

The Pursuit of Gruaidh Ghriansholus.

Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus

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I.— *The Manuscript.*

This story of the “ Pursuit of Gruaidh Ghriansholus, daughter of the King of Antioch,” is taken from a paper MS., H.5.28 (fo. 61a—fo. 111b.) in Trinity College, Dublin. O’Donovan in his Grammar (Introduction, p. lxxxviii.) makes some reference to this MS., which he calls “ the Irish MS. transcribed in Ulster in 1679, quoted as authority for the Ulster dialect of that period.” It had previously been in his own possession, and had been presented by him to the Library of Trinity College, Dublin.

The other contents of the MS. consist of prose romances (the Madra Maol, Bruidhean Eochaidh Bhig Dheirg, Eachtra Melóra agus Orlando, The Vision of Merlino, etc.), and some poems, mostly in the classical metres, by such writers as Fearflatha Ó Gnímh, Eochaidh Ó hEoghusa, etc. It is dated 1679 in various colophons, *e.g.* to the first story, *Ballán Chonghail*, “ 5, July, 1679” ; to *An Madra Maol*, “ 2, August, 1679” ; and to the present tale, “ 20, September, 1679.”

O’Donovan seems to have made a curious mistake with regard to this MS. In MS. H.5.27 he has a note on this “ MS. transcribed in Ulster in 1679.” “ On looking over some papers in the hand-writing of Edward O’Reilly, I found the following memorandum, written in bad Irish, which appears to me to prove that he bought the MS. (H.5.28) from John Clery, which the latter denies.” In the memorandum referred to, O’Reilly says : “ This little book was written by Michael O’Clery or one of his co-labourers (for I know the handwriting) in the house of the friars of St. Francis at Donegal, for it was from a man of the race of this friar O’Clery’s family that I bought the book for a pound and a half of money.”

There seems, however, nothing to justify O’Donovan’s assumption that the book referred to in this memorandum was the MS. H.5.28. It is impossible that O’Reilly should have thought it written by O’Clery, seeing that the date of the MS., 1679, occurs in several places. I think it very probable that O’Reilly was merely referring to the “ Life of Hugh Roe” (now in R.I.A.).

Indeed in this same note in H.5.27, O’Donovan goes on to say that “ John O’Clery brought three other books with him to this city and sold them. Edward O’Reilly bought one of them, viz., the life of O’Donnell, chief of Donegal ; and William Monk Mason bought the two other books.”

I think it at least a possible conjecture that H.5.28 was written by Eoghan Ó Donnghaile, an East Ulster poet of the late seventeenth century. Among the paper MSS. in Trinity College, Dublin, "being transcripts of ancient vellum books," O'Curry refers to "a volume written, about the year 1690, by Owen O'Donnelly (an excellent Gaedhlic scholar)" (O'Curry, *MSS. Materials*, p. 195). It is difficult to identify the MS. O'Curry had in mind, but it seems not unlikely that he was referring to the present MS. Two poems in the MS. (viz., fo. 127b, "*Áluinn dún Mic Muire*," fo. 162a, "*Tuirseach dhamh ag éirghe lae*") are definitely ascribed to this "Eoghan Ó Donnghaile." Though this fact, of course, proves nothing as to the scribe, yet it is of interest in connection with the theory that the scribe was Eoghan Ó Donnghaile himself. That the MS. (like the poet in question) is an East Ulster one, is nearly certain.

II.— *Outline of the Tale.*

The tale is of the knight-errant type of story which relates the adventures of the hero on land and sea. It is akin in spirit to the tale of Conall Gulban, so popular in Gaelic written and oral literature. It will be well to give here a brief outline of the story :

While Cúchulainn is alone and unarmed at Dundalk, he sees a fair damsel landing from a *curach*. She proves to be Gruaidh Ghriansholus, daughter of the King of Antioch, fleeing from a terrible giant, Garuidh Garbhghlúineach, son of Rí na bhFear Morc. She has wandered over the world pursued by this giant, seeking some hero to deliver her from him, and eventually, hearing of Cúchulainn's prowess, she comes to seek his aid. At this juncture, the giant himself arrives, disposes of the unarmed Cúchulainn with a mighty kick, and carries off the maiden. Then begins the tale of Cúchulainn's pursuit. Accompanied only by his faithful charioteer, Laoi mac Riaghabhra, he wanders through various lands, Almayne, Morocco, Sicily, Africa, to avenge the insult on Garuidh and to rescue the maiden. He is involved in many adventures, and disentangles the complicated love affairs of two unhappy couples. Finally he slays Garuidh, his still more terrible brother, and his father, and receives the homage of all whom he has aided against these enemies.

III.— *Parallels.*

Many parallels to the central incident of this tale, that of a maiden from overseas appealing to an Irish hero to rescue her from a dreadful giant, are to be found in Irish literature. It is a common theme of the Fianna tales and ballads.

In *Cath Chnuic an Áir* (Ossianic Society, vol. iv., pp. 64ff) a maiden, Niamh Nuadhchrothach, daughter of the King of Greece, comes to solicit the help of the Fianna. Her pursuer, Tailc mac Tréoin, King of the Catheads, comes after her. The Fianna give him combat, and not until he has slain many hundreds of the Fianna is he finally overcome by Oscar. The *dénouement* in this tale is the death of Niamh from shame and remorse at the sight of the carnage.

In the ballad of *Eas Ruadh* (J. G. Campbell, *The Fianna*, pp. 87ff.), we get a similar theme. Here a damsel, the daughter of Rí fo Thuinn, comes in a coracle seeking the succour of Fionn and the Fianna. She tells that she is fleeing from the advances of Baoighre Borb, son of the King of Sorcha. He comes in pursuit of her on a horse, and the Fianna valiantly fight and conquer him. The princess remained with Fionn a year and a day. Another version of this same ballad is to be found in the Dean of Lismore's collection.

Still another variant occurs in the Bébind episode in *Agallamh na Seanórach* (Silva Gadelica, pp. 210 ff) Bébind is the daughter of the King of Maidens' Land in the West. Thrice she has been given to the son of the King of the Land of Men, and thrice has run away. Now she comes to place herself under the protection of Fionn. While the Fianna are giving her hospitality, her husband comes in pursuit and slays her. He is pursued by the bravest and

fleetest of the Fianna but escapes wounded by a spear-cast of Caoilte. The Fianna beheld the last of him as he entered a great galley with two rowers that bore him out of the West and went off no man knew whither.

Eachtra Chloinne Rígh na h-Ioruaidhe (Irish Texts Society, i.), which I shall have occasion to compare with the present tale in greater detail later, shows a somewhat similar motif. In this story, a strange lady lands from a ship and lays the three brothers Cod, Cead and Míthead, under *geasa* to seek her. The object in this case is the disenchantment of the maiden.

This last tale, which shows no trace of the pursuing warrior, suggests that the present tale is an expansion of the older theme of some distressed lady appealing for help of some sort to recognised champions, a theme which we can trace back to the mythic “otherworld” tales of Irish literature. [1] Such a tale as that of *Serglige Chonculainn* (Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i., 197-227), affords us a good instance of the hero’s visit to the otherworld to aid a supernatural lady. This tale tells how Liban, the wife of Labraid, comes to Ireland inviting Cúchulainn to the otherworld to overcome the enemies of Labraid. Cúchulainn accompanied by Laeg, goes to the Plain of Delight, an island to which they cross in a boat of bronze, and gives Labraid the desired help. [2]

In one of the many forms of the hero’s visit to the otherworld, the object is the release of maidens held captive by an evil power. This old myth is the origin of such themes as that of the magic castle and the imprisoned damsels in the Arthurian legends (*Conte del Graal*, *Diu Crone*), and of the folk-tale of the Sleeping Beauty type. The old myth itself figures prominently in the hero-tales of the Teutonic race (*Lay of Skirni*, *Lay of Swipday and Menglad*, *Saga of Sigurd and Brunhild*).

With this theme, that of a lady from the oversea otherworld coming to invite the hero there, often because she needs his help, we may also compare the “Andromeda theme,” where a maiden about to be carried off by a giant is rescued by the hero. [3] The latter is one of the most widely-spread *märchen*-incidents as well as one of the oldest, at all events among races of Aryan speech. An example of the Andromeda theme is found in the Irish tale of *Tochmarc Emire* (Hull, *The Cuchullin Saga*, p. 81). Cúchulainn finds Dervorgil, the daughter of Ruadh, lamenting bitterly. She is to be given to the Fomori as tribute. Cúchulainn slays three Fomori in single combat, and the grateful father offers the maiden in marriage to Cúchulainn who, however, refuses her. A similar motif occurs in *Giolla an Fhiugha* (Irish Texts Society, i.), where Murrough, the hero, slays a giant who is about to carry off the daughter of the King of Under-Wave Land. [4]

We may take it, then, that the incident which forms the staple of such tales as *Cath Chnuic an Air*, *Eas Ruadh*, and *Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus*, is a development of the fusion of these two older themes, viz., (1) the hero’s visit to the otherworld and (2) the Andromeda myth.

Looked at from another angle, the present tale is an account of the avenging of an insult which has been offered to Cúchulainn by Garuidh. *Mo chéile comhraic uaim-si—Gus an uair si riadh ní dheacha—’Eimhir an chrotha nuadh-ghil—Do bhris, mo nuar ! mo gheasa* (fo. 67b). And Laoi, in suggesting the expedition to his master, says : *Sírfe sinne gach rann nó go bhfagham an Garuidh Garbhghluíneach sin agus go ndíogheola tusa h’anfhorlann air* (fo. 68a).

“It is a *lieu commun* of Celtic folk-tales,” says Nutt in his *Studies in the Legend of the Holy Grail* (p. 155), “that, as a king is sitting at meat, an enemy comes in mounted and offers him an insult the avenging of which forms the staple of the tale.” A good instance of this may be found in Campbell’s “Knight of the Red Shield” (West Highland Tales, lii.), of which

many variants are found in Irish and Scotch-Gaelic folklore. With the Gaelic tale we may compare the Welsh story of Peredur, in reference to which Nutt makes the above remark.

IV.— *Folk Tale Elements.*

Of real folk-tale elements there are few in the tale. The story of the distressed maiden is, indeed, little more than a peg on which to hang an account of Cúchulainn's feats and prowess. In the "in-tale," the daughter of the King of Africa, is changed into a fiery dragon by her rival Beróna, daughter of the King of Crete, and is destined to remain in that shape until a certain warrior from *Críoch na bhFuineadhach* forces three kisses from her. Obviously this is a variant of the folk-tale of the Sleeping Beauty—a maiden sunk in a death-in-life sleep until she be awakened by the kiss of the destined prince. [5]

Many minor incidents have their counterpart in Gaelic folklore. Such, for instance, are the head-crowned spikes. Heads seem to play as large a part in the older Irish sagas as scalps do in Red Indian stories (cp. O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, i., cccxxviii ff.) Examples of this motif have been collected by Schofield (*Harvard Studies and Notes*, iv., 175 ff.) ; a long list of examples from Irish tales is given by A. C. L. Brown (*Harvard Studies and Notes*, viii., 137n).

V.— *Classical Borrowings.*

Giants invulnerable save in one spot are commonplace in Gaelic folklore. The best known example of this is found in the Irish tale of *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmuda agus Ghráinne*. In the present tale, however, this feature would seem to be a reminiscence of the Greek tale. Garuidh's brother, Fearghus Fiodhfhoda, was thrice dipped by his mother, immediately after birth, *a bhfódhomhain shrotha Stix*, and henceforth remained invulnerable save on the tip of his nose which was not reached by the water. How this feature alone escaped immersion remains unexplained. We are probably to assume that he was held by it while undergoing the process ! This is, undoubtedly, a borrowing direct from the classics. According to post-Homeric legends, Thetis, the mother of Achilles, dipped the child in the waters of the river Styx, by which his whole body became invulnerable except that part of his heel by which she held him, whence the proverbial heel of Achilles. With this may be compared the similar story told of the Northern hero, Sigurd.

Neachtain Uathmhar, the foster-father of Garuidh, is described as *mac na Talmhna* and said to have been generated as *innighibh na talmhan* (fo. 63a). If, when wounded, he falls to the ground, his strength is immediately restored to him by his mother, the Earth. In his encounter with Cúchulainn, the latter by feigning to flee before the giant gets him into the water and there slays him with the *ga bulga*. The Greek tale tells how Hercules, in search of the Golden Apples of the Hesperides, met in Libya the giant Antaios son of Gaia (the earth). Hercules overcame him by lifting him in the air and strangling him. In this connection it is interesting to note the story of Hercules and Antaeus (*Anteón mac Tærre*) in an Irish poem (ca. 1695), edited from a Copenhagen manuscript by Stern (*Zeit. f. Celt. Phil.*, ii., 362).

It might be possible to trace other classical parallels such as that of the oak-armed Cuirrín Craoisfhiachlach and the cannibalistic habits of Neachtain Uathmhar (fo. 63b) with the Cyclops. But these are features to be found also in many other native tales.

VI.— *Comparison with Eachtra Chloinne Rígh na h-Ioruaidhe.*

The story of *Eachtra Chloinne Rígh na h-Ioruaidhe* has many points in common with the present tale and many remarkable parallels in place and personal names, etc. That the tale was well known to the writer of *Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus* is not to be doubted for a moment. [6]

In the former tale the three brothers Cod, Ceada and Míthead are out hunting when they behold a bark “with many and variegated sails” coming to land. A fair maiden disembarks, puts the brothers under *geasa* to seek her “in the three divisions of the world,” and then sails away again. Whereupon the three brothers are “distorted” and saddened (*op. cit.* pp. 50-54).

(The opening bears much resemblance to that of the present tale. Even the manner in which the three brothers are affected may be compared with Cúchulainn’s wrath and distortion).

The brothers refuse their father’s offer of a fleet to aid them in their quest, for *ba móide alla agus oirdhearcas duinn gan do bheith linn acht sinn féin amháin* (*ib.* pp. 54-56).

(With this incident compare Cúchulainn’s refusing to take Conall, Fearghus or Laoghaire Buadhach with him, *is eadh adubhairt, dá éirgheadh ágh nó iorghail leis gurb’ air fein ba mhaith leis a h-alla agus a h-árdnos do bheith*, 70a).

The brothers in the course of their wanderings find all alone in a castle, a maiden, step-sister of the heroine, who had been carried off from the midst of an assembly in her father’s court by a hideous black giant (*fomhór*). Cod slays the giant and rescues the maiden (*ib.* pp. 64-70).

(In substance this is the story of Gruaidh Ghriansholus).

Later the brothers encounter An Macaomh Mór, mac Rígh na Sorcha, who had a grudge against them, their father having slain his in the battle of Cathair an tSrotha Dheirg (*ib.* 72-74).

(With this incident we may compare Cúchulainn’s meeting with Ciabhán Cúilfhionn, mac Rígh na h-Almáine, who purposed to go to Ireland to avenge his uncle’s death on Conall Cearnach).

Béthaine, a hideous hag, tells Cod her story. She was the only daughter of the King of Sorcha, and at a great gathering in her father’s court, a warrior came demanding the hand of the princess or combat on her behalf. He slew all who went against him, and the daughter escaped by enshrouding herself in a magic mist (*ib.* pp. 102-108).

(This story, again, is somewhat similar to that told Cuchulainn by the daughter of the King of Antioch).

Grian Ghnúis-sholas, daughter of the King of the Forest of Wonders, tells Cod the story of her lover Ciabhán Glúngheal, son of the King of Birds (*var. lec.* of Antioch), and of her rival, the daughter of the King of Greece, who enchanted Ciabhán and transformed him into a hawk. Cod unspells the enchanted lover (*ib.* pp. 114-120).

(This affords a remarkable parallel to the story of the daughter of the King of Africa, lady-love of Buinne Buadhchleasach, son of the King of Antioch, enchanted by her rival, Beróna, in the present tale. Here too the hero unspells the lover).

In names and epithets the similarity between the two tales is very striking. We get (pp. 160 and 176) a description of Cathair an tSrotha Dheirg which plays such an important part in *Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus*. Cod’s two brothers are bound and fettered there, and he goes to their rescue. The name Cathair na dTri mBeann occurs (p. 176). Finally I may note in *Eachtra Chloinn Rígh na h-Ioruaidhe*, (p. 162), a description of the boat of Buinne Borbthréan which tallies closely with that of Cúchulainn’s Breac-bhairc in the present tale.

Both vessels are said to have been made from the remains of the Ark (*agus d'fhuigheall na h-airce féin í*), both possess many magical properties.

VII.— *A Modern Folk-version.*

In 1906 Mr. J. H. Lloyd published a folk-tale called *Sgéal Chúchulainn ag Cuan Cárn*, “sean-sgéal Conallach, ó bhéalaithris Phódraig uí Bheirn ar Mhín na Gualainne i nGleann Fhinne i dTír Chonaill.” (*G. L. Leabhairíní Gaedhilge le h-aghaidh an tSluaigh*, xxv.) [7] This tale is none other than an oral version of *Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus*. Like much of what passes for simple folklore, it reached the people from literary sources. The MSS. transcribed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were read aloud by the scribe or the local schoolmaster by the fireside in winter evenings. Those among the audience, which was for the most part illiterate, who possessed retentive memories retold these tales again and again, often considerably modifying them and corrupting the personal and place names to a great extent.

For purposes of comparison with the folk-tale, it may be well to give here a detailed summary of the MS. tale, together with the folk-version of corresponding incidents.

Folk-Tale.

- 1.— Cúchulainn at Cuan Cárn, unarmed save for a holly-spit, awaits the arrival of Laoghaire. A fair damsel lands in a little skiff, and tells Cúchulainn her tale. (1).
2. — She is the daughter of Rí na h-Antoile, fleeing from a hideous giant, An Cítheach Árd mac Ríogh na bhFear Borb, and seeking help of the renowned Cúchulainn. (2).
3. — Before Cúchulainn can disclose his identity, the giant follows in pursuit. He kicks Cúchulainn and carries off the maiden. Cúchulainn casts after him his sole remaining holly-spit and breaks three of the giant's ribs. The giant responds with a mocking speech. (3-4).
4. — Cúchulainn rages through the land. He returns home and takes to his bed vowing never to rise again. Laoghaire persuades him to pursue the giant. (5-6).
5. — Cúchulainn and Laoghaire set sail in the Breac-Mharcach. They land in an unknown country and find a large palace. The king of this castle has collected a large army to go to Ireland to avenge on Conall Cearnach the deaths of his father and grand-father. (7-8).
6. — Ambassadors come from the King to take Cúchulainn and Laoghaire prisoners. Laoghaire deals with them while Cúchulainn sleeps. Finally they rout the whole army and take the King prisoner. (9-17).
7. — The King tells Cúchulainn of his daughter who has been enchanted by a giant, and now lies, in the form of a monster, at the bottom of a lake, until the spell shall be broken by a warrior who dives and kisses her thrice. Cúchulainn unspells the maiden and slays the giant (10-24).
8. — The King endeavours to dissuade Cúchulainn from his quest by telling him of the two brothers of An Cítheach Árd, viz., Garuidh Garbh-ghlúnach mac Ríogh na bhFear Borb and an Dragún Teinntidhe mac Ríogh na bhFear Borb. Cúchulainn challenges the first of the trio. All three have bodies which are invulnerable except in one spot. Cúchulainn is grievously wounded and asks Laoghaire to cut off his head. (25-29).

9. — He is cured by one Fuidí Faidí from Ireland, who gives him information concerning the vulnerable spots of the giants, and promises that he and the Tuatha Té Danann will assist Cúchulainn in the encounters. Cúchulainn with this aid slays two of the giants, viz., Garuidh and an Dragún Teinntidhe. (30-36).

10. — Cúchulainn then goes in search of An Cítheach Árd. He finds the lady who had sought his aid at Cuan Cárn lamenting and bewailing her fate. The giant is about to take possession of her. Cúchulainn encounters and slays the giant. He restores the lady to her first love in her father's court. (36-42).

MS. Tale.

1. — Cúchulainn at Dundalk, unarmed save with a holly-spit, awaits the arrival of Laoi with his arms. He sees a boat coming to land from which disembarks a lady who tells Cúchulainn her tale of woe. (61a-62a).

2. — She is the daughter of Rí na h-Antuaithe fleeing from a hideous giant, Garuidh Garbhghlúineach mac Rígh na bhFear Morc, and seeking help of the renowned Cúchulainn. (62b-65a).

3. — Before Cúchulainn can disclose his identity, the giant lands in pursuit. He kicks Cúchulainn, and bears off the maiden. (65a-65b).

4. — Cúchulainn is distorted with anger, and rages through the land. Eimhear plans a device to restore him to his senses. He is reconciled to Laoi, and persuaded by him to follow in pursuit of the giant. (65b-71a).

5. — Cúchulainn and Laoi set sail in the Breac-Bháirc. They land on a pleasant island and find a large army encamped there under Ciabhán Cúilfhionn mac Rígh na h-Almáine, who intends to invade Ireland to avenge his uncle's death on Conall Cearnach. (71a-72a).

6. — Ambassadors come from the camp to take Cúchulainn and Laoi prisoners. They are routed and slain by Laoi who is guarding the tent while Cúchulainn sleeps. Finally Cúchulainn counters Ciabhán. The latter submits and does homage. (72b-81a).

7. — Occurs in MS. tale between 9 and 10).

8. — Cúchulainn tells of his quest in the court of the King of Almayne. The King endeavours to dissuade him by painting Garuidh's brother, Fearghus Fiodhfhoda, in still blacker colours. Cúchulainn goes to Sicily where he slays the seven giants of Fearghus. Then he encounters Fearghus who is vulnerable in but one spot. He is grievously wounded by Fearghus, and at the evening truce, asks Laoi to behead him to avoid the disgrace of falling by Fearghus. (81a-87a).

9. — In this evil plight he is succoured by Finghín Fáithliagh and his friends from Faery. Next day he slays Fearghus with the Ga Bulga. (87a-92b).

7. — Thence he goes to Morocco where he slaughters the Blacks and the Catheads. Thence to Africa where he unspells Carthann Cúilfhionn, daughter of the King of Africa, transformed into a dragon by the jealousy of her rival, Beróna. (92b-98b).

10. — Thence Cúchulainn goes to Antioch where he finds the heroine of the tale weeping over the blood-stained accoutrements of her brother, wounded by Garuidh. Cúchulainn tells her who he is. He slays Garuidh after a fierce struggle. He retraces all his steps, reuniting three love-crossed couples, and finally returns in triumph to Ireland. (98b-IIIb).

1.— In all essentials the folk-tale is in agreement with the MS. tale. Cuan Cam is a corruption of Cuan Carlinn (MS. fo. 65b). Lloyd's suggestion, viz., that it stands for Traigh an Chairn, also called Traigh na dTreinfhear, at Dundrum, Co. Down, is seen to be incorrect.

2.— Ri na h-Antoile is a corruption of Ri na h-Antuaithe as Lloyd notes. The name “An Citheach (Ard)” is a common one for giants in Gaelic folklore.

3. — Here we get an incident in the folk-tale which has probably been omitted from the MS. In the MS. tale, Cúchulainn is armed with a handful of holly-spits. He casts all at birds, save one which he retains. (*Gur chaith na bear a cuilinn uile acht aon bhior amháin* (61b), and again (62a) *agus gan d'arm no-d'iolfhaobhar aige acht aon bhear cinngheár cuilinn*). No further reference is made to this remaining holly-spit. In the folk-tale, on the other hand, there is no such omission ; Cúchulainn has one holly-spit and this he casts at the giant as the latter carries off the maiden, wounding him with it (pp.4,21). The folk-tale here preserves an incident which in all probability formed part of the tale when it was first composed, although not found in the only extant MS.

4. — The folk-tale account of Cúchulainn's rage in which he tears off his clothes and returns home naked, seems a confused reminiscence of the device by which Eimhear restored the hero to his senses.

5. — The name of Cúchulainn's ship, the Breac-bháirc, has been corrupted into the Breac-Mharcach.

7. — Here the simplification of the complexities of the MS. tale is apparent. Ciabhán Cúilfhionn mac Rígh na h-Almáine, Rí na h-Almáine, and Rí na h-Aifrice have but one representative in the folk-tale under the vague designation of *an rí*. The jealous rival Beróna becomes a rejected lover, a giant. The fiery dragon is a monster at the bottom of a lake.

8. — The three brother giants, possessing the Achilles invulnerability in common, take in the folk-tale the place of the MS. Garuidh, his brother Fearghus, and his tutor Neachtain Uathmhar. In the MS. tale, Fearghus alone possessed the Achilles trait ; the villain of the piece, Garuidh, is killed after a great struggle, but is by no means invulnerable. But it is noteworthy that the folk-tale is here inconsistent. In the opening of the tale, Cúchulainn is made to wound this Achilles in the side by a cast of a holly-spit. Perhaps it was the instinct for triads which tempted the narrator to extend this characteristic invulnerability to two brother giants.

9. — Fuidí Faidí is a corruption of Finghín Fáithliagh. He cures Cúchulainn at once by means of a magic herb. Then he proceeds to give Cúchulainn some useful information concerning his opponents. One would expect something similar in the MS. tale. I am inclined to think that, in another version, we should find Finghín Fáithliagh disclosing the vulnerable spot of Fearghus to Cúchulainn. As the MS. reads, we are left to infer that the Ga Bulga, by virtue of its magic properties, was able to pick out this spot. The folk-tale incident of the Tuatha Dé Danann beating down the giants with whips as they rose above Cúchulainn to kill him does not occur in the MS.

10. — It is interesting to note here an incident which impressed itself on the folk-mind. Cúchulainn casts a huge stone at the giant and hits him. The giant throws back the same stone at Cúchulainn, but the latter cleverly intercepts it and catches it in his sling. The incident is identical in both folk and MS. version.

The intricate plot of the MS. tale has been considerably simplified in the folk-tale. The bewildering love affairs which Cúchulainn undertakes to smoothen out are altogether discarded. In the MS. version, Cúchulainn travels successively to Almayne, Sicily, Morocco,

Africa and Antioch. In the folk-tale, he and Laoghaire land in *an áit nach rabh siad ariamh aroimhe*, and end their adventures by restoring the maiden to her father, Rí na h-Antoile, *ins an Domhan Thoir*. The lack of a love motive in Cúchulainn's adventures is emphasised in both tales. When the grateful King wishes to bestow on Cúchulainn the hand of his unspelled daughter, the hero politely says : *Go rabh céad maith agat. Níor chuir mé buaidhreadh mná orm ariamh. 'Sé an obair atá agam troid le fathaigh, seasamh ceart do bhaint-reachaibh agus do dhíleachtaibh.*

VIII. —*The Author's Learning.*

One of the most striking things about the MS. story and one which proves it to be a conscious literary production on which the folk-tale recorded by Lloyd was based, is the accuracy of names, the account of Cúchulainn's feats, weapons, etc., the many parallels, and even verbal resemblances, to passages in the older Cúchulainn literature which are to be found in it. The author, whoever he was, was evidently well versed in the Cúchulainn saga, and at the same time not unacquainted with Greek and Roman classical tales, and with Irish stories of the Fianna cycle. Whilst preserving the spirit and colouring of the old mythico-heroic Ulster tales, he has, as we have seen, borrowed skilfully from already-existing stores of literature and folklore.

In the notes appended to the text I shall call attention to the minor points which are probably borrowings from, or reminiscences of, the older literature. One or two such may be instanced here. In the passage 87bff. Finghín Fáithliagh is fetched from Sliabh Fuaid by the Tuatha Dé Danann to heal Cúchulainn. In the passage in the *Táin Bo Cuailgne*, headed *Fuli Cethirn* (ed. Wind. 4289ff.) Cúchulainn sends Laeg to Sliabh Fuaid to fetch Finghín Fáithliagh to cure the wounds of Cethern. Cethern asks the physician to examine his wounds : *Fega latt dam in fuil-seo dana, a mo phopa Fhingín*. Fingín gives a description of those who inflicted the wounds as he examines him. Compare the passage in the present tale, fo. 89a. Again, fo. 88a, there is a modernised paraphrase of the encounter with Fear Dia. In the *Táin* (ed. Wind. 3837ff.) Dolb and Indolb, *a sidh chairdi*, come to the aid of Cúchulainn at the Ford against Ferdiad, who kills both of them (ib. 3850-60) and the Morrigan entwines herself in the form of an eel about the feet of Cúchulainn in order to aid his opponent. [8]

IX.— *The Cúchulainn Cycle in its later phases.*

Almost every story about Cúchulainn is contained, or alluded to, in our two oldest secular MSS., *Leabhar na hUidhre* transcribed before 1104, and the Book of Leinster transcribed before 1154, both of them avowedly transcripts of, or compilations from, older MSS. Ossianic texts in these early MSS. are accorded a very small space in comparison with that assigned to the Ulster cycle of Cúchulainn and Conchobhar. But, turning to MSS. compiled from the twelfth century on, we note a remarkable change. The proportion of Ossianic literature increases steadily whilst the heroic Northern tales fall into the background, so that much of modern Irish prose literature is of Ossianic or pseudo-Ossianic nature. A discussion of the various theories which have been put forward to justify this popularity of the Fianna story-cycle on historical and racial grounds does not bear on the present tale. All I need say is that eventually the Fianna cycle did displace, for the most part, the heroic Northern saga, whether this was due to the eleventh century usurpation of the Hy Neill Kingship by Brian of the Dal gCais [9] or whether the Fianna cycle, being the hero tales of a subject population, needed some centuries of racial amalgamation to elapse before it could be received into the official corpus of Irish story-telling. [10]

Nevertheless the Cúchulainn stories did continue to be copied into modern MSS. But only a certain number retained this popularity. The story of the *Táin* occurs in a fair number of eighteenth and nineteenth century MSS., but the language of the old tale, based as it was on a still earlier Old-Irish prototype, tended to discourage the scribes, as it certainly led to

corrupt-ions of language and of meaning. More popular than the *Táin* were the *Brisleach Mhór Mhuighe Muirtheimhne*, the account of Cúchulainn's death, and its sequel *Dearg-Ruathar Chonaill Chearnaigh* ; *Oileamhain Chúchulainn* giving the hero's training in valour, and its sequel *Oidheadh Chonlaoidh*. Strange that these episodes, the early life and the death of *heros fortissimus Scotorum*, should have proved popular in place of that which was his great-est exploit, his single-handed defence of the Ulster marches against the men of Erin ! *Oidheadh Chloinne Uisneach*, which belongs to the Cúchulainn cycle though it has no direct reference to Cuchulainn, is perhaps the most popular of all and in this respect will bear comparison with any tale in the Fianna cycle.

But to mention only those which have survived is to run the risk of losing sight of the fact that very many of the Cúchulainn cycle of tales have disappeared from modern Irish literature. The Boyish Exploits of Cúchulainn, the Feast of Bricriu, the Sickbed of Cúchulainn, the Wooing of Eimhear, all the " Wooings " in fact—these had apparently ceased to circulate in MS. form by the time the Modern Irish period began. The Training of Cúchulainn, the Death of Conlaoidh, the Fate of the Children of Uisneach, seem to me to possess in common a romantic rather than a heroic tendency ; I mean just such a character as we find in the popular Fianna tales as opposed to the ruder epic of the North as represented by the *Táin Bó Cuailgne* ; and it may be due to this fact that those tales preserved their life and vigour whilst so many others were condemned to comparative oblivion. The wandering of a hero in strange foreign lands to learn magic feats and prowess in arms under a mysterious Amazonian princess ; the tragedy of the father who, all unknowing, kills his own son and discovers his crime too late ; the banishment and cruel murder of three brave warriors brought about by the beauty of another Helen—these are all incidents of a perennial romance which appeals to all ages. The Cúchulainn cycle dealt mainly in bloodshed and in semi-mythological events. The ruder tales, those which like the Feast of Bricriu are full of barbarity and blood, of the clash of arms and the echo of angry words, or which, like the Wooing of Eimhear, were filled with " kennings " and cleverly allusive in a way which appealed only to a bardic class educated for such things—was it any wonder that these should fail to appeal to a modern audience ? We have proof, at any rate, of the popularity of the Fianna cycle which dealt with romantic over-sea expeditions, with knightly succouring of distressed damsels, with enchantments and wizardries and love-tales and elopements. But probably the prosaic fact of language, antique or otherwise, had more to do with the survival or disappearance of these Cúchulainn tales than any other circumstance.

Those tales of the Cúchulainn cycle which are common in modern manuscripts are also to be found in the scanty folklore of the same cycle. The *Clann Uisneach* tale is the most popular, especially in the Scottish Highlands. A. Carmichael has published (*Trans. Gaelic Society of Inverness*, xiii., pp. 241-57 ; afterwards republished in book form) an oral tale, " Deirdire and the Lay of the Children of Uisne," taken down in the island of Bara. An Irish folk-version of the same tale was published by Dottin in the *Revue Celtique* (xvi., 425ff.)

A degenerated Scotch-Gaelic version of the *Táin* was taken down by Carmichael in Benbecula. The English translation is published in the *Celtic Magazine* (vol. xiii., pp. 319-326, 351-359) ; the Gaelic text is printed in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* (vol. ii). In the same volume of the *Celtic Magazine* (xiii., pp. 514-516) is a translation of a version of the *Táin* taken down in the Island of Eigg by Kenneth Macleod.

The story of *Conlaoidh*, a common Aryan theme well known in its Persian and Teutonic forms, is found quite commonly among the people. (The folk-versions of this tale are merely traditional recollections of manuscripts). M. Dottin took down a version in Galway which he published in the *Revue Celtique* (xiv). Lloyd has a version taken down in Donegal in his *Cruach Chonaill* (pp. 96-8). In the *New Ireland Review* (May, 1906, vol. xxv., pp. 181ff.) an oral version taken down from an old man is published by Dr. Conor Maguire (" Of the many stories I have taken down from him this is the only one concerning Cúchulainn "). Stephen

Gwynn published a translation of a folk-version of the Conlaoch ballad in the *Fortnightly Review* (1904, pp. 281ff.) In the Highlands they still preserve an account of “Aoinfhear Aoife.” Campbell has a version in his *West Highland Tales* (iii., p. 184) where it is confused to some extent with the Fianna cycle. [11] There is a ballad version in *Leabhar na Feinne* (p. 14), and the Dean of Lismore wrote down a poetical fragment in Scotland in the sixteenth century. It is the poetical version, or the “lay” of Cúchulainn over his son’s corpse, which occurs oftenest. Like the Fianna ballads, it probably owes some of its popularity to its metrical form.

Curtin in his *Myths and Folklore of Ireland* (pp. 304-326) has a story entitled “Cuculin,” but where it was taken down is not stated. It is a miscellaneous jumble of many tales. The names of some of the personages, Cuculin, Fin mac Cumhail, Lug Long-hand, Conlan (= Conlaoch), Thin-in-Iron (= Caol an Iarainn), etc, will give some idea of its heterogeneous character.

Professor John MacNeill edited a tale entitled “Cnachar Rí Uladh,” taken down in Tyrone, in the *Gaelic Journal* (xi., p. 3). This tale deals with Conchubhar, Cúchulainn and Bricín (= Bricne *i.e.* Bricriu). “Cnachar” sends Cuchulainn in pursuit of three Irish princesses, his wards, who have been abducted during the course of a feast. There seems to be some reminiscence of the Feast of Bricriu and the *curad-mir* incident in this tale. A variant of the same tale occurs in *An Sgeuluidhe Gaodhalach* (pt. hi., p. 165). Here Bricriu appears as “Bric na Buaire.”

Quiggin in his *Dialect of Donegal* published a story about Cúchulainn entitled “Leadairt na bhFear Mór.” A Co. Cork version of the same tale, by Conchubhar Ó Deasmhumhna of Ballyvourney, was published some years ago in a Dublin weekly paper.

Séamus Ó Searcaigh has published a tale giving a confused account of Cúchulainn’s birth and death in *Cú na gCleas*. [12]

In *Irisleabhar Muighe Nuadhad* for 1914 among a group entitled “Trí Sgéalta Gearra ó Chonndae Mhuigheo” is one called “Sgéal Chúchulainn,” but beyond the fact that the hero’s name is Cuchulainn, it contains nothing of note.

Finally I may note the folk-version of the present tale, “Cúchulainn ag Cuan Cárn,” which has already been discussed.

These few tales represent all that remains in our day in popular memory of the enormous Cúchulainn cycle, a MS. literature the remains of which have been roughly reckoned at two thousand 8vo pages.

It has been said that the Cúchulainn cycle did not develop and generate new tales as the Fianna cycle did. The present tale, *Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus*, is, however, an example of such development. In the Fianna cycle the older tales were being continually developed and remodelled, and fresh invention on the lines of the older legend has been taking place almost down to our own day. But the vitality of the Cúchulainn legend seems to have become exhausted several centuries ago. Perhaps the composition of the present tale was inspired by the provincial patriotism of an Ulsterman anxious to glorify his ancient compatriot. To glorify Fionn would not have been the same, for Fionn, if not exclusively Munster, was, at any rate, not exclusively Ulster.

As an early instance of an “offshoot” of the Cúchulainn cycle and perhaps as a faint foreshadowing of its possible development had the Cúchulainn cycle not had a rival in the Fianna tales, we find a remarkable tale in the Book of Leinster (108a19). Cúchulainn sees a huge curach containing a formidable warrior landing near Emania. He sends Laeg to discover the

identity of the stranger. He says that he is “ Goll mac Carbad, son of the King of the Germans in the north of the world.” There were three brothers, Goll, Cromm and Rig, and they cast lots for the three islands, Britain, Denmark and Ireland. Goll’s lot came first and he decided for Ireland. Cúchulainn defies the stranger, who forthwith gives a tremendous stroke to his boat and drives it a long way on to dry land. In the ensuing encounter Cúchulainn gets the better of Goll.

This tale is remarkable when we consider that the Cúchulainn tradition places that hero at the beginning of the Christian period. It is undoubtedly a late story, perhaps as late as the MS. containing it. It was at this period exactly that the Fianna cycle, then in a state of flux, was profoundly modified by the Norse invasions. It would be interesting to speculate on the possible development of the Northern heroic saga if the rival cycle of the Fianna had not existed, and if the themes of the oversea raiders and a band of warriors perpetually on the watch to guard the country had, as in the actual case of the Fianna cycle, become an integral part of it.

A late literary development of the Cúchulainn cycle is the long rambling series of adventures in foreign lands entitled *Eachtra na gCuradh*. This tale is found in many MSS. in the Royal Irish Academy and elsewhere. It gives an account of the wanderings of Cúchulainn, Conall Cearnach, Fear Dia and others of the “ heroes” through many lands, Africa, Greece, Italy, Persia, etc.

If we except these three tales, viz., that in the Book of Leinster, *Eachtra na gCuradh* and *Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus*, there would seem to be no later developments in the Cúchulainn cycle, none at all of the variation and elaboration of old themes and invention of new which are so marked a characteristic of the Fianna legend.

- [1] Cp. Nutt, *The Voyage of Bran*, Grimm Library, and A. C. L. Brown in *Harvard Studies and Notes*, vol. viii. Brown notes that, in the later variants of the Journey to the Otherworld tales, the fairy character of the lady is quite forgotten and she is often represented as coming from Greece or some other remote land (p. 97).
- [2] In the tale “ *Tóruigheacht Shaidhbhe, inghean Eoghain Óig*,” we read how a strange warrior who proves to be Ciothach Cruadharmach, *árd-rí na Dreolainne Móire*, lands unexpectedly and takes Sadhbh, the wife of Glas mac Aoincheá rda Bhéarra, captive and bears her off in his vessel. Subsequently he is pursued by a party of the Fianna who, after much fighting and many adventures, recover Sadhbh and restore her to her husband. This theme of a giant landing in Ireland and abducting a lady is closely paralleled by *Eachtra Chonail Ghulban*, which has for its motif the abduction of Eithne Uchtsholas, daughter of the King of Leinster, by a *fear mór* from overseas and her subsequent pursuit by Conall Gulban.
- [3] Cp. *Legend of Perseus*, Grimm Library.
- [4] For the early development of the “ combat motive” in the Celtic otherworld tales, see Brown, *Harvard Studies and Notes*, viii., p. 46.
- [5] Cp. G. H. Maynadier, *The Wife of Bath’s Tale*, Grimm Library, for a study of the Loathly Hag theme and Irish parallels. The Loathly Hag motif, however, differs from that of the Sleeping Beauty in that the enchantment is voluntary (*ib.* p. 32). For exact parallel of a maiden transformed into a dragon waiting to be disenchanting by the hero’s kiss, cp. the Middle English romance *Libeaus Descomus*, and the tale of “ Ypocras daughter” in Maundeville’s Travels.
- [6] The story of *Eachtra Chloinne Rígh na h-Ioruaidhe* occurs in a MS. as early as 1658 ; cp. Dr. Hyde’s Introduction to his edition (Irish Texts Society, I., pp. xiii-xiv.), where he states his belief that the story was already a written one in the fourteenth century.
- [7] Lloyd first published his version in 1902 in the *Gaelic Journal*, no. 141, pp. 83ff. He confesses to having occasionally altered the narrator’s wording (*cuireadh corr-athrughadh*

ann).

- [8] In the present tale the Morrigan entwines herself about Cúchulainn's feet when he is fighting against Fear Dia, but in the *T.B.C.* this happens when he is fighting against Loch Mor. (ed. Wind. 2298ff.)
- [9] Alfred Nutt, *Ossian and the Ossianic Literature*. (Popular Studies in Romance, Mythology and Folklore, No. 3).
- [10] Professor MacNeill, Introduction to *Duanaire Finn* (Irish Texts Society).
- [11] In some of these tales we find a confusion of the Fianna and Cúchulainn cycles. In Campbell's version of the Conlaoch tale, alluded to above, Aife is the "fairy sweetheart" of Cúchulainn whom he fell in with while "the rest of the Feinn were in Islay driving out the Lochlanners," and Conan takes the place of Conall Cearnach in the preliminary encounter with Conlaoch. In Curtin's "Cuculin," later referred to, the narrator begins his story with "Fin mac Cumhail" for hero, but later substitutes "Cuculin" for Fin. Later the story degenerates into a version of the *Oidheadh Chonlaoich* and Fin and his men (including Conan Maol) are again strangely introduced, though only in a subsidiary way. The wonder is that this confusion and intermingling of the two cycles did not occur oftener. Macpherson has been accused (Windisch R C.v. 70-93) of being the first to mix together two separate traditions which were always strictly kept apart. Meyer in his Introduction to *Cath Finntrága* seems to think that in this, at least, Macpherson did not break away from tradition. He thinks that such a confusion was "the natural outcome of centuries of oral tradition in Ireland and Scotland," and instances Campbell's version of the Conlaoch story, which I have mentioned above, to prove his point. That the intermingling did not take place to a greater extent may perhaps be explained by the fact that the Cúchulainn cycle was never in recent times popular in the full sense of the word, which the Fianna cycle undoubtedly was.
- [12] It is extremely doubtful whether this can be regarded at all as a folk-tale. It was written by a young man, a school-teacher, who says he "heard it often." Such a source could not be very reliable. The schoolteacher had probably heard or read, whether in Irish or in English, some printed version of what he told; and all unconsciously he may have been influenced by it.

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