

XXI CUCHULAIN AND THE RIVERS

Now while the hosts proceeded from Ath Firdead ('Ferdiad's Ford') southwards, Cuchulain lay in his sickbed in that place. Then came certain men of the Ulstermen thither to help and succour Cuchulain. Before all, Senoll Uathach and the two sons of Gegè: Muridach and Cotreb, to wit. And they bore him to the streams and rivers of Conalle Murthemni, to rub and to wash his stabs and his cuts, his sores and his many wounds in the face of these streams and rivers. For the Tuatha De Danann ('the Tribes divine of Danu') were wont to put herbs and plants of healing and a curing charm in the waters and rivers of the territory of Conalle Murthemni, to help and to succour Cuchulain, so that the streams were speckled and green topped therewith.

Accordingly these are the names of the healing rivers of Cuchulain: —

Sas, Buan, Buas, Bithslan, Findglas ('Whitewater'), Gleoir, Glenamain, Bedg, Tadg, Telameit, Rind, Bir, Brenidè, Dichaem, Muach, Miliuc, Cumung, Cuilind, Gainemain, Drong, Delt, Dubglas ('Blackwater').

Then was the grave of Ferdiad dug by the men of Erin and his funeral games were held.

XXII CETHERN'S STRAIT FIGHT

While now Cuchulain went to bathe in the waters, the hosts went by to the south till they pitched camp at Imorach Smiromrach ('Edge of the Marrow Bath'). Then said the men of Erin to macRoth the chief runner, to go watch and keep guard for them at Sliab Fuait, to the end that the Ulstermen might not come upon them without warning and unobserved. Thereupon macRoth went from the host southwards as far as Sliab Fuait to spy out the men of Ulster, to learn if any one came after them. MacRoth was not long there when he saw something: a lone chariot on Sliab Fuait making from the north straight towards him. A fierce man, stark naked, in that chariot coming towards him, without arms, without armour at all save an iron spit in his hand. In equal manner he goaded his driver and his horses at one and the same time. And it seemed to him that he would never in his life come up to the hosts. And macRoth hastened to tell this news at the fort where Ailill and Medb and Fergus were and the nobles of the men of Erin. Ailill asked tidings of him on his arrival. "Aye, macRoth," inquired Ailill; "hast thou seen any of the Ulstermen on the track of the host this day?"

"That, truly, I know not" answered macRoth; "but I saw something: a lone chariot coming over Sliab Fuait from the north straight towards us. A white, grey, wild, stark naked man in the chariot, without arms or armour at all, except for an iron spit in his hand. In equal manner he prodded his driver and his steeds. It seemed to him he would never in his life come up to the host. A brindled greyhound before him."

"Who, thinkest thou, might it be, O Fergus?" asked Ailill. "Is it Conchobar or Celtchar?"

"Of a truth, that is not likely" Fergus answered; "meseems it is Cethern son of generous, red edged Fintan from Linè in the north that came there. And if so it be, ye shall be on your guard against him!" Fergus indeed spoke true, that it was Fintan's son Cethern that was come there. And so Cethern son of Fintan came on them, and the camp and the garrison were confounded and he wounded all around him in every direction and on all sides and they wounded him in like manner. And then Cethern left them, and it was thus he went, and the front guard of the chariot pressed up against his belly to keep his entrails and vitals within him, and his intestines were wound about his legs. He came to the place where was Cuchulain, to be healed and cured, and he demanded a leech of Cuchulain to heal and to cure him.

Cuchulain had compassion on his wounds; a bed of fresh rushes was made for him and a pillow set to it. "Come, master Laeg!" cried Cuchulain. "Arise, away with thee to the garrison and camp of the men of Erin and summon the leeches to come out to cure Cethern macFintain. I give my word, e'en though it be under the ground or in a well-shut house they are, I myself will bring death and destruction and slaughter upon them before this hour tomorrow, if they come not to minister to Cethern."

Laeg went his way to the quarters and camp of the men of Erin, and he called upon the leeches of the men of Erin to go forth to cure Cethern son of Fintan. Truth to tell, the leeches of the men of Erin were unwilling to go cure their adversary, their enemy and their stranger foe. But they feared Cuchulain would work death and destruction and slaughter upon them if they went not. And so they went. As one man of them after the other came to him, Cethern son of Fintan showed him his stabs and his cuts, his sores and his bloody wounds. When the first leech that came looked at him, "thou wilt not live" he declared.

"Neither wilt thou for this" replied Cethern. Each man of them that said he would not live and could not be healed, Cethern son of Fintan struck him a blow with his right fist in the front of his forehead, so that he drove the brains out through the windows of his ears and the seams of his skull. Howbeit Cethern son of Fintan killed them till, by reason of him, there had come fifteen leeches of the leeches of the men of Erin, as the historian hath declared in proof thereof: —

"These the leeches of the Táin,
Who by Cethern — bane — did fall.
No light thing, in floods of tribes,
That their names are known to me:

"Littè, Luaidren, known o'er sea,
Lot and Luaimnech, 'White-hand' Lon, n,
Lathairnè skilful, also Lon, n,
Laisrè, Slanoll 'That cures all.'

"Dubthach, Fintan's blameless son,
Fintan, master Firfial, too,
Mainè, Boethan 'Gives not pain,'
Eke his pupil, Boethan's son.

"These the leeches, five and ten,
Struck to death by Cethern, true;
I recall them in my day;
They are in the leeches' roll!"

Yea, even the fifteenth leech, it was but the tip of a blow that reached him. Yet he fell lifeless of the great stun between the bodies of the other physicians and lay there for a long space and time. Ithall, leech of Ailill and Medb, was his name.

Thereafter Cethern son of Fintan asked another leech of Cuchulain to heal and to cure him forasmuch as the leeches of the men of Erin had failed him. "Come, master Laeg," quoth Cuchulain, "go for me to Fingin the seer leech, at 'Fingin's Grave Mound' at Leccan ('the Brow') of Sliab Fuait, him that is leech to Conchobar. Bid him come to heal Cethern son of Fintan."

The Táin Bó Cúalnge

Laeg hastened to Fingin the seer leech at 'Fingin's Grave Mound' at Leccan of Sliab Fuait, to the leech of Conchobar. And he told him to go cure Cethern son of Fintan. Thereupon Fingin the prophet leech came with him to where Cuchulain and Cethern were. As soon as he was come, Cethern son of Fintan showed him his stabs and his cuts, his sores and his bloody wounds.

XXIIIA CETHERN'S BLOODY WOUNDS

"Look at this bloody wound for me, O Fingin" said Cethern.

Fingin looked at the bloody wound. "Why, it is a slight, unwillingly given wound we behold here" said the leech; "even a wound that some one of thine own blood hath given thee, and no desire or wish had he therefor, and it will not carry thee off at once."

"That, now, is true" exclaimed Cethern. "A lone man came upon me there; bushy hair on him; a blue mantle wrapped around him; a silver brooch in the mantle over his breast; an oval shield with plaited rim he bore; a five pointed spear in his hand; a pronged spare spear at his side. He gave this bloody wound. He bore away a slight wound from me too."

"Why, we know that man!" cried Cuchulain; "'twas Illann Ilarchless ('Illann of many feats') son of Fergus macRoig. And he would not wish that thou shouldst fall by his hand, but he gave thee this mock blow that the men of Erin might not have it to say it was to betray them or to forsake them if he gave it not."

"Now look at this bloody wound for me, O Fingin my master" said Cethern.

Fingin looked closely into the bloody wound. "Why, 'tis a woman's wanton deed of arms we behold here," said the leech; "namely the wound which a warrior woman inflicted on thee" said he.

"Aye, that is true then" quoth Cethern; "a woman came upon me there by herself. A woman, beautiful, fair-faced, long cheeked, tall; a golden yellow head of hair down to the top of her two shoulder blades she wore; a smock of royal sammet next to her white skin; two birds of gold on her shoulders; a purple cloak without other colour she had around her; a brooch of gold in the cloak over her bosom; a straight, ridged spear, red flaming in her hand. She it was that gave me this bloody wound. She bore away a slight wound from me too."

"Ah, but we know that woman" cried Cuchulain; "Medb daughter of Eocho Fedlech, daughter of the High King of Erin; it is she that came unto us in that dress. A victory and triumph and trophy she had considered it hadst thou fallen at her hands."

"Look at this bloody wound for me too, O Fingin my master" said Cethern.

Fingin looked at the bloody wound. "Why, the feat of arms of two warriors is this" said the leech; "that is to say, two warriors inflicted these two wounds as one wound upon thee."

"Yea, that is true" answered Cethern. "There came two men-at-arms upon me in that place; two, with bushy hair on them; two blue cloaks wrapped around them; brooches of silver in the cloaks over their breasts; a necklace of all white

silver around the neck of each of them; two long shields they bore; two hard chains of silver on each of them; a band of silver around them; two five pointed spears they bore; a vein of silver around them. They smote me this wound and I smote a little wound on each of them.”

“Indeed we know that pair” quoth Cuchulain; “Oll and Othinè they, of the bodyguard of Ailill and Medb; they never go to a hosting, to battle or combat, but when the wounding of a man is certain. They would have held it for victory and triumph and a boast hadst thou fallen at their hands.”

“Look on this bloody wound also for me, O Fingin my master” said Cethern. Fingin looked closely at the bloody wound. “There came upon me a pair of young warriors of the Fian” said Cethern; “a splendid, manly appearance they had. Each of them cast a spear at me. I drave this spear through the one of them.”

Fingin looked into the bloody wound. “Why, this blood is all black” quoth the leech; “through thy heart those spears passed so that they formed a cross of themselves through thy heart, and thy healing and curing are not easy; and I prophesy no cure here, but I would get thee some healing plants and curing charms that they destroy thee not forthwith.”

“Ah, but we know them, that pair” quoth Cuchulain; “Bun and Meconn (‘Stump’ and ‘Root’) are they, of the bodyguard of Ailill and Medb. It was their hope that thou shouldst fall at their hands.”

“Look at this bloody wound for me, too, O Fingin my master” said Cethern.

Fingin examined the bloody wound. “Why, it is the red rush of the two sons of Ri Cailè (‘the King of the Woods’) that is here” said the leech.

“Aye, ‘tis so” replied Cethern; “there attacked me there two fair faced, dark browed youths, huge, with diadems of gold on their heads. Two green mantles folded about them; two pins of bright silver on the mantles over their breasts; two five pronged spears in their hands.”

“Why, near each other are the bloody wounds they gave thee” said the leech; “into thy gullet they went, so that the points of the spears struck one another within thee, and none the easier is it to work thy cure here.”

“We know that pair” quoth Cuchulain; “noble youths of Medb’s great household, Broen and Brudni, are they, two sons of Ri teora Soillse (‘the King of the three Lights’), that is, the two sons of the King of the Woods. It had been victory and triumph and a boast for them, hadst thou fallen at their hands.”

“Look at this bloody wound for me, too, my good Fingin” said Cethern.

Fingin looked into the bloody wound. “The joint deed of two brothers is

here” said the leech.

“’Tis indeed true” replied Cethern. “There came upon me two leading, king’s warriors. Yellow hair upon them; dark grey mantles with fringes, wrapped around them; leaf shaped brooches of silvered bronze in the mantles over their breasts; broad, grey lances in their hands.”

“Ah, but we know that pair” quoth Cuchulain; “Cormac Colomon rig (‘King’s pillar’) is the one, and Cormac son of Mael Foga, of the bodyguard of Ailill and Medb (the other). What they sought was that thou shouldst fall at their hands.”

“Look at this bloody wound for me too, O Fingin my master” said Cethern.

Fingin looked into that bloody wound. “The assault of two brothers is here” said the leech.

“Aye then, ‘tis true” answered Cethern. “There came upon me two tender youths there; very much alike were they; curly dark hair on the one of them; curly yellow hair on the other; two green cloaks wrapped around them; two bright silver brooches in the cloaks over their breasts; two tunics of smooth yellow silk with hoods and red embroidery next their skin; two white hilted swords at their belts; two bright shields having the likenesses of beasts in white silver they bore; two five pronged spears with veins of all white silver in their hands.”

“Ah, but we know that pair” quoth Cuchulain; “Manè ‘Like to his mother’ and Manè ‘Like to his father,’ two sons of Ailill and Medb; and it would be matter of victory, triumph and boasting to them, hadst thou fallen at their hands.”

“Look at this bloody wound for me, too, O Fingin my master” said Cethern. “There came upon me a pair of young warriors of the Fian there. A brilliant appearance, stately tall and manlike, they had; wonderful garments from faraway countries upon them. Each of them thrust the spear he had at me. Then I thrust this spear through each of them.”

Fingin looked into the bloody wound. “Cunning are the bloody wounds they inflicted upon thee” said the leech; “they have severed the strings of thy heart within thee, so that thy heart rolls about in thy breast like an apple in motion or like a ball of yarn in an empty bag, and there is no string at all to support it; and there is no means to cure thee or to save thee, and no healing can I effect here.”

“Ah, but we know those twain” quoth Cuchulain; “a pair of champions from Norway who, because of their cunning and violence, have been sent particularly by Ailill and Medb to slay thee; for not often does one ever issue alive from their combats, and it would be their will that thou shouldst fall at their hands.”

“Look upon this bloody wound for me too, my good Fingin” said Cethern.

Fingin looked at that bloody wound in like manner. “Why, the alternate woundings of a son and his father we behold here” answered the leech.

“Yea, it is so” quoth Cethern; “two tall men, red as torches, came upon me there, with diadems of burnished gold upon them; kingly garments they wore; gold hilted, hammered swords at their girdles, with scabbards of pure white silver, with a cunningly ornamented and delicate embossing and supports of mottled gold outside upon them.”

“Ah, but we know that pair” quoth Cuchulain; “Ailill and his son are they, Manè ‘That embraces the traits of them all.’ They would deem it victory and triumph and a boast shouldst thou fall at their hands.”

Thus far the “Bloody Wounds” of the Táin.

“Speak, O Fingin prophetic leech” spake Cethern son of Fintan; “what verdict and what counsel givest me now?”

“This verily is what I say to thee” replied Fingin the prophetic leech: “Count not on thy big cows for yearlings this year; for if thou dost, it is not thou that will enjoy them, and no profit will they bring thee.”

“This is the judgement and counsel the other surgeons did give me, and certain it is it brought them neither advantage nor profit, and they fell at my hands; and none the more will it bring thee advantage or profit, and thou shalt fall at my hands!” And he gave Fingin a strong, stiff kick with his foot, and sent him between the chariot’s two wheels and the creaking of the chariot might be heard afar off.

“Oh, but vicious is the kick from the old warrior” cried Cuchulain; “’twould be more fitting if thou shouldst ply it on foes than on leech!” Hence, from this saying, is the name Uachtar Lua (‘the Height of the Kick’) in the land of Ross from then until this day.

Nevertheless Fingin the prophet leech gave his choice to Cethern son of Fintan: A long illness for him and afterwards to obtain help and succour, or a red healing for the space of three days and three nights, so that he might then employ his strength on his enemies. What Cethern son of Fintan chose was a red healing for the space of three days and three nights, to the end that he might then vent his anger and strength on his enemies. For what he said was that there would not be found after him any one he would rather have vindicate or avenge him than himself. Thereupon Fingin the prophetic leech asked of Cuchulain a vat of marrow wherewith to heal and to cure Cethern son of Fintan. Cuchulain proceeded to the camp and entrenchment of the men of Erin, and whatsoever he found of herds and flocks and droves there he took away with him. And he made a marrow mash of their flesh and their bones and their skins; and Cethern son of Fintan was placed in the marrow bath till the end of three days and three nights. And his flesh began to drink in the marrow-bath about him and the marrow bath entered in within his stabs and his cuts, his sores

and his many wounds. Thereafter he arose from the marrow bath at the end of three days and three nights, and he slept a day and a night after taking in the marrow."I have no ribs more" said Cethern; "put the ribs of the chariot box into me."

"Thou shalt have it" Cuchulain made answer.

It was thus Cethern arose, with a slab of the chariot pressed to his belly so that his entrails and bowels would not drop out of him. "Had I my own weapons," said Cethern, "the story of what I would do would live forever!"

That was the time when his wife came from the north, from Dûn da Benn ('Fort of the two Gables'), and she brought his sword with her, even Finna daughter of Eocho. "What seest thou?" asked Cethern.

"Meseems" answered Cuchulain "'tis the chariot of little Finna, Eocho's daughter, thy wife, that comes nigh us." And they saw the woman, with the arms in the chariot. Cethern son of Fintan seized his arms and proceeded to attack the men of Erin, with the chariot box bound around his back, for he was not the stronger therefor. But this is to be added: they sent a warning before him; Ithall, physician of Ailill and Medb, had remained as one dead of the great stun from the blow of Cethern among the bodies of the other leeches for a long space and time, and continued in that state till then; at last he rose and rushed to the encampment, and he, the leech that had alone escaped from Cethern, brought the alarm to the camp.

"Hark, ye men of Erin" shouted the leech; "Cethern son of Fintan comes to attack you, now that he has been healed and cured by Fingin the prophetic leech, and take ye heed of him!" Thereat the men of Erin in fear put Ailill's dress and his golden shawl and his regal diadem on the pillar stone in Crich Ross, that it might be thereon that Cethern son of Fintan should first give vent to his anger on his arrival. Eftsoons Cethern reached the place where he saw those things, namely Ailill's dress and his golden shawl around the standing stone in Crich Ross, and he, being unaware and weetless, conceived it to be Ailill himself that was in it. And he made a rush at it like a blast of wind and drave the sword through the stone pillar till it went up to its pommel, so that his fist went through it after the sword.

"Deceit is here" cried Cethern son of Fintan "and on me have ye worked this deceit. And I swear an oath, till there be found among ye of the men of Erin one that will put yon royal dress about him and the golden shawl, I will not stay my hand from them, slaughtering and destroying withal!"

Manè Andoe son of Ailill and Medb heard that, and he put his father's royal raiment about him and the golden shawl and the diadem on his head, and he snatched them up in his chariot before him and dashed off through the midst of the men of Erin. Cethern son of Fintan pursued him closely and hurled his shield the length of a cast at him, so that the chiselled rim of the shield clave him to the ground, with chariot, driver, and horses. When the men of Erin saw

that, they surrounded Cethern on every side and made him a victim of spears and lances, so that he fell at their hands in the strait wherein he was. Wherefore ‘Cethern’s Strait Fight and the Bloody Wounds of Cethern’ is the name of this tale.

His wife, Finna daughter of Eocho Salbuidê (‘Yellow-heel’) stood over him and she was in great sorrow, and she made the funeral song below: —

“I care for naught, care for naught;
Ne’er more man’s hand ‘neath my head,
Since was dug the earthy bed,
Cethern’s bold, of Dûn da Benn!

“Kingly Cethern, Fintan’s son;
Few were with him on the ford.
Connacht’s men with all their host,
For nine hours he left them not!

“Arms he bore not — this an art —
But a red, two-headed pike;
With it slaughtered he the host,
While his anger still was fresh!

“Felled by double-headed pike,
Cethern’s hand held, with their crimes,
Seven times fifty of the hosts,
Fintan’s son brought to their graves!

“Willa-loo, oh, willa-loo!
Woman’s wandering through the mist.
Worse it is for him that’s dead.
She that lives may find a man!

“Never I shall take a man
Of the hosts of this good world;
Never shall I sleep with man;
Never shall my man with wife!

“Dear the homestead, ‘Horse-head’s Dûn,’
Where our hosts were wont to go.
Dear the water, soft and sweet;
Dear the isle, ‘Isle of the Red!’

“Sad the care, oh, sad the care,
Cualnge’s Cow Raid brought on me:
Cethern, Fintan’s son, to keen.
Oh that he had shunned his woe!

“Great the doings, these, oh, great,

And the deed that here was done:
I bewailing him till death,
Him that has been smitten down!

“Finna, Eocho’s daughter, I,
Found a fight of circling spears.
Had my champion had his arms:
By his side a slaughtered heap!”

XXIII HERE FOLLOWETH THE TOOTH FIGHT OF FINTAN

Fintan, himself the son of Niall Niamglonnach ('of the brilliant Exploits') from Dūn da Benn in the north, was father of Cethern son of Fintan. And he came to save the honour of Ulster and to avenge his son upon the hosts. Thrice fifty with many pointed weapons was his number. And thus it was they came, and two spearheads on each shaft with them, a spearhead on the top and a spearhead at the butt, so that it made no difference whether they wounded the hosts with the points or with the butts. They offered three battles to the hosts. And thrice their own number fell at their hands, and there fell also the people of Fintan son of Niall, all excepting Fintan's son Crimthann alone, so that there did not escape any of his people excepting himself and his son. This one was saved under a canopy of shields by Ailill and Medb. And the son was separated from him, his father Fintan, and was saved by Ailill out of fear of Fintan and in order that Fintan might not wreak his fury on them till he should come with Conchobar to the battle. Then said the men of Erin, it would be no disgrace for Fintan son of Niall to withdraw from the camp and quarters, and that they would give up Crimthann son of Fintan to him, and then the hosts would fall back a day's march to the north again; and that should cease from his deeds of arms against the hosts till he would come to encounter them on the day of the great battle at the place where the four grand provinces of Erin would clash at Garech and Ilgarech in the battle of the Cattle Reaving of Cualnge, as was foretold by the druids of the men of Erin. Fintan son of Niall consented to that, and they gave over his son to him. He made friendship with them then when his son had been restored to him. He withdrew from the camp and station, and the hosts marched a day's journey back to the north again, to stop and cease their advance. Thereafter Fintan went to his own land. In this manner they found each man of the people of Fintan son of Niall and each man of the men of Erin, with the lips and the nose and the ear of each of them in the teeth and tusks of the other after they had used up their arms. The men of Erin gave thought to that: "This is a tooth fight for us," said they; "the tooth fight of Fintan's people and of Fintan himself." So this is the 'Tooth Fight' of Fintan.

XXIIIA THE RED SHAME OF MENN FOLLOWETH HERE

It was then came to them great Menn son of Salcholga, he from Renna ('the Waterways') of the Boyne in the north. Twelve men with many-pointed weapons, that was his number. It was thus they came, and two spearheads on each shaft with them, a spearhead on the top and a spearhead at the butt, so that it made no difference whether they wounded the hosts with the points or with the butts. They offered three attacks upon the hosts. Three times their own number fell at their hands and there fell twelve men of the people of Menn, so that there remained alive of them but Menn alone. But Menn himself was sorely wounded in the strait, so that blood ran crimson on him and his followers too were crimsoned. Then said the men of Erin: "Red is this shame" said they "for Menn son of Salcholga, that his people, twelve men, should be slain and destroyed and he himself wounded till blood ran crimson red upon him." Hence here is the 'Reddening Shame of Menn', the name of this tale on the Spoil of the Kine of Cualnge.

Then said the men of Erin, it would be no dishonour for Menn son of Salcholga to leave the camp and quarters, and that the hosts would go a day's journey back to the north again, and that Menn should cease his weapon feats on the hosts till Conchobar arose out of his 'Pains' and battle would be offered them at Garech and Ilgarech on the day of the great battle when the men of Erin and of Ulster would meet together in combat in the great battle of the Cualnge Cow Spoil, as the druids and soothsayers and the knowers of the men of Erin had foretold it.

Menn son of Salcholga agreed to that, to leave the camp and halting place. And the hosts fell back a day's march for to rest and wait, and Menn went his way to his own land.

XXIII^B HERE FOLLOWETH THE ACCOUTREMENT OF THE CHARIOTEERS

Then came the charioteers of the Ulstermen to them. Thrice fifty was their number. They offered three battles to the hosts. Thrice their number fell at their hands, and the charioteers themselves fell on the field whereon they stood. Hence this here is the 'Accoutrement of the Charioteers'. It is for this cause it is called the 'Accoutrement of the Charioteers' because it is with rocks and with boulders and with clumps of earth they accomplished the defeat of the men of Erin.

XXIIIc THE WHITE FIGHT OF ROCHAD NOW FOLLOWETH

Cuchulain despatched his charioteer to Rochad Rigderg ('Red-king') son of Fathemon, from Rigdorn in the north, that he should come to his aid. He was of Ulster. The gilla comes up to Rochad and tells him, if he has come out of his weakness, to go to the help of Cuchulain, that they should employ a ruse to reach the host to seize some of them and slay them. Rochad set out from the north. Thrice fifty warriors was his number, and he took possession of a hill fronting the hosts. "Scan the plain for us today" said Ailill.

"I see a company crossing the plain" the watchman answered "and a tender youth comes in their midst; the other warriors reach but up to his shoulder."

"Who is that warrior, O Fergus?" asked Ailill.

"Rochad son of Fathemon" he answered; "and it is to bring help to Cuchulain he comes. I know what ye had best do with him" Fergus continued. "Let a hundred warriors go from ye with the maiden yonder to the middle of the plain and let the maid go before them, and let a horseman go tell Rochad to come alone to hold converse with the maid and let hands be laid on him, and thus shall be removed all fear of his people from us.

Finnabair, daughter of Ailill and Medb, perceived that and she went to speak to her mother thereof, even to Medb. Now it happened that Finnabair loved Rochad. It is he was the fairest young warrior in Ulster at that time. And Finnabair disclosed her secret and her love to her mother. "Truly have I loved yonder warrior for a long time" said she; "and it is he is my sweetheart, my first love and mine own choice one in wooing of the men of Erin."

"An thou hast so loved him, daughter" quoth Ailill and Medb "sleep with him this night and crave for us a truce of him for the hosts, until with Conchobar he encounters us on the day of the great battle when four of the grand provinces of Erin will meet at Garech and Ilgarech in the battle of the Foray of Cualnge."

This then is done. Rochad sets forth to meet the horseman. "I am come" says the horseman "from Finnabair to meet thee that thou come to speak with the maiden." Thereupon Rochad goes alone to converse with her. The army surrounds him on all sides; he is seized and hands are laid on him; his followers are routed and driven in flight. Afterwards he is set free and bound over not to oppose Ailill's host till the time he will come with all the warriors of Ulster. Also they promise to give Finnabair to him.

Rochad son of Fathemon accepted the offer and thereupon he left them and that night the damsel slept with him.

An Underking of Munster that was in the camp heard the tale. He went to his people to speak of it. "Yonder maiden was plighted to me on fifteen hostages once long ago" said he; "and it is for this I have now come on this hosting." Now

wherever it happened that the seven Underkings of Munster were, what they all said was that it was for this they were come.

“Yonder maiden was pledged to each of us in the bargain as our sole wife, to the end that we should take part in this warfare.” They all declared that that was the price and condition on which they had come on the hosting. “Why” said they “what better counsel could we take? Should we not go to avenge our wife and our honour on the Manè the sons of Ailill who are watching and guarding the rear of the army at Imlech in Glendamrach (‘Kettle Glen’s Navel’)?”

This was the course they resolved upon. And with their seven divisions of thirty hundreds they arose, each man of them to attack the Manè. When Ailill heard that, he arose with a start with ready shield against them and thirty hundred after them. Medb arose with her thirty hundred. The sons of Maga with theirs and the Leinstermen and the Munstermen and the people of Tara.

Then arose Fergus with his thirty hundred to intervene between them, and that was a hand for that mighty work. And a mediation was made between them so that each of them sat down near the other and hard by his arms. Howbeit before the intervention took place, eight hundred very valiant warriors of them had fallen in the slaughter of Glenn Domain (‘Deep Glen’).

Finnabair, daughter of Ailill and Medb, had tidings that so great a number of the men of Erin had fallen for her sake and on account of her. And her heart broke in her breast even as a nut, through shame and disgrace, so that Finnabair Slebè (‘Finnabair of the Mount’) is the name of the place where she fell, died and was buried.

Then said the men of Erin “White is this battle” said they “for Rochad son of Fathemon, in that eight hundred exceeding brave warriors fell for his sake and on his account, and he himself goes safe and whole to his country and land without bloodshedding or reddening on him.” Hence this is the ‘White Fight’ of Rochad.

XXIII^D HERE FOLLOWETH ILIACH'S CLUMP FIGHT

Then came to them Iliach son of Cass son of Bacc son of Ross Ruad son of Rudraige. He was at that time an old man cared for by his son's son, namely by Loegaire Buadach ('the Victorious') in Rath Imbil in the north. It was told him that the four grand provinces of Erin even then laid waste and invaded the lands of Ulster and of the Picts and of Cualnge from Monday at Summer's end till the beginning of Spring, and were carrying off their women and their cows and their children, their flocks, their herds and their cattle, their oxen and their kine and their droves, their steeds and their horses. He then conceived a plan in his mind and he made perfect his plan privily with his people. "What counsel were better for me to make than to go and attack the men of Erin and to use my strength on them and have my boast and victory over them, and thus avenge the honour of Ulster. And I care not though I should fall myself there thereafter."

And this is the counsel he followed. His two withered, mangy, sorrel nags that were upon the strand hard by the fort were led to him. And to them was fastened his ancient, worn out chariot. Thus he mounted his chariot, without either covers or cushions; a hurdle of wattles around it. His big, rough, pale grey shield of iron he carried upon him, with its rim of hard silver around it. He wore his rough, grey hilted, huge smiting sword at his left side. He placed his two rickety-headed, nicked, blunt, rusted spears by his side in the chariot. His folk furnished his chariot around him with cobbles and boulders and huge clumps, so that it was full up.

In such wise he fared forth to assail the men of Erin. And thus he came, stark naked, and the spittle from his gaping mouth trickling down through the chariot under him. When the men of Erin saw him thus, they began to mock and deride him. "Truly it would be well for us" said the men of Erin, "if this were the manner in which all the Ulstermen came to us on the plain."

Dochè son of Maga met him and bade him welcome. "Welcome is thy coming, O Iliach" spake Dochè son of Maga.

"Who bids me welcome?" asked Iliach.

"A comrade and friend of Loegaire Buadach am I, namely Dochè macMagach."

"Truly spoken I esteem that welcome," answered Iliach; "but do thou for the sake of that welcome come to me when now, alas, my deeds of arms will be over and my warlike vigour will have vanished, when I will have spent my rage upon the hosts, so that thou be the one to cut off my head and none other of the men of Erin. However, my sword shall remain with thee for thine own friend, even for Loegaire Buadach!"

He assailed the men of Erin with his weapons till he had made an end of them. And when weapons failed he assailed the men of Erin with cobbles and boulders and huge clumps of earth till he had used them up. And when these

weapons failed him he spent his rage on the man that was nearest him of the men of Erin, and bruised him grievously between his forearms and his sides and the palms of his hands, till he made a marrow mass of him, of flesh and bones and sinews and skin. Hence in memory thereof, these two masses of marrow still live on side by side, the marrow mass that Cuchulain made of the bones of the Ulstermen's cattle for the healing of Cethern son of Fintan, and the marrow mass that Iliach made of the bones of the men of Erin. Wherefore this was one of the three innumerable things of the Táin, the number of them that fell at the hands of Iliach. So that this is the 'Clump Fight' of Iliach. It is for this reason it is called the 'Clump Fight' of Iliach, because with cobbles and boulders and massy clumps he made his fight.

Thereafter Dochè son of Maga met him. "Is not this Iliach?" asked Dochè son of Maga. "It is truly I" Iliach gave answer; "and come to me now and cut off my head and let my sword remain with thee for thy friend, for Loegaire Buadach ('the Victorious')."

Dochè came near him and gave him a blow with the sword so that he severed his head, and he took with him the head and the spoils vauntingly to where were Ailill and Medb. Thus to this point, the 'Clump Fight' of Iliach.

XXIII^E HERE NOW THE DEERSTALKING OF AMARGIN IN TALTIU

This Amargin was the son of Cass who was son of Bacc who was son of Ross Ruad ('the Red') who was son of Rudraige, father of Conall Cernach ('the Triumphant'). He came upon the warriors going over Taltiu westward, and he made them turn before him over Taltiu northwards. And he put his left elbow under him in Taltiu. And his people furnished him with rocks and boulders and great clumps of earth, and he began to pelt the men of Erin till the end of three days and three nights, and he did great slaughter among them so that no man could show his face to him in Taltiu.

XXIII^F THE ADVENTURES OF CUROI SON OF DARÈ FOLLOW NOW

He was told that a single man was checking and stopping four of the five grand provinces of Erin during the three months of winter from Monday at Summer's end till the beginning of Spring. And he felt it unworthy of himself and he deemed it too long that his people were without him. And it was then he set out to the host to fight and contend with Cuchulain. And when he was come to the place where Cuchulain was, he saw Cuchulain there moaning, full of wounds and pierced through with holes, and he felt it would not be honourable nor fair to fight and contend with him after the combat with Ferdiad. Because it would be said it was not that Cuchulain died of the sores and wounds which he would give him so much as of the wounds which Ferdiad had inflicted on him in the conflict before. Be that as it might, Cuchulain offered to engage with him in battle and combat.

Thereupon Curoi set forth for to seek the men of Erin and, when he was near at hand, he espied Amargin there and his left elbow under him to the west of Taltiu. Curoi reached the men of Erin from the north. His people equipped him with rocks and boulders and great clumps, and he began to hurl them right over against Amargin, so that Badb's battle stones collided in the clouds and in the air high above them, and every rock of them was shivered into an hundred stones. "By the truth of thy valour, O Curoi" cried Medb "desist from thy throwing, for no real succour nor help comes to us therefrom, but ill is the succour and help that thence come to us."

"I pledge my word" cried Curoi "I will not cease till the very day of doom and of life, till first Amargin cease!"

"I will cease" said Amargin; "and do thou engage that thou wilt no more come to succour or give aid to the men of Erin." Curoi consented to that and went his way to return to his land and people.

About this time the hosts went past Taltiu westwards. "It is not this was enjoined upon me" quoth Amargin: "never again to cast at the hosts but rather that I should part from them." And he went to the west of them and he turned them before him northeastwards past Taltiu. And he began to pelt them for a long while and time so that he slaughtered more of them than can be numbered. This is one of the three incalculable things on the Táin, the number of those he slew. And his son Conall Cernach ('the Victorious') remained with him providing him with stones and spears. Then it was also that the men of Erin said it would be no disgrace for Amargin to leave the camp and quarters, and that the hosts would retire a day's march back to the north again, there to stop and stay, and for him to quit his feats of arms upon the hosts until such time as he would meet them on the day of the great battle when the four grand provinces of Erin would encounter at Garech and Ilgarech in the battle of the Raid for the Kine of Cualnge. Amargin accepted that offer, and the hosts proceeded a day's march back to the northwards again. Wherefore the 'Deerstalking' of Amargin in Taltiu is the name of this tale.