

The Boyish Exploits

of

Finn Mac Cumhaill,

Edited By

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Letter addressed by Dr. John O'Donovan, to the President of the Ossianic Society.

Dublin, Dec. 27th, 1858.

Dear Sir.— Having, at your request, undertaken to translate into English — to lengthen out the abbreviations, and to fix the grammatical endings of the contracted words, in this notice of the boyish exploits of the celebrated Finn Mac Cumhaill, the Fingal of Mac Pherson's Ossian,— I beg to offer you a few observations on the age and importance of the little tract, as well as of the manuscript from which it has been taken. This tract was copied letter for letter, and contraction for contraction from a fragment of the Psalter of Cashel now preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (*Laud*, 610), by the Rev. Euseby D. Cleaver, M.A., of Christ Church, Oxford, in 1854, and now curate of S. Barnabas, Pimlico, London, whose progress in the study of the Irish language is truly wonderful, considering the slight advantages of oral instruction which he has possessed. He has copied this little tract so faithfully that I was able to understand it as well as if I had the original manuscript before me. No artist ever copied a portrait or inscription more accurately. This manuscript was examined in the year 1844 by the Rev. Dr. Todd, S.F.T.C.D., who published a full account of its contents in the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. 2, p. 336, sq. In 1846 I examined it again with the most anxious care, and published a brief notice of its more important contents in the introduction to *Leabhar na g-Ceart*. It consists of 292 pages folio, vellum, and was transcribed in 1453 by John Boy O'Clery and others at Pottlerath, in the barony of Crannagh, and county of Kilkenny, for Edmund Butler, the head of the sept of Mac Richard, who afterwards became Earls of Ormonde. This manuscript remained in the possession of Mac Richard Butler till the year 1462, when Ormonde and he were defeated in a battle fought at Baile-an-phoill, now Pilltown, in the barony of Iverk, county of Kilkenny, by Thomas, Earl of Desmond, to whom he was obliged to give up this very copy of the Psalter of Cashel, together with another manuscript (now unknown), called the Book of Carrick-on-Suir. This fact appears from a memorandum on fol. 110, p. b, of which the following is a literal translation : —

“ This was the Psalter of Mac Richard Butler, until the defeat at Baile-an-phoill, was given to the Earl of Ormonde, and to Mac Richard by the Earl of Desmond (Thomas), when this book and the book of Carrick, were obtained in the redemption of Mac Richard ; and it was this Mac Richard that had these books transcribed for his own use ; and they remained in his possession until Thomas, Earl of Desmond, wrested them from him.”

The foregoing memorandum was written in the manuscript, while it was in the possession of Thomas, Earl of Desmond, whose name “ Thomas, of Desmond,” appears in English, in

his own hand, on fol. 92, a.. See *Leabhar na g-Ceart*, Introduction, pp. xxviii — xxx. The publication of this manuscript, as it stands, would be a great desideratum in Irish literature, and I trust that Sir John Romilly will not think it unworthy of his attention.

I am of opinion that this little tract is of great antiquity, and contains, perhaps, the oldest account we have remaining of Finn and his cotemporaries. You will observe that the style is extremely simple, and altogether devoid of that redundancy of epithets which characterises the prose compositions of later ages, which are equalled only by those of “*El famoso Feliciano de Silva*.”

The celebrated Irish antiquary, Duaid Mac Firbis, in his genealogical work, pp. 435, 436, gives various pedigrees of the famous Irish hero, Finn Mac Cumhaill. Some deduce his descent from the Orbhraighe of Druim Imnocht, others from the Corco Oiche, a sept of the Ui-Fidhgeinte, who were seated in the present county of Limerick. Some state that he sprung from the Ui-Tairsigh of Ui-Failghe, a plebeian sept, while other genealogists maintain that he came of the Ui-Tairsigh of the Luaighni Teamhrach of *Fera-Cul* in Bregia, which was one of the three septs from whom the chief leader of the Fians, or Irish militia, was elected. Mac Firbis, however, states that this discrepancy must have arisen from mistaking one Finn for another ; but that by far the greater number of the authentic Irish authorities agree in deducing the pedigree of the famous Finn Mac Cumhaill from Nuada Neacht, the fourth son of Sedna Sithbhaic, the ancestor of the kings of Leinster.

By the mother’s side, Finn Mac Cumhaill was descended from Tadhg, son of Nuadhat, son of Aice, son of Daite, son of Brocan, son of Fintan of Tuath-Daite in Bregia. This Mac Firbis believes to be his true maternal descent, though others state that his mother was Torba, daughter of Echuman of the Ernaans of Dun-Cearmna (the old head of Kinsale, in the county of Cork), and that he had a half-brother by the mother’s side, who was called Finn Mac Gleoir.

Mac Firbis adds that Finn Mac Cumhaill possessed, in right of his office of leader of the Fians, seven ballys, or townlands, out of every tricha-ched, or hundred, in Ireland ; that he was born in the third year of the reign of Conn of the Hundred Battles, and died in the year 283.

Some genealogical books give the pedigree of our hero thus : — Finn, son of Cumhall, son of Trénmor, son of Subalt, son of Ealtan, son of Baiscne, son of Nuada Necht : others, Finn, son of Cumhall, son of Baiscne, son of Trénmor . son of Ferdarath, son of Goil, son of Forgall, son of Daire , son of Deaghaidh, son of Sin ; but of the various pedigrees of our hero which Mac Firbis has copied from Irish authorities, the following is the only one that can be considered authentic : —

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1 . Nuada Necht, | |
| | |
| 2. Fergus Failge, ancestor of the Kings of Leinster, | |
| | |
| 3. Rossa Ruadh, | 3. So-alt, |
| | |
| 4. Finn, the poet, king of Leinster, | 4. Alt, |
| | |
| 5. Conchobhar Abhraruadh, | 5. Cairbre Garbhroin, |
| | |
| 6. Moghcorb, king of Leinster, | 6. Baeiscne, |
| | |
| 7. Cucorb, king of Leinster, | 7. Modh, |

8. Nia Corb,	8. Buan,
9. Cormac Gealtagaoith,	9. Fergus,
10. Feilimidh Firurglais,	10. Trendorn,
11. Cathaeir Mor, monarch of Ireland, A.D., 177.	11. Trenmor,
	12. Cumhall,
	13. Finn Mac Cumhaill, sl. 284.

He had a sister named *Sidh*, who was proverbial in Ireland for her fleetness of foot, and who was the mother of Caoilte Mac Ronain, also famous in the Fenian tales for his agility. He had another sister, Seogen, who was the mother of Cobhthach, son of Crunnchu.

I have always believed that Finn Mac Cumhaill was *a real historical personage*, and not a myth or god of war, like the Hercules of the Greeks, the Odin of the Scandinavians, or the Siegfried of the Germans. He was the son-in-law of the famous Cormac Mac Airt monarch of Ireland, and the general of his standing army. He was slain in the year A.D., 284, according to the Annals of Tighernach, a period to which our authentic history unquestionably reaches. (See Ogygia, part iii, c. 70).

This celebrated warrior was, as we have seen, of the regal line of the kings of Leinster, of the Milesian or Scotie race (for my ingenious friend Mr. Herbert F. Hore has theorised in vain to prove him of Scandinavian origin) ; he had two residences in Leinster, one at Allen (Almhain,) in the present county of Kildare, and the other at Moyelly in the (now) King's County, both of which descended to him from his ancestors. Pinkerton, the most critical and sceptical writer that has ever treated of Irish and Scottish history, has the following remarkable words, in which he expresses his conviction of Finn's undoubted historical existence :-

“ He seems,” says he, “ to have been a man of great talents for the age, and of celebrity in arms. His formation of a regular standing army, trained to war, in which all the Irish accounts agree, seems to have been a rude imitation of the Roman legions in Britain. The idea, though simple enough, shows prudence, for such a force alone, could have coped with the Romans had they invaded Ireland. But this machine, which surprised a rude age, and seems the basis of all Finn's fame, like some other great schemes, only lived in its author, and expired soon after him.” — *Inquiry into the History of Scotland*, vol. ii, p. 77.

Our own poet and historian, Moore, who read all that had been written by the Mac Phersons and the modern critics on the history of Finn, expresses his conviction that he was a real man of flesh and blood, and no god of war or poetical creation. He concludes his account of him in the following poetical strain.

“ It has been the fate of this popular Irish hero, after a long course of traditional renown in his country, where his name still lives, not only in legends and songs, but yet in the more indelible record of scenery connected with his memory, to have been all at once transferred by adoption to another country (Scotland), and start under a new but false shape, into a fresh career of fame.” — *History of Ireland*, vol. i. p. 133.

The only known descendants of our hero, now known to exist, are the Dal-Cais, i.e. O'Briens of Munster and their correlatives. Cormac Cas, king of Munster, who married Samhair (Samaria), the daughter of Finn by Gráine, daughter of Cormac Mac Airt, monarch of Ireland, and had by her, according to the Irish genealogists, three sons, Tinne and Connla,

of whose race nothing is known, and Fearcorb, the progenitor of the Dal Cais, the hereditary enemies of the race of Conn of the Hundred Battles. After the death of Finn, the monarch Cairbre Liffechair, son of Cormac, the grandson of Conn of the Hundred Battles, disbanded and outlawed the Clanna Baeiscne, of whom Finn was then the head, and retained in his service their enemies, the Clanna-Morna, a military tribe of the Firbolgs of Connacht. The Clanna-Baeiscne then repaired to Munster to their relative, Fearcorb, who retained them in his service, contrary to the orders of the Irish monarch. This led to the bloody battle of Gabhra (near the Boyne in Meath), in which the two rival military tribes slaughtered each other almost to extermination. In the heat of the action, Oscar, the grandson of Finn (and son of Oisín,) met the monarch in single combat; but fell, and the monarch retiring from the combat, was met by his own relative Semeon, one of the Fotharta, (a tribe that had been expelled into Leinster) who fell upon him after being severely wounded in the dreadful combat with Oscar, and despatched him by a single blow.

Oisín and Caeilte Mac Ronain survived all the followers of our hero, and are fabled to have lived down to the time of St. Patrick (A.D. 432), to whom they related the wonderful exploits of Finn and his contemporaries. This, however, is incredible; but it is highly probable that both lived to converse with some Christian missionaries who preceded the great apostle of Ireland, and who found it difficult to convert them from their pagan notions.

There is a very curious dialogue, partly preserved in the book of Lismore, and partly in a MS. in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, said to have been carried on between Caeilte, son of Ronan, and St. Patrick. This dialogue, notwithstanding its anachronism, or perhaps rather misnomer, is of great value to the Irish linguist, topographer, and antiquary, on account of the curious ancient forms of the language which it preserves, and the various forts, mounds, sepulchres, plains, mountains, estuaries and rivers which it mentions by their primitive and mediaeval names.

Hoping that this tract will soon see the light under your auspices, as President of our Society,

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

JOHN O'DONOVAN.

To

William Smith O'Brien, Esq.

President of the Ossianic Society.

THE BOYISH EXPLOITS OF FINN, DOWN HERE.

HERE happened a meeting of valour, and contention of battle, respecting the chieftainship of the Fianns,[1] and the head-stewardship of Erin, between Cumhall,[2] son of Tréanmór, and Uirgenn, son of Lughaidh Corr, [one] of the Luaighne,[3] i.e. this Cumhall was of the Corca-oiche of Cuil-contuinn,[4] for of these the Hui-Tairsigh his tribe were [a subsection]. Torba, daughter of Eochaman [one] of the Ernaans, had been the wife of Cumhall, until he married Muireann Munchaemh, [Murinda of the fair neck]. The battle of Cnucha[5] was afterwards fought between them, i.e. between Cumhall and Uirgenn.

Daire Dearg, son of Eochaidh Finn, son of Coirpre Galach, son of Muiredhach Muinderg, and his son Aedh, were fighting the battle along with Muirgreim. Another name for this Daire was Morna Munchaim. The battle was then fought, Luichet and Aedh son of this Morna met together [in single combat] in the battle ; Luichet wounded Aedh, and destroyed one of his eyes, so that from this the name of Goll[6] [Luscus] adhered to him from that time forth. Luichet fell by Goll. The keeper of his own corrbholg[7] of séds [treasure bag] wounded Cumhall, and Cumhall fell by Goll son of Morna in the battle, and carried off his arms and his head ; and from this there was a fundamental hatred between Finn and the sons of Morna, concerning which the historian sang : —

“ Goll was son of Daire Dearg of fame,
Son of Eochaidh Finn of valiant deeds,
Son of Cairbre Galach of prowess,
Son of Muireadhach of Finnmhagh.[8]

This Goll slew Luichet of hundreds,
In the battle of Cnucha, no falsehood, —
Luichet Finn of noble chivalry,
By the son of Morna fell !

It was by him fell Cumhall the Great,
In the battle of Cnucha of embattled hosts
What they fought this stout battle for.
Was for the Fian leadership in Erin.

The Clanna Morna were in the battle.
And the Luaighni of Teamhair
For the Fiannship of the men of Fail was theirs
Under the hand of each valiant king.

The victorious Cumhall had a son ;
The blood shedding Finn of hard weapons,
Finn and Goll of great fame.
Mightily they waged war.

After this they made peace
Finn and Goll, of the hundred deeds,
Until the Banbh Sinna fell
On the plain at Teamhair Luachra,[9]

Aedh was the name of Daire's son,
Until Luichet wounded him with dexterity,
But since the stout son of Luaighne wounded him
He was called by the name of Goll.”

Cumhall left his wife pregnant, i. e. Muirenn,[10] and she brought forth a son, and gave him the name of Deimne. Fiacaill the son of Cuchenn, and Bodhmall the Druidess and Liath Luachra came to Muirenn and carried away the son, for his mother durst not keep him with her. Muirenn afterwards married Gleoir the Redhanded, king of Lamhraigle,[11] from which Finn is called the son of Gleoir. However Bodhmall and Liath taking the boy with them went to the forests of Sliabh Bladma,[12] where the boy was nursed secretly. This was indeed necessary, for many a sturdy stalworth youth, and many a venomous inimical hero and angry morose champion of the warriors of Luaighni, and of the sons of Morna, were ready to despatch that boy, and [also] Tulcha the son of Cumhall. But however the two heroines nursed him for a long time in this manner.

His mother came at the end of six years after this to visit her son, for it was told to her, that he was at that place, and she feared the sons of Morna for him, *i.e.* [might kill him.] But however, she passed from one solitude to another, until she reached the forest of Sliabh Bladhma [Slieve Bloom,] and she found the hunting booth [*hut*] and the boy asleep therein, and she afterwards lifted him and pressed him to her bosom, and she then pregnant [from her second husband,] and then she composed these quatrains caressing her son :

“ Sleep with gentle pleasant slumber, &c.” [13]

The woman afterwards bids farewell to the heroines, and asked them if they would take charge of him till he should be of heroic age ; and the son was afterwards reared by them till he was fit for hunting.

The boy came forth alone on a certain day, and saw the [the *pras lacha* with her brood of] ducks upon the lake. He made a shot at them[14] and cut off her feathers and wings, so that she died, and he afterwards took her to the hunting booth : and this was Finn’s first chase.

He afterwards went away with certain poets to flee from the sons of Morna ; and they had him [concealed] about Crotta.[15] These were their names, Futh and Ruth, and Regna of Mad Feada, and Teimle, and Oilpe, and Rogein. Here he was seized with the scurvy, so that he became a carrach [scald,] and was thence called Deimne Mael. There was a plunderer in Leinster at this time, by name Fiacuil, son of Codhna. Fiacuil came into Fidh Gaibhle[16] upon the poets, and killed them all except Deimne alone, who was afterwards with Fiacuil (in his house in a cold sheskin [marsh]. The two heroines came southwards to the house of Fiacuil, son of Codhna, in search of Deimne, and he was given to them ; and they took him from the south to the same place [where they had him previously].

He went forth one day alone [and never halted] till he reached Magh Life,[17] and on the green of a certain Dun [*fort*] there he saw youths hurling. He went to contend in agility or to hurl along with them. He came with them next day, and they sent the fourth of their number against him. He came again, and they sent the third of their number against him, and finally they went all against him, and he won one game from them all. What is thy name said they?

Deimne replied he. The youths tell this to the owner of the dun [*fort*.] “ Do ye kill him if he comes again, if ye are able,” said he. “ We are not able to do aught unto him,” replied they ; “ Deimne is his name.” “What is his appearance?” said he. “He is a well-shaped fair [*finn*] youth,” replied they, “ Deimne shall be named Finn therefore,” said he. And hence these young men used to call him Finn,

He came the next day to them, and joined them in their game, they attacked him all together, with their hurllets, but he made at them and prostrated seven of them, and [then] made off from them into the forests of Sliabh Bladhma.

He afterwards returned at the end of a week to the same place. What the youths were at [then] was swimming in the lake which was close by [the dun.] The youths challenged him to swim with them. He plunged into the lake to them, and afterwards drowned nine of them in the lake, and then made to Sliabh Bladhma himself. Who drowned the youths ? enquired all. Finn, replied they [i.e. the survivors]. And from this the name of Finn clung to him [among all who heard of this deed of drowning.]

He came forth on one occasion out beyond Sliabh Bladhma, the two heroines being along with him, and they perceived a fleet herd of the wild deer of the forest of the mountain. Alas ; said the two old women, that we cannot detain one of these with us. I can, [said Finn] and he ran upon them, and catching two bucks of them, brings them with him to his hunting booth.

After this he used to hunt for them constantly. Depart from us now, young man, said the female warriors to him, for the sons of Morna are watching to kill thee.

He went away from them alone [and halted not till he reached Loch Lein[18], and over Luachair,[19] till he hired in military service, with the king of Bentraighe.[20] He did not go by any name here, but there was not at this time a hunter like him, and so the king said to him : if Cumhall had left any son, methinks thou art he, but we have not heard of Cumhall having left any son, but Tulcha Mac Cumhaill, but he is in military service with the king of Albain.[21]

He afterwards bids farewell to the king, and goes away from him to Cairbrighe, at this day called Ciarraighe[22] [Kerry], and he staid with this king in military service. The king came one day to play chess. He [Finn] played against him, and won seven games in succession. Who art thou ? said the king. The son of a peasant of the Luaighni of Teamhair, replied he ; Not so, said the king ; but thou art the son whom Muirenn [my present wife] brought forth for Cumhall ; and do not be here any longer, that thou mayest not be killed while under my protection. After this he went to Cuilleann g-Cuanach[23] to the house of Lochan, a chief smith : he had a very comely daughter, Cruithne by name ; she fell in love with the youth. I will give thee my daughter, said the smith, although I know not who thou art. The daughter then cohabited with the unknown youth. Make lances for me, said the youth, to the smith. Lochan then made two spears for him. He then bade farewell to Lochan, and went his way. My son, said Lochan, do not go on the passage on which the boar called Beo is usually [to be] seen ; it has devastated the [whole of] Middle Munster. But the youth happened to go on the very pass where the pig was. The pig afterwards rushed at him ! but he made a thrust of his spear at it, and drove it through it, so that he left it lifeless, and he brought the head of the pig with him to the smith as a dower for his daughter. From this is derived Sliabh muice[25] in Munster.

The youth then went into Connaught to look for [his uncle] Crimall, son of Trenmor. As he went on his way he heard the wail of one [solitary] woman. He went towards her, and viewed the woman : The first tear she shed was a tear of blood, and the other was a gush of blood, so that her mouth was red. “ Thy mouth is red, woman !” said he. I have cause for it, said she : my only son was killed by a huge ugly hero, who came to me. What is thy son’s name ? said he. Glonda is his name, said she. From him Ath-Glonda and Tochar-Glondain Maenmhagh [26] are called, and from this Belderg the name Ath-beldeirg[27] remains ever since. Finn then went in pursuit of the hero, and they fought a combat, in which he fell by him [Finn.] The way he was situated was, he had the treasure bag with him, i.e., the [bag containing the] treasures of Cumhall. The person who fell here was Liath Luachra, he who first wounded Cumhall in the battle of Cnucha,

He now proceeds into Connaught, and finds Crimall, then an old man, in a desert there, and some of the old Fianns along with him, who were wont to chase for him. He gave him the Corrbholg, and told him the news from beginning to end : — how he had killed the possessor of the treasures. He bids farewell to Crimall, and goes forward to *Finéces* [who lived at the Boinn[28] to learn poetry. He durst not remain in any part of Ireland until he took to learn poetry, from fear of the sons of Uirgrena, and the sons of Morna.[29]

Seven years Finn-eges remained at the Boinn [Boyne] watching the salmon of Linn-Feic, [30] for it had been prophesied that he would eat the [sacred] salmon of Fec, and that he would be ignorant of nothing afterwards ! He caught the salmon, and ordered [his pupil] Deimne to roast it, and the poet told him not to eat of the salmon. The young man brought him the salmon after cooking it. Hast thou eaten any part of the salmon, young man ? said the poet. “ No,” replied the young man, but I burned my thumb, and put it into my mouth afterwards. What name is upon thee, youth ? said he. Deimne, replied the youth. “ Finn is thy name[31] youth,” said he, and it was to thee the salmon was [really] given, [in the prophecy] to be eaten [not to me], and thou art the Finn truly. The youth afterwards consumed the

salmon, and it was from this the [preternatural] knowledge was given to Finn, i.e., when he used to put his thumb in his mouth, and not through *Teinm Laegha* [poetical incantation,] whatever he had been ignorant of used to be revealed to him.

He learned the three compositions which signify the poets, namely the *Teinm Laegha*, [m] the *Imus for Osna*, and the *Dicedul dicennaib* ; and it was then Finn composed this poem to prove his poetry :

May-day[32] delightful time ! how beautiful the color ![33]
The blackbirds sing their full lay, would that Laighaig
were here
The cuckoos[34] sing in constant[35] strains, how welcome is
the noble
Brilliance of the seasons ever ; on the margin of the
branchy woods
The summer suail[36] skim the stream, the swift horses
seek the pool.
The heath spreads out its long hair, the weak fair bog-
down grows.
Sudden consternation attacks the signs, the planets in
their courses running exert an influence :
The sea is lulled to rest, flowers cover the earth.

[1] *Chieftainship of the Fians*, i.e. the leadership of the Irish militia.

[2] *Cumhall*. The best account of this military leader will be found in the battle of Cnucha, preserved in the book of Lismore.

[3] *Luaighni*, a famous military sept in Meath descended from Luaighni, one of the brothers of Conn of the hundred battles. *Ogygia*, part iii. c. 57.

[4] *Cuil Contuinn*, a territory situated on the borders of the present counties of Meath and Cavan.

[5] *Cnucha*. Connell Magheoghegan states in his translation of the annals of Clonmacnoise, A.D. 726, that this is the place called Castle-knock, [near the river Liffey, county of Dublin.]

[6] *Goll* is glossed *Caéch*, and means one-eyed, the same as the Latin *luscus*.

[7] *Corrbholg*, i.e. a round bag, *sed* means a jewel or any article of value.

[8] *Finnmhagh*, otherwise *Maghfinn*, a plain in the barony of Athlone, county of Roscommon, at this period possessed by the Firbolgs, of whom the Clanna-Morna were a sept.

[9] *Teamhair Luachra*, a place in Kerry not far from Castle Island, in the district of Sliabh Luachra.

[10] *Muireann*. This was very common as the proper name of a woman among the ancient Irish. It is explained in Cormac's Glossary, as meaning *mor-fhinn*, long-haired.

[11] *Lamhraighe*, a people of Kerry in the west of Munster.

[12] *Sliabh Bladhma*, i.e. the mountain of Bladhnia, (Ogygia III., 16.) now Slieve Bloom on the confines of the King's and Queen's Counties. It is sometimes called *Sliabh Smoil*. The summit of this mountain is called *Mullach Eireann*, the summit of Erin, and from it, the O'Dunnes have taken the motto of *Mullach Eireann abu* !

[13] The rest of this Lullaby is lost. Indeed it would appear from the shortness of the sentences, and the abrupt and flighty nature of the composition, that the whole story has been very much condensed, and in some places mutilated.

[14] *At them*. The original Irish is defective here. The words obviously omitted are supplied in brackets. In *Feis Tighe Chonain*, p. 129, it is stated that Finn in his first chase killed the *pras-lacha* (widgeon?), and her clutch of twelve young birds.

[15] *Crotta*, i.e. Crotta Cliach, now the Galty mountains in the south of the county of Tipperary.

[16] Fidh-Guibhle, now Feegile, in the parish of Cloonsast, north of Portarlinton, in the King's County. This was the name of a famous wood in Leinster, in which St. Berchan, the Irish prophet, erected his church of Cloonsast, the ruins of which still remain.

[17] *Magh Liffe*, i.e., the plain of the Liffey ; a very level plain in the county of Kildare, through which the river Liffey winds its course.

[18] *Loch Lein*, now the Lakes at Killarney in Kerry.

[19] *Luachra*, i.e., Luachair Deaghaidh, a district in the now county of Kerry, containing the two Pap mountains.

[20] *Beantraighe*, a district in South Munster, believed to have been coextensive with the barony of Bantry in the county of Cork.

[21] *Albain*, i.e., Scotland.

[22] *Ciarraighe*, now Kerry. The territory so called extended in ancient times only from Tralee to the Shannon. Its more ancient names would appear to have been Cairbrighe, or Corbraighe.

[23] *Cuilleann O'y-Cuanach*. This is the present name of Cullcn, in the county of Tipperary, near the borders of the county of Limerick. It originally belonged to the territory of Coonagh, now a barony, in the north-east of the county of Limerick.

[24] *Shabh Muice*. i.e., the Pig's mountain, now Slieve Muck, situated between the town of Tipperary and the glen of Aherlow.

[25] *Maenmhagh*, Moinmoy, a territory lying round Lough Reagh in the present county of Galway ; but the situations of *Ath-Glonda*, i. e. the ford of Glonda, and of *Tochar-Glunda*, the causeway of Glonda, are now unknown by these names.

[26] *Ath-Beldeirg*, i.e., ford of Red mouth, not identified unless it be Ballyderg.

[27] *The Boinn*, i.e. the river Boyne in Meath.

[28] Here ends folio 119 of the original MS. and on the upper margin of folio 120, in the handwriting of the scribe, is the following observation ; —

“ A Muire is fada go tic Emunn ón coinne.”
Mary [Virgin] it is long till Edmund comes from the meeting.

This was Edmund Butler for whom the MS. was transcribed.

[29] *Linn Feic*, i. e. the pool of Fee, a deep pool in the River Boyne, near *Ferta fer fecc*, the ancient name of the village of Slane, on this river.

[30] *Finn is thy name*. It appears that our hero had concealed from his master Finn-Egés that he had been known by the name of Finn, after he had drowned the nine boys in Magh-Liffe. But the poet finding that he had first tasted of the salmon of *Linn Feic* without intending it, saw that the ancient prophecy was fulfilled in him, and that his real name must be Finn. O’Flaherty states that our hero assisted his father-in-law Cormac son of Art, in compiling codes of laws ; and the Life of St. Columkille compiled by Manus O’Donnell, states that he possessed the gift of prophecy, and foretold the birth and future greatness of St. Columkille.

[31] *Teinm Laegha*. For a curious account of this poetical incantation as given in Cormac’s glossary, the reader is referred to the “ Battle of Magh Rath,” printed for the Archaeological Society, p. 46. It is said that St. Patrick abolished the *Teinm Laegha* and the *Imbas for Osna*, as being profane rites, and allowed the poets to use another called *Dichedal do chendaibh*, which was in itself not repugnant to Christianity, as requiring no offering to false gods or demons.

[32] May-day, cettemain, is glossed belltainee by O’Clery. It signifies the beginning of summer.

[33] *Color*, *cucht*, *gl. dath*, color, *gl. cuinnre*, *gl. gné*, face, countenance, mien.

[34] *Cai*, *gl. cuacha*, cuckoos.

[35] *Constant*, *cruadh*, *gl. dian*.

[36] *Summer suaill*, *gl. the swallows*. The words of this fragment, which was considered to be the first composition of Finn, after having eaten the salmon of the Boyne, is very ancient and exceedingly obscure. The translation is only offered for the consideration of Irish scholars, for it is certain that the meaning of some of the lines are doubtful. The poem obviously wants some lines at the end ; and Mr. Cleaver states, that the remaining portion of the manuscript is so defaced as to render it totally illegible.

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