

The fate of the twenty-seven men and the reason why none dared to wound the Ulstermen when they were in their debility.

‘On another occasion the Ulstermen were in their debility. ‘Among us,’ said Fergus, ‘women and boys do not suffer from the debility nor does anyone Cú Chulainn and his father, and so none dares to shed their blood for whosoever wounds them at once suffers himself from the debility or he wastes away or his life-span is shortened.’’

‘Twenty-seven men came to us from the Isles of Faiche. While we were suffering the debility they climbed over into our backcourt. The women in the fort cried out in warning. The boys who were in the playing-field came on hearing the cries, but when they saw the dark gloomy men, they all fled except Cú Chulainn alone. He cast hand-stones at them and belaboured them with his hurley. He killed nine of them but they dealt him fifty wounds, and then they went off’.

‘If a man did those deeds when he was five years old, it were no wonder that he should have come to the marches, and cut off the heads of yon four men.’

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