

The Sons of Uisnach.

Loch Etive and the sons of Uisnach

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“ Who but the sons of Usnoth, chief of streamy Etha ?”
“ Blessed are the rocks of Etha.” [1]

Loudoun. The next journey will be to Dun Uisnach. That is the chief point in the district, and it has been a point of interest and dispute for centuries, more especially for one century. It has been called Beregonium, Dun Mac Uisneachan, Dun Mhic Uisneachan, Dun Mac Sniochan, and Dun Mac Snichan ; the name has even been dissolved into Usny, and twisted at times into Uiston. Then by some perverse persons the favourite *h* has been added, so as to become Houston and Mac Houston, until others have believed in nothing. For simplicity I prefer the oldest forms, Uisnech and Uisnach, but may use others. It is really pronounced Uisnyach, the *y* being a consonant. This spelling makes it simple for English ears, which are afraid of Dun mac Uisneachan, as being long and outlandish to them.

There are many stories about it. It has been called the beginning of the kingdom of Scotland, the palace of a long race of kings ; also the Halls of Selma, in which Fingal lived ; the stately capital of a Queen Hynde, having towers and halls and much civilization, with a Christianity before Ireland ; whilst it has also been considered to be that which the native name implies, simply the fort of the sons of Uisnach, who came from Ireland, and whose names are found over all the district, and who in the legend are reported to have come to a wild part of Alban. This latter view, I may say, seems to be the common-sense one, raising no obstacles ; but every other view may be discussed, and let us give them all fair play.

Now, first, for the story which makes it interesting. It is romantic and old, and creates its own interest ; and before we look at the spot we shall ask Mr. O’Keefe to tell it.

Mr. O’Keefe considered that he was in a region peculiarly interesting to Irishmen, because the sons of Uisnach came from Ireland and lived about Loch Etive for a long time ; so before any visit was made to the ruins of their house, he told the story, “ one of the three sorrowful tales of Ireland,” using the version printed by the Dublin Society in 1808, but not giving word for word.

O’Keefe.—There is no story better known in Ireland than “ The Death of the Children of Uisnach.” We have songs belonging to it and music also, that sounds well on the Irish pipe. It is an old Milesian story, for these sons were of old and good Milesian blood, and had lived at Uisnach, which is in the middle of Ireland. Uisneach or Usnagh was a fine place in old Ireland, because the council of all the provinces met there, and every year the fresh fire was lighted that was conveyed to all Ireland ; this was before Christianity. There is a large stone on the hill where the provinces met, or at least there was, and many other things ; but St. Patrick did not like the place, and much was destroyed, and no wonder, since it was thoroughly pagan. The stones lately found may be some of those which were cursed. I do not know why the three heroes of the piece came to Ulster ; probably it was for the same reason that people go to London ; they became important men at the capital in Emania, near

Armagh. The place had the name Caen-druim, the head of the ridge, in very old time, but now it has become Usny by a common piece of carelessness. Old habits keep up, and even “ in 1111 the Synod of Uisneach met, with fifty bishops, three hundred priests, and three thousand ecclesiastics.” [2] It was a convenient spot for Christians, as it had been for pagans, seeing the means of locomotion were the same. Conor (*Concobhar*) was king of Ulster : he was the son of Fatna the Wise, son of Ross the Red, son of Rory, and his mother was Nessa, as I told you. He lived in the splendid Eman or Emania, that great city that was built by Macha of the Red Tresses (*Macha Mongruadh*), She took the golden brooch from her neck, and marked the bounds of the rath ; and I assure you it was no obscure spot in which the king lived, and large it was, as the ruins to-day testify. I fear I cannot give you an exact description of the palaces at Emania, but I have one at hand that may suit the purpose equally well, giving the idea of a fine house of those days. It is from the Irish book of Lismore. [3] Crede was a great beauty, and she was very rich. She built a palace on the Boyne, and she would not marry any one whose soul was not great enough to comprehend its beauty and taste, and to sing of it in suitable poetry. Many tried, and all failed but Coel O’Neamhain (O’Naevan), who succeeded by means of this poem :

Happy the house in which she is,
Between men and children and women,
Between Druids and musical performers,
Between cupbearers and doorkeepers.

Between equerries who are not shy,
And distributors who divide (the fare);
And over all these the command belongs
To fair Crede of the yellow hair.

It would be happy for me to be in her dun.

The colour (of her dun) is like the colour of lime :
Within it are couches and green rushes,
Within it are silks and blue mantles,
Within it are red gold and silver cups.

Of its *grianan* (sunny chamber, say drawing-room)
the corner-stones
Are all of silver and of yellow gold ;
Its thatch in stripes of matchless order
Of (birds’) wings of brown and crimson red.

Two door-posts of green I see;
Nor is its door devoid of beauty;
Of carved silver, long has it been renowned,
Is the lintel that is over the door.

Crede’s chair is at her right hand,
The pleasantest of the pleasant it is,
All of a blaze of Alpine gold,
At the foot of her beautiful couch.

The household which are in her house,
To the happiest conditions have they been destined :

Grey and glossy are their garments,
Twisted and fair is their flowing hair.

Wounded men would sink in sleep,
Though ever so heavily teeming with blood,
With the warblings of the fairy birds
From the eaves of her sunny chamber.

An hundred feet spans Crede's house
From one angle to the other ;
And twenty feet are fully measured
In the breadth of its noble door.

Its portico is thatched
With wings of birds both blue and yellow;
Its lawn in front, and its well
Of crystal and of cormogal. [4]

Four posts to every bed,
Of gold and silver finely carved;
A crystal gem between every two posts
They are no cause of unpleasantness,

There is in it a vat of royal bronze,
Whence flows the pleasant juice of malt;
An apple tree stands overhead the vat
With the abundance of its weighty fruit. [5]

That is enough. You see it is a fancy house, and the writer had very narrow ideas of comfort ; still he had the idea of barbaric grandeur, and at least the comfort of soft pillows. And now we shall go on with the story, as this is quite a digression.

King Conor's house, I may tell you, is now only a set of mounds near Armagh, but at the time of which I speak many nobles were assembled there. They had music and poetry, and pleasant histories of great deeds and tales of their ancestry ; they had philosophers—the name is shortened to Fileas ; and they had wise and cunning Druids that were acquainted with magic.

Conor was proud of his house ; and in old times people who were great were expected to boast and show their superiority to others in unpleasant ways. There were one thousand six hundred and sixty-five persons belonging to the household, and the king thought of this, and instead of allowing others to drink his health, he raised his voice and said, " Did you ever see a mansion better than my mansion ?" " No," they said. " Do you know anything that it wants ?" " No," they said. But the king thought differently, and said, " I know of a great want which presseth, that the three renowned and exalted youths, the three luminaries of the valour of the Gaels—that is, the three noble sons of Uisnach—should be absent from us." Every one agreed with this sentiment, because these three nobles—Naisi, Ainli, and Ardan—had defended a district and a half of Alba, [6] and their power was lost to their own country, " for sons of a king are they who would assert high sovereignty from the princes of Ulster" (Uladh).

Then Conor proposed to send messengers to Loch Etive to bring them back. He asked Conall Carnach to go and also Cuchullin, but he did not promise good security for the lives of the three nobles, and the two heroes refused. Fergus MacRoy who had given Conor the kingdom agreed to go, and he vowed to kill any man but Conor himself that would do the Uisnachs injury, but the pledge of the king to give them safety is not evident.

And now it is clear that these sons of Uisnach were men of great importance, when their return was so much longed for by the whole court of Ulster, and I must tell you why they were absent.

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Deirdre (Or Darthula).

Feilim was a teller of stories ; I suppose a historian and “ filea,” and he must have had a high position and been very agreeable. He invited the king to an entertainment, and many important men were there. Entertainments were long in those days, and we hear of them lasting for weeks, months, or even a year. During the time the king was there a daughter was born to Feilim, and I suppose all the company looked at her. We hear nothing of Feilim’s wife ; she could not have been pleased when Caffa a Druid, who was there, said that this daughter would be the cause of much loss and mischief to Ulster, and the nobles proposed therefore to kill her at once. Conor objected, and said he would take care of her and bring her up as his own wife. He sent her into a retired lios or small fort with a nurse, and in time a tutor and Lavarcam, who was perhaps a gossip ; she is called a speech or conversation woman, but I think it more likely that she was a singer (cainte) at the court.

Time passed, and Deirdre was looking out on the snow ; her tutor killed a calf, and a raven came to feed on the blood, when the young lady said to her nurse that she would like a husband with these three colours : the hair as black as the raven, the cheek as red as the blood, and the skin as white as the snow. This is quite against the opinion that Naisi was a Milesian, but it was a common way of marking beauty in Ireland, and it is put here rather thoughtlessly. Naisi must have had brown hair and not black like a Firbolg ; on the other hand I have seen him called a Firbolg.

It so happened that Lavarcam brought Naisi, quite unaware of the trick and playing innocently, on a pipe I think, within sight of Deirdre, and I fear she made love to him, and by some adjuration compelled him to go with her. Woman had great rights in old Ireland. “ Naisi was quite alone ; sweet truly was the music of the sons of Uisnach. Every cow or other animal that heard it used to milk two thirds more than usual ; every human being that heard it was overcome with the delight of its harmony. Their valour, too, was transcendent.”

Deirdre threw herself in Naisi’s way, and he said, “ Mild is the dame that passeth by.” “ It is natural for damsels to be mild where there are no youths,” said she. I don’t quite understand all the conversation, and perhaps you won’t, but she threw a ball at him and it struck his head, and she said, “ A stroke of disgrace is this through life’s extent if you take me not.” “ Depart from me, woman,” said he. “ Thou wilt be in disgrace,” said she ; then she took his instrument and played. This music caused great commotion, and the “ sons of Uslinn” (another spelling) remonstrated with their brother who knew of the terrible prophecies about Deirdre. But it was fated ; Naisi was bewitched or in honour compelled, and the brothers went off with a hundred and fifty men and their wives and servants and greyhounds : they were pursued round Erin to Ballyshannon, Howth, Rathlin, and at last to a wild place, Loch Etive. They chased deer on the mountain, and when these failed they took to

harrying and raised enemies, but the King of Alba required their help, and soon they became important and powerful. Some people say that the King of Alba, whoever he was, wanted to kill Naisi so as to steal Deirdre on account of her great beauty, and that they ran away to a sea-girt isle, but we hear that they were living at Loch Etive, when they were sent for, and they seem to have been happy.

The great fort which is still called by their name, the Fort of the sons of Uisnach, is in a pleasant situation, and there are numerous proofs of some population all around. They fished as we hear, and they had a boat which took them up to the top of the loch when they wished to hunt among the wild hills of Glen Etive, and they left their names well remembered on the fields and the rocks. We can go up to the fort and see one of the finest views in Scotland from it, and we can go up the loch to Eilean Uisneachan, the island of the Uisnachs, and see remainders of their little hunting lodges where they had three apartments considered to be a luxury. We can see the great projecting rock half way up Glen Etive, called Deirdre's drawing room, as a kind of joke, one very old out of all record. We can also see the field not far below it called after Deirdre.

It is also pleasant to go to the wood near Taynuilt and hear it still called the wood of Naisi (coille nāish), where the family must have had a settlement, and to hear stories about them opposite Bunawe on a projecting rocky land called Ruadh nan Draighnean.

As they were a whole clan they would cover much ground, and we are not surprised that they have left their name also on the bay near the fort, and looking to the south of Lismore—Cambus Nāish. [7]

Deirdre is supposed to have sung—that is, if she did not sing some one put a song into her mouth, and Mr. Skene has translated it [8]—

Glen Etive, O Glen Etive,
There I raised my earliest house,
Beautiful its woods on rising,
When the sun fell on Glen Etive.

They did not confine themselves to the glen ; they went over to Loch Awe, and we can fancy them enjoying the sight and Deirdre singing—

Beloved is Draighen and its sounding shore,
Beloved the water over clear pure sands,
Oh that I might not depart from this east
Unless I go with my beloved.

When they reached Loch Awe it was but a step to Glenorchy, and we who admire it and who look at drawings of Kilchurn at its foot, and rejoice in the Urchay and the Strae, need not wonder at Deirdre singing—

Glenorchy, O Glenorchy,
The straight glen of smooth ridges,
No man of his age was so joyful
As Naisi in Glenorchy.

They went up to Glenloch also, and Deirdre could enjoy the chase and the delights of a good dinner after it—

Glenlaidhe, O Glenlaidhe,
I used to sleep by its soothing murmurs,
Fish and flesh of wild boar and badger
Was my repast in Glenlaidhe. [9]

They sometimes from Glenorchy passed over to Lochfyne and down to Cowal, as we find them in Glendaruel, and so we can imagine them roaming about the Kyles of Bute, and, in fact, seeking all the prettiest places.

Glendaruadh, O Glendaruadh,
I love each man of its inheritance,
Sweet the noise of the cuckoo on bended bough
On the hill above Glendaruadh.

There is a vitrified fort on the Kyles of Bute, and some of their friends may have lived there : it is on a little island, and although the steamer passes near few people know it : it is usually called the Burnt Island.

These Uisnach people went far notwithstanding the want of conveyances. To us it is difficult to enter Glendaruel, as they now spell it. If we run up from Tigh-na-bruaich we are apt to find the upper part of Loch Riddan (Ruel) dry, the tide being out, and if we do not row far we have far to walk, and conveyances are not easily obtained. The round from Loch Striven or Holy Loch is very long, but the glen is a fine broad expanse, and one feels surprised to see such a spot there. Naisi and Deirdre with some of their companions would probably pass from the mouth of the Ruel to the top of Loch Striven, and up the stream to Glenmasan, from which they would easily descend to Holy Loch and Loch Eck. They must have enjoyed Glenmasan—

Glenmasan, O Glenmasan,
High its herbs, fair its boughs,
Solitary was the place of our repose,
On grassy Invermasan.

This fine poem would tell to a man of Alba the joys of a life in Argyleshire, and it must go to the heart of every man in the west of Scotland who has had the fortune to spend his holidays in that country. I have given the verses in an inverse order to suit our purpose. I sometimes wonder who wrote the whole, as it is evidently later than the time of Deirdre. But let us follow the events in Alba.

Naisi had soon become a great man in Argyle, as he had been in Erin, and he was sent for to help (I suppose, the Picts) up at Inverness. Deirdre seems to have gone also in that direction, and a vitrified fort on the Ness bears her name. But Naisi from one of his journeys, as we hear, did not come straight home, but went down to Duntroon, and he admired very much the daughter of the lord of that place. A later poem, as I suppose it to be, says—

He sent her a frisking doe,
A hind of the forest and a fawn at its feet ;
And he passed to her on a visit,
On his return from the host at Inverness.

This was the only sorrow of Deirdre in Alba which she loved so well—

Upon my hearing of this
My head filled with jealousy ;
I put my little skiff on the wave,
And indifferent to me was life and death.

They pursued me on the float,
Ainli and Ardan who uttered not falsehood ;
They turned me inwards,
Two that would subdue in battle a hundred.

Naisi gave his word in truth.

Deirdre believed in Naisi, and when they had enjoyed the view about Crinan and the hospitality of the lord of Duntroon, who probably then lived in the vitrified fort which we saw behind the present castle, the abode of the Rev. R. J. Mapleton, they sometimes went south as far as Loch Sweeny and could say, “ Beloved Dun Suibhne,” &c., the Castle of Sweeny.

Now, this I call a very pleasant picture, perhaps the oldest you have in Scotland (said Mr. O’Keefe) ; let us not look at dates, but attend to our friends in their sorrow.

We have heard that at the feast in Eman, the king sent Fergus to bring back his friends, and Fergus took no followers but his two sons—Illan the fair, and Buine, the ruthless red, and a shield-bearer named Callon. “ They moved to the fastnesses of the sons of Uisnach and to the Lake Eitche, in Alba.” Naisi and Deirdre are represented as living in hunting booths at the time.

And when Fergus came into the harbour, he shouted like a hunter. Naisi and Deirdre were playing at chess ; they had taken King Conor’s polished cabinet or chessboard with them. When Naisi heard the cry he said, “ That is the voice of a man of Erin.” Deirdre knew the voice, but avoided the thought, and said, “ That is not so ; it is the voice of a man of Alba.” Fergus shouted again, and Naisi said, “ That is the cry of a man of Erin ;” but Deirdre said, “ It is not indeed ; let us play on.” But a third cry made it certain to all, and Ardan went to meet Fergus.

Deirdre said she knew the voice. “ Then why didst thou conceal it, my queen ?” “ A vision I saw last night, namely, that three birds came unto us from Eman of Macha, bearing three sups of honey in their beaks, and these they left with us, and they took three sups of our blood with them.” “ And what conclusion do you draw from that, O Princess ?” said Naisi. “ It is,” said Deirdre, “ that Fergus comes to us with messages of peace from Conor ; for more sweet is not honey than the peace message of a false man.” “ Let that go,” said Naisi ; “ Fergus is long on the point. Go, Ardan, and meet him, and bring him with you.” Ardan went and kissed Fergus and his sons, and said, “ My affection unto you, O dear companions ;” and he asked them tales of Erin, and brought them in, and Deirdre and Naisi kissed them, and asked them for news. And Fergus said, “ The best tale I have to tell is that Conor has sent us under condition and guarantee for you.” Deirdre at once said, “ It is not meet for them to go thither, for greater is their own sway in Alba than the sway of Conor in Erin.” “ The land of our birth is better than all things,” said Fergus. “ It is a cheerless thing to the richest and greatest not to see his own country every day.” “ True,” said Naisi, “ and Erin is dearer to me than Alba, even if I have more here.” “ You may go confidently with us,” said Fergus. “ We

have confidence," said Naisi, "and we shall go with you to Erin." But Deirdre still opposed his going, and Fergus pledged his word and said, "If all the men of Erin were against you, it could not hurt you if I were with you." "True it is," said Naisi, "and we will go with you to Erin."

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The Death of the Children of Uisneach

They sailed to Erin, but Deirdre looked back after that eastern land of Alba, and said, "My love to you, O eastern land. Grieved am I to leave you; delightful are thy harbours and thy bays, and thy clear beautiful plains of soft grass, and thy cheerful green-sided hills; little did we think to leave you." Then she is said to have sung the song already given—as she mentioned each spot she delighted in.

It was the duty of Fergus to take the Uisnachs to Emania, but Barach laid a trap for him and invited him to a feast, one of those feasts that were to last for months, and to refuse which was war. He was angry, but went, confiding the Uisnach family to his sons; and Deirdre proposed that they should go to Rathlin until the feast was over, and so enable every one to keep his word. But the sons of Fergus insisted on their own valour being sufficient, and the sons of Uisnach were too proud to seek refuge by practising the proposed device, and Deirdre bemoaned the faith of the unsteady son of Roy. She had a dream of Illan the fair being faithful and losing his life, and Buine being faithless and retaining his; and proposed to go to Dundalgan or Dundalk to stay with the great hero Cuchullin until the formidable feast should be over; but the same arguments were used as before, and all went with the sons of Fergus.

There were three great houses, or kingly abodes, in Emania, in one of which Conor lived, and Deirdre gave as a sign to her friends that if they were asked to go there no treachery was intended, but if they were sent to the house of the Red Branch, then it was all over with them. The Red Branch represented a body of men who have been called knights, and we have no better name, men high in the ranks of fighting, and well born men.

They rapped at the door of Conor's house. Conor was feasting and inquired if the Red Branch house were well supplied with food. The answer was in a style that might still be called Hibernian—"If the seven battalions of Ulster would come they would still find abundance to eat and to drink." "Then take the sons of Uisnach to it," said Conor.

Deirdre did not give up. Her character is remarkably consistent and decided. She still desired them to go to Rathlin, but the old reasoning prevailed. "For it is not cowardice or unmanliness that has ever been known of us, and we will go to the Red Branch."

It is true there was enough to eat when they came to the house, but they were tired, and Naisi called as usual for the polished chessboard, and he and Deirdre began to play.

The king had not seen Deirdre for a long time, and he was very desirous of knowing if she were still the most beautiful of women. He was proud of Naisi as one of his greatest nobles, and would not hurt him for nothing, but he was quite willing to break his word and to kill Naisi if Deirdre were still worth admiring. So he sent his old confidante, the poetess or singer Lavarcam, and she came and warned Deirdre and Naisi of the intention of Conor, and advised them to defend the house against an attack. She then went to Conor and told him that Deirdre had lost all her beauty, and was not worth thinking of. Still he was not sure, and he sent an-

other messenger, one who was sure to hate Naisi. This was Trendorm, whose father and three brothers had been killed by Naisi. This messenger found most of the house barricaded, but he looked in at one of the windows. Deirdre saw him and told Naisi, who, having a chessman in his hand, made a *fortunate* throw and knocked out one of Trendorm's eyes. Of course the wounded man told Conor, and Conor admired the blow and said, "The man of that throw would be king of the world if he had not short life." "Moreover," Trendorm added, "there is not in the world a woman of face and form more beautiful than she" (Deirdre).

Then came a terrible struggle. I do not think I shall tell it all. Faithlessness was mixed with faithfulness. The story has nothing impossible in it until it comes to the deeds of these children of Uisnach, who, as in older poets, have too many deaths laid to their honour. But they died, and Deirdre alone lived. It was not, however, possible to kill them without supernatural power, so the Druid Cathbad came forward, and Conor promised not to hurt the heroes, if only he could make them yield. Cathbad believed this, and caused "a viscid sea of whelming waves to come around the children of Uisnach, so that they swam along the ground." They did not yield, but the Ulstermen would not approach them till their arms fell off them, and no one could be persuaded to kill them until a *fellow*, called *Maini Rough-hand*, son of the king of Norway, [10] said he would do it because Naisi had killed his father and two brothers. "If so," said Ardan, "let me be killed first." "No, but me," said Ainli. But Naisi said, "I have a sword which Mananan MacLir gave me, and it leaves no remains of a blow ; let us three be struck together with it, and we shall all be killed at once." So the three heads were laid on the block together, and were severed by one blow.

The end is coming for Deirdre. There are different accounts. One says that she died on the graves of the sons of Uisnach ; another that she lived a year, and that in rage with Conor she flung herself from his carriage, head foremost, on to a rock and was killed.

Cameron.—Let us conclude from a well known version :—"Awake, Darthula, awake, thou first of women ! The wind of spring is abroad. The flowers shake their heads on the green hills. The woods wave their growing leaves. Retire, O sun ! The daughter of Colla is asleep. She will not come forth in her beauty. She will not move in the steps of her loveliness."

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Is it a Sun Myth ?

"The sun is the centre of power, and therefore *of life and thought to our earth.*"

"Rejoice then, O sun, in the strength of thy youth.
Macpherson's *Ossian*."

Margaet.—I am amused, and much pleased with your story, but do you know that I have read about this, and was told that it was an old Aryan story out of the Mahabharata ? The primitive story sent out from the glowing regions of India has lived among all the race that sprung from the people there, and glows still with all its vigour, sometimes with new tints, sometimes with old. What do you say ?

O'Keefe.—Well, we may amuse each other. If the story of a man who kept away a lover from a young woman for some time, but at last was unsuccessful, since youth had its way, is believed by you to be an account of that which once happened in India, I will not attempt to prove otherwise. Men do not go far for stories when they can be got at hand. The ground

facts have occurred millions and millions of times, and if you do not know several such occurrences among your acquaintances you must be highly favoured. Indeed, I know that it occurred amongst my own relations ; but there was a modern variation of circumstances.

Loudoun.—Do you believe in spontaneous growth ? Do you imagine that stories will grow of themselves anywhere ? You have heard that there are but few of these stories in reality, although they are all made to appear different by change of dressing ? Mr. J. G. v. Hahn [11] tells us that there are only forty classes of stories, each with variations, and this of yours would probably belong to class 27, the Helena form. You do not now require to tell a story in full, but when anything interesting happens you have only to say, “ It happened according to form 21, subform *a*,” and so on, and the idea is given at once. These names of persons may interest some, but intellectually they mean nothing, and any name may do. As to the names of places, all our shores have been covered with wild romances, and it requires no Aryan beginning to form them ; they grow from the germs which exist in abundance in the human heart, and in human mechanism. We require no proof of spontaneous growth so long as man is one, and if you stop all connection with the past in the memory of man, new Deirdres will rise up to-morrow, new Conors, who will be treacherous and cruel, showing this character according to their stations in life and the conditions of society.

Margaet.—I fear you will speak disrespectfully of the solar myth.

Loudoun.— Yes, if driven to extremity, and of the principle that makes men bring this story from Asia. Man is the most interesting creature to man, and when he looks at the sun and the sky, he interprets their movements according to his human interests, having no words at first to express himself otherwise. We see children doing the same thing. I have known nurses calling the small clouds lambs, but they called windlestraws lambs also. Man is the true beginning, although the motion of the heavens is too important not to tinge the representation of the acts of man. The solar myth has been driven to distraction, and so has Aryanism, but the fundamental ideas as they first unfold themselves are really beautiful, and commend themselves as true. You have seen children playing with pebbles. One says, “ This is papa and that is mamma, and this is the coach and the other the horse, and the fifth the whip.” Objects are converted into the ideas which are in the mind. The objects need not suggest the ideas. A stool or a table or anything is made to represent a man. As the “ fleecy” clouds are sometimes called sheep (and the common adjective is an abundant proof), so are the whitened curves of the sea waves called fleeces, and similar thoughts are found regarding the globe and the atmosphere around it. Of course the sun would be held the highest of his class, and ideas would grow around him with force ; but new objects continually arise, and especially new individuals, men of vigour, and these have a powerful influence on others’ minds, I should say the very highest and most powerful, so much so that human nature has been exaggerated, and ideas from the heavens have been transferred to it. For this reason I have great faith in the human nucleus of a so-called myth, but am willing enough to believe in the ideal characteristics caught from the sun’s glory, and made use of to symbolize the greatness of the man to be praised. Even when a hero is gifted with divine attributes, I do not suppose him to have grown in the sky, but to have had an ideal life from the sky transferred to him.

When Phoebus mounts his car, we have a very human beginning and a very advanced civilization. It is mere imagery, so far as the car is concerned, exactly as the waves are called lambs and fleeces.

Man and his ways are the beginning of stories. The doings of man are the most interesting stories to man, but the highest expression for all these is got from the heavens. When ideas rise so high they gain in interest : they are human, yet in a certain sense superhuman. In order

to exalt man, we take our imagery from heaven. That the highest or strangest images are transferred from place to place, from heaven to earth, is certain, and heaven and earth are intermingled, the human always predominating.

Margaet.—But do none ever begin with the sun ?

Londoun.—I will not go so far, but every one seems to have a solid root in the very common earth, where so many other ideas grow. In other words, if men find any connection with the sun in the story of the Uisnachs, or any similar tale, the explanation must be that human beings began the greatness, and similar beings have tried to put solar radiance round it ; but I do not see a reason even for that. The whole story is possible, probable, natural, and simple.

[1] Macpherson's *Ossian* is here quoted. Etha does not occur in old writings ; it is Etie, so far as I know, and Usnoth is not the name of a man. It is evidently intended to be a soft form of Uisnech or Uisnach.

[2] *Cambrensis Eversus*, cap. 31.

[3] *Manuscript Materials of Irish History*. O'Curry, p. 309.

[4] *Carbuncles*.—Sullivan.

[5] Some of the words are from Dr. Prof. Sullivan's Version.

[6] Now Scotland. I do not know how much a district was.

[7] Where there is the Balure farm of Mr. M'Niven.

[8] See the Book of the Dean of Lismore.

[9] Glenlochy.—Skene.

[10] This mention of Norway shows that the version of the story is later much than the date given to the events. The Norse get the name of being rough, as if no gentle Gael could have done such an act. It may be that Norsemen came in the first century; it has been supposed that the Fomorians were of that class. The story does not require this discussion, since this version is unquestionably full of comparatively late additions.

[11] In his *Griechische and Albanesische Märchen*.

Loch Etive and the sons of Uisnach (1885)

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