

Chapter V

§ 29. Once more the hall became a babel of words, the women lauding their men. Then essayed Conall and Loigaire and Cuchulainn to stir up dissension. Sencha, son of Ailill, got up and shook his sceptre. To him the Ultonians gave ear, and then to restrain the ladies he made speech:—

“I restrain ye, ladies of Ulster, noble in name and in glory;
Cease ye your words of contention, lest the mien of men folk be paler,
In keenness of conflict striving, amid vainglorious combat;
Through guile of women, meseemeth, men’s shields are wont to be splintered,
In frays the hosts of the heroes are oft contending in anger;
To woman’s whims it is owing this use and wont among men folk—
They bruise what there’s no upbinding, and attack what they have not attained to:

Heroines gallant and glorious, and noble ones, I restrain ye.”

§ 30. Then Emer spake and made answer:—

“Fitting for me, meseemeth, to speak as the wife of a hero
Who combineth in natural union graces of mind and of body,
Since ever his teaching was finished and learning to him came easy. [8]

.....

None will be found who will equal his age, his growth, and his splendour:
Of a line that is long descended, he speaketh with grace and with order;
A brave and a valiant hero, like a fury he fights in the tumult,
Dexterous of aim and so agile, and quick and sure at the hunting;
And find ye a man among men folk, a mould that may match with Cuchulainn!”

§ 31. “Sooth, lady,” quoth Conall the Victorious, “let that famous fellow (lit. gillie of feats) come here that we may inquire of him.” “No,” quoth Cuchulainn. “I am to-day weary and done up. I will not hold a duel till after I have had food and sleep.” In sooth that was really so, inasmuch as it was the day on which he had fallen in with [his steed] the Grey of Macha by the side of the Grey Linn at Sliav Fuait. On its having come out of the loch, Cuchulainn crept up to it and put his two hands around the steed’s neck till they twain got a-wrestling, and on that wise they made a circuit of Erin, until on that night Cuchulainn came chasing with his steed (lit. driving horse) to Emain. He got the Black Sainglenn in like wise from Lough Dubh Sainglenn.

§ 32. It was then Cuchulainn spake thus: “To-day have the Grey and I visited the great plains of Erin, namely, Bregia of Meath, the seashore marsh of Muirthemne Macha, Moy Medba, Currech Cleitech Cerna, Lia of Linn Locharn, Fea Femen Fergna, Urros Domnand, Ros Roigne (? ...)

Eô. And to sleep and to eat it liketh me better than everything. By the god of my folk I swear 'twould be but fun and frolic for me to fight a duel had I my fill of food and of sleep." ["Well," quoth Bricriu, "this has lasted long enough. The Feast of Bricriu has to be celebrated; let meat and drink (lit. food and ale) be got at once, and let the women's warfare be put a stop to till the feast be over." This was done, and it was a pleasant (time) for them till the end of three days and three nights.][9]

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