

Aislinge Meic Conglinne  
(The Vision of MacConglinne)

translated by

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## The Vision of MacConglinne Begins.

The four things to be asked of every composition must be asked of this composition, viz., place, and person, and time, and cause of invention.

The place of this composition is great Cork of Munster, and its author is Aniér MacConglinne of the Onaght Glenowra. In the time of Cathal MacFinguine, son of Cúcengairm, or son of Cúcenmáthir, it was made. The cause of its invention was to banish the demon of gluttony that was in the throat of Cathal MacFinguine.

Cathal MacFinguine was a good king, who governed Munster; a great warrior prince was he. A warrior of this sort: with the edge of a hound, he ate like a horse. Satan, viz. a demon of gluttony that was in his throat, used to devour his rations with him. A pig and a cow and a bull-calf of three hands, with three score cakes of pure wheat, and a vat of new ale, and thirty heathpoults' eggs, that was his first dole, besides his other snack, until his great feast was ready for him. As regards the great feast, that passes account or reckoning.

The reason of the demon of gluttony being in the throat of Cathal MacFinguine was, because he had, though he had never seen her, a first love for Lígach, daughter of Mældúin, king of Ailech; and she sister to Fergal, son of Mældúin, also king of Ailech, who was then contending for the kingship of Ireland against Cathal MacFinguine, as is plain from the quarrel of the two hags, when they had a duel in quatrains at Freshford:

“He comes from the North, comes from the North,  
The son of Mældúin, over the rocks,  
Over Barrow's brink, over Barrow's brink,  
Till kine he take he will not stay.”

“He shall stay, shall stay,” said the Southern hag;  
“He will be thankful if he escapes.  
By my father’s hand, by my father’s hand,  
If Cathal meets him, he’ll take no kine.”

Then kernels and apples and many sweets used to be brought from Lígach, Mældúin’s daughter, to Cathal MacFinguine, for his love and affection. Fergal, son of Mældúin, heard this, and his sister was called unto him. And he gave her a blessing if she should tell him truth, and a curse if she should deny him it. The sister told him; for great as was her love and affection for Cathal MacFinguine, she feared her brother’s curse reaching her. Then she told the true story.

The brother told her to send the apples to himself. And a scholar was summoned unto him, and he promised great rewards to the scholar for putting charms in those numerous sweets, to the destruction of Cathal MacFinguine. And the scholar put charms and heathen spells in those numerous sweets, and they were delivered to Fergal, who despatched messengers to convey them to Cathal. And they entreated him by each of the seven universal things, sun and moon, dew and sea, heaven and earth, day [and night ... that he would eat] those apples, since it was out of love and affection for him they were brought from Lígach, daughter of Mældúin.

Cathal thereupon ate the apples, and little creatures through the poison spells were formed of them in his inside. And those little creatures gathered in the womb of one – in that animal, so that there was formed the demon of gluttony. And this is the cause why the demon of gluttony abode in the throat of Cathal MacFinguine, to the ruin of the men of Munster during three half-years; and it is likely he would have ruined Ireland during another half-year.

There were eight persons in Armagh at that time, of whom these lays were sung:

I heard of eight to-night  
In Armagh after midnight  
I proclaim them with hosts of deeds,  
Their names are no sweet symphonies.

Comgán was the name of the Two Smiths' son.  
Famous was he after the hunt.  
Critán was Rustang's noble son,  
It was a full fitting name.

The Two Tribes' Dark One, a shining cry,  
That was the name of Stelene's son,  
Dun Raven, a white nun, of Beare,  
Rough Derry was the name of Samán's son.

Never-Refused was MacConglinne's name,  
From the brink of the sweet-crested Bann.  
Wee Man, Wee Wife, bag of carnage,  
Were Dead Man's sire and dam.

My king, king of high heaven,  
That givest hosts victory over death,  
Great son of Mary, – Thine the way –  
A confluence of cries I heard.

One of these eight, then, was Aníer MacConglinne, a famous scholar he, with abundance of knowledge. The reason why he was called Aníer was because he would satirise and praise all. No wonder, indeed; for there had not come before him, and came not after him, one whose satire or praise was harder to bear, wherefore he was called Anéra [*i.e.* Non-refusal], for that there was no refusing him.

A great longing seized the mind of the scholar, to follow poetry, and to abandon his reading. For wretched to him was his life in the shade of his studies. And he searched in his mind whither he would make his first poetical journey. The result of his search was, to go to Cathal MacFinguine, who was then on a royal progress in Iveagh of Munster. The scholar had heard that he would get plenty and enough of all kinds of whitemeats; for greedy and hungry for whitemeats was the scholar.

This came into the mind of the scholar on a Saturday eve exactly, at Roscommon; for there he was pursuing his reading. Then he sold the little stock he possessed for two wheaten cakes and a slice of old bacon with a

streak across its middle. These he put in his book-satchel. And on that night two pointed shoes of hide, of seven-folded dun leather, he shaped for himself.

He arose early on the morrow, and tucked up his shirt over the rounds of his fork, and wrapped him in the folds of his white cloak, in the front of which was an iron brooch. He lifted his book-satchel on to the arched slope of his back. In his right hand he grasped his even-poised knotty staff, in which were five hands from one end to the other. Then, going right-hand-wise round the cemetery, he bade farewell to his tutor, who put a gospel around him.

He set out on his way and journey, across the lands of Connaught into Aughty, to Limerick, to Carnarry, to Barna-trí-Carbad, into Slieve-Keen, into the country of the Fir-Féni, which is this day called Fermoy, across Moinmore, until he rested a short time before vespers in the guest-house of Cork. On that Saturday he had gone from Roscommon to Cork.

This was the way in which he found the guesthouse on his arrival, it was open. That was one of the days of the three things, viz., wind and snow and rain about the door; so that the wind left not a wisp of thatch, nor a speck of ashes that it did not sweep with it through the other door, under the beds and couches and screens of the princely house.

The blanket of the guest-house was rolled, bundled, in the bed, and was full of lice and fleas. No wonder, truly, for it never got its sunning by day, nor its lifting at night; for it was not wont to be empty at its lifting. The bath-tub of the guest house, with the water of the night before in it, with its stones, was by the side of the door-post.

The scholar found no one who would wash his feet. So he himself took off his shoes and washed his feet in that bath-tub, in which he afterwards dipped his shoes. He hung his book-satchel on the peg in the wall, took up his shoes, and gathered his hands into the blanket, which he tucked about his legs. But, truly, as numerous as the sand of the sea, or sparks of fire, or dew on a May morning, or the stars of heaven, were the lice and fleas nibbling his legs, so that weariness seized him. And no one came to visit him or do reverence to him.

He took down his book-satchel, and brought out his psalter, and began singing his psalms. What the learned and the books of Cork relate is, that the sound of the scholar's voice was heard a thousand paces beyond the

city, as he sang his psalms, through spiritual mysteries, in lauds, and stories, and various kinds, in dia-psalms and syn-psalms and sets of ten, with paters and canticles and hymns at the conclusion of each fifty. Now, it seemed to every man in Cork that the sound of the voice was in the house next himself. This came of original sin, and MacConglinne's hereditary sin and his own plain-working bad luck; so that he was detained without drink, without food, without washing, until every man in Cork had gone to his bed.

Then it was that Manchín, abbot of Cork, said, after having gone to his bed: "Lad," he said, "are there guests with us to-night?"

"There are not," said the attendant.

However, the other attendant said: "I saw one going hastily, impatiently across the green a short time before vespers, a while ago."

"You had better visit him," said Manchín, "and take him his ration. For he has been too lazy to come back for his allowance, and moreover the night was very bad."

His allowance was brought out, and these were the rations that were taken to him: a small cup of the church whey-water, and two sparks of fire in the middle of a wisp of oaten straw, and two sods of fresh peat.

The servant came to the door of the guest-house, and fear and terror seized him at the gaping open pitch-dark house. He knew not whether anybody was within, or not; whereupon one of the two asked, in putting his foot across the threshold:

"Is there any one here says he.

"There is some one," answered MacConglinne.

"It is a breaking of the spells that are on this house to put it in order for one man."

"If ever the spells on it were broken," said MacConglinne, "they were to-night; for their breaking was fated, and it is I who break them."

"Rise," said the attendant, "and eat thy meal."

"I pledge my God's doom," said he, "that since I have been kept waiting till now, until I know what you have there, I shall not rise."

The gillie put the two sparks of fire that were in the middle of the wisp of oaten straw, on the hearth, and pulled another wisp from the bed. He arranged the two sods of fresh peat round the wisps, blew the spark, lighted the wisp, and showed him his repast; whereupon MacConglinne

said:

“My lad,” said MacConglinne,  
“Why should not we have a duel in quatrains?  
A quatrain compose on the bread,  
I will make one on the relish.

Cork, wherein are sweet bells,  
Sour is its sand,  
Its soil is sand,  
Food there is none in it.

Unto Doom I would not eat,  
Unless famine befel them,  
The oaten ration of Cork,  
Cork’s oaten ration.

Along with thee carry the bread,  
For which thou’st made thy orison;  
Woe worth him who eats this ration,  
That is my say, my lad.”

The attendant remembered the quatrains, for his understanding was sharp.

They take the food back to the place where Manchín was, and declared the quatrains to the abbot.

“Well,” said Manchín, “the ill word will tell you the boy. Little boys will sing those verses, unless the words are avenged on him who made them.”

“What do you mean to do, then?” said the gillie.

“This,” said Manchín; “to go to the person who made them, to strip him of all his clothes, to lay scourges and horsewhips on him, until his flesh and skin break and sever from his bones (only let his bones not be broken); to put him in the Lee and give him his fill of the muddy water of the Lee. Then let him be put into the guest-house, without a stitch of clothing.” (And there was no clothing in that house but the blanket, in which lice and fleas were as plentiful as May dew.) “There let him sleep that night, in the most wretched and darkest plight he ever was in. Let the house be closed on him

from outside until morning, in order that he may not escape, until my counsel together with the Counsel of the monks of Cork shall be held on him to-morrow, even in the presence of the Creator and of St. Barre, whose servant I am. Our counsel shall be no other than his crucifixion to-morrow, for the honour of me and of St. Barre, and of the Church."

So it was done. And then it was that his hereditary transgression and his own plain-working sin rose against MacConglinne. The whole of his clothing was stripped oil him, and scourges and horsewhips were laid on him. He was put into the Lee, and had his fill of its dead water. After which he lay in the guest-house until morning.

Early at morn Manchín arose on the morrow; and the monks of Cork were gathered by him, until they were in one place, at the guest-house. It was opened before them, and they sat down on the bed-rails and couches of the house.

"Well, you wretch," said Manchín, "you did not do right in reviling the Church last night,"

"The church-folk did no better," said MacConglinne, "to leave me without food, though I was only a party of one."

"Thou hadst not gone without food, even though thou hadst only got a little crumb, or a drink of whey-water in the church. There are three things, about which there should be no grumbling in the Church; viz. new fruit, and new ale, and Sunday eve's portion. For however little is obtained on Sunday eve, what is nearest on the morrow is psalm-singing, then bell-ringing, Mass, with preaching and the Sacrament, and feeding the poor. What was wanting on the eve of Sunday will be got on Sunday or on the eve of Monday. You began grumbling early."

"And I profess," said MacConglinne, "that we acted in humility, and there was more than enough in requital."

"But I vow before the Creator and St. Barre," said Manchín, "thou shalt not revile again. Take him away with you, that he may be crucified on the green, for the honour of St. Barre and of the Church, and for my own honour."

"O cleric," said MacConglinne, "let me not be crucified, but let a righteous, just judgment be given on me, which is better than to crucify me."

Then they proceeded to give judgment on MacConglinne. Manchín



began to plead against him, and every man of the monks of Cork proceeded, according to rank, against MacConglinne. But, though a deal of wisdom and knowledge and learning had they, lawfully he was not convicted on a point of speech for which he could be crucified.

Then was he taken without law to Ráthín Mac n-Aeda, a green in the southern quarter of Cork. He said:

“A boon for me, O Manchín, and ye monks of Cork!”

“Is it to spare thee?” asked Manchín.

“That is not what I ask,” said MacConglinne, “though I should be glad if that would come of it.”

“Speak,” said Manchín.

“I will not speak,” said MacConglinne, “until I have pledges for it.”

Pledges and bonds stout and strong were imposed on the monks of Cork for its fulfilment, and he bound them upon his pledges.

“Say what it is you want,” said Manchín.

“I will,” said Anier: “to eat the viaticum that is in my book-satchel before going to death, for it is not right to go on a journey without being shriven. Let my satchel be given to me.”

His satchel was brought to him, and he opened it, and took out of it the two wheaten cakes and the slice of old bacon. And he took the tenth part of each of the cakes, and cut off the tenth of the bacon, decently and justly.

“Here are tithes, ye monks of Cork,” said MacConglinne. “If we knew the man who has better right, or who is poorer than another, to him would we give our tithes.”

All the paupers that were there rose up on seeing the tithes, and reached out their hands. And he began looking at them, and said:

“Verily before God,” said he, “it can never be known if any one of you stands in greater need of these tithes than I myself. The journey of none of you was greater yesterday than mine—from Roscommon to Cork. Not a morsel or drop tasted I after coming. I had eaten nothing on the road, I did not find a guest’s welcome on my arrival, but I received [insult], ye curs and robbers and dung-hounds, ye monks of Cork! The whole of my clothing was stripped off me, scourges and horsewhips were laid on me, I was plunged into the Lee, and clean injustice was practised upon me. Fair play was not given me. In the presence of the Maker,” said MacConglinne, “it shall not be the first thing the fiend shall lay to my charge after going

yonder, that I gave to you these tithes, for ye deserve them not.”

So the first morsel that he ate was his tithes, and after that he ate his meal – his two cakes, with his slice of old bacon. Then, lifting up his hands, and giving thanks to his Maker, he said:

“Now take me to the Lee!”

On that he was taken, bonds and guards and all, towards the Lee.

When he reached the well, the name of which is “Ever-full”, he doffed his white cloak, and laid it out to be under his side, his book-satchel under the slope of his back. He let himself down upon his cloak, supine, put his finger through the loop of his brooch, and dipped the point of the pin over his back in the well. And while the drop of water trickled down from the end of the brooch, the brooch was over his breath.

The men that guarded him and held him in bonds grew tired.

“Your own treachery has come about you, ye curs and robbers, ye monks of Cork! When I was in my cell, what I used to do was to hoard what bits might reach me during five or six days, and then eat them in one night, drinking my fill of water afterwards. This would sustain me to the end of three days and three nights without anything else, and it would not harm me. I shall be three days and nights subsisting on what I ate just now, three days and nights more doing penance, and another three days and nights drinking water, for I have pledges in my hands. I vow to God and St. Barre, whose I am here,” said MacConglinne, “though neither high nor low of the monks of Cork should leave the place where they are, but should all go to death in one night, and Manchín before all or after all, to death and hell, – since I am sure of heaven, and shall be in the Presence, to which there is neither end nor decay.”

This story was told to the monks of Cork, who quickly held a meeting, and the upshot of the meeting was that MacConglinne should have a blessing on his going in humility to be crucified, or else that nine persons should surround him to guard him until he died where he was, that he might be crucified afterwards.

That message was delivered to MacConglinne.

“It is a sentence of curs,” said he. “Nevertheless, whatever may come of it, we will go in humility, as our Master, Jesus Christ, went to His Passion.”

Thereupon he rose, and went to the place where were the monks of Cork. And by this time the close of vespers had come.

"A boon for us, O Manchín!" said the monks of Cork themselves.

"O my God, what boon?" cried Manchín.

"Respite for that poor devil until morning. We have not tolled bells, neither have we celebrated Mass, nor preached, nor made the Offering. The poor have not been satisfied by us with food against the Sunday, nor have we refreshed ourselves. Grant us a respite for him till morning."

"I pledge my word," said Manchín, "that respite shall not be given, but the day of his transgression shall be the day of his punishment."

Ochone! in that hour MacConglinne was taken to the Foxes' Wood, and an axe was put in his hand, his guard being about him. He himself cut his passion-tree, and bore it on his back to the green of Cork. He himself fixed the tree. And the time had outrun the close of vespers, and the one resolve they had was to crucify him there and then.

"A boon for me, O Manchín, and ye monks of Cork!" said MacConglinne.

"I pledge my word," said Manchín, "that no boon shall come from us."

"It is not to spare me I ask you, for, though it were asked, it would not be granted to me of your free will, ye curs and ye robbers and dung-hounds and unlettered brutes, ye shifting, blundering, hang-head monks of Cork! But I want my fill of generous juicy food, and of tasty intoxicating sweet ale, and a fine light suit of thin dry clothing to cover me, that neither cold nor heat may strike me; a gorging feast of a fortnight for me before going to the meeting with death."

"I vow," said Manchín, "thou shalt not get that. But it is now the close of the day; it is Sunday. The convent, moreover, are entreating a respite for thee. But thy scanty clothing shall be stripped off thee, and thou shalt be tied to yonder pillar-stone, for a fore-torture before the great torture to-morrow."

So it was done. His scanty clothing was stripped off him, and ropes and cords were tied across him to the pillar stone.

They turned away home, Manchín going to the abbot's house, that the poor and guests might be fed by them. They also ate something themselves. But they left that sage to fast, who came, having been sent by God and the Lord for the salvation of Cathal MacFinguine and the men of Munster, and the whole Southern Half to boot. The justice of law was not granted him.

He remained there until midnight. Then an angel of God came to him on the pillar-stone, and began to manifest the vision unto him. As long as the angel was on the pillar-stone it was too hot for MacConglinne, but when he moved on a ridge away from him, it was comfortable. (Hence the "Angel's Ridge" in the green of Cork, which was never a morning without dew.) At the end of the night the angel departed from him.

Thereupon he shaped a little rhyme of his own, which would serve to relate what had been manifested to him, and there he remained until morning with the poetical account of his vision ready.

Early at morn the chapter-bell was tolled on the morrow by the monks of Cork, and all came to the pillar-stone.

"Well, you miserable wretch," said Manchín, "how is it with you to-day?"

"It is well," said he, "if I am allowed to make known to thee a few short words that I have, for a vision appeared to me last night," said MacConglinne, "and, if a respite is given me, I will relate the vision."

"By my word, I say," quoth Manchín, "if the race of Adam were of my thinking they would not give thee respite even for a day or a night. As for myself, I will not give it."

"We pledge our word," said the monks, "though it be disagreeable to you, he shall have a respite, that he may relate his vision. Inflict on him afterwards whatever you wish."

Then it was that he traced Manchín up to Adam, according to the pedigree of food, saying:

"Bless us, O cleric, famous pillar of learning,  
Son of honey-bag, son of juice, son of lard,  
    Son of stirabout, son of pottage, son of fair speckled fruit-clusters,  
Son of smooth clustering cream, son of buttermilk, son of curds,  
    Son of beer (glory of liquors!), son of pleasant bragget,  
Son of twisted leek, son of bacon, son of butter,  
    Son of full-fat sausage, son of pure new milk,  
Son of nut-fruit, son of tree-fruit, son of gravy, son of dripping,  
    Son of fat, son of kidney, son of rib, son of shoulder,  
Son of well-filled gullet, son of leg, son of loin,  
    Son of hip, son of flich, son of striped breastbone,

Son of bit, son of sup, son of back, son of paunch,  
    Son of slender tripe, son of cheese without decrease,  
Son of fish of Inver Indsén, son of sweet whey, son of biestings,  
    Son of mead, son of wine, son of flesh, son of ale,  
Son of hard wheat, son of tripe, son of ...  
    Son of fair white porridge, made of pure sheep's milk,  
Son of soft rich pottage, with its curls of steam,  
    Son of rough curds, son of fair oatmeal gruel,  
Son of sprouty meat-soup, with its purple berries,  
    Son of the top of effeminate kale, son of soft whit midriff,  
Son of bone-nourishing nut-fruit, son of Abel, son of Adam.  
    Fine is thy kindred of choice food, to the tongue it is sweet,  
O thou of staid and steady step,-with the help of pointed staff."

"That hurts me not, MacConglinne," said Manchín. "Little didst thou care about slandering me and the Church when thou didst compose a food-pedigree to commemorate me, such as has not been invented for any man before me, and will not be invented till Doom."

"It is no slander at all, O cleric," said MacConglinne, "but a vision that was manifested to me last night. That is its prelude. The vision is not out of place, and, if respite or leave be granted me, I will relate it."

And Manchín said, as before, that he would give no respite. But MacConglinne began to recount his vision, and it is said that from here onward is what the angel manifested to him, as he said:

A vision that appeared to me,  
An apparition wonderful  
    I tell to all:  
A lardy coracle all of lard  
Within a port of New-milk Loch,  
    Up on the World's smooth sea.

We went into the man-of-war,  
'Twas warrior-like to take the road  
    O'er ocean's heaving waves.  
Our oar-strokes then we pulled

Across the level sea,  
Throwing the sea's harvest up,  
Like honey, the sea-soil.

The fort we reached was beautiful,  
With works of custards thick,  
Beyond the loch.  
New butter was the bridge in front,  
The rubble dyke was wheaten white,  
Bacon the palisade.

Stately, pleasantly it sat,  
A compact house and strong.  
Then I went in:  
The door of it was dry meat,  
The threshold was bare bread,  
Cheese-curds the sides.

Smooth pillars of old cheese,  
And sappy bacon props  
Alternate ranged;  
Fine beams of mellow cream,  
White rafters—real curds,  
Kept up the house.

Behind was a wine well,  
Beer and bragget in streams,  
Each full pool to the taste.  
Malt in smooth wavy sea,  
Over a lard-spring's brink  
Flowed through the floor.

A loch of pottage fat  
Under a cream of oozy lard  
Lay 'tween it and the sea.  
Hedges of butter fenced it round,

Under a blossom of white-mantling lard,  
    Around the wall outside.  
A row of fragrant apple-trees,  
An orchard in its pink-tipped bloom,  
    Between it and the hill.  
A forest tall of real leeks,  
Of onions and of carrots, stood  
    Behind the house.

Within, a household generous,  
A welcome of red, firm-fed men,  
    Around the fire.  
Seven bead-strings, and necklets seven,  
Of cheeses and of bits of tripe,  
    Hung from each neck.

The Chief in mantle of beefy fat  
Beside his noble wife and fair  
    I then beheld.  
Below the lofty cauldron's spit  
Then the Dispenser I beheld,  
    His fleshfork on his back.

The good Cathal MacFinguine,  
He is a good man to enjoy  
    Tales tall and fine.  
That is a business for an hour,  
And full of delight 'tis to tell  
The rowing of the man-of-war  
    O'er Loch Milk's sea.

He then narrated his entire vision in the presence of the monks of Cork until he reached its close (but this is not its close), and the virtues of the vision were manifested unto Manchín.

"Excellent, thou wretch," said Manchín, "go straight to Cathal MacFinguine, and relate the vision to him; for it was revealed to me last

night that this evil which afflicts Cathal would be cured through that vision."

"What reward shall I have for that?" asked MacConglinne.

"Is not the reward great," said Manchín, "to let thee have thy body and soul?"

"I care not for that, though it should be done. The windows of Heaven are open to receive me, and all the faithful from Adam and Abel, his son, even to the faithful one who went to Heaven in this very moment, are all chanting in expectation of my soul, that I may enter Heaven. The nine orders of Heaven, with Cherubim and Seraphim, are awaiting my soul. I care not, though Cathal MacFinguine and the men of Munster, along with all the southern Half, and the people of Cork, and Manchín first or last, should go to death and hell in one night; while I myself shall be in the unity of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

"What reward dost thou require?" asked the monks of Cork.

"Not great indeed is what I ask," said MacConglinne, "merely the little cloak, which he refused to the clergy of the Southern Half, and for which they fasted on the same night, viz., Manchín's cloak!"

"Little is that thing in thy sight, but great in mine," said Manchín.

"Verily," he added, "I declare, in the presence of God and of St. Barre, that if the whole country between Cork and its boundary were mine, I would sooner resign it all than the cloak alone."

"Woe to him that gives not the cloak," cried all present, "for the salvation of Cathal and Mog's Half is better than the cloak."

"I will give it then," said Manchín, "but I never gave, nor shall I give, a boon more disagreeable to me; that is to say, I will give it into the hands of the bishop of Cork, to be delivered to the scholar if he helps Cathal MacFinguine."

It was then given into the hands of the bishop of Cork, and the monks of Cork were to deliver the cloak with him; but in the hands of the bishop it was left.

"Now go at once to Cathal!"

"Where is Cathal?" asked MacConglinne.

"Not hard to tell," answered Manchín. "In the house of Pichán, son of Maelfinde, King of Iveagh, at Dún Coba, on the borders of Iveagh and Corcalee, and thou must journey thither this night."



MacConglinne thereupon went hastily, eagerly, impatiently; and he lifted his five-folded well-straped cloak on to the slope of his two shoulders, and tied his shirt over the rounds of his fork, and strode thus across the green to the house of Pichán, son of Maelfinde, to Dún Coba, on the confines of Iveagh and Corcalee. And at this pace he went quickly to the dún. And as he came to the very meeting house where the hosts were gathering, he put on a short cloak and short garments: each upper garment being shorter with him, and each lower one being longer. In this wise he began juggling for the host from the floor of the royal house, (a thing not fit for an ecclesiastic) and practising satire and buffoonery and singing songs; and it has been said that there came not before his time, nor since, one more renowned in the arts of satire.

When he was engaged in his feats in the house of Pichán, son of Maelfind, then it was that Pichán said aside: "Though great thy mirth, son of learning, it does not make me glad."

"What makes him sad?" asked MacConglinne.

"Knowest thou not, O scholar," said Pichán, "that Cathal MacFinguine with the nobles of Munster is coming to-night; and though troublesome to me is the great host of Munster, more troublesome is Cathal alone; and though troublesome is he in his first meal, more troublesome is he in his prime feast; but most troublesome of all is his feast again. For at this feast three things are wanted, viz., a bushel of oats, and a bushel of wild apples, and a bushel of flour-cakes."

"What reward would be given me," said MacConglinne, "if I shield thee against him from this hour to the same hour to-morrow, and that he would not avenge it on thy people or on thyself?"

"I would give thee a golden ring and a Welsh steed," said Pichán.

"By my oath, thou wilt add unto it when accepted," said MacConglinne.

"I will give thee besides," said Pichán, "a white sheep for every house and for every fold, from Carn to Cork."

"I will take that," said MacConglinne, "provided that kings and lords of land, poets and satirists are pledged to me for the delivery of my dues and for their fulfilment, so that they shall reach me in full, viz., kings to enforce the dues, lords of land to keep spending on the collectors while they are levying my dues, food and drink and necessaries; poets to scathe and revile, if I am cheated of my dues and satirists to scatter the satires, and

sing them against thee and thy children and thy race, unless my dues reach me." And he bound him then on his pledges.

Cathal MacFinguine came with the companies and hosts of horse of the Munstermen; and they sat themselves down on bed-rails and couches and beds. Gentle maidens began to serve and attend to the hosts and to the multitudes. But Cathal MacFinguine did not let the thong of his shoe be half loosed, before he began supplying his mouth from both hands with the apples that were on the hides round about him. MacConglinne was there, and began smacking his lips at the other side of the house, but Cathal did not notice it. MacConglinne rose and went hastily, impatiently, like the fiend, in his furious rush and warlike bold pace across the royal house. And there was a huge block and warriors' stone of strength on which spears and rivets were wont to be fastened, and against which points and edges were wont to be ground; and a warrior's pillar-stone was that flag. And he lifted it on his back and bore it to the place where he had been before on the bed-rail, thrust the upper end of it in his mouth, rested the other end of it on his knee, and began grinding his teeth against the stone.

What the learned, and the elders, and the books of Cork relate is, that there was no one in the neighbourhood of the dún inside or outside, that did not hear the noise of his teeth against the stone, though it was of the smoothest.

Thereat Cathal raised his head.

"What makes thee mad, son of learning?" asked Cathal.

"Two things," said MacConglinne; "viz., Cathal, the right-beautiful son of Finguine, the high-king of the great Southern Half, the chief defender of Ireland against the children of Conn of the hundred battles, a man ordained of God and the elements, the noble well-born hero of pleasant Onaght of Glennowra, according to the kindred of his paternity, — I grieve to see him eating anything alone; and if men from distant countries were within, soliciting request or gift, they will scoff if my beard wags not in mutual movement with thine."

"True," said Cathal, giving him an apple, and jamming two or three into his own mouth. (During the space of three half-years that the fiend abode in the throat of Cathal MacFinguine, he had not performed such an act of humanity as the giving of that one wild apple to MacConglinne after it had been earnestly asked.)

“Better two things than one in learning,” said MacConglinne.

He flung him another.

“The number of the Trinity!

He gives him one.

“The four books of the Gospel, according to the Testament of Christ! “

He threw him one.

“The five books of Moses, according to the Ten Commandments of the Law.”

He flung him one.

“The first numeral article which consists of its own parts and divisions, viz., the number six; for its half is three, its third is two, [and its sixth is one] – give me the sixth!

He cast him one apple.

“The seven things which were prophesied of thy God on earth, viz., His Conception, His Birth, His Baptism,” etc.

He gave him one.

“The eight Beatitudes of the Gospel, O Prince of kingly judgments!”

He threw him one.

“The nine orders of the kingdom of Heaven, O royal champion of the world!”

He gave him one.

“The tenth is the order of Mankind, O defender of the province!”

He cast him an apple.

“The imperfect number of the apostles after sin.”

He flung him one.

“The perfect number of the apostles after sin, even though they had committed transgression.”

He threw him one.

“The triumph beyond triumphs and the perfect number, Christ with his apostles.”

“Verily, by St. Barre!” said Cathal, “thou’lt devour me, if thou pursue me any further.”

Cathal flung him hide, apples and all, so that there was neither corner, nor nook, nor floor, nor bed, that the apples did not reach. They were not nearer to MacConglinne than to all else; but they were the farther from Cathal.

Fury seizes Cathal. One of his eyes jumped so far back into his head that a pet crane could not have picked it out. The other eye started out until it was as large in his head as a heath-poult's egg. And he pressed his back against the side of the palace, so that he left neither rafter, nor pole, nor wattle, nor wisp of thatch, nor post, that was not displaced. And he sat down in his seat.

"Thy foot and thy cheek under thee, O King said MacConglinne. "Curse me not, and cut me not off from Heaven!"

"What has caused thee to act so, son of learning?" said Cathal.

"Good reason have I," said MacConglinne. "I had a quarrel last night with the monks of Cork, and they gave me their malediction. This is the cause of my behaving thus towards thee."

"Go to, MacConglinne," said Cathal. "By Emly-Ivar, if it were my custom to kill students, either thou wouldst not have come, or thou shouldst not depart."

(Now, the reason why Emly-Ivar was an oath with him was, because it was there he used to get his fill of small bread; and he used to be there, dressed in a dun-coloured soft cloak, his hard straight-bladed sword in his left hand, eating broken meats from one cell to another.

One day he went into the cell of a certain student, and got his fill of broken meats. He examined the bits. The student examined the page that lay before him; and when he had finished studying the page, he thrust out his tongue to turn over the leaf.

"What has caused thee to do that, O student?" asked Cathal.

"Great cause have I," said he. "I have been pressed to go soldiering with a host in arms to the world's borders, so that there is nothing that touches ashes and fire, that has not been dried up by smoke and wind during my absence, until there is neither sap nor strength in it, not so much as a biscuit-rim. I have not a morsel of bacon, nor of butter, nor of meat, no drink of any sort, except the dead water of the pool; so that I have been bereft of my strength and vigour. But first and last—the hosting!"

"Verily!" said the son of Finguine, said Cathal. "By St. Barre, henceforth whilst I live, no cleric shall go a-soldiering with me." And up to that time the clerics of Ireland were wont to go a-soldiering with the King of Ireland; and he was therefore the first that ever exempted clerics from going a-soldiering.

He left his grace and blessings, moreover, to the pilgrims of Emly, and a profusion of small bread in Emly. And this is greatest in the south-western part of it; for there he used to get his fill.

(But this is a digression.)

“By thy kingship, by thy sovereignty, by the service to which thou art entitled, grant me a little boon before I go,” said MacConglinne.

Pichán was summoned into the house.

“Yon student,” said Cathal, “is asking a boon from me.”

“Grant it,” said Pichán.

“It shall be granted,” said Cathal. “Tell me what it is thou desirest.”

“I will not, until pledges are given for its fulfilment.”

“They shall be given,” said Cathal.

“Thy princely word therein?” said MacConglinne.

“By my word,” said he, “thou shalt have them, and now name the request.”

“This is it,” said MacConglinne. “I had a quarrel with the monks of Cork last night, when they all gave me their curse, and this is what caused that misunderstanding between me and thee. And do thou fast with me to-night on God, since thou art an original brother, to save me from the malediction of the monks of Cork; that is what I ask.”

“Say not that, son of learning,” said Cathal. “Thou shalt have a cow out of every garth in Munster, and an ounce from every house-owner, together with a cloak from every church, to be levied by a steward, and thou thyself shalt feast in my company as long as he is engaged in levying the dues. And by my God’s doom,” said Cathal, “I had rather thou shouldst have all there is from the west to the east, and from the south to the north of Munster, than that I should be one night without food.”

“By my God’s doom,” said MacConglinne, “since thy princely troth has passed in this, and since it is not lawful for a King of Cashel to transgress it, if all that there is in the Southern Half were given me, I would not accept it. Good reason have I, thou arch-warrior and king-hero of Europe, why I should not accept conditions from thee; for my own treasure is only in Heaven, or on earth, in wisdom, or in poetry. And not alone that—for the last thing is always the heaviest—but I shall go to endless, limitless perdition, unless thou save me from the malediction of the monks of Cork.”

“That shall be granted to thee,” said Cathal, “and there has not been

given before, nor shall there be given hereafter to the brink of Doom, a thing more grievous to us than that."

Cathal fasted with him that night, and all that were there fasted also. And the student lay down on a couch by the side of a door-post, and closed the house.

As he lay there at the end of the night, up rose Pichán, the son of Mael-Finde.

"Why does Pichán rise at this hour?" said MacConglinne.

"To prepare food for these hosts," answered Pichán, "and 'twere better for us had it been ready since yesterday."

"Not so, indeed," said MacConglinne. "We fasted last night. The first thing we shall have tomorrow is preaching." And they waited until morning. Few or many as they were, not one of them went out thence until the time of rising on the morrow, when MacConglinne himself got up and opened the house. He washed his hands, took up his book-satchel, brought out his psalter, and began preaching to the hosts. And historians, and elders, and the books of Cork declare, that there was neither high nor low that did not shed three showers of tears while listening to the scholar's preaching.

When the sermon was ended, prayers were offered for the King, that he might have length of life, and that there might be prosperity in Munster during his reign. Prayers were also offered up for the lands, and for the tribes, and for the province as well, as is usual after a sermon.

"Well," asked MacConglinne, "how are things over there to-day?"

"By my God's doom," answered Cathal, "it never was worse before, and never shall be until Doom."

"Very natural it is that thou shouldst be in evil case," said MacConglinne, "with a demon destroying and ravaging thee now during the space of three half-years; and thou didst not fast a day or night on thy own account, though thou didst so for the sake of a wretched, impetuous, insignificant person like me."

"What is the good of all this, son of learning?" asked Cathal MacFinguine.

"This," said MacConglinne. "Since thou alone didst fast with me last night, let us all fast this night, as many of us as there are; and do thou also fast, that thou mayest obtain some succour from God."

“Say not that, son of learning,” said Cathal. “For though the first trial was hard, seven times harder is the last.”

“Do thou not say that,” said MacConglinne, “but act bravely in this.”

Then Cathal fasted that night together with his host even until the end of the night.

Then MacConglinne arose.

“Is Pichán asleep?” he said.

“I will tell truth,” answered Pichán. “If Cathal were to remain as he is to the brink of Doom, I shall not sleep, I shall not eat, nor smile, nor laugh.”

“Get up,” said MacConglinne. And he called for juicy old bacon, and tender corned-beef, and full-fleshed wether, and honey in the comb, and English salt on a beautiful polished dish of white silver, along with four perfectly straight white hazel spits to support the joints. The viands which he enumerated were procured for him, and he fixed unspeakable, huge pieces on the spits. Then putting a linen apron about him below, and placing a flat linen cap on the crown of his head, he lighted a fair four-ridged, four-apertured, four-cleft fire of ash-wood, without smoke, without fume, without sparks. He stuck a spit into each of the portions, and as quick was he about the spits and fire as a hind about her first fawn, or as a roe, or a swallow, or a bare spring wind in the flank of March. He rubbed the honey and the salt into one piece after another. And big as the pieces were that were before the fire, there dropped not to the ground out of these four pieces as much as would quench a spark of a candle; but what there was of relish in them went into their very centre.

It had been explained to Pichán that the reason why the scholar had come was to save Cathal. Now, when the pieces were ready, MacConglinne cried out, “Ropes and cords here!”

“What is wanted with them?” asked Pichán. Now, that was a “question beyond discretion” for him, since it had been explained to him before; and hence is the old saying, “a question beyond discretion.”

Ropes and cords were given to MacConglinne, and to those that were strongest of the warriors. They laid hands upon Cathal, who was tied in this manner to the side of the palace. Then MacConglinne came, and was a long time securing the ropes with hooks and staples. And when this was ended, he came into the house, with his four spits raised high on his back, and his white wide-spread cloak hanging behind, its two peaks round his

neck, to the place where Cathal was. And he stuck the spits into the bed before Cathal's eyes, and sat himself down in his seat, with his two legs crossed. Then taking his knife out of his girdle, he cut a bit off the piece that was nearest to him, and dipped it in the honey that was on the aforesaid dish of white silver.

"Here's the first for a male beast," said MacConglinne, putting the bit into his own mouth. (And from that day to this the old saying has remained.) He cut a morsel from the next piece, and dipping it in the honey, put it past Cathal's mouth into his own.

"Carve the food for us, son of learning exclaimed Cathal.

"I will do so," answered MacConglinne; and cutting another bit of the nearest piece, and dipping it as before, he put it past Cathal's mouth into his own.

"How long wilt thou carry this on, student?" said Cathal.

"No more henceforth," answered MacConglinne, "for, indeed, thou hast hitherto consumed such a quantity and variety of agreeable morsels, that I shall eat the little that there is here myself, and this will be 'food from mouth' for thee." (And that has been a proverb since.)

Then Cathal roared and bellowed, and commanded the killing of the scholar. But that was not done for him.

"Well, Cathal," said MacConglinne, "a vision has appeared to me, and I have heard that thou art good at interpreting a dream."

"By my God's Doom!" exclaimed Cathal, "though I should interpret the dreams of the men of the world, I would not interpret thine."

"I vow," said MacConglinne, "even though thou dost not interpret it, it shall be related in thy presence."

He then began his vision, and the way he related it was, whilst putting two morsels or three at a time past Cathal's mouth into his own.

"A vision I beheld last night:  
I sallied forth with two or three,  
When I saw a fair and well-filled house,  
In which there was great store of food.



A lake of new milk I beheld  
In the midst of a fair plain.  
I saw a well-appointed house  
Thatched with butter.

As I went all around it  
To view its arrangement:  
Puddings fresh-boiled,  
They were its thatch-rods.

Its two soft door-posts of custard,  
Its dais of curds and butter,  
Beds of glorious lard,  
Many shields of thin pressed cheese.

Under the straps of those shields  
Were men of soft sweet smooth cheese,  
Men who knew not to wound a Gael,  
Spears of old butter had each of them.

A huge caldron full of ...  
(Methought I'd try to tackle it)  
Boiled, leafy kale, brownny-white,  
A brimming vessel full of milk.

A bacon house of two-score ribs,  
A wattling of tripe – support of clans –  
Of every food pleasant to man,  
Meseemed the whole was gathered there.”

And he said further:

“A vision I beheld last night,  
’Twas a fair spell,  
’Twas a power of strength when to me appeared  
The kingship of Erin.

I saw a court-yard topped with trees,  
A bacon palisade,  
A bristling rubble dyke of stone  
Of pregnant cheeses.

Of chitterlings of pigs were made  
Its beautiful rafters,  
Splendid the beams and the pillars,  
Of marvellous ...

Marvellous the vision that appeared to me  
By my fireside:  
A butter draught-board with its men,  
Smooth, speckled, peaked.

God bless the words I utter,  
A feast without fatigue!  
When I get to Butter-mount,  
May a gillie take off my shoes!

Here now begins the fable.

Though grievous to Cathal was the pain of being two days and a night without food, much greater was the agony of (listening to) the enumeration before him of the many various pleasant viands, and none of them for him!

After this, MacConglinne began the fable.

“As I lay last night in my beautiful canopied bed, with its gilded posts, with its bronze rails, I heard something, viz., a voice coming towards me; but I answered it not. That was natural; such was the comfort of my bed, the ease of my body, and the soundness of my slumber. Whereupon it said again: ‘Beware, beware, MacConglinne, lest the gravy drown thee!’

“At early morn on the morrow I arose, and went to the well to wash my hands, when I saw a mighty phantom approaching me. ‘Well, there,’ said he to me. ‘Well, indeed,’ said I to him. ‘Well, now, wretch,’ said the phantom,

'it was I that gave thee warning last night, lest the gravy should drown thee. But, verily, 'twas

Warning to one fey,  
Mocking a beggar,  
Dropping a stone on a tree,  
Whispering to the deaf,  
A legacy to a glum man,  
Putting a charm in a hurdle,  
A withe about sand or gravel,  
Striking an oak with fists,  
Sucking honey from roots of yew,  
Looking for butter in a dog's kennel,  
Dining on grains of pepper,  
Seeking wool on a goat,  
An arrow at a pillar,  
Keeping a mare from breaking wind,  
Keeping a loose woman from lust,  
Water on the bottom of a sieve,  
Trusting a roped bitch,  
Salt on rushes,  
A settlement after marriage,  
A secret to a silly woman,  
(Looking for) sense in an oaf,  
Exalting slaves,  
Ale to infants,  
Competing (?) with a king,  
A body without a head,  
A head without a body,  
A nun as bell-ringer,  
A veteran in a bishop's chair,  
A people without a king,  
Rowing a boat without a rudder,  
Corn in a basket full of holes,  
Milk on a hide,

Housekeeping without a woman,  
Berries on a hide,  
Warning visions to sinners,  
Reproof to the face,  
Restoration without restitution,  
Putting seed in bad land,  
Property to a bad woman,  
Serving a bad lord,  
An unequal contract,  
Uneven measure,  
Going against a verdict,  
To outrage the gospel,  
Instructing Antichrist,

to instruct thee, MacConglinne, regarding thy appetite.'

“‘I declare by my God’s Doom,’ said I, ‘the reproof is hard and severe.’

“‘How is that?’ asked the phantom.

“‘Not hard to say,’ I answered. ‘I know not whence thou comest, nor whither thou goest, nor whence thou art thyself, to question thee, or tell thee again.’

“‘That is easily known,’ said the phantom. ‘I am Fluxy son of Elcab the Fearless, from the Fairy knoll of Eating.’

“‘If thou art he,’ I said, ‘I fancy thou hast great news, and tidings of food and eating. Hast any?’

“‘I have indeed,’ said the phantom; I but though I have, ’twould be no luck for a friend who had no power of eating to come up with it.’

“‘How is that?’ I asked.

“‘Indeed, it is not hard to tell,’ said the phantom. ‘Even so: unless he had a very broad four-edged belly, five hands in diameter, in which could be fitted thrice nine eatings, and seven drinkings (with the drink of nine in each of them), and of seven chewings, and nine digestions—a dinner of a hundred being in each of those eatings, drinkings, swallowings, and digestions respectively.’

“‘Since I have not that belly,’ answered I, ‘give me thy counsel, for thou hast made me greedy.’

“‘I will indeed give thee counsel,’ said the phantom. ‘Go,’ said he, I to

the hermitage from which I have come, even to the hermitage of the Wizard Doctor, where thy appetite for all kinds of food, which thy gullet and thy heart can desire, will find a cure; where thy teeth will be polished by the many wonderful manifold viands of which we have spoken; where thy melancholy will be attacked; where thy senses will be startled; where thy lips will be gratified with choice drink and choice morsels, with eating and putting away every sort of soft, savoury, tender-sweet food acceptable to thy body, and not injurious to thy soul,—if only thou gettest to the Wizard Doctor, and to sharp-lipped Becnat, daughter of Baetan the monstrous Eater, the wife of the Wizard Doctor.

“‘The day thou wilt arrive at the fort will be the day on which his pavilion of fat will be raised about him, on its fair round wheat plains, with the two Loins, the Gullet, and the worthy Son of Fat-kettle, with their mantles of ... about them. It will be a happy day for thee when thou shalt come unto the fort, O MacConglinne,’ said the phantom; ‘the more so as that will be the day, on which the chieftains of the Tribe of Food will be summoned to the fort.’

“‘And what are their names?’ asked MacConglinne.

“‘Not hard to tell,’ said the phantom; ‘they are Little Sloey, son of Smooth-juicy-bacon; Cakey, son of Hung Beef; and Hollow-sides, son of Gullet, and Milkikin, son of Lactulus, and Wristy-hand, son of Leather-head, and young Mul-Lard, son of Flich of Old-Bacon.’

“‘And what is thy own name, if we may ask?’

“‘Not hard to tell,’ said the phantom.

‘Wheatlet, son of Milklet,  
Son of juicy Bacon,  
Is mine own name.  
Honeyed Butter-roll  
Is the man’s name  
That bears my bag.

Haunch of Mutton  
Is my dog’s name,  
Of lovely leaps.

Lard, my wife,  
Sweetly smiles  
    Across the kale-top.

Cheese-curds, my daughter,  
Goes round the spit,  
    Fair is her fame.  
Corned Beef, my son,  
Whose mantle shines  
    Over a big tail.

Savour of Savours  
Is the name of my wife's maid:  
Morning-early  
Across New-milk Lake she went.

Beef-lard, my steed,  
An excellent stallion,  
    That increases studs  
A guard against toil  
Is the saddle of cheese  
    On his back.

When a cheese-steed is sent after him  
    Rapid his course,  
Fat ... is on his ribs,  
    Exceeding all shapes.

A large necklace of delicious cheese-curds  
    Around his back,  
His halter and his traces all  
    Of fresh butter.

His bridle with its reins of fat  
    In every place.

The horsecloth of tripe with its ...  
Tripes are his hoofs.

Egg-horn is my bridle-boy  
.....  
Before going to a meeting with death  
.....

My pottage tunic around myself  
Everywhere,  
... of tripe with its ...  
Of uncooked food.

“‘Off with thee now to those delicious prodigious viands, O MacConglinne,’ said the phantom,

‘many wonderful provisions,  
pieces of every palatable food,  
brown red-yellow dishes,  
full without fault,  
perpetual joints of corned beef,  
smooth savoury lard,  
and heavy flitches of boar.

“‘Off with thee now to the suets and cheeses!’ said the phantom.

“‘I will certainly go,’ said MacConglinne, ‘and do thou put a gospel around me.’

“‘It shall be given,’ said the phantom, ‘even a gospel of four-cornered even dry cheese, and I will put my own paternoster around thee, and neither greed nor hunger can visit him around whom it is put.’ And he said:

“‘May smooth juicy bacon protect thee, O MacConglinne!’ said the phantom.

“‘May hard yellow-skinned cream protect thee, O MacConglinne!

“‘May the caldron full of pottage protect thee, O MacConglinne!

“‘May the pan full of pottage protect thee, O MacConglinne!’

“‘By my God’s doom, in the presence of the Creator,’ said

MacConglinne, 'I wish I could get to that fortress, that I might consume my fill of those old strained delicious liquors, and of those wonderful enormous viands.'

"'If thou really so wishest,' said the phantom, 'thou shalt have them. Go as I tell thee; but only, if thou goest, do not go astray.'

"'How is that?' said MacConglinne.

"'Not hard to tell,' said the phantom. 'Thou must place thyself under the protection and safe guard of the mighty peerless warriors, the chiefs of the Tribes of Food, lest the gravy destroy thee.'

"'How, then,' said MacConglinne, 'which of the chiefs of the Tribes of Food are the most puissant safeguards against the heavy waves of gravy?'

"'Not hard to tell,' said the phantom. 'The Suets and the Cheeses.'

"Thereupon then I advanced," said MacConglinne, "erect, with exultant head, with stout steps. The wind that comes across that country – it is not by me I wish it to go, but into my mouth. And no wonder; so heavy was the disease, so scant the cure, so great the longing for the remedy. I advanced vehemently, furiously, impatiently, eagerly, greedily, softly, gliding, like a young fox approaching a shepherd, or as a clown to violate a queen, or a royston-crow to carrion, or a deer to the cropping of a field of winter-rye in the month of June. However, I lifted my shirt above my buttocks, and I thought that neither fly, nor gadfly, nor gnat could stick to my hinder part, in its speed and agility, as I went through plains and woods and wastes towards that lake and fort.

"Then in the harbour of the lake before me I saw a juicy little coracle of beef-fat, with its coating of tallow, with its thwarts of curds, with its prow of lard, with its stern of butter, with its thole-pins of marrow, with its oars of fitches of old boar in it.

"Indeed, she was a sound craft in which we embarked. Then we rowed across the wide expanse of New-Milk Lake, through seas of broth, past river mouths of mead, over swelling boisterous waves of butter-milk, by perpetual pools of gravy, past woods dewy with meat-juice, past springs of savoury lard, by islands of cheeses, by hard rocks of rich tallow, by headlands of old curds, along strands of dry cheese; until we reached the firm, level beach between Butter-mount and Milk-Lake and Curd-point at the mouth of the pass to the country of O'Early-eating, in front of the hermitage of the Wizard Doctor. Every oar we plied in New-milk Lake



would send its sea-sand of cheese curds to the surface.”

It was then MacConglinne said, at the top of his voice “Ha, ha, ha! these are not the seas that I would not take!”

“Then the Wizard Doctor spoke to his people: ‘A troublesome party approaches you to-night, my friends,’ said the Wizard Doctor, ‘viz., Aniér MacConglinne of the men of Munster, a youngster of deep lore, entertaining and delightful. And he must be well served; for he is melancholy, passionate, impetuous, violent, and impatient; and he is eager, fond of eating early; and he is voracious, shameless, greedy; and yet he is mild and gentle,... easily moved to laughter. And he is a man great in thanks-givings and in upbraidings. And no wonder; for he has wit both to censure and to praise the hearth of a well appointed, gentle, fine, mirthful house with a mead-hall.’”

“Marvellous, indeed, was the hermitage in which I then found myself. Around it were seven score hundred smooth stakes of old bacon, and instead of the thorns above the top of every long stake was fried juicy lard of choice well-fed boar, in expectation of a battle against the tribes of Butter-pat and Cheese that were on Newmilk Lake, warring against the Wizard Doctor.

“There was a gate of tallow to it, whereon was a bolt of sausage.

“I raised myself up then out of my boat,” said MacConglinne, “and betook myself to the outer door of the entrance porch of the fortress, and seizing a branchy cudgel that lay directly on my right hand outside the porch of the fortress, I dealt a blow with it at the tallow door, on which was the sausage lock, and drove it before me along the outer porch of the fortress, until I reached the splendid inner chief residence of the enormous fort. And I fixed my ten pointed purple-bright nails in its smooth old-bacon door, which had a lock of cheese, flung it behind me, and passed through.

“Then I saw the doorkeeper. Fair was the shape of that man; and his name was Bacon-lad, son of Butter-lad, son of Lard; with his smooth sandals of old bacon on his soles, and leggings of potmeat encircling his shins, with his tunic of corned beef, and his girdle of salmon skin around him, with his hood of flummery about him, with a seven-filletted crown of butter on his head (in each fillet of which was the produce of seven ridges of pure leeks); with his seven badges of tripe about his neck, and seven bosses of boiled lard on the point of every badge of them; his steed of

bacon under him, with its four legs of custard, with its four hoofs of coarse oaten bread under it, with its ears of curds, with its two eyes of honey in its head, with its streams of old cream in its two nostrils, and a flux of bragget streaming down behind, with its tail of dulse, from which seven handfuls were pulled every ordinary day; with its smooth saddle of glorious choice lard upon it, with its face band of the side of a heifer around its head, with its neck-band of old-wether spleen around its neck, with its little bell of cheese suspended from the neck-band, with its tongue of thick compact metal hanging down from the bell; and a whip in that rider's hand, the cords whereof were twenty-nine fair puddings of white-fat cows, and the substance of every juicy drop that fell to the ground from the end of each of these puddings would, with half a cake, be a surfeit for a priest; with his slender boiled stick of *bundrish* in his hand, and every juicy drop that trickled from the end of it, when he turned it downwards, would contain the full of seven vats."

"'Open the hermitage to us,' said MacConglinne.

"'Come in, wretch!' answered the doorkeeper.

"On going in, then," said MacConglinne, "I saw on my left hand the servants of the Wizard Doctor with their hairy cloaks of ... with their hairy rags of soft custard, with their shovels of dry bread in their hands, carrying the tallowy offal that was on the stone-dyke of custard, from the porch of the great house to the outer porch of the fortress.

"On my right hand I then beheld the Wizard Doctor, with his two gloves of full-fat rump-steak on his hands, setting in order the house, which was hung all round with tripe from roof to floor.

"Then I went into the kitchen, and there I saw the Wizard Doctor's son, with his fishing-hook of lard in his hand, with its line made of fine brawn of a deer, viz., the marrow of its shank, with its thirty-hand rod of tripe attached to the line below, and he angling in a lake of lard. Now he would bring a flitch of old bacon, and now a weasand of corned beef from the lake of lard mixed with honey, on to a bank of curds that was near him in the kitchen. And in that lake it is that the Wizard Doctor's son was drowned, for whom the celebrated elegy was made:

'The son of Eoghan of lasting fame,' etc.

“Afterwards I went into the great house. As I set my foot across the threshold into the house, I saw something, viz., a pure white bed-tick of butter, on which I sat; but I sank in it to the tips of my two ears. The eight strongest men that were in the king’s house had hard work to pull me out by the top of the crown of my head.

“Then I was taken to the place where the Wizard Doctor himself was.

“‘Pray for me!’ said I to him.

“‘In the name of cheese!’ said he to me. ‘Evil is the limp look of thy face,’ said the Wizard Doctor. ‘Alas! it is the look of disease. Thy hands are yellow, thy lips are spotted, thine eyes are grey. Thy sinews have relaxed, they have risen over thy eye and over thy flesh, and over thy joints and nails. The three hags have attacked thee, even scarcity and death and famine, with fierce beaks of hunger. An eye that sains not has regarded thee. A plague of heavy disease has visited thee. No wonder, truly; for thine is not the look of a full-suckled milk-fed calf, tended by the hands of a good cook. Thou hast not the corslet look of well-nourished blood, but that of a youth badly reared under the vapours of bad feeding.’

“‘Very natural that,’ said MacConglinne. ‘Such is the heaviness of my ailment, the scarcity of cure, the longing for the remedy.’

“‘Tell me thy disease, my man,’ said the Wizard Doctor.

“‘I will tell thee,’ said MacConglinne, ‘what it is that shrivels me up and what makes me low-spirited, inactive, even love of good cheer, hatred of bad cheer, desire of eating early, the gnawing of my many fancies, the gnawing of flesh, the consumption of white-meats, greed and hunger. The thirst and voracity which I feel in consuming my food, so that what I eat gives neither satiety nor substance; inhospitality and niggardliness, refusal and uncharitableness regarding what is my own, so that I am a burden to myself, and dear to none. Hunger, with its four-and-twenty subdivisions in addition thereto, sadness, niggardliness, anxiety to be welcomed before everybody to all kinds of food, and the injurious effect to me of every food.

“‘My wish would be, that the various numerous wonderful viands of the world were before my gorge, that I might gratify my desires, and satisfy my greed. But alas! great is the misfortune to one like me, who cannot obtain any of these.’

“‘On my word,’ said the Great Doctor, ‘the disease is grievous. Woe to him on whom it has fallen, and not long will it be endured. But as thou hast

come to me to my hermitage and to my fort at this time, thou shalt take home with thee a medicine to cure thy disease, and shalt be for ever healed therefrom.'

“‘What is that?’ asked MacConglinne.

“‘Not hard to tell,’ answered the Great Doctor. ‘If thou goest home to-night, go to the well to wash thy hands, rub thy teeth with thy fists,, and comb every straight rib of thy hair in order. Warm thyself afterwards before a glowing red fire of straight red oak, or of octagonal ash that grows near a hill-side where little sparrows leave their droppings; on a dry hearth, very high, very low, that its embers may warm thee, that its blaze may not burn thee, that its smoke may not touch thee. Let a hairy calf-skin be placed under thee to the north-east before the fire, thy side resting exactly against a rail of alder. And let an active, white-handed, sensible, joyous woman wait upon thee, who must be of good repute, of good discourse, red-lipped, womanly, eloquent, of a good kin, wearing a necklace, and a cloak, and a brooch, with a black edge between the two peaks of her cloak, that sorrow may not come upon her; with the three nurses of her dignity upon her, with three dimples of love and delight in her countenance, without an expression of harshness in her forehead, who shall have a joyous, comely appearance, a purple five-folded cloak about her, a red gold brooch in her cloak, a fair broad face, a good blue eye in her head, two blue-black brows of the colour of the black chafer over those eyes, ruddy even cheeks, red thin lips, white clear teeth in her head as though they were pearls, soft tender white fore-arms, two smooth snowy sides, beauteous shapely thighs, straight well-proportioned calves, thin white-skinned feet, long transparent fingers, long pale-red nails. So that the gait and movements of the maiden may be graceful and quick, so that her gentle talk and address may be melodious as strings, soft and sweet; so that, from her crown to her sole, there may be neither fault, nor stain, nor blemish, on which a sharp watchful observer may hit.

“‘Let this maiden give thee thy thrice nine morsels, O MacConglinne, each morsel of which shall be as big as a heath-fowl’s egg. These morsels thou must put in thy mouth with a swinging jerk, and thine eyes must whirl about in thy skull whilst thou art eating them.’

“‘The eight kinds of grain thou must not spare, O MacConglinne, wheresoever they are offered thee, viz., rye, wild-oats, beare, buck-wheat,

wheat, barley, *fidbach*, oats. Take eight cakes of each grain of these, and eight condiments with every cake, and eight sauces with each condiment; and let each morsel thou puttest in thy mouth be as big as a heron's egg. Away now to the smooth panikins of cheese-curd, O MacConglinne,

to fresh pigs,  
to loins of fat,  
to boiled mutton,  
to the choice easily-discussed thing for which the hosts contend—the gullet of salted beef;  
to the dainty of the nobles, to mead;  
to the cure of chest-disease—old bacon  
to the appetite of pottage—stale curds;  
to the fancy of an unmarried woman—new milk  
to a queen's mash—carrots;  
to the danger awaiting a guest—ale  
to the sustenance of Lent—the cock of a hen;  
to a broken head—butter-roll  
to hand-upon-all—dry bread  
to the pregnant thing of a hearth—cheese  
to the bubble-burster—new ale  
to the priests' fancy—juicy kale  
to the treasure that is smoothest and sweetest of all food—white porridge;  
to the anchor ... —broth;  
to the double-looped twins-sheep's tripe;  
to the dues of a wall—sides (of bacon);  
to the bird of a cross—salt;  
to the entry of a gathering—sweet apples;  
to the pearls of a household—hens' eggs;  
to the glance of nakedness—kernels.'

“When he had reckoned me up those many viands, he ordered me my drop of drink. ‘A tiny little measure for thee, MacConglinne, not too large, only as much as twenty men will drink, on the top of those viands: of very thick milk, of milk not too thick, of milk of long thickness, of milk of

medium thickness, of yellow bubbling milk, the swallowing of which needs chewing, of the milk that makes the snoring bleat of a ram as it rushes down the gorge, so that the first draught says to the last draught: "I vow, thou mangy cur, before the Creator, if thou comest down, I'll go up, for there is no room for the doghood of the pair of us in this treasure-house."

"Whatever disease may seize thee from it, MacConglinne, 'tis I that will cure thee, excepting one disease, I mean the disease of sages and of gentlemen, the best of all diseases, the disease that is worth perpetual health—loose bowels."

Thus far the vision, etc.

At the pleasure of the recital and the recounting of those many various pleasant viands in the king's presence, the lawless beast that abode in the inner bowels of Cathal MacFinguine came forth, until it was licking its lips outside his head. The scholar had a large fire beside him in the house. Each of the pieces was put in order to the fire, and then one after the other to the lips of the king.

One time when one of the pieces was put to the king's mouth, the son of malediction darted forth, fixed his two claws in the piece that was in the student's hand, and taking it with him across the hearth to the other side, bore it below the caldron that was on the other side of the fire. And the caldron was overturned upon him. (And hence is said *lonchoire*, viz., from the demon—*lon*—of gluttony that was in Cathal's throat being under the caldron.)

This is not what (some) story-tellers relate, who say that it was down the throat of the priest's gillie he went, and that the gillie was drowned in the millpond of Dún-Cáin opposite the fortress of Pichán, son of Mael Finde, in the land of the men of Féne. But it is not so in the books of Cork, which state that he was put into the caldron, and was burned under it.

"To God and Brigit we give thanks," said MacConglinne, clapping his right palm over his own mouth, and his left palm over the mouth of Cathal. And linen sheets were put round Cathal's head and he was carried out.

"What is most necessary for us to do now?" asked Pichán.

"The easiest thing in the world," said MacConglinne. "Let the hosts and multitudes, the kings and queens and people, the herds, flocks and cattle, and the entire gold and silver treasure of the fortress be taken out beyond the fortress."

And the learned say, that the price of a chafer's leg of any kind of property was not left in the large central royal pavilion of the fort, except the caldron that was about the demon's head.

And the house was then shut on him from the outside, and four huge fires were kindled here and there in the house. When the house was a tower of red flame and a huge blaze, the demon sprang to the rooftree of the palace above, and the fire was powerless to do anything to him, and he sat on the house that was next to it.

"Well, now, ye men of Munster," said MacConglinne, "yonder is your friend. Shut your mouths that I may speak with that ... unworshipful monk."

"Now, wretch," said MacConglinne, "do obeisance unto us."

"And indeed I will," said the devil, "since I cannot help it. For thou art a man with the grace of God, with abundance of wisdom, with acuteness of intellect, with intente humility, with the desire of every goodness, with the grace of the seven-fold Spirit. I am a demon by nature, of infrangible substance, and I shall tell thee my story. I have been three half-years in Cathal's mouth, to the ruin of Munster and the Southern Half besides, and if I were to continue three half years more, I should ruin all Ireland. Were it not for the nobleness of the monks of great Cork of Munster, and for their wisdom, for their purity and for their honesty, and for the multitude of their bishops and their confessors, from whom thou hast come against me; and were it not for the worth of the voice and the word, honour and soul of the noble venerable king, whom thou hast come to save; and again, were it not for thy own nobility and worth, and purity and wisdom, and abundance of knowledge and lore—it is into thine own throat I would go, so that they would lash thee with dog-straps and scourges and horsewhips through all Ireland, and the disease that would kill thee, would be hunger."

"The sign of the Lord's cross between me and thee," said MacConglinne, thrice threatening him with the Gospels.

And the demon said: "Were it not for the little fair woman from the Curragh, by my God's doom before God, O Cathal MacFinguine, I would bear thy body into the earth and thy soul into hell before long to-night." After that he flew into the air among the people of hell.

"What is to be done now, O MacConglinne?" asked Pichán.

"Not hard to tell," answered MacConglinne. "Let new milk and fresh

butter be boiled along with honey, and drunk for a new drink by the King.”

That was done. A caldron of a hundred measures of fully-boiled milk was given as a special drink to the King. It was the last great bellyful that Cathal took because of the demon.

A bed was afterwards prepared for the King on a downy quilt, and musicians and players entertained him from noon until twilight. The King lay in his slumbering rest of sleep. The chieftains lay around Pichán in as pleasant and honourable a manner as ever before.

Great respect and honour had they that night for the scholar.

The learned (viz. the story-tellers) say that the King was three days and three nights in that one sleep. But the books of Cork relate that he only slept the round of the Hours.

The King arose on the morrow, and passed his hand over his face; and no smaller than a full-fragrant apple was each dark-purple drop of dew that was on his face.

“Where is MacConglinne?” asked the King.

“Here he is,” answered he. Tell us the vision now.”

“It shall be done,” said MacConglinne.

“However long the tale may be to-day,” said Cathal, “it will not appear long to me — ’tis not the same as yesterday.”

Cathal left his grace and blessing on everyone who would read it and preserve it.

“Some boon should be done to MacConglinne,” said the chieftains.

“It shall be done,” said Cathal. “He shall have a cow out of every close in Munsterland, and an ounce for every householder, and a cloak for every church, and a sheep from every house from Carn to Cork. Moreover, he shall be given the treasure that is better than all these, I mean Manchín’s little cloak.”

It was then that Roennu Ressamnach came into the house, and Cruitfiach, his son, and Mælchiar, his daughter. And then he made these quatrains:

“Manchín went — a brilliant feat —  
To plead against MacConglinne,  
Manchín they defrauded then



Of the little cloak around him.”

“‘Twere not too much for pure Comgan,  
    (said the son of the jester)  
Though we are not his kindred,  
The famous cloaklet which I see,  
Although worth thrice seven *cumals*  
Though it were of the ravens’ hue,  
From Cathal, King of Munster.

“‘Twere not too much for me to give,  
Though gold were in its border,  
As it was given by his will  
And spoken in pure reason:  
For health of reason Cathal now  
Receives from Manchín’s journey.”

Then was given him a cow out of every close, an ounce for every householder, a cloak for every church, a ring of gold, a Welsh steed, a white sheep out of every house from Carn to Cork. Two-thirds of the right of intercession (one-third being reserved to the men of Ireland) was accorded to him, and that he should sit always at the right hand of Cathal. All these things were granted to him, as we have said.

Let this be heard by every ear, and delivered by every chosen tongue to another, as elders and old men and historians have declared, as it is read and written in the books of Cork, as the angel of God set it forth to MacConglinne, as MacConglinne himself uttered it to Cathal MacFinguine and to the men of Munster besides. Nothing sorrowful shall be heard by anyone who has heard it, it will be a year’s protection to him.

There are thirty chief virtues attending this tale, and a few of them are enough for an example.

The married couple to whom it is related the first night shall not separate without an heir; they shall not be in dearth of food or raiment.

The new house, in which it is the first tale told, no corpse shall be taken out of it; it shall not want food or raiment; fire does not burn it.

The king to whom it is recited before battle or conflict shall be

victorious.

On the occasion of bringing out ale, or of feasting a prince, or of taking an inheritance or patrimony, this tale should be recited.

The reward of the recital of this story is a white-spotted, red-eared cow, a shirt of new linen, a woollen cloak with its brooch, from a king and queen, from married couples, from stewards, from princes, to him who is able to tell and recite it to them.

The End.