

16th MAY, 1888.

At this meeting the following gentlemen were elected members of the Society :—The Rev. David Masson, M.D., 57 Albany Place, Edinburgh ; C. Maccallum, M.D., Elm Lodge, Anstruther, Fife ; Mr J. M'Rury, commercial traveller, Edinburgh ; and the Rev. Adam Gunn, Strathy, Thurso. Thereafter, the Secretary read an English translation of "Deirdire," contributed by Mr Alex. Carmichael, Edinburgh. Mr Carmichael's paper was as follows :—

DEIRDIRE.

[CLOSE TRANSLATION.]

There was once a man in Eirin of the name of Colum Cruitire—*Colum the Harper*. The man was an honest man, and he had a goodly portion of worldly means. He had a wife, but the husband and wife had no children.

The husband and wife reached a great age, so that they had no expectation of children forever.

What should Colum Cruitire hear but that a soothsayer was come home to the place, and, as the man was a hospitable man, he had a wish that the soothsayer should come near them. Whether it was that he was asked to come, or that he was come of his own accord, the soothsayer came to the house of Colum Cruitire.

"Art thou making soothsaying?" said Colum Cruitire. "I am making a little; art thou seeking soothsaying?" said the soothsayer. "Well, I do not mind should I take soothsaying from thee if thou hast soothsaying for me, and that thou wouldst be pleased to make it." "Well, I will make thee soothsaying; what kind of soothsaying wouldst wish to have?" "Well, the soothsaying that I myself would wish to have would be to know my condition, and what was to happen to me, were it permissible for thee to tell me." "Well, I am going out, and when I come in I will put a question to thee," and the soothsayer went out of the house.

The soothsayer was not long out when he came into the house again. "Hadst thou ever any offspring?" said the soothsayer to Colum Cruitire. "Well, no, there has never been offspring upon me or upon her whom I have, and we never expect any now; I have only, said Colum Cruitire, myself and my wife." "Well," said the soothsayer, "that surprises me much, and that I see in my augury that it is about a daughter of thine that the greatest

amount of blood will be spilt that has been spilt in Eirin for generations and ages past, and the three heroes of the greatest renown in the land shall lose their lives on her account." "Is that the soothsaying that thou art making me," said Colum Cruitire, with anger, he thinking that the soothsayer was mocking him. "Well, it is," said the soothsayer. "Well, if that be the soothsaying that thou art making me thou mayest keep it to thyself, for neither thou thyself nor thy soothsaying is worth much, and go thou thy way." "Well," said the soothsayer, "I make thee sure enough of this; I see it very clearly in my augury." "Well," said Colum Cruitire, "that cannot come to pass; I and my wife are of great age, so that it is not possible that there ever shall be offspring upon us. I do not revile thy soothsaying—I have no right to do that; but that is the thing of which I am sure that there never has been and that there never shall be offspring upon me or upon my wife. But that will suffice; more of thy soothsaying I will neither seek nor receive since thou hast made the soothsaying without sense." And Colum Cruitire allowed the soothsayer to go his way, whether or not he gave him a gift.

And the soothsayer went his way. That is not ridiculing the story; but the soothsayer was not long away when the wife of Colum Cruitire became pregnant; and as the wife grew more heavy the husband grew more dolorous, and vexed at himself that he did not make more conversation with the soothsayer the time he was talking to him. Colum Cruitire was under pain by day and care by night, that he himself was but a man without sense, without knowledge, without trusted friend, without back support in the world; and should this burden come upon him now, a thing likely to come, and he himself so much averse to it from first.

Colum Cruitire now believed that everything should come to pass as the soothsayer said in his augury, and he was in sore distress and dismay. He did not know in the wide world what to do to ward off the spilling of blood from the land, and it was the thought that grew in his head that, should the Good Being send this infant into the world—a thing he was likely to send—that he himself would need to put it away to a far-off place, where no eye would see a sight of it, and no ear would hear a sound of it.

Now the time of her delivery drew upon the wife of Colum Cruitire, and she was brought to the floor-bed. The woman was delivered, and she brought forth an infant girl. Colum Cruitire did not allow a living creature to come home to his house but the knee-woman alone. Colum Cruitire then asked the knee-woman if she herself would undertake to bring up the child, and to keep it

in hiding in some remote place, where no eye could see it and no ear could hear it. The woman said she would, and that she would make her utmost efforts.

Then Colum Cruitire got three men, and he led them to a great mountain far away, without knowledge, without hint to any person. He there betook him to dig a green conical mound inside out, and to line the hollow thus formed right round, so as to enable a small party to dwell therein comfortably.

Colum Cruitire then sent the knee-woman away with the infant to this small low sheiling among the great high hills in the wild distant desert, where no eye could see and no ear could hear Deirdire, for that was the name of the child. He made every preparation for the comfort of nurse and child, and he sent food and raiment with them to last them for a year and a day. And he told the knee-woman that food and clothing would be sent to them again at the end of the year, and that way from year to year as long as he was alive. And this was so.

Deirdire and her nurse-mother were dwelling in the low little bothy among the great high hills, without the knowledge, without the suspicion of any living one, or of anything that happened about them till Deirdire was fourteen years of age. Deirdire was growing as lithe and fair as the stately sapling, and as straight and symmetrical as the young moorland rush. She was above comparison of the world's women, shapely in her person, lovely in her beauty, and pure in her complexion, while her skin and her gait were like those of the swan of the lake and the hind of the hill. She was the blood-drop of finest features, of gracefullest form, and of gentlest mien between heaven and earth in Eirin. And whatever other colour or complexion she should have on before, no one looked in her face but she instantly went into blushes like glowing fire on the occasion.

The nurse-mother was teaching Deirdire all the knowledge she knew herself. There was no plant springing from root, nor bird singing from spray, nor star gazing from heaven, for which Deirdire had not a name. But one thing the woman did not wish—that Deirdire should have communion or converse with anyone of the living ones of the earth. But on a wild, wintry night of dark gloomy clouds, what should happen but that a venison-hunter, traversing the desert hills, and having lost his course and his companions, should lay himself down to rest on the green grassy knoll in which Deirdire dwelt. Drowsiness came down on the man from wandering the hills, and he fell asleep. The man was weak from fatigue and hunger, and benumbed with cold.

When he rested in the shelter of the green mound in which Deirdire abode sleep-wandering came upon the man, and he dreamt that he was at the abode of fairies, and the fairies making music therein. The hunter called in his dreams if there was any one in the house for the sake of the Good Being to let him in.

Deirdire heard the voice, and she said to the nurse-mother—
“Nurse-mother, what is that?” “Only a thing of little worth, the birds of the air astray from each other, and seeking one another; but let them hie them away to the forest of trees.” Another sleep-wandering came upon the man, and he called again in his sleep if there was anyone in the knoll for the sake of the Being of the Elements to let him in. “What is that, nurse-mother?” said Deirdire. “Only a thing of little worth, the birds of the flocks astray from each other, and seeking one another and home; but let them hie them away to the forest of trees.” Then another sleep-wandering came upon the man, and he called the third time in his sleep “if there is anyone in the knoll for the sake of the God of the Elements let me in, for I am benumbed with cold and sore with hunger.” “Oh! nurse-mother, what is that?” said Deirdire. “Thou needst not think there is aught there to give thee gladness, maiden,” said the nurse-mother. “Is there then but the birds of the air astray from one another, and seeking each other and home; but let them hie them away to the forest of trees. There is neither house nor home for them here this night.” “Oh! nurse-mother, the bird is asking shelter in the name of the God of the Elements, and thou thyself teacheth me that whatever is asked in His name should be done. If thou will not allow me to let in the bird, benumbed with cold and sore with hunger, I myself will doubt thy teaching and thy faith. But, as I believe in thy teaching and in the faith thou teachest me, I will arise and let in the bird.”

And Deirdire arose, took the bar off the door, and let in the hunter. She placed a seat in a sitting place, food in a feeding place, and drink in a drinking place, for the man who came home.

“Say away and take thy food, and thou needful of it,” said Deirdire. “Well, I was, indeed, needful of food and of drink and of warmth when I came home to this sheiling to-night,” said the hunter; “but may I never relish my health if these are not gone from me altogether on beholding thee, maiden.” “Oh! by thy food and clothing, thou man, who camest home, is it not upon thy tongue the talk is,” said the carlin. “It is not much for thee to keep thy mouth shut and thy tongue dumb on coming home here and obtaining the shelter of the dwelling on a cold wintry night.”

"Well," said the hunter, "I may do that, keep my mouth closed and my tongue silent, on coming home here, and receiving sup and shelter from thee, but, by thy father's hand, and thy grandfather's hand, and thine own two hands to free them, were some others of the world's people to see this blood-drop whom thou hast in hiding here, it is not long, oh King of the Earth and the Elements, that they would leave her here with thee." "Who are they, and where are they seen?" said Deirdire. "Well, I will tell thee that, maiden," said the hunter. "They are Naoise, the son of Uisne, and Aillean and Ardan, his two brothers." "And what like are they on being seen, should we see them?" said Deirdire. "Well, those are their names and descent, all that I saw and heard of them," said the hunter; "and the appearance of the men on being seen—their hair is like the raven's plume, their skin is like the swan of the wave, and their cheeks are like the blood of the speckled-red fawn, while their strength and their stateliness are those of the salmon of the rapid stream and the stag of the crested hill; while Naoise is taller by all above the shoulders than all the men of Eirin."

"However they are," said the foster-mother, "go thou thy way, and take thee hence, and oh! King of the Sun, and of the Moon, truly and verily small are my own obligations to thee, and to her who let thee in."

And the hunter went his way. Shortly after he left, the man thought to himself that Connachar, the king of Ulster, was lying down and rising up alone without a confidential love, without a conversational mate beside him, and that were he to see this blood-drop he might possibly bring her home to his house, and perhaps do a good deed to himself for telling him that there was such a damsel as this on the surface of the living dewy world.

And the hunter went straight and direct to the palace of Connachar. He sent a message in to the king that he would like to be talking to him were it his pleasure, The king answered the message, and came out to speak to the hunter. "What is the purport of thy message with me?" said the king to the man. "My own business with you, king," said the hunter, "is that I have seen the loveliest blood-drop that ever was born in Eirin, and I have come to tell you." "Who is she that blood-drop, and where is she seen, when she had not been seen before till thou hadst seen her, if seen her thou hast?" said the king. "Well, I have seen her, and I have seen her indeed," said the hunter; "but if I have, no one else can see her till he is led to the place where she dwells." "And wilt thou guide me to the place where

the damsel dwells, and the reward for thy guidance will be as good as the reward for thy telling," said the king. "Well, I will, oh king," said the hunter, "though probably my doing so may not be commended." "Thou shalt remain in this household to-night, and I and my friends will go with thee early to-morrow," said Connachar. "I will," said the hunter; and the hunter remained that night in the household of Connachar, the king of Ulster.

Connachar, the king of Ulster, sent word to all the men who were nearest of kin to himself, such as the three sons of his own paternal uncle, Fearachar, the son of Ro, and he told them his mind. Though early and soft were the songs of the birds of the bush, and the carols of the birds of the grove, yet earlier still were Connachar, the king of Ulster, and his band of trusted friends astir in the mild morning dawn of the gentle, joyous May, with an outpouring of dew on sapling, bush, and plant, going in search of the green sunny sheiling in which Deirdire dwelt. There was many a gay gallant of lithe, lively, lightsome step at leaving, of weak, wounded, waddled step on reaching there, from the greatness of the distance and the roughness of the way.

"There now, down on the floor of the glen, is the sheiling in which the maiden abides, but I will go no nearer than this to the carlin," said the hunter. Connachar and his band of trusted friends went down to the green sheiling wherein Deirdire dwelt, and they knocked at the door of the dwelling. The foster-mother said that no opening would be given to anyone, and that she was averse to any person molesting herself or her home. "Open thou the door of thy bothy, and thou shalt have yet a better house and hall than this when we reach home," said the king. "I do not want a better house or hall than my own little bothy were I let alone, and my permission for my lying down and my rising up left to myself alone. Not less than the word of a king or the force of a kingdom would drive me from my own humble house this night." "Open thou thy bothy door, and if thou wilt not open it with thy will thou shalt open it against thy will," said the king, growing angry. "I would be obliged to you," said the woman, "were you to tell me who commands me to open my bothy door?" "It is I, Connachar, the king of Ulster, and let not the matter be in darkness to thee longer." When the poor woman heard who was at the door she arose in haste and let in the king and all who could come of his band.

When Connachar saw the damsel of whom he was in search, he thought to himself that never in waking day or dreaming night saw he a blood-drop so lovely as Deirdire; and he gave her the

weight of his heart of love. There was nothing in his own mind, or in the minds of his men, from the beginning to the end of the matter, but to take Deirdire away on the summit of their shoulders be she willing or not. This was what was done, and Deirdire was raised on the summit of the shoulders of the heroes, and she and her foster-mother were carried to the palace of Connachar, the king of Ulster.

From the love that Connachar gave Deirdire he wished to marry her immediately whether or not she was willing to marry him. When the matter was placed before her she would not consent to it on any account, and that she never saw the features of living man till now. She had no knowledge of the duties of wife, nor of the manners of maiden, seeing that she never sat in gathering or in company before. Nor could she even sit in a chair, and that she never saw chair or people till now. From the way that Connachar pressed marriage upon Deirdire she said she would be obliged to him if he would give her a delay of a year and a day. He said he would, though hard to bear (the time), if she would promise to marry him at the end of the year. She did.

The king got teaching women to Deirdire, and merry, manly, modest, maidens to lie down, and to rise up, and to play, and to converse with her.

Deirdire was eident in maidenly acquirements, and diligent in womanly knowledge, and Connachar bethought to himself that he never with his bodily eyes saw a blood-drop so lovely and delightful as she.

What were Deirdire and her maidens but one day out on the hill behind the house enjoying the scene and drinking the sun. And whom should they see coming their way but three way-faring men. Deirdire is gazing at the men who are coming, and wondering at their appearance. As the men approach Deirdire remembers the words of the hunter, and she says to herself that these are the three sons of Uisne, and that this is Naoise, and he taller than all the men of Eirin.

The three brothers pass them by without heeding them, without looking above them at the maiden damsels on the hill. What but that the love of Naoise is become so implanted in the heart of Deirdire that she cannot resist going after him. She gathers up her garments, and she goes after the men who have passed by at the base of the hill, leaving her companions on the summit, be they annoyed or pleased.

Aillean and Ardan heard of the damsel whom Connachar had in his house, and they thought to themselves that if Naoise, their

brother, were to see her, he would have her himself, especially (literally, *seven times specially, seachd araidh*) as she was not yet married to the king. They saw the damsel coming after them, and they exhorted one another to walk well, the long distance they had to travel, and the darkness of night coming on.

Deirdire cried, "Naoise, thou son of Uisne, art thou going to leave me?" "What cry is that in mine ear that is not easy for me to answer, nor easy for me to refuse?" said Naoise. "No cry; only the cry of the lake-ducks of Connachar," said his brothers. "But let us hasten our feet and hurry our steps, the long distance we have to travel, and the dark shadows of night coming on." They do this, and they stretch the distance between themselves and her. Deirdire cried again "Naoise! Naoise! thou son of Uisne, art thou going to leave me?" "What cry is that that struck my ear and pierced my heart, so difficult for me to answer, nor easy for me to refuse." "No cry, nor cry; only the cry of the grey geese of Connachar," said his brothers. "But let us walk well, the long travelling we have before us, and the gloomy darkness of night coming on." Then Deirdire cried the third time, "Naoise! Naoise! Naoise! thou son of Uisne, art thou going to leave me?" "Whose is the pleading cry, the most musical to my ear that it ever heard, and the most hard to my heart that it ever struck," said Naoise. "No cry, nor cry; only the flute-like notes of the lake-swans of Connachar," said his brothers. "There is the third cry of distress," said Naoise, "and the vow of a hero be upon me if I can go one more step forward till I know whence comes the cry of distress," and Naoise went back.

Naoise and Deirdire met, and Deirdire gave the thrice three kisses to Naoise, and one kiss to each of his brothers. From the shame that was upon Deirdire, she was going into glowing blushes of fire, while the trembling hues of her ruddy cheeks were moving as fast as the tremulous leaves of the aspen tree of the stream, Naoise bethought to himself that he never saw in bodily form a drop of blood so lovely as this; and Naoise gave a love to Deirdire that he never gave to thing or to vision or to living form but to herself alone.

Naoise placed Deirdire on the summit of his shoulders, and he requested his brothers to walk well now, and that he would walk well.

Naoise thought to himself that it was not advisable for him to remain in Eirin, as he put Connachar, his own father's brother's son, against him, on account of this damsel, though she was not married to the king, and he returned to Albain. He reached the

side of Lochnaois, and he made his home there. He could kill the salmon of the rapid stream out at the door, and the deer of the crested hill out at the window. Naoise and Deirdire, Aillean and Ardan were dwelling in the dun, and they were happy while dwelling there.

Then came the end of the time when Deirdire was to marry Connachar, the King of Ulster. What is Connachar in his own mind but meditating to win Deirdire by the sword be she married to Naoise or not. And what work is Connachar engaged upon but preparing a great, eventful banquet. He sent invitations to his kinsmen throughout the length and breadth of Eirin all to come to the feast. He is thinking to himself to give a day of battle and of combat to Naoise, the son of Uisne, and to take the damsel from him. Connachar thought to himself that Naoise would not come should he write to him, and it was the scheme that grew in his head to send for his father's brother, Fearachar, the son of Ro, and to send him on an embassy to Naoise. He sent for him accordingly, and Connachar said to Fearachar—Say thou to Naoise, the son of Uisne, that I am preparing a great, joyous feast for my friends and kinsmen throughout the length of Eirin all, and that I shall have no peace by day or rest by night if he and Aillean and Ardan are absent from the feast.

Fearachar, the son of Ro, and his two sons went on their mission, and reached the tower in which Naoise dwelt on Locheitve-side. The sons of Uisne hail with warm welcome Fearachar, the son of Ro, and his two sons, and they asked of them the news of Eirin. "The best news I myself have for you," said the hardy hero, "is that Connachar, the King of Ulster, is preparing a great, joyous banquet for his friends and kinsmen throughout the realm of Eirin, and that he has vowed a vow by the earth beneath him by the sky above him and by the westward-passing sun, that he will not pause by day nor rest by night if the three sons of Uisne, as our father's brother's sons, do not come home to the land of their birth and the country of their inheritance and to the banquet he has prepared, and he has sent us an embassy to you." "We will go with you," said Naoise. "We will," said his brothers. "You will come," said Fearachar, the son of Ro, "and I and my three sons will be with you." "We will," said Boinne Borb (*violent current*). "We will," said Cuilinn Cruaidh (*hard holly*). "Better is their own lording in Albain than their householding in Eirin," said Deirdire. "Dearer is the hereditary home than the hereditary country," said Fearachar, the son of Ro. "Unhappy it is for a man, however good his means and however prosperous

his lot, if he does not see his own country and his own home when he rises up in the morning and when he lies down at night." "Unhappy," said Naoise; "dearer to myself is the birth heredity than the kin heredity; though more we would get here than there." It will be rude if you do not come with me," said Fearachar. "It will," said Naoise; "and we will go with you."

Deirdire was against going with Fearachar, the son of Ro, and she besought Naoise in every way not to go with him. She sang and said:—

I.

"The howling of the dogs is in mine ear,
The vision of the night is in mine eye;
I see Fearachar in league with a bribe,
I see Connachar in his tower without compassion,
I see Connachar in his tower without compassion.

II.

I see Naoise without his supports of battle,
I see Ailleán without his sounding shield,
I see Arden without his sword, without his targe;
And I see the house of Atha without luck, without joy.
And I see the house of Atha without luck, without joy.

III.

I see Connachar with a thirst for blood,
I see Fearachar under the shadow of guile,
I see the three brothers with their backs to the earth,
And I see Deirdire full of sorrow and full of tears.
And I see Deirdire full of sorrow and full of tears."

"I myself never liked and never yielded to the howlings of dogs nor to the dreams of women, Naoise, and as Connachar, the King of Ulster, has sent invitation of feast and of friendship to you, it will be unfriendly if you do not come, Naoise," said Fearachar, the son of Ro. "It will," said Naoise, "and we will go with you." "I saw another vision, Naoise, and explain it to me," said Deirdire:—

I.

Deirdire—

"I saw the three fair, white doves
With their three mouthfuls of honey in their mouths;
And, oh! Naoise, thou son of Uisne,
Enlighten thou to me the darkness of my dream?"

II.

Naoise—

“It is only the disturbance of sleep,
And woman’s sleep-wandering, Deirdire.”

III.

Deirdire—

“I saw the three ungenerous hawks
With the three drops of blood, the cold blood of heroes ;
And, oh ! Naoise, thou son of Uisne,
Enlighten thou to me the darkness of my dream ?”

IV.

Naoise—

“It is only the disturbance of sleep,
And woman’s sleep-wandering, Deirdire.”

V.

Deirdire—

“I saw the three black, lustrous ravens
With the three gloomy leaves of the yew tree of death ;
And, oh ! Naoise, thou son of Uisne,
Unravel thou to me the darkness of my dream ?”

VI.

Naoise—

It is only the disturbance of sleep,
And woman’s sleep-wandering, Deirdire.

“As Connachar, the King of Ulster, has sent us the message to come to the banquet, it will be unfriendly of us not to come, Deirdire.”

“You will come,” said Fearachar, the son of Ro ; “and if Connachar shows friendship to you, you will show friendship to him ; and if he will show enmity to you, you will show enmity to him, and I and my three sons will be with you.” “We will,” said Boinne Borb. “We will,” said Cuilinn Cruaidh. “I have three sons and they are three knights of surpassing fame, and harm or maltreatment that shall threaten you they will be with you, and I myself along with them.” And Fearachar, the son of Ro, gave his vow and his word in the presence of his arms that any harm or maltreatment which should threaten the sons of Uisne he and his three sons would leave no head on living body in Eirin,

despite sword and helmet, spear and shield, blade and shirt of mail at their best.

Deirdire was not willing to leave Albain, but she went with Naoise. Deirdire's tears were falling in showers as she sang—

Beloved land art thou, eastern land,
Albain with thy woods and thy lakes!
Sore is my heart going away from thee,
But I go with Naoise!

Fearachar, the son of Ro, did not stop till he got the sons of Uisne to come away with him despite the suspicions of Deirdire.

‘ They placed their curach on the sea,
They hoisted to her masts the sails,
And they reached on the second morrow
The fair-furrowed strand of Eirin.

As soon as the children of Uisne landed in Eirin, Fearachar, the son of Ro, sent information to Connachar, the king of Ulster, that the men, of whom he was in pursuit, were now come, and to see that he would act justly towards them.

“Well,” said Connachar, “I did not expect that the sons of Uisne would come, though I sent for them, and I am not quite prepared for them yet. But there is a house down yonder where I keep mercenaries, and let them go down there to-day, and my house will be ready for their reception to-morrow.” Fearachar, the son of Ro, told this to the sons of Uisne. “Well,” said Naoise, “since that is the place which the king has ordered for us we will go there, but sure it is not for too much love of us that Connachar is sending us among the mercenaries.”

They went down on that occasion, and they reached the quarters of the mercenaries. There were there huddled together fifteen twenties of mercenaries, and of mercenaries fifteen. There was not a man among them all who did not laugh a loud laugh on seeing these men coming home among them. And Naoise laughed a loud laugh louder than the loud laugh of all the others put together.

When the mercenaries got them all within they rose one by one, and each placed a bar on the door. When Naoise saw this he arose himself, and he placed two bars on the door. “Who is he, the great stalwart man that was come home among us here, that has made the two loud laughs, and that has placed the two bars on the door?” said the commander of the mercenaries. “I will tell thee that if thou will tell me this,” said Naoise. “What

was the cause that made all of you laugh, and that made each of you to put a bar on the door?" "I will tell thee that, hero. I have never seen men of your likeness, and of your brightness, coming home here, and I have never seen men, a mouthful of whose flesh and a drop of whose blood I would like so well as your own flesh and your own blood. But tell me, hero, why laughed you the two loud laughs, and why placed you the two bars on the door?" said the head man of the mercenaries. "Well, I will tell thee that," said Naoise. "I have not seen in the land of the living, nor in the company of the dead, nor among the common sons of men, people I would prefer to yourselves here—men to knock off your heads at one free stroke." And Naoise rose in his great standing strength, and he seized the mercenary of slenderest shank and of biggest head, and he stroked them down and he stroked them up on this side and on that, and before long he left not a mercenary man alive among them all. Then they cleared and cleaned the house, raised the bright and blazing fire, and they made themselves sufficiently reconciled till morning.

But Connachar was becoming impatient that he was not hearing how they were faring down in the house of the mercenaries. "Go thou down, foster-mother," said he, "and see if her own bloom and beauty are still upon Deirdire, and if she is what she was when she went away from me. If so, I will win Deirdire at the point of the lance and by the edge of the sword, despite the Feinne at their best; but if not, be she Naoise's own." The foster-mother went down to the quarters of the mercenaries, where the Clann Uisne and Deirdire dwelt. She had no way of looking at Deirdire, but through the small chicken-hole on the door. The woman gazed through the chicken-hole, and then returned home to Connachar. "Well, foster-mother, and how now does she look? Are her own bloom and beauty still upon Deirdire?" "It is clear and evident that it is through suffering and sorrow that the love of my heart and the treasure of my soul has been since she went away; there is not much of her own bloom or beauty this night upon Deirdire." I will need more proof than that yet ere I give up Deirdire," said Connachar. "Go thou down, Gealbhan Greadhnach (bright fire), thou son of the King of Scandinavia, and bring me up information are her own bloom and beauty on Deirdire. If they are, I will win her at the point of the blade and the edge of the sword, but if not, she may remain with Naoise himself," said Connachar.

The Gealbhan Greadhnach, the son of the King of Scandinavia, went down to the quarters of the mercenaries, where the Clann Uisne and Deirdire abode. He looked in through the chicken-hole on the door. That woman of whom he was in search was wont to go into glowing blushes of red fire on being looked at. Naoise glanced at Deirdire, and he observed that some one was looking at her from behind the door. Seizing a white die on the board before him, Naoise threw it through the chicken-hole on the door, and drove the eye of the Gealbhan Greadhnach out of his head with the die. The Gealbhan Greadhnach went back to the palace of Connachar, the king. "Thou wert cheerful and joyful going, but I see thee cheerless and joyless returning. What ails thee, Gealbhan? But hast thou seen her, and are her own bloom and beauty on Deirdire?" said Connachar. "Well, I have seen Deirdire, and I have seen, indeed, too, and, while looking at her through the chicken-hole on the door, Naoise, the son of Uisne, drove out my eye with the chessman in his hand. But of a truth and verity, though he drove out one eye, I would fain have continued to gaze at her with the other eye had it not been for my anxiety to come and tell thee of Deirdire." "That is true," said Connachar. "Let three hundred true knights of valour go down to the quarters of the mercenaries, and bring me up Deirdire, and kill the others.

"Pursuit is coming," said Deirdire. "I myself will go out and check the pursuit," said Naoise. "It is not thou but I who will go out," said Boinne Borb, the son of Fearachar, the son of Ro. "It was to me that my father entrusted that no injury or maltreatment should threaten you when he himself went home." And the Boinne Borb went out, and he killed a third of the knights. The king came out, and he called from above, "Who is that down on the plain slaying my people?" "I am, the Boinne Borb, the first son of Fearachar, the son of Ro." "I gave a free bridge to thy grandfather, a free bridge to thy father, and I will give a free bridge to thyself, too, and come over on this hand of me to-night," said the Connachar. "Well, I will take that from you," said the Boinne Borb; and he turned wither-shins, and went over to the king. "That man is gone over to the hand of the king," said Deirdire. "He went, but he performed good work before he went," said Naoise.

Then Connachar ordered three hundred full knights of valour to go down to the quarters of the mercenaries to bring up Deirdire, and to kill the others. "Pursuit is coming," said Deirdire. "I myself will go out and check the pursuit," said Naoise. "It is

not thou but I who will go out," said the Cuilinn Cruaidh, the son of Fearachar, the son of Ro. "It was to me that my father entrusted to allow no mishap or maltreatment to threaten you when he himself went home." And the Cuilinn Cruaidh went out, and he killed two-thirds of the company. Connachar came out, and he cried from above, "Who is that down on the plain slaying my people?" "I am the Cuilinn Cruaidh, the second son of Fearachar, the son of Ro." "I gave a free bridge to thy grandfather, a free bridge to thy father, a free bridge to thy brother, and I will give a free bridge to thyself, too, and come over on this hand of me to-night," said Connachar. "Well, I will take that," said the Cuilinn Cruaidh; and he went over to the hand of the king. "That man went over to the hand of the king," said Deirdire. "He went, but he performed gallant deeds before he went," said Naoise.

Connachar then ordered three hundred swift knights of valour down to the quarters of the mercenaries to bring up Deirdire and to kill the others. "The pursuit is coming," said Deirdire. "Yes, but I myself will go out and quench the pursuit," said Naoise. "It is not thou but I who will go out," said the Fillan Fionn (*Fillan the Fair*), "it was to me that my father entrusted to allow no injury or maltreatment to befall you when he himself went home." And the young hero, fresh-manly, fresh-noble, fresh-glorious, with his long lovely golden locks, now went out girded in his war weapons of hard battle and combat, and clothed in his hard clothing of combat, battle, and steel, that was smoothed and polished, glossy and glittering, scaly and brilliant, on which were the many figures of beasts, birds, and creeping things—*leigheann*, lion, tiger and griffin, brown eagle and swift hawk, and deadly serpent—and the young, glorious gallant thrashed three-thirds of the band. Connachar came out in haste, and demanded in wrath "Who is there down on the floor of the plain making slaughter on my people?" "I am the Fillan Fionn, the third son of Fearachar, the son of Ro." "Well, I gave a free bridge to thy grandfather, a free bridge to thy father, and free bridges to both thy brothers, and I will give thee a free bridge, too, and come over on this hand of me to-night." "Well, Connachar, I will not accept thy offer, nor thank thee for it. Much more do I prefer to go home, and to tell in the presence of my father the deeds that I have done than any one thing which I could receive from thee in that respect. And Naoise, the son of Uisne, and Ailleán and Ardan are as near akin of kin to thee as they are to me, though thou art so keen to spill their blood, and thou wouldst spill my blood, too, Connachar."

And the young, manly, handsome hero, with his wealth of golden, beautiful, brown hair, returned to the house, the dewy incense wreathing around his noble countenance of whiteness and redness of hues. "I am now going home," said he, "to tell to my father that you are safe from the hands of the king."

And the young, straight, handsome hero went away home to tell his father that the sons of Uisne were safe. This was about the separation of night from day, at the time of the morning dawn, and Naoise said that they should leave this house and return to Albain.

Naoise and Deirdire, Aillean and Ardan, left to return to Albain. Word went up to the king that the men, of whom he was in search, went away. Then the king sent for Duanan Gacha Draogh, a Druid of his own, and he spoke to him thus—"Great is the wealth that I have spent upon thee, Duanan Gacha Draogh, teaching thee schooling and learning and the secrets of Druidism, though those are away from me to-day without heed for me, without respect for me, without my ability to check them, without my power to turn them." "Well," said the Druid, "I will turn them till the return of those whom you sent in pursuit." And the Druidman placed a wood before them, through which no one could travel. But the sons of Uisne went through the wood without hurt or hindrance, and Naoise had Deirdire by the hand! "Though that is good it will not yet suffice," said Connachar, "they going without the binding of foot, without the shortening of step, without heed for me, without respect for me, and I without ability to cope with them, or power to turn them back this night."

"I will try another way with them," said the Druid, and he placed a grey sea before them on the green plain. The three brave brothers bared themselves and tied their clothing behind their heads, and Naoise placed Deirdire on the summit of his shoulders.

They stretched their sides to the stream,
Indifferent to them was land or water ;
The grey, swelling, shaggy sea,
Or the green, pleasing machair.

"Though that is good, Duanan, it does not turn the men," said Connachar. "They are going without heed for me, without respect for me, and me without ability to hinder them or to turn them back to-night."

"We will try another way with them yet," said the Druidman. And the Druidman froze the grey, shaggy sea into hard,

jagged lumps the sharpness of swords on some sides and the venom of serpents on others. Then Ardan cried that he himself was becoming tired and nearly exhausted. "Come thou and sit on my right shoulder, thou brother of my love," said Naoise. And Ardan came and he sat on the right shoulder of Naoise. But he was not long there when Ardan died; but, though dead, Naoise did not let him go. Then Aillean cried that he himself was becoming tired and nearly exhausted. When Naoise heard the confession he heard the sore sigh of death, and he desired Aillean to hold on to him and that he would bring him to land. But Aillean was not long when the weakness of death came upon him, and his hold relaxed. When Naoise looked and saw that his two beloved brothers, whom he loved so well, were now dead, he cared not whether he himself were dead or alive, and heaving the heavy sighs of death his heart rent.

"Those are now past," said Duanan Gacha Draogh to the King, "and I have done as thou wished me. The sons of Uisne are now dead, and they shall trouble thee no more, while thou hast thy sweetheart, and thy wife-to-be, hale and whole."

"The honour of that is thine, and the gain mine, Duanan. I call it no loss all that I spent in giving thee schooling and learning. Now, dry the sea, so that I may behold Deirdire," said Connachar. And Duanan Gacha Draogh dried the sea, and behold the three sons of Uisne are lying dead together side by side on the green, smooth machair, and Deirdire leaning over their corpses shedding showers of tears.

Then the people gathered together round the corpses of the heroes, and they asked the King what should be done to their bodies. It was the order that the King gave to dig a pit and to bring the three bodies together side by side.

Deirdire was sitting on the bank, and constantly asking the workmen to dig the grave broad and smooth. When the bodies of the brothers were laid in the grave Deirdire said:—

"Lie thee over, O Naoise of my love;
Close thee Ardan over to Aillean;
If dead had consciousness,
Ye would make room for me."

They did this. Then Deirdire leapt into the grave, and lying down close to Naoise, she was dead by his side.

The wicked King ordered her body to be lifted out of the grave and to be buried on the other side of the loch. This was done as

the King commanded, and the grave was closed. Then a young pine grew from the grave of Deirdre ; and a young pine grew from the grave of Naoise, and the two young pines bent towards one another and twined together over the lake. The King commanded that the two young pines should be cut down, and this was done twice ; but they grew again, and the wife whom the King married persuaded him to cease his persecution of the dead.