

MATH THE SON OF MATHONWY

Math the son of Mathonwy was lord over Gwynedd, and Pryderi the son of Pwyll was lord over the one and twenty Cantrefs of the South; and these were the seven Cantrefs of Dyfed, and the seven Cantrefs of Morganwc, the four Cantrefs of Ceredigiawn, and the three of Ystrad Tywi.

At that time, Math the son of Mathonwy could not exist unless his feet were in the lap of a maiden, except only when he was prevented by the tumult of war. Now the maiden who was with him was Goewin, the daughter of Pebin of Dol Pebin, in Arfon, and she was the fairest maiden of her time who was known there.

And Math dwelt always at Caer Dathyl, in Arfon, and was not able to go the circuit of the land, but Gilfaethwy the son of Don, and Eneyd the son of Don, his nephews, the sons of his sister, with his household, went the circuit of the land in his stead.

Now the maiden was with Math continually, and Gilfaethwy the son of Don set his affections upon her, and loved her so that he knew not what he should do because of her, and therefrom behold his hue, and his aspect, and his spirits changed for love of her, so that it was not easy to know him.

One day his brother Gwydion gazed steadfastly upon him. "Youth" said he "what aileth thee?"

"Why" replied he "what seest thou in me?"

"I see" said he "that thou hast lost thy aspect and thy hue; what, therefore, aileth thee?"

"My lord, brother" he answered "that which aileth me, it will not profit me that I should own to any."

"What may it be, my soul?" said he.

"Thou knowest" he said "that Math the son of Mathonwy has this property, that if men whisper together, in a tone how low soever, if the wind meet it, it becomes known unto him."

"Yes" said Gwydion "hold now thy peace, I know thy intent, thou lovest Goewin."

When he found that his brother knew his intent, he gave the heaviest sigh in the world.

"Be silent, my soul, and sigh not" he said. "It is not thereby that thou wilt succeed. I will cause" said he "if it cannot be otherwise, the rising of Gwynedd,

and Powys, and Deheubarth, to seek the maiden. Be thou of glad cheer therefore, and I will compass it.”

So they went unto Math the son of Mathonwy. “Lord” said Gwydion “I have heard that there have come to the South some beasts, such as were never known in this island before.”

“What are they called?” he asked.

“Pigs, lord.” “And what kind of animals are they?”

“They are small animals, and their flesh is better than the flesh of oxen.”

“They are small then?”

“And they change their names. Swine are they now called.”

“Who owneth them?”

“Pryderi the son of Pwyll; they were sent him from Annwn, by Arawn the king of Annwn, and still they keep that name, half hog, half pig.”

“Verily” asked he “and by what means may they be obtained from him?”

“I will go, lord, as one of twelve in the guise of bards, to seek the swine.”

“But it may be that he will refuse you” said he.

“My journey will not be evil, lord” said he “I will not come back without the swine.”

“Gladly” said he “go thou forward.”

So he and Gilfaethwy went, and ten other men with them. And they came into Ceredigiawn, to the place that is now called Rhuddlan Teifi, where the palace of Pryderi was. In the guise of bards they came in, and they were received joyfully, and Gwydion was placed beside Pryderi that night.

“Of a truth” said Pryderi “gladly would I have a tale from some of your men yonder.”

“Lord” said Gwydion “we have a custom that the first night that we come to the court of a great man, the chief of song recites. Gladly will I relate a tale.” Now Gwydion was the best teller of tales in the world, and he diverted all the court that night with pleasant discourse and with tales, so that he charmed everyone in the court, and it pleased Pryderi to talk with him.

And after this "Lord" said he unto Pryderi "were it more pleasing to thee, that another should discharge my errand unto thee, than that I should tell thee myself what it is?"

"No" he answered "ample speech hast thou."

"Behold, then, lord" said he "my errand. It is to crave from thee the animals that were sent thee from Annwn."

"Verily" he replied "that were the easiest thing in the world to grant, were there not a covenant between me and my land concerning them. And the covenant is that they shall not go from me, until they have produced double their number in the land."

"Lord" said he "I can set thee free from these words, and this is the way I can do so; give me not the swine tonight, neither refuse them unto me, and tomorrow I will show thee an exchange for them."

And that night he and his fellows went unto their lodging, and they took counsel. "Ah, my men" said he "we shall not have the swine for the asking."

"Well" said they "how may they be obtained?"

"I will cause them to be obtained" said Gwydion.

Then he betook himself to his arts, and began to work a charm. And he caused twelve chargers to appear, and twelve black greyhounds, each of them white breasted, and having upon them twelve collars and twelve leashes, such as no one that saw them could know to be other than gold. And upon the horses twelve saddles, and every part which should have been of iron was entirely of gold, and the bridles were of the same workmanship. And with the horses and the dogs he came to Pryderi.

"Good day unto thee, lord" said he.

"Heaven prosper thee" said the other "and greetings be unto thee."

"Lord" said he "behold here is a release for thee from the word which thou spakest last evening concerning the swine; that thou wouldest neither give nor sell them. Thou mayest exchange them for that which is better. And I will give these twelve horses, all caparisoned as they are, with their saddles and their bridles, and these twelve greyhounds, with their collars and their leashes as thou seest, and the twelve gilded shields that thou beholdest yonder." Now these he had formed of fungus.

"Well" said he "we will take counsel." And they consulted together, and determined to give the swine to Gwydion, and to take his horses and his dogs and his shields.

Then Gwydion and his men took their leave, and began to journey forth with the pigs. "Ah, my comrades" said Gwydion "it is needful that we journey with speed. The illusion will not last but from the one hour to the same tomorrow."

And that night they journeyed as far as the upper part of Ceredigiawn, to the place which, from that cause, is called Mochdre still. And the next day they took their course through Melenydd, and came that night to the town which is likewise for that reason called Mochdre, between Keri and Arwystli. And thence they journeyed forward; and that night they came as far as that Commot in Powys, which also upon account thereof is called Mochnant, and there tarried they that night. And they journeyed thence to the Cantref of Rhos, and the place where they were that night is still called Mochdre.

"My men" said Gwydion "we must push forward to the fastnesses of Gwynedd with these animals, for there is a gathering of hosts in pursuit of us." So they journeyed on to the highest town of Arllechwedd, and there they made a sty for the swine, and therefore was the name of Creuwyrion given to that town. And after they had made the sty for the swine, they proceeded to Math the son of Mathonwy, at Caerdathyl. And when they came there, the country was rising. "What news is there here?" asked Gwydion.

"Pryderi is assembling one and twenty Cantrefs to pursue after you" answered they.

"It is marvellous that you should have journeyed so slowly."

"Where are the animals whereof you went in quest?" said Math.

"They have had a sty made for them in the other Cantref below" said Gwydion.

Thereupon, lo! They heard the trumpets and the host in the land, and they arrayed themselves and set forward and came to Penardd in Arfon.

And at night Gwydion the son of Don, and Gilfaethwy his brother, returned to Caerdathyl; and Gilfaethwy took Math the son of Mathonwy's couch. And while he turned out the other damsels from the room discourteously, he made Goewin unwillingly remain.

And when they saw the day on the morrow, they went back unto the place where Math the son of Mathonwy was with his host; and when they came there, the warriors were taking counsel in what district they should await the coming of Pryderi, and the men of the South. So they went in to the council. And it was resolved to wait in the strongholds of Gwynedd, in Arfon. So within the two Maenors they took their stand, Maenor Penardd and Maenor Coed Alun. And there Pryderi attacked them, and there the combat took place. And great was the slaughter on both sides; but the men of the South were forced to flee. And they fled unto the place which is still called Nantcall. And thither did they follow them, and they made a vast slaughter of them there, so that they fled again as

far as the place called Dol Pen Maen, and there they halted and sought to make peace.

And that he might have peace, Pryderi gave hostages, Gwrgi Gwastra gave he and three and twenty others, sons of nobles. And after this they journeyed in peace even unto Traeth Mawr; but as they went on together towards Melenryd, the men on foot could not be restrained from shooting. Pryderi despatched unto Math an embassy to pray him to forbid his people, and to leave it between him and Gwydion the son of Don, for that he had caused all this. And the messengers came to Math. "Of a truth" said Math "I call Heaven to witness, if it be pleasing unto Gwydion the son of Don, I will so leave it gladly. Never will I compel any to go to fight, but that we ourselves should do our utmost."

"Verily" said the messengers "Pryderi saith that it were more fair that the man who did him this wrong should oppose his own body to his, and let his people remain unscathed."

"I declare to Heaven, I will not ask the men of Gwynedd to fight because of me. If I am allowed to fight Pryderi myself, gladly will I oppose my body to his." And this answer they took back to Pryderi.

"Truly" said Pryderi "I shall require no one to demand my rights but myself."

Then these two came forth and armed themselves, and they fought. And by force of strength, and fierceness, and by the magic and charms of Gwydion, Pryderi was slain. And at Maen Tyriawc, above Melenryd, was he buried, and there is his grave.

And the men of the South set forth in sorrow towards their own land; nor is it a marvel that they should grieve, seeing that they had lost their lord, and many of their best warriors, and for the most part, their horses and their arms.

The men of Gwynedd went back joyful and in triumph. "Lord" said Gwydion unto Math "would it not be right for us to release the hostages of the men of the South, which they pledged unto us for peace? For we ought not to put them in prison."

"Let them then be set free" said Math. So that youth, and the other hostages that were with him, were set free to follow the men of the South.

Math himself went forward to Caerdathyl. Gilfaethwy the son of Don, and they of the household that were with him went to make the circuit of Gwynedd as they were wont, without coming to the court. Math went into his chamber, and caused a place to be prepared for him whereon to recline, so that he might put his feet in the maiden's lap. "Lord" said Goewin "seek now another to hold thy feet, for I am now a wife."

"What meaneth this?" said he. "An attack, lord, was made unawares upon me; but I held not my peace, and there was no one in the court who knew not

of it. Now the attack was made by thy nephews, lord, the sons of thy sister, Gwydion the son of Don, and Gilfaethwy the son of Don; unto me they did wrong, and unto thee dishonour.”

“Verily” he exclaimed “I will do to the utmost of my power concerning this matter. But first I will cause thee to have compensation, and then will I have amends made unto myself. As for thee, I will take thee to be my wife, and the possession of my dominions will I give unto thy hands.”

And Gwydion and Gilfaethwy came not near the court, but stayed in the confines of the land until it was forbidden to give them meat and drink. At first they came not near unto Math, but at last they came. “Lord” said they “Good day to thee.”

“Well” said he “is it to make me compensation that ye are come?”

“Lord” they said “we are at thy will.”

“By my will I would not have lost my warriors, and so many arms as I have done. You cannot compensate me my shame, setting aside the death of Pryderi. But since ye come hither to be at my will, I shall begin your punishment forthwith.”

Then he took his magic wand, and struck Gilfaethwy, so that he became a deer, and he seized upon the other hastily lest he should escape from him. And he struck him with the same magic wand, and he became a deer also. “Since now ye are in bonds, I will that ye go forth together and be companions, and possess the nature of the animals whose form ye bear. And this day twelvemonth come hither unto me.”

At the end of a year from that day, lo there was a loud noise under the chamber wall, and the barking of the dogs of the palace together with the noise. “Look” said he “what is without.”

“Lord” said one “I have looked; there are there two deer, and a fawn with them.” Then he arose and went out. And when he came he beheld the three animals. And he lifted up his wand.

“As ye were deer last year, be ye wild hogs each and either of you, for the year that is to come.” And thereupon he struck them with the magic wand. “The young one will I take and cause to be baptized.” Now the name that he gave him was Hydwn. “Go ye and be wild swine, each and either of you, and be ye of the nature of wild swine. And this day twelvemonth be ye here under the wall.”

At the end of the year the barking of dogs was heard under the wall of the chamber. And the court assembled, and thereupon he arose and went forth, and when he came forth he beheld three beasts. Now these were the beasts that he saw; two wild hogs of the woods, and a well-grown young one with them. And he was very large for his age. “Truly” said Math, “this one will I take and

cause to be baptized.” And he struck him with his magic wand, and he became a fine fair auburn haired youth, and the name that he gave him was Hychdwn. “Now as for you, as ye were wild hogs last year, be ye wolves each and either of you for the year that is to come.” Thereupon he struck them with his magic wand, and they became wolves. “And be ye of like nature with the animals whose semblance ye bear, and return here this day twelvemonth beneath this wall.”

And the same day at the end of the year, he heard a clamour and a barking of dogs under the wall of the chamber. And he rose and went forth. And when he came, behold he saw two wolves, and a strong cub with them. “This one will I take” said Math “and I will cause him to be baptized; there is a name prepared for him, and that is Bleiddwn. Now these three, such are they:

“The three sons of Gilfaethwy the false,
The three faithful combatants,
Bleiddwn, Hydwn, and Hychdwn the Tall.”

Then he struck the two with his magic wand, and they resumed their own nature. “Oh men” said he “for the wrong that ye did unto me, sufficient has been your punishment and your dishonour. Prepare now precious ointment for these men, and wash their heads, and equip them.” And this was done.

And after they were equipped, they came unto him. “Oh men” said he, “you have obtained peace, and you shall likewise have friendship. Give your counsel unto me, what maiden I shall seek.” “Lord” said Gwydion the son of Don “it is easy to give thee counsel; seek Arianrod, the daughter of Don, thy niece, thy sister’s daughter.”

And they brought her unto him, and the maiden came in. “Ha damsel” said he “art thou the maiden?”

“I know not, Lord, other than that I am.”

Then he took up his magic wand, and bent it. “Step over this” said he “and I shall know if thou art the maiden.” Then stepped she over the magic wand, and there appeared forthwith a fine chubby yellow haired boy. And at the crying out of the boy, she went towards the door. And thereupon some small form was seen; but before anyone could get a second glimpse of it, Gwydion had taken it, and had flung a scarf of velvet around it and hidden it. Now the place where he hid it was the bottom of a chest at the foot of his bed.

“Verily” said Math the son of Mathonwy, concerning the fine yellow haired boy “I will cause this one to be baptized, and Dylan is the name I will give him.”

So they had the boy baptized, and as they baptized him he plunged into the sea. And immediately when he was in the sea, he took its nature, and swam as well as the best fish that was therein. And for that reason was he called Dylan, the son of the Wave. Beneath him no wave ever broke. And the blow whereby

he came to his death, was struck by his uncle Govannion. The third fatal blow was it called.

As Gwydion lay one morning on his bed awake, he heard a cry in the chest at his feet; and though it was not loud, it was such that he could hear it. Then he arose in haste, and opened the chest; and when he opened it, he beheld an infant boy stretching out his arms from the folds of the scarf, and casting it aside. And he took up the boy in his arms, and carried him to a place where he knew there was a woman that could nurse him. And he agreed with the woman that she should take charge of the boy. And that year he was nursed.

And at the end of the year, he seemed by his size as though he were two years old. And the second year he was a big child, and able to go to the court by himself. And when he came to the court, Gwydion noticed him, and the boy became familiar with him, and loved him better than anyone else. Then was the boy reared at the court until he was four years old, when he was as big as though he had been eight.

And one day Gwydion walked forth, and the boy followed him, and he went to the Castle of Arianrod, having the boy with him; and when he came into the court, Arianrod arose to meet him, and greeted him and bade him welcome. "Heaven prosper thee" said he.

"Who is the boy that followeth thee?" she asked.

"This youth, he is thy son" he answered.

"Alas" said she "what has come unto thee that thou shouldest shame me thus, wherefore dost thou seek my dishonour, and retain it so long as this?"

"Unless thou suffer dishonour greater than that of my bringing up such a boy as this, small will be thy disgrace."

"What is the name of the boy?" said she.

"Verily" he replied "he has not yet a name."

"Well" she said "I lay this destiny upon him, that he shall never have a name until he receives one from me."

"Heaven bears me witness" answered he "that thou art a wicked woman. But the boy shall have a name how displeasing howsoever it may be unto thee. As for thee, that which afflicts thee is that thou art no longer called a damsel." And thereupon he went forth in wrath, and returned to Caer Dathyl, and there he tarried that night.

And the next day he arose and took the boy with him, and went to walk on the sea shore between that place and Aber Menei. And there he saw some sedges and sea weed, and he turned them into a boat. And out of dry sticks and sedges

he made some Cordovan leather, and a great deal thereof, and he coloured it in such a manner that no one ever saw leather more beautiful than it. Then he made a sail to the boat, and he and the boy went in it to the Port of the Castle of Arianrod. And he began forming shoes and stitching them, until he was observed from the castle. And when he knew that they of the castle were observing him, he disguised his aspect, and put another semblance upon himself, and upon the boy, so that they might not be known. "What men are those in yonder boat?" said Arianrod.

"They are cordwainers" answered they.

"Go and see what kind of leather they have, and what kind of work they can do."

So they came unto them. And when they came he was colouring some Cordovan leather, and gilding it. And the messengers came and told her this. "Well" said she "take the measure of my foot, and desire the cordwainer to make shoes for me." So he made the shoes for her, yet not according to the measure, but larger. The shoes then were brought unto her, and behold they were too large. "These are too large" said she, "but he shall receive their value. Let him also make some that are smaller than they." Then he made her others that were much smaller than her foot, and sent them unto her. "Tell him that these will not go on my feet" said she. And they told him this.

"Verily" said he "I will not make her any shoes, unless I see her foot." And this was told unto her.

"Truly" she answered "I will go unto him."

So she went down to the boat, and when she came there, he was shaping shoes and the boy stitching them. "Ah, lady" said he "good day to thee."

"Heaven prosper thee" said she. "I marvel that thou canst not manage to make shoes according to a measure."

"I could not" he replied, "but now I shall be able."

Thereupon behold a wren stood upon the deck of the boat, and the boy shot at it, and hit it in the leg between the sinew and the bone. Then she smiled. "Verily" said she "with a steady hand did the lion aim at it."

"Heaven reward thee not, but now has he got a name. And a good enough name it is. Llew Llaw Gyffes be he called henceforth."

Then the work disappeared in sea weed and sedges, and he went on with it no further. And for that reason was he called the third Gold-shoemaker. "Of a truth" said she "thou wilt not thrive the better for doing evil unto me."

“I have done thee no evil yet” said he. Then he restored the boy to his own form.

“Well” said she “I will lay a destiny upon this boy that he shall never have arms and armour until I invest him with them.”

“By Heaven” said he “let thy malice be what it may, he shall have arms.”

Then they went towards Dinas Dinlleu, and there he brought up Llew Llaw Gyffes, until he could manage any horse, and he was perfect in features, and strength, and stature. And then Gwydion saw that he languished through the want of horses, and arms. And he called him unto him. “Ah, youth” said he “we will go tomorrow on an errand together. Be therefore more cheerful than thou art.”

“That I will” said the youth.

Next morning, at the dawn of day, they arose. And they took their way along the sea coast, up towards Bryn Aryen. And at the top of Cefn Clydno they equipped themselves with horses, and went towards the Castle of Arianrod. And they changed their form, and pricked towards the gate in the semblance of two youths, but the aspect of Gwydion was more staid than that of the other. “Porter” said he “go thou in and say that there are here bards from Glamorgan.”

And the porter went in. “The welcome of Heaven be unto them, let them in” said Arianrod. With great joy were they greeted. And the hall was arranged, and they went to meat. When meat was ended, Arianrod discoursed with Gwydion of tales and stories. Now Gwydion was an excellent teller of tales. And when it was time to leave off feasting, a chamber was prepared for them, and they went to rest.

In the early twilight Gwydion arose, and he called unto him his magic and his power. And by the time that the day dawned, there resounded through the land uproar, and trumpets, and shouts. When it was now day, they heard a knocking at the door of the chamber, and therewith Arianrod asking that it might be opened. Up rose the youth and opened unto her, and she entered and a maiden with her. “Ah, good men” she said “in evil plight are we.”

“Yes truly” said Gwydion “we have heard trumpets, and shouts; what thinkest thou that they may mean?”

“Verily” said she “we cannot see the colour of the ocean by reason of all the ships, side by side. And they are making for the land with all the speed they can. And what can we do?” said she.

“Lady” said Gwydion “there is none other counsel than to close the castle upon us, and to defend it as best we may.”

“Truly” said she “may Heaven reward you. And do you defend it. And here you may have plenty of arms.”

And thereupon went she forth for the arms, and behold she returned, and two maidens, and suits of armour for two men, with her. “Lady” said he “do thou accoutre this stripling, and I will arm myself with the help of thy maidens. Lo, I hear the tumult of the men approaching.”

“I will do so, gladly.” So she armed him fully, and that right cheerfully.

“Hast thou finished arming the youth” said he.

“I have finished” she answered. “I likewise have finished” said Gwydion. “Let us now take off our arms, we have no need of them.”

“Wherefore?” said she. “Here is the army around the house.”

“Oh, lady, there is here no army.”

“Oh” cried she “whence then was this tumult?”

“The tumult was but to break thy prophecy and to obtain arms for thy son. And now has he got arms without any thanks unto thee.”

“By Heaven” said Arianrod “thou art a wicked man. Many a youth might have lost his life, through the uproar thou hast caused in this Cantref today. Now will I lay a destiny upon this youth” she said “that he shall never have a wife of the race that now inhabits this earth.”

“Verily” said he “thou wast ever a malicious woman, and no one ought to support thee. A wife shall he have notwithstanding.”

They went thereupon unto Math the son of Mathonwy, and complained unto him most bitterly of Arianrod. Gwydion showed him also how he had procured arms for the youth. “Well” said Math “we will seek, I and thou, by charms and illusion, to form a wife for him out of flowers. He has now come to man’s stature, and he is the comeliest youth that was ever beheld.” So they took the blossoms of the oak, and the blossoms of the broom, and the blossoms of the meadow-sweet, and produced from them a maiden, the fairest and most graceful that man ever saw. And they baptized her, and gave her the name of Blodeuwedd.

After she had become his bride, and they had feasted, said Gwydion “It is not easy for a man to maintain himself without possessions.”

“Of a truth” said Math “I will give the young man the best Cantref to hold.”

“Lord” said he “what Cantref is that?”

“The Cantref of Dinodig” he answered. Now it is called at this day Eifionydd and Ardudwy. And the place in the Cantref where he dwelt, was a palace of his in a spot called Mur y Castell, on the confines of Ardudwy. There dwelt he and reigned, and both he and his sway were beloved by all.

One day he went forth to Caer Dathyl, to visit Math the son of Mathonwy. And on the day that he set out for Caer Dathyl, Blodeuwedd walked in the court. And she heard the sound of a horn. And after the sound of the horn, behold, a tired stag went by, with dogs and huntsmen following it. And after the dogs and the huntsmen there came a crowd of men on foot. “Send a youth” said she “to ask who yonder host may be.”

So a youth went, and enquired who they were. “Gronw Pebyr is this, the lord of Penllyn” said they. And thus the youth told her.

Gronw Pebyr pursued the stag, and by the river Cynfael he overtook the stag and killed it. And what, with flaying the stag and baiting his dogs, he was there until the night began to close in upon him. And as the day departed and the night drew near, he came to the gate of the court. “Verily” said Blodeuwedd “the chieftain will speak ill of us, if we let him at this hour depart to another land without inviting him in.”

“Yes, truly, lady” said they “it will be most fitting to invite him.”

Then went messengers to meet him and bid him in. And he accepted her bidding gladly, and came to the court, and Blodeuwedd went to meet him and greeted him, and bade him welcome. “Lady” said he “Heaven repay thee thy kindness.”

When they had disaccoutred themselves, they went to sit down. And Blodeuwedd looked upon him, and from the moment that she looked on him she became filled with his love. And he gazed on her, and the same thought came unto him as unto her, so that he could not conceal from her that he loved her, but he declared unto her that he did so. Thereupon she was very joyful. And all their discourse that night was concerning the affection and love which they felt one for the other, and which in no longer space than one evening had arisen. And that evening passed they in each other’s company.

The next day he sought to depart. But she said “I pray thee go not from me today.” And that night he tarried also. And that night they consulted by what means they might always be together.

“There is none other counsel” said he “but that thou strive to learn from Llew Llaw Gyffes in what manner he will meet his death. And this must thou do under the semblance of solicitude concerning him.”

The next day Gronw sought to depart. “Verily” said she “I would counsel thee not to go from me today.”

“At thy instance, will I not go” said he “albeit, I must say, there is danger that the chief who owns the palace may return home.”

“Tomorrow” answered she “will I indeed permit thee to go forth.”

The next day he sought to go, and she hindered him not. “Be mindful” said Gronw “of what I have said unto thee, and converse with him fully, and that under the guise of the dalliance of love, and find out by what means he may come to his death.”

That night Llew Llaw Gyffes returned to his home. And the day they spent in discourse, and minstrelsy, and feasting. And at night they went to rest, and he spoke to Blodeuwedd once, and he spoke to her a second time. But, for all this, he could not get from her one word. “What aileth thee” said he “art thou well?”

“I was thinking” said she “of that which thou didst never think of concerning me; for I was sorrowful as to thy death, lest thou shouldst go sooner than I.”

“Heaven reward thy care for me” said he “but until Heaven take me I shall not easily be slain.”

“For the sake of Heaven, and for mine, show me how thou mightiest be slain. My memory in guarding is better than thine.”

“I will tell thee gladly” said he. “Not easily can I be slain, except by a wound. And the spear wherewith I am struck must be a year in the forming. And nothing must be done towards it except during the sacrifice on Sundays.”

“Is this certain?” asked she.

“It is in truth” he answered. “And I cannot be slain within a house, nor without. I cannot be slain on horseback nor on foot.” “Verily” said she “in what manner then canst thou be slain?” “I will tell thee” said he. “By making a bath for me by the side of a river, and by putting a roof over the cauldron, and thatching it well and tightly, and bringing a buck, and putting it beside the cauldron. Then if I place one foot on the buck’s back, and the other on the edge of the cauldron, whosoever strikes me thus will cause my death.”

“Well” said she “I thank Heaven that it will be easy to avoid this.”

No sooner had she held this discourse than she sent to Gronw Pebyr. Gronw toiled at making the spear, and that day twelvemonth it was ready. And that very day he caused her to be informed thereof.

“Lord” said Blodeuwedd unto Llew “I have been thinking how it is possible that what thou didst tell me formerly can be true; wilt thou show me in what manner thou couldst stand at once upon the edge of a cauldron and upon a buck, if I prepare the bath for thee?”

“I will show thee” said he.

Then she sent unto Gronw, and bade him be in ambush on the hill which is now called Bryn Cyfergyr, on the bank of the River Cynfael. She caused also to be collected all the goats that were in the Cantref, and had them brought to the other side of the river, opposite Bryn Cyfergyr.

And the next day she spoke thus. “Lord” said she “I have caused the roof and the bath to be prepared, and lo! They are ready.” “Well” said Llew “we will go gladly to look at them.”

The day after they came and looked at the bath. “Wilt thou go into the bath, lord?” said she.

“Willingly will I go in” he answered. So into the bath he went, and he anointed himself.

“Lord” said she “behold the animals which thou didst speak of as being called bucks.”

“Well” said he “cause one of them to be caught and brought here.” And the buck was brought. Then Llew rose out of the bath, and put on his trousers, and he placed one foot on the edge of the bath and the other on the buck’s back.

Thereupon Gronw rose up from the hill which is called Bryn Cyfergyr, and he rested on one knee, and flung the poisoned dart and struck him on the side, so that the shaft started out, but the head of the dart remained in. Then he flew up in the form of an eagle, and gave a fearful scream. And thenceforth was he no more seen.

As soon as he departed Gronw and Blodeuwedd went together unto the palace that night. And the next day Gronw arose and took possession of Ardudwy. And after he had overcome the land, he ruled over it, so that Ardudwy and Penllyn were both under his sway.

Then these tidings reached Math the son of Mathonwy. And heaviness and grief came upon Math, and much more upon Gwydion than upon him. “Lord” said Gwydion “I shall never rest until I have tidings of my nephew.”

“Verily” said Math “may Heaven be thy strength.” Then Gwydion set forth and began to go forward. And he went through Gwynedd and Powys to the confines. And when he had done so, he went into Arfon, and came to the house of a vassal, in Maenawr Penardd. And he alighted at the house, and stayed there that night. The man of the house and his household came in, and last of all came there the swineherd.

Said the man of the house to the swineherd “Well, youth, hath thy sow come in tonight?”

“She hath” said he “and is this instant returned to the pigs.”

“Where doth this sow go to?” said Gwydion.

“Every day, when the sty is opened, she goeth forth and none can catch sight of her, neither is it known whither she goeth more than if she sank into the earth.”

“Wilt thou grant unto me” said Gwydion “not to open the sty until I am beside the sty with thee.”

“This will I do, right gladly” he answered.

That night they went to rest; and as soon as the swineherd saw the light of day, he awoke Gwydion. And Gwydion arose and dressed himself, and went with the swineherd, and stood beside the sty. Then the swineherd opened the sty. And as soon as he opened it, behold, she leaped forth, and set off with great speed. And Gwydion followed her, and she went against the course of a river, and made for a brook, which is now called Nant y Llew. And there she halted and began feeding. And Gwydion came under the tree, and looked what it might be that the sow was feeding on. And he saw that she was eating putrid flesh and vermin. Then looked he up to the top of the tree, and as he looked he beheld on the top of the tree an eagle, and when the eagle shook itself, there fell vermin and putrid flesh from off it, and these the sow devoured. And it seemed to him that the eagle was Llew. And he sang an englyn:

“Oak that grows between the two banks;
Darkened is the sky and hill!
Shall I not tell him by his wounds,
That this is Llew?”

Upon this the eagle came down until he reached the centre of the tree. And Gwydion sang another englyn:

“Oak that grows in upland ground,
Is it not wetted by the rain? Has it not been drenched
By nine score tempests?
It bears in its branches Llew Llaw Gyffes!”

Then the eagle came down until he was on the lowest branch of the tree, and thereupon this englyn did Gwydion sing:

“Oak that grows beneath the steep;
Stately and majestic is its aspect!
Shall I not speak it?
That Llew will come to my lap?”

And the eagle came down upon Gwydion's knee. And Gwydion struck him with his magic wand, so that he returned to his own form. No one ever saw a more piteous sight, for he was nothing but skin and bone.

Then he went unto Caer Dathyl, and there were brought unto him good physicians that were in Gwynedd, and before the end of the year he was quite healed.

"Lord" said he unto Math the son of Mathonwy "it is full time now that I have retribution of him by whom I have suffered all this woe."

"Truly" said Math "he will never be able to maintain himself in the possession of that which is thy right."

"Well" said Llew "the sooner I have my right, the better shall I be pleased."

Then they called together the whole of Gwynedd, and set forth to Ardudwy. And Gwydion went on before and proceeded to Mur y Castell. And when Blodeuwedd heard that he was coming, she took her maidens with her, and fled to the mountain. And they passed through the River Cynfael, and went towards a court that there was upon the mountain, and through fear they could not proceed except with their faces looking backwards, so that unawares they fell into the lake. And they were all drowned except Blodeuwedd herself, and her Gwydion overtook. And he said unto her "I will not slay thee, but I will do unto thee worse than that. For I will turn thee into a bird; and because of the shame thou hast done unto Llew Llaw Gyffes, thou shall never show thy face in the light of day henceforth; and that through fear of all the other birds. For it shall be their nature to attack thee, and to chase thee from wheresoever they may find thee. And thou shalt not lose thy name, but shalt be always called Blodeuwedd." Now Blodeuwedd is an owl in the language of this present time, and for this reason is the owl hateful unto all birds. And even now the owl is called Blodeuwedd.

Then Gronw Pebyr withdrew unto Penllyn, and he despatched thence an embassy. And the messengers he sent, asked Llew Llaw Gyffes, if he would take land, or domain, or gold, or silver, for the injury he had received. "I will not, by my confession to Heaven" said he.

"Behold this is the least that I will accept from him; that he come to the spot where I was when he wounded me with the dart, and that I stand where he did, and that with a dart I take my aim at him. And this is the very least that I will accept."

And this was told unto Gronw Pebyr. "Verily" said he "is it needful for me to do thus? My faithful warriors, and my household, and my foster brothers, is there not one among you who will stand the blow in my stead?"

“There is not, verily” answered they. And because of their refusal to suffer one stroke for their lord, they are called the third disloyal tribe even unto this day.

“Well” said he “I will meet it.”

Then they two went forth to the banks of the river Cynfael, and Gronw stood in the place where Llew Llaw Gyffes was when he struck him, and Llew in the place where Gronw was. Then said Gronw Pebyr unto Llew “Since it was through the wiles of a woman that I did unto thee as I have done, I adjure thee by Heaven to let me place between me and the blow, the slab thou seest yonder on the river’s bank.”

“Verily” said Llew “I will not refuse thee this.”

“Ah” said he “may Heaven reward thee.” So Gronw took the slab and placed it between him and the blow.

Then Llew flung the dart at him, and it pierced the slab and went through Gronw likewise, so that it pierced through his back. And thus was Gronw Pebyr slain. And there is still the slab on the bank of the river Cynfael, in Ardudwy, having the hole through it. And therefore it is even now called Llech Ronw.

A second time did Llew Llaw Gyffes take possession of the land, and prosperously did he govern it. And as the story relates, he was lord after this over Gwynedd.

And thus ends this portion of the Mabinogi.