Patrick was besought of the host

(*Maelán* son of *Dubhán* his name was) but in the matter of a draught from that banquet he denies the Saint. The righteous one being angered at the niggard said: “to thee, Maelan, be not born either son or daughter; have thou not relatives, nor yet a single kinsman.” Neither had he.

After that they all came on to *árd Chuillinn* in the plain of Leinster, where they gazed abroad at the precipice and at the river [that were there], and at *árd Chuanaidhe*. The king interrogated Caeilte with: “why was *árd Chuanaidhe* conferred on the *árd* or ‘eminence’ yonder away from us, and on this spot the name of *árd Cuillinn*?” Lamentably and in grief Caeilte wept then, and said: “it was a special fosterling that I had here, Cuanaidhe, son of Lenn mac Faubar king of Leinster, namely; whose mother, Dubthach’s daughter Cuillinn, was not a good woman. Now once we were on the print-track of clan-Morna and, to the number of thrice fifty shield-wearers from among the armour-clad young men of Ireland’s Fianna, came hither: a shoulder without a white buckler, a head that lacked a helmet, was not amongst us. On stout *Cael ua Nemhnainn* the hundred-wounder I enjoined to follow the trail, and that warrior accordingly carried it as far as the town in which dwelt a certain she-miller [*Cuillinn* above]. In the woman’s company he saw a dark-browed young man that parleyed with her: a shirt of regal silk the same had next his skin, and about him a fringed mantle of fair crimson with a brooch of gold, he the while sitting by her on the platform’s edge [where she lay]. “My good son,” said Cuillinn, “be going now; for this is no place in which thou mayest confer with me, and clan-Morna (those hereditary enemies to Finn) have by the ford already crossed the river.” Cael returned to us and the tale was told us; then with the ready rising of one man we up and away till we overtook the other, whom (that is to say Cuanaidhe, son of Lenn mac Faubar and my own fosterling) we never recognised. He turned his face on us, charged through us thrice, and the third time delivered me a spear-cast that transfixes both my knees; whence also at every hill or crag up which I run it is the after-effect of that spear which comes against me. To him in turn I for my part administered a throw which, piercing his tunic’s sinus, grimly cracked his spine in two in him, and at yonder eminence he died; hence ‘Cuanaidhe’s eminence’ it is called.”

They all, Patrick along with them, went on to Rathmore of Moyfea, entered into that good town, and there for a space drank and took their pleasure. "Be thy timpan brought to thee, Cascorach," said the king. Then Bebhionn daughter of Coban king of Connacht declared: "that dark capacious hood which envelops the head of the minstrel's *gilla*, I wonder that neither by day nor by night it is ever stripped from him." "How do we know but 'tis a head in some way disfigured that he wears," said the king: "and yet, so far as every limb that we see of him goes, no defect of conformation affects it at all."

To Caeilte then king Eochaid said: "I possess [the stuff of] a spear-shaft, and on this I would fain have thee to expend four touches of thy skill; for I have heard that whether in Ireland or in Scotland there is not a shaft-trimmer better than thyself." Caeilte answered: "I tell thee that the spear-shaft which of old all Ireland could not finish, it was I that could make a hand of it." The shaft was put into Caeilte's hand and [in four operations] he dressed it effectually, so that in all Ireland and Scotland was no shaft better wrought. "Now," said the king, "fit the spear." Caeilte set his foot [i.e., stood close up] to a solid post of the house, and into it drove the spear's head; then he grasped the shaft and [falling back to a certain distance] dexterously hurled it at the head with such aim and force that into its bed and socket it went home just as though already for a long time it had been adjusted there. "Here, king of Leinster, my soul, is thy spear for thee," said Caeilte. Eochaid takes the weapon, and good it was: "my two horses and my chariot to thee, Caeilte," he cries, "in guerdon of the finished spear!" and those were the pair of horses and the chariot which at the last drew Caeilte in Ireland, the names of the two being *Err* and *Inneall*.

Howbeit the spear was in the king's hand and, as he considered it intently, he thought it great grief that he had no son and heir that should succeed to it. To Patrick enquiring why he fretted so he replied; "good cause I have for it." "And what is that?" "It is by reason of the son concerning whom a while ago I spoke to thee: that I am without an own peculiar and befitting successor for that spear which Caeilte has fitted for me." "Good," quoth Patrick: "be it put into the hand of the minstrel's lad till we know whether his grip will be filled with its shaft and socket": and the spear was handed to the youth, who right gallantly wielded and

poised it. "Doff now once for all thy dark capacious hood, and well mayest thou wear thy father's spear!" said Patrick. The lad removed his hood, and none there but recognised him. "By our word," exclaimed the assembly, "it is a good cleric's gift!" and the king said: "holy Patrick, seeing that till this day thou hast nourished him, and nurtured, let not the *tuatha dé danann*'s power any more prevail against the lad." Patrick answered: "that death which the king of Heaven and of Earth hath ordained is the one that he will have." Now rose the host and throng belonging to the *dún* and with the young man struck terms of service and of fealty, so that by the morrow's rising-time he had ten hundred of a force.

Again the whole of them (Patrick as well) advanced, Caeilte travelling in the chariot which the king had given him; and they reached *árd fostadha na féinne* out across Slaney, where Caeilte alighted out of the chariot and a hunting-match was disposed by them. "Caeilte," said the king, "it is well: why now was *árd fostadha na féinne* or 'eminence of the Fianna's arrestation' given to this rise?" "I remember it," answered Caeilte, "though its origin be no new thing [i.e. is very ancient]:

"It was one day that Finn mac Cumall and the three battles of the Fianna came to this ford, where as we sat we saw upon the round rock yonder that commands the ford a lone young woman girt with a silken tunic and wrapped in a green mantle held with a brooch of gold; on her head was a golden diadem, emblem of a queen, and she said: 'Fianna of Ireland, let one warrior of you come and speak with me.' Dathchaein's son, Sciathbreac, stepped forward and: 'whom wouldest thou?' he asked; she answered: 'Finn mac Cumall.' To confer with the damsels Finn sought the ford: 'who art thou, girl,' he said, 'and what is thy desire?' 'I am Doireann, daughter of the Daghdha's son Bodhb Derg, who to mate with thee in consideration of bride-gift and of presents am come hither.' 'What bride-gift?' asked Finn. 'A stipulation that for one year I be thine only wife, and after that in perpetuity enjoy a full half of thy conjugal society.' 'That,' said Finn, 'I concede not to any one of the whole world's women, neither will yield to thee.'

"Out of her bosom then the young woman brought a *cuach* of white silver containing its fill of delicious mead, and reached it to Finn, who questioned: 'young woman, what is this?' 'Mead,' was her answer:

'delectable, potent to intoxicate.' Now to Finn it was prohibition to refuse a regalement; he took the *cuach* therefore, drank a draught from it and, that swallowed, straightway was all demented. Upon the Fianna he turned his face, and every harm and flaw and mishap of battle that he knew against any man of them he, by operation of the frenzy that the young woman had worked in him, threw in their teeth.

"Then the chieftains of Ireland's Fianna rose and left the place for him: namely every one of them to retire to his own land and country; so that upon said hill were left none but Finn and myself. I rose then and went after the Fianna, to whom I said: 'men, for a cozening fairy woman's mischief that afflicts him, never desert your chief and lord!' Twelve times and yet another I collected and on this hill mustered them; the last of day being come now and the first of night, the venom died out of Finn's tongue so that at the final time of my staying them his sense and memory returned to him; but now would he have fallen upon his weapons of war and have chosen to die rather than to live. And that," ended Caeilte, "was one of the two days on which I had the greatest amount of hardship that ever befel me, as: the aforesaid day of staying the Fianna; and the day when, by bringing him 'the odd drove,' I ransomed Finn from Cormac the king. This then is the reason that from that time to this they respectively are *árd an fhostadha* and *áth an fhostadha*, or 'the hill' and 'the ford of staying':

Caeilte *cecinit*.

"The ford where Finn's Fianna were stayed...."

"Great quantity of evil, of battles and encounters, was had in these various places named by thee, Caeilte, my soul," said Eochaid mac Angus Finn king of Leinster. "It is not that any of those things comes against me to-day," Caeilte replied, "but only blight and decrepitude."

The company, Patrick accompanying them, passed on across *duibhfidh* or 'black-wood,' now called *fidh dorcha* or 'dark wood,' to *sliabh na mban* or 'mountain of women' now 'the mountain of Aighe son of Ugaine.' They ascended into the top and, being set down, tarried there for a season.

The king enquired of Caeilte: what mountain is this, and what the place where we are?" "This," answered Caeilte, "is a mountain in the

which is a fairy *brugh* that none (save only Finn accompanied with six óglaechs) has ever found; and it was this way:—

“A beautiful and timorous fawn that was roused by us at *Torach* or ‘Torry island’ in the north of Ireland, and we, being six óglaechs, followed it from Torach to this mountain of Aighe mac Ugaine. Here the fawn ‘put its head into the earth’ [i.e. vanished under ground], and in what direction it went [afterwards] we knew not. Heavy snow poured down now, making of the forest’s branches as it were a withe-twist; the greatness of the foul weather and of the storm that came robbed us of our lustihood and of our resourcefulness, and Finn said to me: ‘canst thou, Caeilte, find us protection against this night’s tempest?’ I suppled myself and away with me over the mountain’s elbow to the southward where, when I took a look round, I perceived a well illuminated sídh furnished forth with great variety of *cuachs*, of horns and of cups. For a space I stood in front of the sídh considering it, and bethought me how I might manage to enter the place and to enquire all about it; or else whether it were back again to Finn with his few Fianna I should go. The course on which I determined was such as that I went into the sídh, and on the house floor sat down in a chair of crystal. I surveyed the house round about me, and saw on the one side of it eight-and-twenty warriors with a woman of lovely form at each man’s shoulder; on the other side, six gentle and yellow-haired damsels that wore shag cloaks reaching to their shoulders. In the fair midst of the mansion another such sat in a chair and held a harp on which she performed and played continually; to whom every time that she had sung a lay was reached a horn that she should take a draught from it, she handing it back to him that had given it to her. Round her therefore they all sat and made merry.

“‘Caeilte my soul,’ said she, ‘suffer that thou be reverently ministered to.’ ‘By no means will I’ was my answer, ‘for I have with me those that are better than I, as Finn mac Cumall [with others his companions], and in this sídh he desires to have entertainment for this night.’ The óglaech of the sídh said: ‘Caeilte my soul, go to fetch Finn; for he in his own house never refused a man, neither with us shall he meet with denial.’ I went accordingly to bring Finn, and he said: ‘it is [i.e. seems to be] a long time thou art away from us, Caeilte, for since the day on which I first took

warrior's arms in my hand never have I had a night that distressed me more sorely than does this one.'

"Thereafter we, being as we were six that bore shield and weapon, entered into the bright and spacious *sídh*: Finn namely, myself, *Diarmuid ó Duibhne*, Ossian, Oscar and mac Lughach. In there we sat on the edge of a couch, and to tend us worshipfully a soft girl came, yellow-haired, of marriageable age; then she transferred us to a translucent crystal seat in the hall's. centre, and the freshest of all meats with the oldest of all liquors were brought to us. Now when we had made an end of moderating our hunger's keenness and our thirst the Fian-chief said. 'who among you is he whom I shall question?' and the tallest *óglæch* of them answered: 'enquire of whom thou wilt.' 'Warrior, who art thou thyself?' Finn began: 'for I knew not that in Ireland were so many as this number present and I impotent to recognize them.' 'Yonder eight-and-twenty *óglæchs* whom thou seest in the *sídh*,' the other answered, 'had the same father and mother, and indeed are sons to the Daghdha's son Midir Yellow-mane; our mother being *Fionnchaem* or 'the fair-lovely,' daughter of the king of *sídh monaidh* in the east [i.e. in Scotland]. Now to-morrow it will be thirty years since a convention and muster of the *tuatha dé danann* was made to confer their sovereignty on the Daghdha's son Bodhb Derg at the hospitable lightsome *brugh*, who of us, so many brethren as we are here, began to demand prisoners [i.e. hostages]; but we said that until the *tuatha dé danann* in general had given such neither would we.'

"To Midir, to our father, Bodhb Derg said: 'unless thou put away thy sons from thee we will wall up thy *sídh* on thee.' We therefore, these eight-and-twenty brothers, came out to seek a *sídh*-place; and searched out all Ireland until we found this obscure and hidden spot, in which from that time to this we abide. Twenty-eight brethren as I say we are here, who had each man of us ten hundred *óglæchs* of his own; but saving the eight-and-twenty that we are of one father's and one mother's progeny all these are now extinguished.' 'And how is your extinguishment effected?' asked Finn. 'By the *tuatha dé danann*'s coming yearly thrice to give us battle on this grass-clad green abroad.' 'What,' enquired Finn, 'is the long fresh grave that we saw on the green outside?' 'That is Dianghalach the wizard's: who was a good magician

that the *tuatha dé danann* had, and the greatest loss that was inflicted on them.' Finn questioned: 'what was the next loss?' 'All that the *tuatha dé danann* had of jewels, of wealth and of treasures: comprising horns, and cuachs, and goblets of crystal and pale gold, we at one stroke reft from them.' 'What was the third loss?' asked Finn. Donn mac Midir answered: 'Fethnaid daughter of Fidach, the *tuatha dé danann*'s she-minstrel: their melody, and recreation of their spirits all. So then to-morrow is their appointed time to be here to give us battle, but in fighting number we are but these eight-and-twenty brothers to oppose them. We had perceived ourselves, as being few in number, to be in peril and over-matched; wherefore in form of a daft fawn we despatched yonder bareheaded woman to Torach in Ireland's northern part to fetch thee, and her ye followed to this *sídh*. That young woman whom ye see wrapped in a green mantle and washing herself, she it is that went to look for you. The vacant part that ye see of the *sídh*, that is the room of them whom the *tuatha dé danann* have slain.'

"That night they passed in drinking and making merry, and when they rose Donn mac Midir said to Finn: I come with me upon the green that thou may'st see the place in which yearly we and the *tuatha dé danann* give each other battle.' They issued forth and looked abroad upon the graves and monumental stones. Donn said: 'it is appointed that thus far the *tuatha dé danann* come to meet us.' 'In what fashion [i.e. who and how many] come they to keep tryst with you?' asked Finn. Donn answered him: 'Bodhb Derg with his seven sons; Angus Oge son of the Dagha with his seven sons; Finnbarr of *cnoc meadha siuil*, or 'Knockmaa' near Tuam, with his seventeen sons; Lir of *sídh Fionnachaíd* with his twenty-seven sons, and their offspring as well; Teigue son of Nuadha out of the beautiful *sídh* of Almhain; Donn of the island, and Donn of the *dabhach* or 'kieve'; the two named *Glas* out of *sídh Ghlais* in the land of Ossory; Dobhran of the Duffry out of Liamhain smooth-smock's *sídh* in the province of Leinster; Aedh of the island out of Rathlin in the north; Ferai and Aillen and Lu and Fainne, all sons of Eogabal out of *sídh Eogabail* or 'Knockany' in the south; Cian and Coban and Conn, three sons of the king of *sídh monaidh* over from Scotland; Aedh Minbhreac of Assaroe with his seven sons; the children of the *mórríghan* or 'great queen,' daughter of Ernmas, with her six-and-twenty she-warriors; the

two Luaths from Moyliffe; *Bratán* and *Baillgheal* and *Abhallruisc* out of the *sídh* of Cletty in the Bregian plain; Cathal and Caithne and Catarnach out of the *sídh* of Druimderg, from the land of Kinelconall in the north; Derg and Drecan out of the *sídh* of Ben-Edar in the east; Bodhb Derg himself with his great household: ten men, ten score, and ten hundred; all which are the chiefs and territorial lords of the *tuatha dé danann* that year by year come to uproot our *sídh* upon us.'

"Finn re-entered the *sídh* and to his people imparted all this, then: 'my faithful folk,' he said, 'the necessity and the oppression, the extremity and distress of these whose guests we find ourselves are great indeed; ourselves too have chanced into a strait pass, and unless that in our own defence we play the men it is odds whether ever again we see one of our Fianna and followers.' 'Finn, my soul,' cried each one of us, 'where hast thou at any time marked faintness in us that thou warnest us beforehand?' Finn answered: 'my word I give that, though I explored the whole world, yet should I having with me this present number of Ireland's Fianna never know fear nor fright.' The people of the *sídh* went out now, Finn with his six warriors accompanying them, and: 'good now, Donn,' said he, 'is it by day or by night that the *tuatha dé danann* come to you?' 'At the night's junction [with day],' Donn mac Midir answered, 'that they may do all the heavier mischief.' There they tarried therefore till night came on.

"Finn said: 'let one of you go out upon the green to keep watch and ward for us, to the end the *tuatha dé danann* come not at us without our knowledge and unheard by us;' nor was the look-out man gone far when he saw five stern battles of equal size that marched on him. 'As it seems to me,' said he of the look-out [making his report], 'warriors and battle-champions in numbers presently surround *fert in druadh* or the 'wizard's grave,' and this time are a match for heroes indeed.' Then Finn uttered:—

"Worthy opponents of *laechs* are round the wizard's grave, with multitude of spears sharp-pointed, strong....'

"Where now is Oscar?" Finn asked. 'Here, Fian-chief,' he answered. 'This day do valiantly in the *tuatha dé danann*'s battle; so too let Dermot and mac Lugach do. Myself and Caeilte and Ossian it is that are the seniors of our band; therefore the battle's rearward leave ye to us, and in

the fight bear us the sons of Midir safe: that little group of brothers that they are. That they should come to harm were for us, now that we have joined them, a treason to honour and to loyalty.'

"Then from the last of evening's shades [i.e. from the setting in of darkness] to the confines of the morrow's morn we fought the battle, in which the *tuatha dé danann*'s losses at any rate were ten men, ten score and ten hundred.

"Bodhb Derg and Midir and Fionnbarr said now: 'how shall we manage with all these slain? let Lir of *sídh Fionnachaidh* give us counsel, since he is the eldest of us.' Lir said: 'I will advise you: to their own *sídh* respectively let all carry away their friends and fosterlings, their sons and brethren; but round about us [that tarry here] be a wall of fire thrown up on our one side, and on the other a defence of water made.' After this the *tuatha dé danann* erected that great sepulchral stone, nor of all the carnage which they of our *sídh* had inflicted on them left so much as the raven might perch upon.

"Into the *sídh* Finn and the sons of Midir entered sore hurt and bleeding, while of us others were three in very evil plight: mac Lughach, Oscar and Dermot. Thrice during that year the *tuatha dé danann* assailed the same *sídh*, and battles three we fought with them. Our loss from them consisted in Conn mac Midir; as for us, we [that is most of us] were come off well from the last battle, seeing that upon Oscar and Dermot the venom and fury of the battle leant to such pitch that bended twigs of white hazel they were which maintained their raiment on them as they lay littered in blood upon their bed. We then, the four warriors that were whole stepped forth upon the green, and Ossian said: 'an ill trip it was that we took to the *sídh* of Midir's sons, to leave behind my son and my foster-brother.' 'Woe to him,' said mac Lughach, 'who having left Oscar and Dermot after him should face the Fianna: and that because for the sustaining of the Fian-service in arms have been no two better than they.' 'Whoe'er he be that will so face them, it shall not be myself,' Finn said. With that Donn mac Midir came up to us, and: 'good now, Donn,' said Finn again, 'knowest thou of, or where to find, that which should heal those men?' Donn answered: 'I know not of anything but one special physician whom the *tuatha dé danann* have; and from him, unless the wounded have had their dorsal marrow severed, within a nine days'

space assuagement and relief will be procured them so that they shall be hurt-whole and unscarred.' Finn asked: 'how should we get hold of him, for no firm friends to us are they with whom he is?' 'At earliest day,' replied Donn, 'he issues from the *brugh* to gather healing herbs, that so he may light on them still carrying the morning's moisture-bead [i.e. the dew].' 'Donn,' said I, 'find me one that will point out to me said physician and, dead or alive, he shall come with me.'

"Then rose Aedh and Flann *fuileach* or 'ruber sanguinarius' saying: 'Caeilte, my soul, come along.' They went their way to the dew-shot *brugh*'s green, which when they had reached they saw a strapping young fellow clad in garb of defence and wearing a mantle of wethers' wool from the flock-abounding land of promise; and his cloak's skirtful of healing and balsamic herbs he had for putting into the wounds and hurts of such from among the *tuatha dé danann* as had been damaged in the battle. 'Who is that, Aedh?' I asked. He answered: 'yonder is the *óglæch* to seek whom we are come; him mind ye well that he escape not away from you into the *sídh*.' At one and the same instant we ran upon him, and I caught him by the shoulders; thence we took him to the ford on the Slaney (where the Fianna were stayed) in the great plain of Leinster, and here a magic vapour rose about us so that we were invisible. We thus having gained the *tulach* that commands the ford saw four men clad in fringed mantles of crimson, with four golden-hilted swords in their hands, and four hounds of the chase with them. To them we were not perceptible through the magic mist which surrounded us, but they were manifest to us, and they that were there were Finn's two sons: Cainche and Raighne, with my own two: Colla and Faelan, whose discourse turned on the loss of Finn mac Cumall, their captain and their lord, which for now a year had afflicted them. I heard the converse of my pair of sons and of Finn's, and their colloquy saddened me, for thus they spoke: 'what will Ireland's Fianna do in future, without leader, without lord?' said Raighne. 'They have nothing to do,' said Colla mac Caeilte, 'but to repair to Tara and then disband themselves, or either to create a Fian-chief for themselves'; and those sons wept bitterly [*lit.* 'heavily'], copiously, for the loss of their two fathers and of their common lord. We came away from them and till we reached *loch da én* or 'two-bird loch,' by that which at the present is called the mountain of Aighe mac Ugaine;

we went into the *sídh*, Finn and Donn mac Midir welcomed Liubhra the physician, and to him Oscar and Dermot were exhibited. ‘There,’ said Donn, ‘are two that are kinsmen to me; try now whether they be likely to convalesce and be healed.’ The leech examined them and said: ‘they are curable—supposing my fee to be a good one.’ ‘Good it shall be indeed,’ I said: ‘how long now will it take to heal them?’ ‘A nine days’ space,’ said Liubhra the protophysician. I went on: ‘a good fee thou shalt have, even this: that thy life be left thee; but and if the young men recover not with thee, mine own hand shall take off thy head.’ The leech accordingly cured and set them up within the time, so that they were unscarred and hurt-whole.’

“It was after this that from Cormac mac Art, from the king of Ireland, and consequently upon their lord and leader Finn mac Cumall’s absence, a *gilla* came to bring the Fianna to Almhain in order to their proceeding with Cormac to hold the Feast of Tara; and the Fianna of all Ireland in their integrity: both man and woman, both *gilla* and *óglæch*, and minstrel too, attained to *fert na ndruadh* on Tara’s green.

“Then Goll mac Morna sat on one side of Ireland’s king, and her provincial kings with their retinues sat [duly ranged] in Tara. ‘Fianna of Ireland,’ said Cormac, ‘your loss is great: being your leader and your lord, Finn son of Cumall.’ ‘Great indeed it is,’ said Goll mac Morna. ‘It is great,’ repeated Cormac: ‘for three equal losses they were which aforetime were inflicted on Ireland: Lugh and Conn and Conaire; and this makes one of the four greatest losses that ever befell her.’ ‘What course of management [lit. ‘what navigation or steering’] prescribest thou for the Fianna now, Cormac?’ asked Goll mac Morna. The king answered: ‘to thee, Goll, I assign privilege of hunting and venery over all Ireland, until we know whether Finn be disappeared outright; clan-Baeiscne however, and Finn’s issue, to have of thee their choice of hunting-ground for this year.’ The Fianna of Ireland consented to this, Goll saying: ‘until for three years he shall have been away from all, and that of all Ireland no individual man’s expectation any more look for him, in respect of the Fian-chiefry I will not oppose Finn [i.e. will not seek to supersede him].’

“To Cormac now Aillbe Freckle-cheek said: ‘how shall Finn’s fair woman-folk make out, these seventeen ladies namely?’ ‘For each one of

them with her attendant bevy be a retired and well-secured house made [in which to live] for a month, for a quarter, and for a year, till we learn whether Finn be alive or dead; their full sufficiency of meat and fluid to be provided them for that time.'

"Finn's minstrels turned their faces to Cormac then: Daighre mac Morna, Der *ua Daighre*, Senach *ua Daighre*, Suanach son of Senach, and Suanach son of Senchenn that was Finn mac Cumall's reciter of old tales and the sweetest that in Ireland or Scotland ever handled timpan; also *Cnú deireoil* the dwarf, and Blathnait his wife. Cormac answered them and said: 'I am well pleased that ye should be in Tara; as from myself therefore ye shall have 'half-due,' and I will grant you the full equivalent of that stipend which Finn used to pay you [i.e. your old rate of pay shall be continued to you on Finn's account, I adding half so much on mine].'

"Fergus True-lips, poet of the Fianna, joined them: whose number was ten hundred of poets and men of art. Cormac said to them: 'for you I have Ireland's choicest prosperity, that is, from *tonn Chlíodhma* or 'Cleena's wave' to *tonn Rudhraighe* or 'Rury's wave.'

"Then came Finn's *meidheschal*, accompanying Garbchronan chief of the senior *gillas*, and said: 'give heed to us, Cormac!' He answered: 'to you by way of comfortable maintenance I apportion from the broad *áth lóiche* or 'ford of *Lóch*' [i.e. 'Athlo'] in the west, eastward to Ben-Edar.'

This done, in Tara they proceeded and Cormac entered *teach mór midchuarta* or 'the great mid-court house,' where he had every man settled according to precedence deriving rightly from his father and grandfather: Goll mac Morna he caused to be set in the Fian-chief's place, Cahir More's daughter Eithne the poetess in a queen's room, and by her side again Aillbhe Freckle-cheek; next to Aillbhe, Garadh Black-knee's daughter Maighinis; and from that out all the rest according to callings and to rightful due. Thereupon meat and drink was served out to them.

"Then Cormac stood up with a polished drinking-horn that he held, and said: 'it were well, men of Ireland, if in hill, in hidden place or rugged wild, in cliff, in inver, in river, or in any *sídh* of Ireland's or of Scotland's fairy mansions, some one from among you could find for us tidings of Finn.'

"Hereupon Bernghal the *bóchétach* or 'owner of cows in hundreds' from the borders of Slievefuad in the north, who also was royal

hospitaller to the king of Ireland, made answer: ‘it was the day on which the Fian-chief came out of the north in pursuit of a fairy deer, he having with him the six warriors that were his companions [when they roused the quarry]: and into my hand he put a keen spear of special deadly quality, with sheeny head, likewise a hound’s collar, and told me to keep them by me till such time as we should meet again in the one spot. Bernghal handed spear and collar to Cormac, then he to Goll, and they all considered it. The king said: ‘a great loss to the men of Ireland is he whose spear and whose collar these are,’ and further questioned the *óglæch* whether either Finn or they that were with him had hounds with them. ‘They had,’ the hospitaller said. ‘Goll,’ asked Cormac, ‘what hounds were those?’ ‘*Bran* and *Sceolang*, held by Finn,’ replied Goll: ‘*Adhnuail* and *Féruaine* by Ossian; *Tarratach* and *Fostadh* by Oscar; *Baeth* and *Buidhe* by Dermot; *Breac* and *Luath* and *Láinbhinn* by Caeilte; *Conuall* and *Comrith* by mac Lughach.’

“Cormac enquired: ‘where is Fergus True-lips?’ ‘Here, noble sir and monarch,’ answered he. ‘Knowest thou how long the Fian-chief is away from us?’ ‘I remember it,’ the poet said: ‘a month, a quarter, and a year it is since he is missing,’ and he uttered:—

“‘Finn’s computation how long he is....’

“The king of Ireland said now: ‘the loss is great; for it is not our mind that may any more be set on finding those six that in Ireland and in Scotland were the best [i.e. I at all events give up all hope]; but Cithruadh,’ he continued, ‘many jewels, much wealth and treasure the Fian-chief lavished on thee, and yet thou tellest us not whether he be alive or dead.’ ‘The Fian-chief lives,’ returned Cithruadh, ‘but as for my telling on him I will not do it, seeing that he would not himself wish any such thing.’ All in general were rejoiced at this, for they knew that everything which Cithruadh had ever presaged was come to pass. ‘Give it a date,’ said Cormac [*lit.* ‘an end’ or ‘limit’ i.e. name the day of his return]. Then Cithruadh son of Ferchaecait said: ‘on the last day of Tara’s Feast the Fian-chief will be seen’; and this, namely for how long Finn was in *sídh dá én*, constitutes a problem in ‘the Colloquy of the Ancients.’

“After all this, in the *sídh* we tarried yet for those six weeks during which the Feast of Tara was maintained, and until for Donn mac Midir we had taken the *tuatha dé danann*’s hostages; and from that time forth

the Fianna of Ireland had not more frequent and free intercourse with the men of settled habitation than with the *tuatha dé danann*."

The while Caeilte told this tale to Eochaid they had seen an *óglæch* approach them: a shirt of king's satin was next his skin; over and outside it a tunic of the same soft fabric, and a fringed crimson mantle confined with a bodkin of gold upon his breast; in his hand a gold-hilted sword, a golden helmet on his head, and Donn mac Midir it was that was there. In Patrick's bosom he laid his head, and gave him command over the *tuatha dé danann*, who all made genuflexion to him; and to Patrick with his people Donn mac Midir gave that night's entertainment. Next, the whole company and Patrick along with them advanced to Rathmore of Moyfea, and at night came in messengers from the king of Munster to fetch Patrick, and to tell him that the king would adhere to his gospel. The Saint therefore bade farewell to the king of Leinster and to the chief men of his people and of all his country, and with his familia journeyed thence to *lios na laechraide* or 'liss of warriors,' now called *caiseal na rígh* or 'Cashel of the kings.'

Then came Eoghan son of Angus, king of both provinces of Munster, escorted by great numbers, to meet holy Patrick; and all Munster's chiefs did him reverence, laying their lands and their whole riches at his discretion. "A 'gospel penny' for saint Patrick, king of Munster" cried Benignus. "What penny is that, cleric?" asked the king. "A country and land for him." The king answered: "this town to serve him and his familia after him for ever." "How shall it be given to us [i.e. how shall the grant be defined]?" "As thus," the king said: "Patrick to mount upon *leac na gcéad* or 'the flagstone of hundreds,' and so much as on all sides of him he can see of Munster's plain-land to be his." Patrick stepped up upon the stone, and to suit the saintly cleric the sun rose so that in all directions everything was lighted up for him; also at the instant of Patrick's setting his foot on the flag, out of its edges rose a thousand and one legions of demons and betook them into the air and the firmament, seeking to evade saint Patrick. After this Patrick blesses the stone, and forby the benediction confers on it the virtue of counsel [i.e of being oracular]; an angel of God also to pass over it at every evening-tide; the king of Munster accompanied by a great chief's nine sons to fast upon it, and he should have whatsoever boon he craved; finally, that its fire

should be one of the three which at the last shall in Ireland be alive and thriving.

The king of Munster, her nobles too, make Caeilte welcome and: "Caeilte, my soul," quoth the king, "why was *leac na gcéad* conferred on this stone?" "I remember its derivation," Caeilte answered: "cognisance of Heaven we never had until Finn sat on that stone and a hundred times put his thumb under his knowledge-tooth; whereat Heaven and Earth [i.e. things celestial and terrestrial] were shewn him, the Very and Glorious God's faith and, *Táilchenn*, thine advent to Ireland in which [thenceforth] should be saints and righteous men, and religion of the Cross and of devotion." "Who first made a mansion here?" Caeilte answered: "Fiacha Broad-crown son of Eoghan, who for thirty years ruled both provinces of Munster; by him a strong ditch was run round this town, and therein he dwelt." *Ut dixit Patricius:—*

"This stone, its name is *cloch na gcéad*...."

Have victory and benediction, holy Patrick," cried the king of Munster: "'tis good knowledge that thou likewise [i.e. as well as Caeilte] hast imparted to us!"

The entire company abode there until out of his fiery zone the sun rose, and filled the world with his light. They went their way thence westwards to *ráithín na niongnadh* or 'the little rath of wonders' on Moyfemen; and at one end of it the king with the nobles of Munster sat, Patrick and Caeilte taking the other.

Then the king questioned Caeilte: "why was this called 'the little rath of wonders'?" which made Caeilte to say:

"A wondrous windfall that Finn found on this rath awaiting him: three men of surpassing form, and a single hound among them.

"It was of a day," he went on, "that we the three battles of the Fianna came to this *tulach* and saw three *óglæchs* awaiting us, with one hound; in the whole world was not a colour but was in that animal, which also as compared with other hounds shewed an enormous bulk. They sat before Finn, and he asked: 'whence come ye young men?' 'Out of the greater *Ioruath* or 'Norway,' in the east,' they replied. 'And for what come ye?' 'To make our covenants of service and our friendship with thee.' 'What is the benefit that shall accrue to us from your being with us?' 'We, being as we are three persons, have each man of us a separate qualification.'

'What are those?' Says one of them: 'I will discharge the watching and warding of all Ireland's and Scotland's Fianna.' 'Of every stress of battle and of single combat that shall occur to them I will relieve them, let them all but keep still,' said the next. The third said: 'I will meet every difficulty that shall crop up for my lord, and of me shall be had everything that may be petitioned of him. As for the hound,' he added, 'so long as there shall be deer in Ireland he will provide for the Fianna every other night, and on the nights between I will do the like.' Finn asked: 'I what will ye demand of us and to be with us so?' 'We claim three conditions,' they replied: 'that when once night shall fall none ever come, whether within a distance or close to, towards our camp; that never be anything, much or little, portioned out to us [i.e. we are to provide for ourselves]; and that to us the Fianna of Ireland allot the worst of their hunting [i.e. their poorest game country on all occasions].' 'On your conscience now,' said Finn, 'why seek ye that when night comes no man see you?' 'We have a reason,' answered they: 'but be it a long time or a short that [you and] we shall keep company [*lit.* 'be on one path], question us no more. [We will however tell you thus much: that] of these three *óglæchs* which make our number every third night one man is dead and we the other two watch him, wherefore it is that we would not have any to see us.' Now to Finn it was a thing prohibited to see a dead man unless that weapons had slain him; but [in this case] he had the remedy at hand: he needed but to keep clear of this rath.

"To Finn now came seven men of science belonging to the people of Cithruadh son of Airemh son of Ferchaegat, to demand the fee for a poem: thrice fifty ounces of gold and as many of silver, to take to Tara for Cithruadh. 'We shall find a help for that,' said *Scannal ó Liatháin*. 'Good now, men of art,' the three *óglæchs* said: 'had ye rather get your poem-fee to-night than tomorrow?' 'To-morrow suffices us,' replied the learned.

"Then came those *óglæchs* aforesaid to the hound's lair a little way outside of *ráithín na niongnadh*; and in their presence the hound threw up that amount of gold and silver, which was given to the schoolmen and away they went.

"Here Finn said: 'how shall the three battles of the Fianna do to-night, they having no water?' and one of the three enquired: 'how

many right drinking-horns has Finn?' 'Three hundred and twelve,' I told them; for as I have said:—

"Twelve horns and three hundred....

"Pass me the horns into my hand,' the *óglæch* said, 'and whatsoever shall be found in them that drink ye.' Thrice he filled them with ale, and with the third time of filling they that drank were confused and cheerily vociferous. 'Wonderful indeed is the process of this banquet,' said Finn; whence *lios na fleidhe* or 'liss of the banquet' is the name of that one in which it was given to Finn, and *leabadh in chon* or 'the hound's bed' is that of the lair. For this reason it was," ended Caeilte, "that this was called 'the little rath of wonders,' and that other little one *ráth chinn chon* or 'rath of the hound's head'; and in this wise they were for a year in the Fianna."

Then Eogan mac Angus mac Nadfraech, having with him Patrick and Caeilte, progressed to [another] *ráth chinn chon*, in the south part of Moyfemen, and to *lios an bhanntrachta* or 'liss of the woman-folk.' The whole company sat upon the rath and Caeilte sat in front of the king, who asked: "why were this rath and this liss called by those names?" Caeilte made answer: "it was a royal hospitaller of hundreds that was here: Cellach son of *Dubh déad* or 'niger dentatus'; whose [bucolic] wealth and substance when they were numbered covered all the great plain of Femem, but in the world was not a man better endowed than he was with churlish- and with niggardliness. To the number of thirty that wore shields and bore arms we, after the hunting of *slíabh Cua*, were come with Ireland's and Scotland's Fian-chief, and there sat down on the rails of couches; but before ever an end was made of tending us, on every one of us individually (Finn alone excepted) the man of the house heaped insult and reproach.

"A certain fierce man of the Fianna: Cuinnskleo, son of Ainnscleo king of Britain in the east, spoke at him then and said: 'a mighty ready bit of dog's-head snapping and snarling this is to which the boor has treated Ireland's Fianna! "Thou hast lighted on a happy word by way of name for him,' said Finn: 'fix *cenn con* or 'dog's head' on him.'" "And why," sought the king of Munster, "was this rath called 'of the woman-folk'?" "Soon said," answered Caeilte: "it was fifty sempstresses, the best in Ireland, that for the purpose of making raiment and wearables for the

Fianna the Chief caused bring together to this rath. The charge over whom all he gave to the king of Britain's daughter: Dergoda by name, wife of Ossian's son Oscar, and in this town they were for a long series of years; hence it is called *ráth an bhantrachta*."

The king went on: "what is that solid pillar-stone in the middle of the rath?" "The she-company's candelabra it was," said Caeilte: "for in order that nor soot nor grime nor smoke of fire should reach themselves or their garments they would not have a fire but thrice in the year [and therefore had to be lighted otherwise]. In this town then they were as I have said for a span of years, busied with needlework of all kinds and with making up of apparel for the Fianna. Now in the king of Hy-Kinsellach's daughters, whose names were *Fionnchas*, *Fionndruine* and *Finninghen*, these women possessed a great source of pastime; for they had a little timpan with its *leithrinn* of silver and its pegs of gold, and to the enticing fairy music which those three of the she-company used to make even women in the sharpest of their pangs would have slept."

"Caeilte," said the king of Munster, "what are these two great graves that we see?" "The three *óglæchs* that, as above, took service with Finn at *ráithín na ningnadh* and had the wonderful hound, it was they that slew the two warriors whose graves those are: Donn and Dubhan, the king of Ulidia's two sons out of the north." "How perished they?" asked the king. "The three lay in a place apart from the Fianna," Caeilte replied, "with their hound centrally between them; and when once night came there used a wall of fire to surround them so that none might dare even to look at them. On the night in question the king of Ulidia's sons kept watch for Ireland's and Scotland's Fianna, and thrice made the circuit of their camp. The third time however they saw the fiery wall, and Donn said: "tis a strange thing how these three *óglæchs* are for now a year past, and their hound amongst them; for they have proclaimed that after nightfall none must go look at them." Then the king of Ulidia's sons passed inside through the fire-wall; when they were there they got their arms ready to their hands, and so scanned both men and dog. But the huge hound which daily they had in the chase was at this instant no greater than a lap-dog such as a great lady or man of high estate may keep; one man moreover with his keen sword naked in his hand standing sentry over the animal while to the mouth of the same another held a

*cuach* of fair silver; and the choicest of every kind of liquor which any individual of the three might require of him, that is what the hound kept on ejecting from his mouth into the *cuach*.

"Then to the hound an *óglæch* of them said: 'it is well, thou noble and righteous and high-couraged! give heed now to the treachery wrought thee by Finn.' At this the hound wagged his tail hard, whereby was created a factitious magic wind that made their shields to fall from our men's shoulders, their spears from their hands, their swords from their sides, and to be cast before their faces into the fiery wall. Hereat the three killed the king of Ulidia's two sons; which being effected the dog turned, applied his breath to them, and reduced them to dust and ashes so that nor blood nor flesh nor bone was ever found of them. Their's then are the two mounds concerning which thou questionedst me," ended Caeilte: "but, mould and sand excepted, whosoever should open them would not find them to contain the smallest thing."

"Never, Caeilte, hast thou told us tale more marvellous, more fraught with mystery than this," said the king: "but what is yon high fence beside the pillar-stone over in the rath?" "That," Caeilte said, "is the she-company's wage from Finn yearly, which it was Ossian's son Oscar that hid: ten score ounces of gold thrice told, and where he hid it was under that monolith's base." The concourse of them went and excavated, and brought out the gold: a third of which was given to the king of Munster, a third to Patrick and Caeilte, and to the clergy another third. "The gold lasts on," said Caeilte, "but neither the Fian-chief, nor Oscar that hid it, have endured"; and he uttered:

"The dog's-head rath remains to-day...."

"As touching those same three *óglæchs*, Caeilte: was it with you they continued after, or away from you they went?" "They tarried with us until at *ráithín na naenbar* or 'the rath of nines' in Leinster's great plain the three battles of the Fianna were told off into small sections of nine men, and till in quest of the king of Ulidia's two sons fallen by the king of Iruath's sons out of the cast nine *óglæchs* and nine *gillas* visited every town in Ireland.

"After he had dispersed us Finn mac Cumall for his part betook himself to Tara Luachra, there being with him of the Fianna none but the camp-followers and drudges.

"As for those squads of nine which for the purpose of seeking the king of Ulidia's sons he had made of the Fianna, to the same place and all in one night they repaired to join him; but brought no hint whether those men were alive or dead."

Here Patrick and the king of Munster passed southerly onwards to *benn bhán in reatha* or 'the white hill of running,' between Slieveriach and Slievecrot. Patrick and the rest sat down, and the king questioned Caeilte: "why was this *benn* called by such a name?" and he answered that:—

"It was once upon a time that Finn was on this *tulach*, upon which [as they came to it] they had seen a woman that awaited them. A crimson mantle...

[*There is a lacuna embracing the death of Edaein Fair-hair of Ben-Edar; the story of the king of Munster's daughter Cuillenn wooed by Cullann, son of Fergus king of Ulidia; and the opening lines of Treon's daughter Bébhionn and her visit to Finn mac Cumall]*

'By my word and indeed,' Goll answered, 'never have either I or any other seen a woman bigger than she.' Out of her bosom the woman took her long graceful hand; on which were three rings of gold, there being two on the other, and every one of them as thick as a three-ox yoke. 'It were but right to question her,' said Goll; but Finn objected: 'how could that be, unless we rose to our feet? and 'tis a question whether even so she could hear us.'

"To confer and to converse with her the whole company rose now and stood, but simultaneously with them she too rose. 'Maiden,' said Finn, 'sit down and on the hill-side lean thine elbow, if so be thou desire us to hear anything from thee.' Upon the hill then she lay along, and the Fian-chief sought to know of her out of what land she came and who was she herself. 'Out of the land of Lasses in the west,' she said, 'where the sun sets: of which country's king I am daughter.' 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Bebhionn daughter of Treon.' 'And why is that land called 'of lasses'?' 'Of men,' she replied, 'there are in it none but my father with his three sons, whereas nine daughters and seven score they are that have been born to him: hence that is dubbed 'the land of lasses.' 'What

country is the nearest to it?' 'The land of Men.' 'Who is king over it?' 'Cédach croidhearg or 'the crimson-red possessor of hundreds,' who to his own share has sons eight score and an only daughter. Now to a son of his, to handsome Aedh son of Cedach, I was given: thrice was given, and three times (this being the third) ran away from him.' 'Who or what directed thee to this country?' 'It was three fishers that the wind blew off this land and over to us: they informed us of this region, in which they affirmed a good warrior, Finn mac Cumall, to be. If then thou be that óglaech, I am come to seek thee and to be under thy safeguard.' Then she took off her glove and laid her hand in Finn's, whereat he said: 'put thy hand in Goll mac Morna's: with no warrior in Ireland is it more expedient for thee to have tie of friendship and of guarantee than with the same.' In Goll's hand accordingly the maid laid hers and with him knitted those ties.

"With that they saw come towards them in headlong career a hart with some of the Fianna's hounds after him, but: 'let the deer be,' said Finn, 'for 'tis not to any hunting of our hounds that we will trust to-night, but rather will have recourse to some óglaech of the Fianna. Where then is Finn son of Cuan?' 'Here am I,' he answered. 'Precede us now to thy house, and for this night be we provided and ministered to by thee.' 'To give thee aught is to us a grateful task; for eight score milch herds I have in the pastures of Luachra, and by means of thee it was that I came by all those.' But of Finn mac Cumall's virtues was this: that no matter how much he should at any time have bestowed on any man, neither by day nor by night did he ever bring it up against him. So to his own house Finn mac Cuan repaired in advance of the Fianna.

"To return to the young woman: she doffed her polished gilded helmet all bejewelled, and in seven score tresses let down her fair curly golden hair, at the wealth of which when it was loosened all stood amazed, Finn saying: 'great gods of our adoration, a huge marvel Conn's grandson Cormac, and Eithne the poetess daughter of Cahir More, and the Fianna's blooming woman-folk, would esteem it to see Treon's daughter Bebhionn! good now, girl, in thine eyes were it too little to assign thee the portion of ten hundred?' Upon the dwarf, on *Cnú deireoil*, that before Finn just then played a harp, the girl looked and said: 'be it little or be it much of an allowance that thou shalt give to yon wee man

that works the harp, the equivalent of that same I too will account amply sufficient.'

"Of Finn now she begged a drink, and he said: 'where is Saltran *sálfhada* or 'long-heel'? 'Here am I, Fian-chief,' the gilla answered. 'Bring the goblet called *cuach smera puill* full of water from yonder ford' (the *cuach* held a draught for nine men of the Fianna). The gilla brought the *cuachful* and handed it to the young woman; she poured the water into her right palm and drank three sips of it, then raised her hand and over the whole concourse of them sprinkled the residue, which caused them and herself with them to burst out a-laughing. Finn said: 'on thy conscience, girl, what made thee to not drink the water out of the *cuach*?' 'Never,' she answered, 'have I drunk anything from a vessel saving such to which there should be a rim either of gold or of silver.' I chancing at this point to look about me," proceeded Caeilte, "saw a tall young man come towards us, and if the girl was big he was bigger still: a shag cape covered his shoulders; he had no beard, and though the whole world's men had been collected alongside of him not one of them had been found comelier than he. A green cloak he had about him and in that a brooch of gold, while next to his skin was a shirt of king's satin; a shield red as the rowan-berry was slung on him, at his side hung a sword of gilded hilt, and in his hand was a brave thick-shafted spear.

"Then all the throng looked on him and, excepting only professional men of valour, few there were of us but horror and fear seized before him. But Finn had a stout nature, for never whether by day or in the night had fear taken him before human being, and what the Fian-chief said therefore was: 'let neither *gilla* nor warrior of you speak, nor a man stir from his place! knows any one of you yon *óglæch*?' 'I know him: that is the man seeking to escape whom I am come,' the maiden said, and sat down betwixt Finn and Goll. The stranger drew near us, and that which was in his intention was not present to us in our intelligence by any means: for so soon as he came right up to Finn and Goll he raised the spear and at the girl made a greedy and most cruel thrust, so that of the weapon's shaft so much as equalled the length of a warrior's hand appeared through her back. He drew the spear and passed on his way out through the crowd. 'Men,' cried Finn, 'ye see that; and he that upon

the doer of it will not avenge this foul deed, let him not any more have his mind bent on Fianship!'

"Then," Caeilte went on, "we the three battles of the Fianna started on the instant, so that upon the hill was left none but Finn and Goll and the woman wounded to death; and we all made after the stranger to *ráth na macraidhe* or 'the rath of lads,' now called *ráth na gcaerach* or 'the rath of sheep,' in Moylee to the southward; thence to the *coreach* or marshland of *magh Uladh* or 'the Ulidian flat,' where they of Ulidia were in camp to beleaguer the *claenráth* or 'sloping rath,' what time they slew *Cúraei mac Daire*; downwards and on to *láthair luinge* or 'ship-place,' where *clann Deaghaidh* or the 'children of Deghaidh' kept their galleys, and to the inver of *labharthonn*: which means either 'Labar-wave,' because Milesius of Spain's daughter Labar was drowned there; or 'speaking-wave' [from 'labar' possessing speech], because there the surf 'spoke' to the coast; yet farther to *tiopra an laeich leisc* or 'well of the lazy warrior,' westwards to *tráigh Lí* or 'the strand of Lí son of *Oidhreamhail*' ['Tralee'], and to *rinn chána* or 'tribute point,' at which yearly the *allmharachs* or 'over-sea men' used to pay rent and tribute to Curaei. There he set his face outwards to the broad bay, and four *óglaechs* we were that were well up with him: Dermot, and Glas son of Encherd Beirre, and Oscar son of Ossian, and myself fourth. We too faced the open sea to strike out upon it; but after him I came bounding as I ran at topmost speed and [just before I took the water] hurled at him [who already was in it], whereby the spear entered the sling of his shield and his left shoulder, and the buckler fell off into the sea. I [by this time wading up to him] met the shield with my left hand and, as he brought his right to draw my spear out of him, I caught the one that was in his left and it came away with me; but when I would have delivered him a cast of his own spear 'the thick of the waves and the deep of the sea' came between us [i.e. we being now out of our depth I lost sight of him among the rollers, and so landed again]. Then as we stood and watched him fixedly we saw a great galley, with two that rowed her, bear down out of the west; he got on board, and we never knew which way they went from us. Our three battalions returned eastward to this *tulach* and Finn sought an account of us, which I gave him, and on the ground we laid the shield and spear before him. 'Excellent in sooth those arms are,' said the young woman: 'being indeed

the spear which is named the *torainnchleasach* or ‘performer of the thunder-feat’ so-called, and the shield the *donnchraebhach* or ‘red-arabesqued.’ Finn, it is well,’ she went on: ‘by thee now be my grave and my burial cared for becomingly; for it was while I trusted to thy guarantee and honour that I came by my death, and to thee it was that I came into Ireland.’ Her bracelets she gave to the bardic folk: to *Cnú dheireoil*, to Blathnait his wife, and to the harper Daighre; soul parted from body with her, here she was laid under-ground, and from her the name of *druim na mná mairbhe* or ‘ridge of the dead woman’ was conferred on this *druim* or ‘ridge,’ O king of Munster,” ended Caeilte.

“And *daire in chogair* or ‘oak-grove of the conspiracy’ [lit. ‘whisper’], whence is it?” asked the king of Munster. “The four,” Caeilte answered, “of whom thou hast heard me tell how they were at *ráithín na niongnadh*, the three *óglæchs* and their hound namely: to kill these the Fianna conspired here.” “But what cause had they to conspire against them, and they in their own service?” “They understood not the manner and practice after which they disposed themselves: that they must have a camp apart, with a rampart of fire round about them and none to see them until rising-time on the morrow. Finn however said: ‘by no means would I have them slain; for of the whole world’s men they are the best in vigour and in spear-skill, and they possess three arts for the sake of which it is not right to kill them: firstly, were all possible men laid in disease and sickness, let but the one man of them apply certain herbs to the ailment of each...

[here is a lacuna covering the remainder of this story and that of the three sons of Uar son of Indast; Caeilte’s problem to Patrick; the charming of the pernicious birds that ravaged the fields, and the forepart to Patrick’s decision in the matter of Aedh mac Muiredach, king of Connacht and Bodhb Derg’s daughter Aillenn iolchrothach or ‘the variously beautiful,’ which follows here]

“I am she,” answered the young woman. “What is it,” Patrick went on, “that maintains you [i.e. thee and thine] thus in the zenith of your form and comeliness?” “All such of us as partook of Goibhniu’s banquet, nor pain nor sickness troubles them but, holy Patrick, in my case and the king of Connacht’s what is thine award?” “It is a good one,” the Saint replied:

"by God and myself it is determined that a man be restricted to one single wedded wife, and this prescription we [that are here] may not transgress." "And I," said the girl, "what am I to do now?" "To retire to thy home and *sídh*," Patrick enjoined her, "and if the king of Leinster's daughter depart before thee, that man on whom thou hast bestowed thy love to have thee thenceforth as his only wife. But if, whether by day or by night, thou do either the king or his present spouse a mischief, I will spoil thee in such wise that not thy mother, nor thy father, nor yet thy guardian shall care to see thee"; and Patrick uttered:

"O Aillenn, generous, crimson-cheeked...."

"Is this then thy fixed determination," she asked: "that so long as he shall have that wife I may not be given to the king?" "Even so," answered the Saint. "What remains then, holy Cleric," she went on, "but this: by thy word's truthfulness to conjure thee that should the king's wife go before me I be given to him?" Patrick said: "I affirm on my veracity that if she go first thou shalt be granted to him."

Then the young woman wept plentifully, wofully, and the king said: "I am dear to thee." "Dear indeed," she replied. "Of the human tribe is none more beloved than thou art to me," he said, "but that I may not go beyond the conditions and prohibition of the *Táilchenn* and of the Very God." So the maid departed to her *sídh* till such time as the story again touches on her.

For three days with their nights Patrick, Caelte and the company tarried in that spot; then they progressed to *fert Fiadhmoir* or 'Fiadhmor's grave' on *machaire an scáil* or 'the hero's plain,' now called *magh nAei* or 'the plain of Aei,' where all sat down, and Patrick too: whence *suidhe Pátraic* or 'Patrick's seat' is the name of that place.

The king of Connacht welcomed Caelte and enquired of him: "why was the name of 'Fiadhmor's grave' given to this place and....

[lacuna comprising the main part of how Fiadhmór mac Arist king of Scotland came to Ireland in quest of Aei daughter of Finn mac Cumall]

"so from the shades of evening until the morrow's morn we fought this fight, and our bodies streamed with blood; we were the victors nevertheless. From these three heroes we took their heads, and agreed

among ourselves to carry them off and so to go back again. This course we abandoned however and rather turned upon the rest of the invaders that were on the shore, of whom in our first shock of battle we slew four hundred *óglæchs*; the three battles of them converged upon us and for the fair day's length till night-time we strove with them; then when they saw that their champions were fallen they broke to their vessels and swift galleys, and we came off full of wounds and bleeding.

"By this time fear on our account had taken the Fian-chief, and he said: 'Fianna of Ireland, go ye in pursuit of the three that went from you'; but just as they rose in their three serried phalanxes we came up to them at this hill, and before Finn we laid the heads upon the ground. It was I," Caeilte said, "that killed Fiadhmore, Dermot that killed Circall, and Oscar that slew Congna. The three heads were bestowed on yonder *tulachs* and hence they bear those denominations, while 'the battle of *trágh Eothaile*' is the name of this battle in the Fian-lore."

"Success and benediction, Caeilte," said the king of Connacht, "and if thou desiredst jewels and rich things we would give them thee!" "Thou art all the better of having offered them [i.e. hast the merit of a generous action], but I need them not," answered Caeilte.

Again they came on: to *breicshliabh* or 'spotted mountain,' i.e. 'Bricklieve' near loch Arrow, called *sliabh formaeile* or 'bald-topped mountain' also, i.e. 'Slieveformoyle'; and to *suidhe Finn* or 'Finn's seat,' i.e. 'Seefinn,' on the mountain's summit; and as they sat there Caeilte, surveying the place in which Finn was wont to have his seat, wept. "Caeilte, my soul," said the king of Connacht, "what makes thee to weep? is it perhaps the sight of that spot where Finn sat: of Formoyle of the Fianna?" "That indeed it is," he answered: "for this mountain was their choicest hunting-ground: round about *loch na neilltedh* or 'the loch of hinds' that is to say, which now is called *lock formaeile* or 'loch of the Formoyle'; and *cluain na damraighe* or 'the lawn of harts,' presently called *cell tulach* or 'the church of *tulachs*,' which was Conan Mael Morna's town; and *ros na macraighe* or 'the wood of lads,' now *in airm* or 'the place,' where a part of the Fianna's horses were kept; on to the *dún* of Saltran Long-heel, now called *cell Chaeimhín* or 'saint Caeimin's church' upon the river *Suca*; thence on to *móin na fostadha* or 'the moor of staying,

known as *móin an tachair* or ‘moor of the affray’; and so to *carraig an fhomorach* or ‘rock of the pirate,’ at this time called *dún móir*.”

The king farther questioned Caeilte:—“whence was Finn mac Cumall’s origin?” and he replied: “of Leinster, being of the *úi Thairrsigh*, that is from *glaise Bolcáin*; or he was Finn son of Cumall son of *Tredhorn* son of *Cairebre* called *garbshrón* or ‘roughnose’ son of *Fiacha fóbhreac* or ‘the slightly freckled’ of the *úi Fhailge*, a quibus ‘Offaley.’” “Whence sprang his mother?” “She was Muirne smooth-neck, daughter of Teigue son of Nuadha, of the *tuatha dé danann*; and that [i.e. Finn] was one of the five best warriors that in Ireland ever took shield and sword; and of all the world’s north-westernmost part the hand pre-eminent in bestowing of jewels, of rich things, and of great wage; one of the three best men that ever fell to the island of the Gael; one who, if only a man had a head to eat with and legs upon which to go [and to carry off his bounty], never denied one in any matter and, to the end none should say it was fear that moved him, never turned and looked behind him.”

“What were the standing Fianna’s names?” asked the king. “Finn mac Cumall verily,” Caeilte began, “and Ossian with his four sons: Oscar, Ossian, Echtach and Ulach; Raighne Wide-eye, Caine the crimson-red, Uillenn Sharp-edge, Faelan the virile and Aedh Beg, all sons of Finn; Finn More son of Cuan son of Murrough, high chief of Munster’s Fianna; Finn son of Temenan, chief of the Decian Fianna in Munster; Finn son of Urgna, chief of Kinelconall’s Fianna; Finn son of Foghaeth and Finn son of *Abhratruadh* or ‘Red-eyebrow,’ the two Fian-chiefs of Dalaradia in the north; Finn Bane grandson of Bresal, Fian-chief of Hy-Kinsellach; Finn *fer an champair* or ‘man of contention,’ Fian-chief of Scotland; Goll Gulbain and Cas of Cuailgne, the two Fian-chiefs of Ulidia in the north; Deghoc’s three sons: Fead and Faeidh and Foscadh; Encherd Beirre’s three sons: Glas and Gear and Gubha; Caeilte mac Ronan and his two sons: Faelan and Colla; *Goth gaeithe* or ‘spear of the wind’ mac Ronan, who when he desired to assert his own running power used to be a javelin cast in front of all the Fianna; Lergan the swift from Luachair in the west, that used to bring in the wild hinds as another would fetch home his own proper kine; *Diarmaid ó Duibhne* of the men of Munster, that never knew weariness of foot nor shortness of breath nor, whether in going out or in coming in, ever flagged; mac Lugach the impetuous and strong: primest

young man of Ireland's and of Scotland's Fianna, mainstay of universal Fianry's valour; Bran Beg, grandson of Buacachan, chief comptroller of Ireland's and of Scotland's Fianna; Scannal grandson of Liathan, leader of their striplings; Sciathbreac son of Dathchain, the Irish Fianna's best man at games; Goll More mac Morna, with his twice thirty own brothers and fifteen hundred of one kith and kin; and the three 'men of instrument' from Slievefuad, having three instruments of music which they played concertedly and facing each other [i.e. all three facing inwards], and the which when any heard neither trouble nor hardship any more afflicted him." "What," asked the king of Connacht, "were those *óglæchs'* names?" "*Luath*, *Léidmhech*, and *Lánláidir*, i.e. 'the swift,' 'the destroying,' 'the powerfully strong,' who were of the standing Fianna," Caeilte answered: "the above being the names of those chiefs and lords and men of territory whom Finn had, and that thrice in every year used to victual him in his own liss, and were performers of the *dórd fiansa*. These then, king of Connacht, are the questions thou enquiredst of me," Caeilte ended, and straightway benumbed in stupor fell down on the hillside. For three days and three nights after that he remained without capacity to travel or to go, fretting for his comrades and for his foster-fellows; wherefore here the king of Connacht had a camp pitched, and they caused Caeilte to be bathed.

Next they drew on to *cluain na ndamh* or 'the lawn of stags,' which now is called *cluain imdheargtha* or 'the lawn of reproach,' where they camped; Patrick blessed the town, and of Caeilte the king sought the reason of such two names.

"It was a special bounty of the chase that Finn and the Fianna's three battles had here: a hart to every two of them, and to Finn three; whence the spot was called 'the lawn of stags.' But 'the lawn of reproach' was conferred on it for this reason: when clan-Morna were on terms of depredation upon Finn, once on a time just as they were busied with their meal and had their portions before them they never noticed anything until we were come round about this ridge and so surrounded them. Then said Goll mac Morna: 'a great reproach it is that these men have fixed on us!' 'Be 'the lawn of reproach' its name henceforth,' said Conan Mael mac Morna. But," said Caeilte, "their gallantry we must not suppress to clan-Morna's prejudice: for out through the battalion of the

Fianna came the weighty phalanx in their might, nor did we avail to draw blood or to have 'a superficial reddening' of them. Here we sat down by their fires, and to Finn a basin of pale gold was brought....

[here is a lacuna comprising the sequel of this section; the tale of Radubh son of Dubh and of Finn mac Cumall's daughter Aeife dhearg; Tighernach mac Conn's churlishness to Patrick; origin of the rath of Cas and of Conall, the king of Kinelconall's two sons, and of tobar Pátraic or 'Patrick's well'; the Saint's banishment of the nine goblins into inis scríne or 'shrine island' in loch Carra; the cause of Caelte's visit to Assaroe, and how he entered sídh dumha in Leyney of Connacht on his wa; the expedition of the king of Denmark's sons Garbh and Eolus, with Bé dreacain or 'the dragon maid,' daughter of Ioruath, to Ireland or the purpose of the following battle.]

Then Cascorach mac Cainchinne enquired of the *tuatha dé danann*: "have ye for me a hard, tough, and right solid shield?" Donn mac Midir replied: "I have one." "Give it me," said Cascorach. The shield was given to him, he took the sword in his hand and came straight to where the she-brave watched and warded the invaders. "And what mayest thou be, young man?" she questioned. "To do battle with thee am I come," said he. "Never until this day," said she, "have I been matched in fight against one man only, or even against two; more often has it been mine to inspire a hardy battalion of full strength with fear of me; and as for thee, young fellow, seeing thou art come to encounter me, 'tis positive that nowhere else in the world hast thou been able to find thee room." For all that, bloodily and with good endeavour they set to and either on other inflicted thirty huge wounds such as need the leech's care. In the end however the young man nimbly and vehemently falling on her plied her with deadly strokes, and with a cut that he chanced to get at her past her shield's rim struck off her head. This he bore away to the *tuatha dé danann*, and Caelte uttered a quatrain:

"Cascorach of the strokes has killed the woman (no boasting fib it is); he has left her lying on the strand with the sea-foam washing up to her."

"A great deed is that thou hast done, stripling," the Danish invaders cried [from their ships]: "to have slain before our faces the champion that we had, and that in all extremity used to relieve us!"

Then they inaugurated Eolus the late king's brother and came ashore to challenge the *tuatha dé danann*, who said: "we accept, for more and more easy we find it to give them battle."

Early in the morning then, ere yet a man of the host was up, Fermaise son of Eogabhal rose and grasped 'the pronged javelin': so called because on either side of it were five prongs each having both its edges garnished with sickle-shaped barbs, every one of which again would have 'cut a hair against the stream.' "My gods," he said, "what manner of man is Eolus?" and he that accompanied him said: "the comeliest óglaech and the finest form of the whole world's men." "Go not thou to any distance from me," said Fermaise, "but continue to instruct and guide me."

About him then Eolus took his fighting garb of battle, and his various weapons in his hand, and stepped upon the ship's gangway. "There, young man," the companion said, "is he whom thou requirest me to point out to thee: with the diadem of gold upon his head, wearing the red shield and clad in the green suit of mail." With that Fermaise gave his foot a solid bearing on the ground, put his finger into the javelin's thong, and at the other delivered a cast that impinged on the shield's very rim; it broke the good warrior's back in him and, after driving his heart as it were a great lump of blood out through his mouth, the spear's point passed clean through him and stuck in the ship's bulwark. Howbeit, when the Danish fleet saw that those three were fallen they renounced the battle and departed to their own land; then Caeilte uttered:

"Joyful the sídh-folk are; that without loss, without violence done to themselves, they are scaped from the host of them with the curling locks is not, in our judgment, conducive to their payment any more of tribute."

Throughout all Ireland the fall of that trio was made much of, both the *tuatha dé danann* and the men of Erin esteeming it a wondrous event that by the aforesaid three [i.e. Caeilte, Cascorach, Fermaise] were perished those that every year came to harry and to spoil them.

Caeilte asked now: "where is the seer Eoghan?" who answered: "here!" "Procure me knowledge of and true monition concerning my life's length; for I am but a decrepid ancient, for whom the latter end of his age and of his time must now be near at hand." Then Eoghan pronounced a quatrain:

"Seventeen years from this day there are for thee, O Caeilte of fair fame, till thou shalt fall at Tara's pool: grievous as by the king's household that will be accounted."

"Success and benediction attend thee, Eoghan," Caeilte said: this forecast is identical with that which my chief and lord, my gentle loving guardian Finn, made for me." "What length of life," said the others, "does Eoghan assign thee?" "Seventeen years," answered Caeilte. "That will prove true," they went on, "for never has he asserted that one should have a given span but it would so happen to him; and for very many years he used to tell us that by you, and with those weapons, these three were to fall."

Then Caeilte said: "sídh-folk, it is well; by you now be my cure (the errand upon which I came to you) effected, for I have given you my healing's fee: the greatest benefit that ever was achieved for you 'tis I have wrought it." "True it is indeed that thou hast done so," they replied, "and by us a change of form and feature shall be brought about for thee so that again thou mayest enjoy vigour and full activity; and chief command of the *tuatha dé danann*'s young men be thine as well." "That were a miserable thing," said Caeilte, "that I should take on me a shape of sorcery! by no means will I take another than that which my Maker and my Creator, He that is the Very and Glorious God, hath conferred on me, and which the rule of faith and devotion of that *Táilchenn* with whom I have foregathered in Ireland doth assign to me." "A true warrior's and a very hero's utterance is that," they said, "and the thing thou sayest is good; but in the matter of healing thee we crave yet a respite." "What is the respite's reason?" "It is three ravens which yearly come to us out of the north and, when the youngsters of the *sídh* are goaling, swoop on them and carry off one apiece of them," said Ilbhreac. There then they tarried until day was come with its full light, whereupon the *tuatha dé danann* in general proceeded to look on at the hurling: for every six men was given them a chess-board; a backgammon-board for every five; for every ten men a timpan, for every hundred a harp, and in the proportion of one to every nine were supplied pipes shrill and dominant.

Then they saw three ravens that out of the north came in from the deep sea, pitched on the great tree of special properties that stood on the

green, and there emitted three lugubrious ill-omened screeches. Were it a thing permitted that the dead should be raised out of earth, or hair snatched from the heads of men, those three screeches would have effected both; as it was they perturbed and disordered the whole concourse.

Cascorach took a man of the chessmen, with which he made a shot at one of the ravens, and the missile entered first his beak and then his throat, so killing him. Another of the ravens Fermaise aimed at and slew, while for the third one Caeilte in like manner did as much. Then he said: "the birds are done away; now let my cure be wrought." But they of the sídh said: "knowest thou not, Caeilte, that for now a long time there is a feud fastened on the *tuatha dé danann*?" "What feud is that?" he asked. "It is the king of Ulidia's three sons in the north: Conn, Congal and Colla, that predatorily war on them and," said Ilbhreac again, "yearly come to us demanding eric for Eochaid Red-neck (king of Ulidia, and their grandfather) whom in the battle of *trágh Baile* or 'Baile's strand,' i.e. Dundalk to the northward, the *tuatha dé danann* slew. From every sídh in Ireland year by year they require a set combat of three: a combat of unequal event, for the three of us that are told off to it are killed invariably, the three brethren going scot free; and it is to the people of our sídh that this year it falls to fight with them." Now where the king of Ulidia's sons dwelt after their yearly marauding upon the *tuatha dé danann* was on *benn Boirche* in that province.

Said one son of them: "what sídh is it ours to attack now?" Ilbhreac's sídh of Assaroe," answered the other brothers; but one of them added: "in that sídh is a warrior of Finn mac Cumall's people, having with him two more, to whom whether prepared for fight or taken at disadvantage it were [under other circumstances] well to give a wide berth; but should we now shirk this same sídh they [the *tuatha dé danann*] will affirm that it is from unwillingness to face them on any terms that we do so." The three therefore for that night tarried where they were; then they looked to their armature and various edged weapons, and early on the morrow's morn reached Assaroe. The sídh-people, Caeilte with his two accompanying them, came out upon the green and he enquired: "are those yonder the three that come to assail you?" "They are they indeed,"

they answered; and Caeilte said: "the men's bodily form and their equipment both are good."

"Men, it is well," he called to the strangers: "for how long now are ye in contention with the *tuatha dé danann*?" "For a hundred years we are at it, and yearly slay three of them," they replied. "If ye do so then have ye three times over avenged your grandfather on them; and should ye encounter here 'tis yourselves will fall, for it is you that have the unjust cause." "We will pay you a fine," put in Ilbhreac, "out of every *sídh* in Ireland: twenty ounces of gold, of silver as many, and either side to cry quits with the other." The brethren said: "we will accept that." It was delivered to them therefore, and they departed.

"Let my cure be wrought now," said Caeilte, "for I hold it to be time;" and Ilbhreac called: "where is Elcmhar's daughter, Bebhionn?" "Here am I," answered the woman. "Into some hidden place convey Caeilte son of Ronan and procure him to be well tended and healed, seeing that from both *tuatha dé danann* and all Ireland he has averted spoliation and violence of outlawry. Also let Cascorach make him music and minstrelsy, and Fermaise son of Eogabal keep watch and ward for him and minister to his wants."

Bebhionn (and her two sons with her) proceeded to *teach na narm* or 'the house of arms,' where a rich bed in which to be cured was decked out for Caeilte, and a basin of white gold containing its fill of water was brought to the lady. She took to her a mash-tub of crystal into which she had put certain herbs; these she comminuted in the water, handed the basin to Caeilte, and out of the same he drank a great draught [*which potion and four that follow it act emetically, Bebhionn in answer to the patient's queries very minutely reporting therapeutic progress each time, and the fifth she pronounces to be the last step towards perfect recovery; then*] the woman gave him a can of new milk and he drank it but, as a consequence of all that retching, was for three days and three nights debilitated and out of sorts.

"In my judgment, Caeilte," said the lady, "thou hast gotten easement and relief." "That have I indeed," he answered, "but that the great disorder of my head annoys me." "'The washing of Flann daughter of Flidhais' shall be done for thee: the which being used to any head this latter is not affected by ache, nor by baldness, nor by defect of sight."

For a space and a spell therefore that remedy was applied to him. They of the *sídh* also divided themselves in three [lit. 'made thirds of themselves'] to visit and to divert him (one third being of their gentles and great nobles, another of their young men, and one more of their womankind and poets) for the time, were it long or short, that he should be on his bed of convalescence. All special fruits of the chase moreover that they secured were bestowed on Caeilte.

Thus the lady and both her sons, with Cascorach and Fermaise son of Eogabal, drank and made merry by Caeilte when they heard a sound, a gush of music, draw near from the water of Assaroe: melody for sake of which one would have abandoned the whole world's various strains. They hang their harps on the corners of the couches and go out, which made Caeilte to wonder; then he noticed and recognised that he yet lacked his spear-power and his full strength, and he said: "many a stern and desperate fight, many a warlike mêlée and van of battle I have faced, and to say that to-day there is not in me so much strength or pith as to go out along with all the rest!" and tears burst out and adown his cheeks.

After having heard the music the *sídh*-people that had been abroad returned and Caeilte sought news of them, saying: "what was the burst of music that we heard?" "It was *Uainebhuidhe* out of the *sídh* of *Dorn buidhe* from Cleena's Wave in the south, and with her the birds of the land of promise, she being minstrel of that entire country. Now is her turn to visit this *sídh*, and every year she takes some other one": thus Bebhionn. By this time the new-comers had entered the *sídh*, the birds as well coming in and perching on the cornices and couches of the dwelling. Thirty of them penetrated into *teach na narm*, where Caeilte was, and there within struck up in concert. Cascorach handled his timpan, and to every piece that he played the birds sang him an accompaniment. "Many's the music we have heard," Cascorach said: "but music so good as that, never."

Then 'the washing of Flann daughter of Flidhais' was performed for Caeilte; and never, so long as he lived, did defect of sight, of hearing or of hair, afflict him, but he was scarless and hurt-whole. "The matter and the cause for which I came: to have my foot healed, let it be executed now," said he. "To-morrow in the morning it shall be done," the woman answered.

At that time she brought to him the two tubes of Modharn's daughter Binn; a she-slave sucked at one, a he-slave at the other, and left not in his foot unsoundness, nor ailment, nor clotted blood but they brought out, and he was whole. For three days and three nights after the cure he and his abode there.

The dwellers in the *sídh* emerged now to the banks of Assaroe, laid aside their clothes, and struck out into the stream to swim. Caeilte said: "what ails me that I should not go swim, since my health is restored me?" and with that he plunged in and disported himself in the water. This done they passed into the *sídh* again, and that night a banqueting-hall was set out for them. Caeilte fell to take leave of them and to render thanks for his restoration: "for," said he, "I am whole and perfect, wherefore a benison be on you"; and he uttered:

"A blessing on the people of the *sídh*...."

"Verily and by our word," rejoined the denizens, "never on the earth's surface have we seen warrior better than thou; we opine indeed that not Finn himself surpassed thee." "Alack," he cried, "were it Finn that ye looked on ye would give up the whole human race nor ever mention them! but it is time for me to go, and so a benediction rest on you: the men of Erin were trysted to meet at Tara within a twelvemonth [which even now expires], and I cannot choose but go to have speech of my comrade and foster-fellow Ossian son of Finn; as well as for the precept laid on me by the *Táilchenn*, who commanded me to repair thither when all Ireland's chieftains should be gathered in one spot: in order to the reciting of the Fianna's great deeds of valour and of arms, of Finn mac Cumall's, and of Ireland's other good men's too, that by authors and by ollaves the whole should be amended and preserved to the latter times." The lady answered: "we have a means of help for thee." "What help is that?" he asked. "That we should convey to Tara for thee a certain mnemonic potion of nature such that never a stream, nor river, nor estuary, nor battle, nor single combat came in thy way but thou shalt have present in thy memory." Caeilte made answer: "that is a helpful gift of very kinsmen and of friends—if then we should happen to possess aught that ye might desire, ye should have it of us."

"A great favour is this that thou hast conferred on us," said Bebhionn: "to have averted from us them that every seventh year

harried and raided us; for thy behoof therefore I have a ribbed shirt in the which while thou art no opposition shall affect thee [in thy undertakings]; a fringed mantle likewise, purely crimson, of wool of the land of promise from beyond, and its border yellow with gold: he about whom it is will be the chief ornament of all meetings and conventions. A boon most comfortable to an aged senior I have too: a fish-hook named *aicil mac mogha* which thou couldst not set in any rapid, in estuary nor in river, but there it surely would capture somewhat." "Fermaise son of Eogabal," said Caeilte, "what wilt thou do?" "I will continue in this *sídh* until the Feast of Tara be held, and I carry thither all things that Bebhionn has promised thee." "And thou, Cascorach, what wilt thou do?" "Go with thee," he answered, "to acquire knowledge and right instruction up to such time as the men of Ireland break up in Tara." They bade good-bye to the *sídh*-people and came out to *cnoc an nuáill* or 'the hill of outcry,' where the *tuatha dé danann* at their parting from Caeilte made great *nuall* or 'outcry,' whence the hill's name from that day to this. Quoth Caeilte: "until the judgment come, and the world's last day, this town I will not revisit."

They came on to *eas na finghaile* or 'the falls of fratricide,' now called 'the falls of Cronan son of Balbh': for it was seven brothers that once were there; concerning the falls there was a falling out between them and each one killed another, so that from them the falls were denominated. But their father, Cronan son of Balbh, lived after them and ever coming hither used to bewail his sons; one night his heart burst in his body, and from him comes *eas Crónáin* or 'the falls of Cronan.'

Not long had they been there when the clouds of waning day fell on them; so they moved away from the falls and by-and-by saw a tall man that awaited them on a *tulach*. They sat down by him and: "whence come ye?" he enquired; in answer to which they impart their names, their designations, and their story, then in their turn ask: "and who art thou thyself?" "I am Blathmac the stock-owner from the outskirts of Slievelugha, out of *cúil radhairc* which now men call *cúil bFinn* or 'Coolavin.'" "It is this night's entertainment that we would have of thee," said Caeilte. Now in all Ireland that same *óglæch* most excelled in churlishness and grudging, he replied therefore: "would ye but give me a price I would yield you provant and have you served for the night."

Caeilte questioned: "what price is that?" "The matter is: three pillar-stones that are hard by my town, and are called 'the three men's pillar-stones,' but we know not from whom they are so styled." "I have it for thee," said Caeilte, "for I remember it:

"It was a good warrior that was in Ireland's Fianna: Breasal's grandson Finn Bane, who also was of clan-Baeiscne, and he had three superlative daughters; neither were there of the children of Baeiscne more than three as good as he: Finn namely, Ossian, and Oscar. To set against which excellence of these men Finn Bane's daughters had three perfections of their own: in broidering and in all other skilled handiwork they outdid all Ireland's women, and in the whole island were no three women of finer form. Special and gorgeously-coloured apparel it was that men practised to take into the gathering of Taillte, into the great convention of Usnach, to the Feast of Tara; and none cared for raiment other than such as those women had made. To these Finn mac Cumall said: 'girls, go not with any men but those on whom I and Ireland's Fianna shall bestow you.' Thus then they were for a season in Almhain of Leinster, awaiting the Chief's word, and until three men of clan-Morna passing by *carraig Almhaine* or 'the rock of Almhain' saw the maidens at their embroidery north-easterly from them on the rock. Those three óglaechs: Conan and Art and Meccon their names were, came near and said: 'yonder is a good chance to do a stroke of slaughter upon Finn and clan-Baeiscne, of whom (Finn himself and Ossian and Oscar only excepted) there are not three more valuable than those.' They captured the women and led them to this *tulach*, on which were Goll and his brethren. He asked: 'whence are the she-captives brought?' 'From Almhain,' answered she that was the eldest. 'This is a wherewithal to make peace with the Fianna,' said Goll. 'By our word and indeed,' cried Conan, 'it is not to make peace with them that we have brought these women, but to kill them before your faces!' 'Our curse be on him that shall slay them,' said Goll: 'and as for our being present at their slaughter, that will we not by any means.'

"Thereupon clan-Morna, all but those six aforesaid, as one man departed from the hill, and the girls said [to the three that continued with them]: 'is it to kill us ye are fain?' 'Even so,' Conan replied. They said: 'we will give you good conditions, as that every mischief and all

wrong that ever ye have done to Finn and to the Fianna be forgiven you, and peace made between you; we ourselves also to be yours as wives.' On no account were these terms granted them however, but the three dealt them three cuts and took off their three heads. Here they were laid under earth, and lie under the three monoliths in question: Etaein and Aeife and Aillbhe their names were."

"Success and benediction, Caeilte!" the *óglæch* cried: "for myself, for my son and for my grandson that is a good item of knowledge; in return for which piece of old lore ye shall e'en be welcome for these three nights."

They advanced therefore to *lios na mban* or 'the liss of women' in Coolavin, and passed into the dwelling, where they were well served that night. From a vat of mead that he had the *óglæch* dipped a hornful and reached it to Caeilte, saying: "thine be the whole vat, Caeilte; and though 'twere for a year thou desiredst to stay on here thou shouldst have it." "A blessing attend thee," the ancient answered, "but longer than this night we will not tarry." "Well then," said the host, "another thing I have to enquire of thee: why was this liss called 'of women'?"

"It was nine sisters of the *tuatha dé danann*'s women that hither came to meet nine warriors of the Fianna; but they being come thus far the children of Morna spied them out as they kept their tryst, and slew them: from whom this spot has the name of *líos na mban*." There then they passed that night; on the morrow they took leave and bequeathed a blessing.

They reached *carn na finghaile* or 'the cairn of fratricide,' now called *dumha na con* or 'the mound of wolf-dogs,' where as they stepped up the *tulach* they saw nine lovely women that with a queen of excellent form in their midst awaited them. A smock of royal silk she had next to her skin; over that an outer tunic of soft silk, and around her a hooded mantle of crimson fastened on her breast with a golden brooch. Upon seeing Caeilte the lady rose and gave him three kisses; then he asked: "maiden, who art thou?" She replied: "I am Echna daughter of Muiredach mac Finnachta, the king of Connacht's daughter that is to say." Now the bevy of them had a chess-board, on which they played; a can of delicious mead too, which they drank, and in which floated a fair polished horn. Every time that a game was won and ended they took a draught: they

caroused in fact and made merry. The manner of the lady was this: she had three perfections; for of the whole world's wise women she was one, and he whom she should have counselled had as the result both affluence and consideration. "Caeilte, my soul," she said, "where wert thou last night?" "In the house of Blathmac the stock-owner, at *cúil radhairc* below, in Leyney of Connacht." "All hail to thee, 'tis thine own way thou art come!" cried the girl. She took one end of the chess-board, and Caeilte the other, in his lap, saying: "a long time it is that I have not played chess." When they had now played for a while they laid the board from them; they [the new-comers] looking abroad saw three *dúns* near to them, and Caeilte enquired of the young woman: it what *dúns* are these?" She replied: "it was I that had them made." "It was a good woman that had them made," said he. "But Caeilte," she went on, "what minstrel is that by thee?" "Cascorach, minstrel of the *tuatha dé danann* at large, and the best that is in both Ireland and Scotland." "His semblance is good, if only his minstrelsy be such." "By our word and indeed," said Caeilte, "good as are his looks his minstrelsy is better." "Take thy timpan, *óglæch*," she commanded; he took it, played on it and performed sustainedly. Which being done she gave him the two bracelets that were on her arms, and Cascorach said: "success and benediction attend thee, lady, but I need them not; neither shall I ever give them to one whom I could prefer to thyself: take them therefore and with them a blessing."

It was the last of day then; and they betook them to the nearest one of those three *dúns*, where they were bestowed in a hidden and retired apartment. Etrom son of Lugar, the young woman's guardian, rose and made Caeilte welcome; she entered then, and in this wise they all feasted and enjoyed themselves. "Caeilte, my soul, 'tis well," said the girl: "why was this cairn called 'of fratricide,' and this mound outside 'of wolf-dogs'?" "It was *Ben mebhla* or 'woman of malice,' daughter of Ronan and a sorceress of the *tuatha dé danann*, that fell in love with Finn mac Cumall; but Finn said that, so long as he could have any other woman whatsoever in the whole world, he never would wed a witch. Finn's wolf-dogs being slipped came hither, thrice fifty in number, and the said woman breathed her breath on them, whereby, to spite Finn, she incarcerated them in this mound: hence it is named 'of the wolf-dogs.'" "And 'the cairn of fratricide,' whence is it?" "It was *Lámh luath* or 'swift

hand,' son of *Cumasc deabhtha* or 'mêlée-fighter' son of *Déanamh comhlainn* or 'duellist,' who was of this country's people: and any occasions of single combat that might befall the kings of Ireland, as Art and Cormac and Cairbre [successively], he it was, and his father and grandfather [before him], that used to undertake them all.

"At that time, in the Duffry, and in the *duibhfidh*, and in Slievecarbery which now is styled Slievegorey, was an *óglæch*: *Borbchú* son of *Trénlámhach* was his name, who had a daughter: *Niamh* or 'brilliance' she was called. They were nine brethren that Lamhluath above had, every man of whom separately came to crave the girl of Borbchu; and what each one used to say to him was: 'we will kill thyself and sons all together unless thou give us thy daughter.' What Borbchu on the other hand, for fear of being slain, used to tell each of them apart was: 'it will so turn out that she shall be thine.'

"One day then upon this hill Lamhluath said: 'is it true, my brothers, that ye look for the woman whom I have solicited of Borbchu?' They answered: 'it is true.' Thereupon a pang of jealousy took him; he rose, took his sword, and to the brother that was next to him dealt a stroke that killed him. But at sight of the fratricide those seven that remained laid their lips to the ground, and for grief of their brother died. They were put away under this cairn, and hence, lady, is 'the cairn of fratricide'; in lieu of which deed he [the doer] submitted to saint Patrick in Tara and said that, were the latter but so to enjoin him, he would ply his own sword upon himself."

"Success and benison, Caelte my soul," the maiden cried: "great knowledge and true instruction is this that thou hast left with us! and now, knowest thou a defect that ails me and for which I cannot find relief?" "What defect is that?" "A head-disorder that attacks me, and water wherewith to cool it is none in proximity to us; for when I apply water to my head I get ease." Caelte called: "where is Cascorach?" "Here," answered he. "Go out to the well, taking with thee this holy water, and sprinkle it on the well; so shall the magic veil that hangs over it fall away, and it will serve all men. Which well is that of Cormac's daughter *Aillbhe ghruaidbhreac* or 'freckle-cheek.'" All this Cascorach did, and the well was revealed to every one. "Thy hospitality's fee to thee, lady, it is that the well serve thee and them of the country," said Caelte;

and so it did until between two kings that grasped the rule of Connacht fratricide was perpetrated: Aedh and Eoghan were their names, and by Aedh the latter was slain at *lic an fhomorach* or 'the pirate's flagstone,' now called lic *Ghnathail* or 'Gnathal's flagstone.' In that night too were inflicted the three greatest losses that ever fell on Connacht's province, as: the draining away of the falls that ran out of *inbhear na bfear* or 'the inver of men,' known presently as 'the Moy'; the ebbing in that same night of the high tide which out of the main ocean outside used to ascend the *Gaillimh* or 'Galway river,' and on which [in great part] depended the weal of the whole province; moreover the running dry of this well: of Aillbhe's."

Caeilte resumed: "to depart must be ours to-morrow; and never have I carried my head into the house of a woman better than thyself" "A most urgent thing I would enquire of thee before departure, Caeilte my soul," the girl said, and he asked: "what thing is that?" "Who is yon minstrel with you, and who his father and his mother?" "Cascorach mac Cainchinne son of the *tuatha dé danann*'s ollave, himself also an ollave, his mother being Bebhionn daughter of Elcmar of the *brugh*." "An ill chance indeed," she cried, "that he is not son to Bodhb Derg, or to Angus, or to Teigue son of Nuadha!" "What means that, young woman?" asked Caeilte. "That I who never yet have loved any am fallen heavily, hugely, in love with him." "Not one of those others will in the long run prove better than he," said Caeilte, "in virtue of saint Patrick's award that at the last he shall hold all Ireland's ollaveship; and saving only this minstrel he will relegate the *tuatha dé danann* to 'the foreheads' of hills and of rocks [i.e. to their wildest steeps], unless that now and again thou see some poor one of them appear as transiently he revisits earth [i.e. the haunts of men]. And thou, Cascorach, what is thy mind anent this business?" "My mind is this," he answered: "that of the whole world's women never have I seen one to please me better than this one." "What then hinders you that ye should not make a match of it?" asked Caeilte. She said: "with thy consent and by thy counsel...."

"...and Finn held the chase of Slievegamph, and of the Curlieu mountains, and of the green-banked Corann's broad low lands; and there the *gilla* ran after a deer in such fashion that his own spear chanced into 'the hollow of his side,' and that to the length of a warrior's hand

the strong thick shaft thereof went clean through him. We the three battles of the Fianna came to him, and for nine nights he lived on and we striving to work his cure; but then he died, and this green-skinned *tulach* was closed in over him:—

Finn cecinit this quatrain.

“Alas, O variously handsome Eolar, O valiant battle-loving hero, for all thy body’s blood that is turned to clotted gore after streaming through a cruel wound!”

“*Cnoc an eolais* or ‘the hill of guidance’ too is another name for it,” added Caeilte. “What ‘guidance’ [i.e. instruction or interpretation] was that?” “It was *Cainnelsciath* or ‘candle-shield,’ i.e. ‘of the glittering shield,’ a magician of Finn’s people, that from the firmament’s clouds drew omens in Finn’s presence, and: ‘Yonder,’ said he, ‘is the spot in which by Fatha Canann mac Maccon mac Macnia a *bruinden* will be made.’ ‘Verily,’ Finn said, ‘I see that,’ and he uttered:—

“Cainnelsciath, over a *bruinden* three clouds of noxious property I see: to all of us proclaim the thing if it so please thee, for thou understandest the matter for which they are there. O Cainnelsciath, declare this: all that thus holds me in perplexity; from thy lord hide not the case as it stands: the three clouds of woe which I see.’ ‘I see a cloud [the wizard answered], one clear as crystal, hang above a wide-doored *bruinden*; there the chief of a band one day shall be when the chalk flies from shields as they are riven. A cloud of grey, foreboding grief I see in the fair midst between the other two: that for which the ravens lust shall come of the event, when there is glint of weapons in their play. A crimson cloud than which blood unmixed is not more red I see there poised above the two: if battle there be [and so there will] the hue of ruby gore will prove to have portended wrathfulness [i.e. ferocity of fight]. That bodies must be tortured and great hosts perish in the early day, O king of *Clí* that knowest every day, the three clouds which I see foretell.”

Then they all went to Tara; before the men of Ireland Caeilte and Ossian related, and Ireland’s ollaves emended all that they said.

“Victory and blessings attend you, noble sirs,” the men of Erin said: “though in all Ireland should be knowledge and instruction no more than that which even now ye have bequeathed to them, yet were it meet that they should gather themselves together in one place to have it.”

Then Cascorach rose and said: "Caelte, my soul, henceforth it is time for me to go; the benison that is due from every pupil be upon thee then." "And on thee rest the blessing due from every guardian that has had a charge," Caelte answered: "for of all that ever I have seen thou the most dost excel in art." Dermot the king added: "all Ireland's ollaveship I confer on thee for so long as I rule over her."

That was the hour and time in which thrice nine of the remnant of the Fianna that had accompanied Caelte came out of the west to Tara. They took heed and were diligent to mark that, they now lacking their vigour, their pith and their full force, there was not paid them attention or regard so much as that one should even speak with them. Upon the hillside therefore they laid their lips to the earth and there died; under which tulach's mould they were laid, and so *cnoc na nónbhar* or 'hill of the nines' is that hill's name after them."

"A miserable thing indeed is this," said Ossian: "that was the last surviving residue of the great and gallant band which Finn had, and ourselves." That day the ancient men were grieved and wretched after those nines, seeing that of the Fianna's three battalions there had endured none but Caelte and Ossian and the aforesaid. The men of Ireland all were hushed, not a man of them speaking to his fellow, so greatly oppressed they were with the sorrow which the seniors testified after their Fianna and own very people. Then Ossian uttered:

"Is there here one that could tell (and were he unlearned, of a low estate) the place in which Finn's *cuach* was left all by itself in *cromghlinn*, i.e. 'Crumlin' or 'the crooked glen'?"

"Except this day," said Caelte, "never was there one in which I found it not easy to speak with thee, Ossian;" and he said:

"Here is one that could declare where it was that Finn turned right-handwise; the spot which is in the green glen nought but a magic veil hath hidden."

Ossian *cecinit*.

"Is there here one that could tell (and were be unlearned, of a low estate) who 'twas that set the head of *Currach cain* upon the hill over the strand of Bodamar?"

"It was thou that didst take off his head," said Caeilte, "and thy father that first wounded him, and myself that closed in the tulach over him":

Caeilte dixit.

"After which [i.e. the beheading] I brought the head to the hill that stands over the strand of Bodamar; there it is from that time to this, and lies at rest within the hill."

Ossian said: "remembrest thou too, my soul, who it was that over Ballachgowran of a morning made a cast at Goll mac Morna?" "It was I," Caeilte answered, "that sent the spear at him; it struck off the golden helmet on his head, and of his flesh carried away from him a fragment as thick as its own shaft [i.e. ploughed such a furrow in his head]." "And proudly taken by him that was," said Ossian: "great as the hurt was, again he donned the helmet and took his weapons in his hand, and to his brethren called out that he felt no whit ashamed." Then Ossian uttered:

"Is there here one that could tell (and so on)...."

The king of Ireland enquired of them now: who was it that in the battle of Gowra slew Cairbre Lifechair?" "Ossian's son, Oscar, it was that killed him," said Caeilte. "The exact truth of the matter it is that's best, my soul," put in Ossian. "Who then was it that destroyed him?" asked Dermot. "*Orlámh* or 'gold-hand,' king of the Fotharta in the south: an *óglæch* whom I had, and my father before me." "And Oscar," pursued the king: "who slew him?" "It was a single cast by Cormac's son Cairbre Lifechair that did it." "And mac Lughach: who killed him in the same battle?" "Bresal mac Eirge, son of the Norse-Gaels' king from out of the Hebrides yonder away, that was captain of the king of Ireland's household."

Now this night was the last one of Tara's Feast, and they passed it in banqueting and pleasure; on the morrow the whole host rose.

Then the men of Erin broke up to their various provinces, each into his own borders and ancestral seat. The king of Ireland likewise drew off, and came to *lic na ndruadh* or 'flagstone of the magicians' north-easterly from Tara. Bebhionn daughter of Alasc mac Angus, of the king of Scotland, was his wife; to whom he spoke, and what he said was this: "I desire to proceed upon the grand visitation of Ireland, and my wish is that thou be in Tara ministering to the ancients so that from the

men of Erin neither disgrace nor reproach reach me." The queen answered: "as thou shalt ordain and themselves shall pronounce, even so shall their pleasure be executed." Together then the king and queen entered into the house in which the seniors, Ossian and Caeilte, were, and the king told them this. But the manner of Ossian was that he was the most modest man in Ireland, and he said: "not so shall it be done, noble sir and king: but be thy wife along with thyself; and as for us, commit us to the chief steward." "Well then," quoth the king, "have the steward brought to us." Himself and his wife were produced, and the king said to them: "here is the fashion in which I prescribe to you to feed the ancients here: that [on my account] ye have seven score kine put into a fenced grass field, the same nightly to be milked for them; rations also for ten hundred to be provided them by the men of Erin; that they have liquor and milk in Tara too, be bathed every other day, and in their beds have a layer of fresh rushes strewed. This too: that the last of their liquor be not drunk out when they shall have the new ready to their hand. And thou, steward," the king ended, "hast seven sons: the which, and thyself along with them, I will have killed should the seniors want any item of all this."

Ossian said: "*lige in abhaic* or 'the dwarf's lair' in Tara, to make trial of which all Ireland used to resort thither, was not more wonderful than ourselves commended thus to *Maelmuirir* son of *Dubhán*, Tara's chief steward, and to Beoan the stock-owner's daughter *Cuarnait*, his wife."

"What was that—the dwarf—Ossian, my soul?" questioned the king. "A treasure-trove that Conn of the Hundred Battles got: in whose stature were three of Conn's spans, and who was the best chess and backgammon hand in Ireland; granted that all ailments in the world were concentrated in one individual, he had but to lay his hand on him and he would relieve him; and though all Ireland had stood arrayed against each other on the battle-field he would have made peace between them. Now a stone that was here in Tara," Ossian went on, "it was upon that his bed was, the properties of which bed were extraordinary: the biggest one of the men of Ireland got his exact fit in the mannikin's bed, while in the same the tiniest babe that could be found had but his own sufficient room. This then, and the *lia fáil* or 'stone of destiny' that was there, were the two wonders of Tara."

"What that was out of the way attached to the *lia fáil*?" Dermot enquired; to which Ossian made answer: "any one of all Ireland on whom an ex-parté imputation rested was set upon that stone: then if the truth were in him he would turn pink and white [lit. 'it was whiteness and pinkness that it (the stone) made for him']; but if otherwise, it was a black spot that in some conspicuous place would appear on him. Farther: when Ireland's monarch stepped on to it the stone would cry out under him, and her three arch-waves boom in answer: as the wave of Cleena, the wave of Ballintoy, and the wave of loch Rury; when a provincial king went on it the flag would rumble under him; when a barren woman trod it, it was a dew of dusky blood that broke out on it; when one that would bear children tried it, it was 'a nursing drop' [i.e. a semblance of milk] that it sweated." Dermot son of Cerball sought now: "and who was it that lifted that flag, or that carried it away out of Ireland" It was an *óglæch* of a great spirit that ruled over....

*[caetera desunt]*