

The Fight between Eógan mac Durthacht and Conchobar

‘There was strife between the Ulstermen and Eógan mac Durthacht. The Ulstermen went to battle while Cú Chulainn was left behind asleep. The Ulstermen were defeated. Conchobar and Cúscraid Menn Macha and many others besides were left on the field. Their groans awoke Cú Chulainn. Then he stretched himself so that the two flag-stones which were about him were smashed. Bricriu yonder witnessed this happening,’ said Fergus. ‘Then he arose. I met him in front of the fort as I came in severely wounded. ‘Hey! Welcome! master Fergus,’ said he. ‘Where is Conchobar?’ ‘I do not know,’ said He went on his way then. The night was dark. He made for the battlefield. He saw in front of him a man with half a head carrying the half of another man on his back.’

“‘Help me, Cú Chulainn!’ said he. ‘I have been wounded and I have brought half of my brother on my back. Take a turn with me in carrying him.’ ‘I will not,’ said he. Whereupon the other threw the burden he was carrying to him, but Cú Chulainn cast it off. They wrestled then and Cú Chulainn was thrown. He heard the war- goddess crying from among the corpses. ‘Poor stuff to make a warrior is he who is overthrown by phantoms!’ Whereupon Cú Chulainn rose to his feet, and, striking off his opponent's head with his hurley, he began to drive the head like a ball before him across the plain’.

“‘Is my master Conchobar on this battle-field?’ Conchobar answered him. Cú Chulainn went towards him and saw him in the ditch with the earth around him on all sides hiding him. ‘Why have you come to the battle-field’ said Conchobar, ‘where you may die of fright?’ He lifted Conchobar out of the ditch then. Six of our strong men in Ulster could not have lifted him out more courageously. ‘Go before us to yonder house,’ said Conchobar, ‘and make a fire for me there.’ He kindled a big fire for him.’

“‘Well,’ said Conchobar, ‘if I now had a roast pig, I should live.’ ‘I will go and fetch one,’ said Cú Chulainn. He went off then and saw a man at a cooking-pit in the middle of the wood, with one hand holding his weapons, the other cooking a pig. Great was the fearsomeness of the man. Nevertheless he attacked him and carried off his head and his pig. Afterwards Conchobar ate the pig. ‘Let us go to our house,’ said Conchobar. They met Cúscraid mac Conchobair. He too bore severe wounds, Cú Chulainn carried him on his back. The three of them went on to Emain Macha.’