

only distinguished the chieftain. The three polished pebbles, as before observed, were probably amulets.

Nothing is known of the history or ancient name of Ballon Hill. I have applied to that generous assistant of every student of Ireland's history and antiquities—Dr. O'Donovan, but in vain. He has never met a notice of the spot, but is of opinion, that, from its proximity to Dunrigh, a royal residence of the kings of Leinster, it may have been the cemetery of the Pagan princes of that district of Ireland.

FOLK-LORE.—No. I.

PORCINE LEGENDS.

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THE old Irish manuscripts which circulate amongst the better class of our peasantry are generally collected into books bound after a rustic fashion, each volume being supplied with a list of its contents. In examining these lists, the title of one particular composition will frequently meet the eye, and must, therefore, have been highly prized by the transcribers. This is one, which, as it embodies and localizes a section of oral legends which prevail throughout the south of Ireland, may form a suitable introduction to the subject of folk-lore. The tract to which I allude is divided into two parts, of which the first (though sufficiently voluminous) is only an introduction; it is called the "Adventures of Toraliv M'Stairn." The second contains the achievements of the three sons of that hero, and is technically called the "Triur Mac," or the Three Sons. The substance of the whole story is this:—Toraliv was a nephew of the king of Denmark, and having become enamoured of a lovely woman, of whom he caught a casual glance, goes in search of her to various countries, and at length finds her in Ireland, at Tara, in the reign of (our Haroun al Radschid) Cormac Mac Art. She is daughter of a Tuatha de Danann nobleman, and is married to Toraliv, by whom she becomes mother, at one birth, of three sons—Crohan, Sal, and Daltheen. The father and mother go from Ireland in the "good ship" called the Mermaid, formerly the property of Mananan Mac an Lir. Toraliv having conquered many kingdoms and empires, loses his wife, becomes tired of war, and ends his days as a hermit. His wife, Fionabhartagh, dies, having given birth to a daughter in the land of the Amazons. Meantime the three sons are sent to be reared in Kerry, under the charge of the Gruagach of Slieve Mis. When they have finished their elementary course,

the Gruagach looks about for a suitable college ; and here begins the mythic portion of the tale. We are told that when the Fir Volgans reigned in Ireland, the land was overrun with pigs, which committed vast depredations. The Tuatha de Dananns on conquering the country extirpated all these animals, except one furious herd which devastated the maritime districts of the county of Clare by day, and retired at night to an island in Malbay, called Muc Inis, now Mutton Island. To root them out of this place of resort, was found beyond the human energies of the Tuatha de Dananns, who at length had recourse to magic, and so raised a violent convulsion of the elements, by which they finally succeeded. For a time, however, one ferocious boar withstood all their efforts ; his name was Matal ; his abode was on an island, now Mattle rock, almost denuded of earth by the enchantment brought to bear on it, when Matal was swept into the waves. The Tuatha de Dananns having relieved the country of the presence of these dreadful boars, selected their great resting-place as an eligible site for a college, on account of its seclusion, and for other advantages which it possessed. To this college at Mutton Island, all the young noblemen of their race resorted for many ages, and thither went Gruagach of Slieve Mis, with his three pupils. Like all heroes they excelled their school-fellows in the quick acquisition of all natural and supernatural learning ; finally they became better informed than their masters. On leaving college, their old guardian of Slieve Mis gave them one strict injunction, which was, that neither of them should attempt any achievement singly ; all three should meet danger and glory together. They went in search of adventures, and having travelled (as we perceive by the maps, about nine miles) as far as Bhuaille na Greine, they found a congregation of sun-worshippers offering sacrifice at an altar—the spot indicated by the MS. is exactly where a “leaba Diarmuid” now stands, lower on the mountain than Lough Bhuaille na Greine, which lies between it and the celebrated Ogham inscription on Callan mountain. They appear to have joined in the sacrifice, and whilst so engaged, a huge boar made its appearance, walking slowly up the hill, to his usual haunt on the summit of Slieve Collain (this animal had his den or sty at a place called Poul-Gorm-liath on the north side of the mountain). The day was very warm, and so the animal walked slowly ; when he came abreast of where the sacrifice was going on, he perceived the smoke and smelt the blood of the victims. He turned his head in the direction of the assembly, whereupon they were all thrown into utter consternation ; but the animal continued his course without molesting them. This was a favourable opportunity for the young heroes to signalize themselves, for the boar was as destructive as any of those already disposed of—they followed, passed him, and turning round confronted him, with their three spears pointed at him. They slew him, and when the sun-worshippers perceived their success, they crowded round the three sons, but were afraid to look at the boar

though dead—he must have been as hideous an object as the Erymanthean boar. They soon so far recovered that they all joined in bringing the dead body to the altar, and making of it an offering to the sun. The three sons soon heard of another nuisance which infested the country. This was a frightful dragon, whose den was on an islet in the lake called Doo-Lough, south of Bhuaille-na-Greine. They also destroyed this frightful monster, an ollaphiast, with sixty legs at each side of her body. Her name was Farbagh: she was one of the three sister dragons, whose names were Dabran, Farbagh, and Cathach, the offspring of the all-devouring sow; their father having been gate-keeper of the infernal regions. The red demon of the west of Ireland was their nurse. This Farbagh had been placed at Doo-Lough, by a Fir Volgan druid, to guard an enchanted palace in the bottom of the lake, then inhabited by a king, his family, and a large concourse of courtiers. (There is a Dun Farbagh on the Arran islands). The elder sister dragon was a guardian round Leim Cuncullion, now Loop Head, of whom hereafter. The youngest sister, Cathach, had her abode on an island in the Shannon, named from the dragon Inis Cathig, now Scatterry Island. The three heroes are now called upon to free the country from another dreadful scourge, the wild cat of Craig-na-Seanean, near Doo-Lough. This animal had across its forehead a figure of the moon, at the extremity of its tail was a sharp nail; it devoured hundreds of human beings, whose bones formed a mound outside the den. When the three sons appeared beneath the cliff in which the den was, the cat, on smelling them, looked down, and, determined on killing them, precipitated herself from the height, and was received by the heroes on the points of their spears. They then brought the body to the ground, and cut it into small particles. The congregation, judging of the success of the champions, repaired to the spot and burnt the fragments of the wild cat, for fear of a plague. They all return in happiness to Bhuaille-na-Greine, where the heroes remain to partake of the hospitality of the people. Meantime their fame spreads through all Ireland and reaches even the ears of the monarch. The three sons now determine to visit their grandfather, who resides in the island of Cove; the first night they rested at the island of the Calf, now called Ennis, passing across the Ballyhoura mountains they arrived at the seat of their maternal ancestors. Here they meet with a most joyful welcome, and are visited by all the Tuatha de Danann nobility. After some time it was agreed upon by all parties that the heroes should travel in search of their parents. They took shipping in the enchanted vessel already mentioned, and, after many exploits, returned to Ireland loaded with riches, and bringing with them, from the Amazons, their sister, who was named Aonmna (*recte* Aonbhean, the only woman). They go to a great meeting at Tara, where Aonbhean is seen by Diarmuid O'Duibhne, who, as was his wont, falls in love with her. The Tuatha de Danann race have a horror of the Fenians, and the young heroes determine on concealing

their sister from his pursuit. For this purpose they repair to the south-west point of the county of Clare, and here they erect three forts, one for each brother, and another for the sister, to whose protection they mean to dedicate their lives; and, still further to secure her, they place the dragon, Dabran, round her abode, so as that no one could land without being devoured by it. Meantime, Diarmuid, not being able to meet with the fair Aonbhean, falls into a state of despondency, and repairs for comfort to Aongus, of the banks of the Boyne, the great philosopher and necromancer of the age, who anticipates his tale of woe, prescribes a remedy, informs him where the object of his love is concealed, gives him a ring and a square wax candle, tells him to go to Brandon Head, in Kerry, opposite the Leim Concullion, where the lady's fort is built, tells him to watch the ring day and night, shows him a precious stone of a red colour set in the ring, tells him of the danger of encountering the serpent, and charges him not to venture on his enterprise of abduction until he shall see the colour of the ring change from red to green.

Diarmuid takes his departure, retires with one companion, an attendant, watches for the usual space of a year and a day at Brandon Head, the ring changes colour, he betakes himself to a small skiff, crosses the Shannon, lands on a rock, now called Diarmuid and Grainne's Rock, lights his square wax candle, whereupon, according to Aongus' prophecy, the serpent falls asleep; the brothers are absent on an expedition against certain remnants of the Fir Volgans; he surprises Aonbhean, whom he seizes and bears to his skiff, bringing with him the magical missile of Lughadh Lamhfada, which, like the boomerang, returned to the hands of the person throwing it. When half-way across the Shannon's mouth the square wax candle burns out, Dabran the ollaphiast awakes and pursues him, he throws the magical ring into her yawning throat, which, as Aongus foretold, deprives her of one-third of her strength; still she pursues—he wounds her repeatedly with the magical missile, and, finally, she is killed, and her enormous corpse extends along the ocean, a prey to multitudes of sea birds. The dragon sister at Scatterry perceiving that Dabran had been killed, proceeds to lay waste the country on both sides of the Shannon from the sea to where Limerick now stands, and for a whole year no boat or ship dare venture on the Shannon. When Crohan, Sal, and Daltheen returned in triumph from their expedition against the Fir Volgans, they found what had happened, and such was their grief that they walked down from the cahir of Aonbhean and precipitated themselves into the sea over the cliffs.

Such is the tragical finale of the three sons. Nothing is said of the subsequent career of Diarmuid, after this episode, in his biography, nor do we know how long his attachment to Aonbhean lasted; or how soon after these events the prophecy was fulfilled which had been uttered at the time of his birth, namely, that he would be killed by a boar. It is scarcely necessary to point out to the Irish archæologist

the coincidence in the particulars of the deaths of Adonis and of Diarmuid, each killed by a boar, contrary to the injunctions of his goddess or lady love.

If any interest is found in the story of the three sons, it is necessary to explain that one fact connected with its authorship is calculated to dull its archæological effect. A correspondence with a clergyman in the county of Clare shows that this celebrated romance was written not more than one hundred years since, by a Mr. Comyn, of Milford, in that county. This information is conveyed in a letter from a learned antiquary, the Rev. E. P. Barry, P.P. of Kilmurry.

The foregoing sketch is, however, divested of any incidents which are not in some measure corroborated by their similarity with well known oral legends of other places, from which it may be concluded that this romance is formed from the folk-lore of the county of Clare. The topographical terms, at least, exactly correspond at this day, as may be seen in all instances, and, particularly, in the names of Cahir Crohan, Cahir Saul, Lis Doon Dalheen, and Cahir-na-heanmna, as they appear in Sheet No. 71 of the Ordnance Survey Map of the county of Clare. These forts, and the other places named, were probably associated in oral tradition with some fables similar to those wrought into Mr. Comyn's story. The stories of the boar, the dragon, and the cat prevail all over Ireland, in the main features identical with the details in the "Three Sons." One instance suggests itself, of which the following is a brief sketch: There was once a king whose name was Olioll oll mucaid, that is, Olioll of the great pigs (he could not have been a monarch, as we have not the name in our chronological list, though we have Ængus Ollmucka); the reason why this king was so called, was, that in his reign there prevailed all over Ireland a remarkably large breed of pigs, which remained for many ages, "till at long last" the people got tired of them, and they were driven out from every place but Imokilly (this barony runs west from Youghal Bay to Cove Harbour, having the ocean in the south). Imokilly is said to have been called "Gorm Liathain" (which would remind one of the Poul Gorm Liath, the den of the Sliabh Collain boar). Some *seannchaidhes* say its right name was Ibh Muck Olla, a name given it by the people of other parts of Ireland, because it was the only place where the great pigs were preserved (a kind of Irish Bœotia, where the preservation of the sacred ox seems to have elicited the ridicule of Greece, the "learned Thebans" being residents of the city of the heifer). The first of the great pigs that came to Imokilly gave name to the glen through which he came from Ibh Liathain, it is called Glen O'Leihe, which we are told is the glen of the liath or boar. In the course of ages all the great pigs were at last driven out of Imokilly, except two sows and a hog. One sow had her lair or stye at a place thence called Crobally (cro, a stye), the hog resided at a hill called Cnock-an-Chullaig (from collach, a hog), a road is pointed out by which he walked every day to meet the sow at a spot

called Kilamucky. "Between himself and the sow the country was devastated and spoiled. People's lives were not worth having through the means of them." The story goes on to say that matters continued in this state until the arrival of the Geraldines, the first of whom determined to kill the monster. In this encounter the circumstances have certain features of resemblance with the story of the three sons; but, after he had killed the boar, he left the dead animal on the spot, and the decay of the carcass caused a pestilence which swept away thousands of people; at length an effort was made, and the body was buried in a coffin made of large stones (this was a megalithic monument, erased in 1844) at Kilamucky, near Castlemartyr, the ancient seat of the Fitzgeralds of Imokilly. After the boar was buried at Kilamucky, the sow disappeared from her sty at Crobally, and was never more seen. But the other sow, whose sty was at Cnock-an-na-Mbhainbh (the mound of the sucking pigs), "could not be rooted out," she used to go about "wasting the country far and near," until at last the people "put their heads together," and watching their opportunity, one day when the sow was ranging the country, they made a mess which was eaten by the young pigs, and by which they were poisoned. When the sow returned in the evening and saw the bainbhs all dead, she "made off with herself in the direction of Lismore" and was never seen after. As to the Imokilly Geraldines, though the slayer of the boar was known to have thereby done great benefit to the country, a certain undefinable horror was attached to the deed, which obtained for him the name of Madra-na-Folla (the blood-hound); his descendants are to this day identified as the Fulla family; their crest is the boar's head, conspicuous on their monument in an old church in Castlemartyr demesne.

Whether there be any association with the foregoing fables in a practice which formerly prevailed cannot be ascertained; but it is not many years since, on Samhain's eve, 31st October, a rustic procession perambulated the district between Ballycotton and Trabolgan, along the coast. The parties represented themselves as messengers of the Muck Olla, in whose name they levied contributions on farmers; as usual they were accompanied by sundry youths, sounding lustily on cows' horns; at the head of the procession was a figure enveloped in a white robe or sheet, having, as it were, the head of a mare, this personage was called the Lair Bhān, "the white mare," he was a sort of president or master of the ceremonies. A long string of verses was recited at each house. In the second distich were distinctly mentioned two names savouring strongly of Paganism, the archæological reader will understand what they were. Though they did not disturb the decorum of the assembly, they would not have been permitted to be publicly uttered elsewhere; for those people, and, indeed, all our peasantry are very free from any coarse expressions. The other verses purported to be uttered by a messenger of the Muck Olla, in which it was set forth, that, owing to the goodness of that being, the

farmer whom they addressed had been prosperous all his life, that his property would continue as long as he was liberal in his donations in honour of the Muck Olla; giving a very uninviting account of the state into which his affairs would fall should the Muck Olla withdraw his favour, and visit him with the vengeance certain to follow any illiberal or churlish treatment of his men. Whether it was owing to the charm of the poetry or the cogency of the appeal, the contributions were in general on a liberal scale, every description of gifts was bestowed, milk, butter, eggs, corn, potatoes, wool, &c. To distribute the accumulated store, it was the regular practice for a sort of rural merchant or two to await the return of the group and purchase the whole stock, distributing his share to each according to a conventional arrangement of their respective ranks. These scenes were enacted at night. Could such contributions have been levied in the open day, aided by physical force and the use of weapons? In such a case the "laying waste the country round" becomes an intelligible expression. Could the Muck Olla have been a deity, exhibited, as in Egypt of old, as a living animal? Can the rural merchant be a substitute for some lingering druid, who maintained his ground long after the establishment of Christianity?

To enter on such queries would lead to too long a digression from the subject of folk-lore. It must be observed, that as yet we are without a history of Pagan Ireland, or any work upon the subject, but we read that Ireland was once called Muck Inis, and for aught we know, it might have been then ruled by a hierocracy of a religion bordering on, if not identical with the worship of Vishnu in his Varaha or boar incarnation. We read in the 8th volume of the "Asiatic Researches," p. 302, that Varaha-Dwipa was Europe. Why it was so called is given at p. 361, where we read that "Vishnu resides in Europe in the shape of a varaha or boar, as the chief of a numerous offspring (or followers) in that shape."

However out of place it may appear to introduce such a quotation into the humble subject of folk-lore, it must be remembered that our oral legends tell some facts or other in a language which we do not profess to understand, and that it is, therefore, pardonable to seek in every quarter for means of rendering them intelligible.

The extract from Major Wilford's essay on the sacred islands of the west, has a startling resemblance to the Imokilly legend of the Muck Olla. Could the space allotted to this paper permit a minute comparison of our oral legends with those which were once manifestly "folk-lore"—the mythic adventures of classic demigods—many equally startling coincidences would appear. Hercules slew the Erymanthian boar. We find Fionn, in our oral legends, slaying boars all over Ireland: at Glen Turkin in Imokilly he killed a monstrous Turc, whence the name Glen Turc Fin; during his sojourn at Bally Fin, a few miles to the east on the same coast, he freed all that neighbourhood from the devastations of those animals. Having cleared the coast of

Imokilly from them, he went across Cork harbour, and landing in Kinalea, took up his abode at Rath Fin, now Rafeen. His successes here were triumphant, for all his warriors assembled at Fathach-na-Laoch (now Faha Lay) and assisted him in his exploits. He then went along the coast into the maritime barony of Carberry, and fixed his residence at Dun Fin (now Duneen), where he slew a frightful boar at Muckross. In Greece, Meleagar and his contemporary warriors assembled for the purpose of slaying the Calydonian boar.

Can all these myths have one meaning? Do they point at a suppression of a heathen sacerdotal rule, which had rendered itself intolerable to the age? One more extract may be permitted, it is from that popular work, *Household Words*, in No. 67, 5th July, 1851, p. 351, we read a minute description of a Chinese temple, after which the writer proceeds—"Our guide next conducted us to the sanctuary of the Holy Swine—for the animal which the Mohamadan holds in utter detestation, the Chinese deify. The interior chiefly consists of a handsome stone hall; . . . The holy swine are so watchfully tended and abundantly fed, that they are usually killed with kindness and die a premature death. At the time of my visit the sanctuary contained only one happy pair; and I was informed that there are seldom more than six of the animals living at a time." Tedious as all these references may appear, they are only a few specimens of what might be given on this curious subject.

As regards Irish folk-lore, it may be necessary to remark that our topographical terms go hand in hand with it. Of this the curious reader may easily satisfy himself, if he will merely ascertain the various Irish names of the boar genus, and then cast his eyes over the Ordnance Survey maps.

Returning to Mr. Comyn's romance of the Three Sons of Toraliv, it is needless to say of the dragons that those animals are associated with traditions at almost every mountain lake in Ireland; but it is not generally known that similar fables will be found amidst the "busy haunts of man" at those spots in our rivers where the tide-waters end. Such places are called "Poul-a-choire" (Anglicised, Poul-a-Kerry). "Choire" is a cauldron, for the story says that such an utensil is there turned down upon a great serpent which is constantly endeavouring to release itself.

On the south coast the furious wild cat is very familiarly known, and in many places his den is pointed out. In a word, the romance of "the Three Sons" comprehends most of the animals which "laid waste the country round." If the details above given respecting them should be found interesting, it is to be hoped that the "folk-lore," relative to the beneficent animals which "give milk to all the country round," will prove still better worth attention.