

III. A Story of Mongán.

Now once upon a time when Forgoll the poet was with Mongán, the latter at a certain hour of the day went before his [10] stronghold, where he found a bardic scholar ¹ learning his lesson. ² Said Mongán:

'All is lasting
In a cloak of sackcloth; ³
In due course thou shalt attain
The end of thy studies.'⁴ ⁴ [15]

[paragraph continues] Mongán then took pity on the scholar, who was in the cloak of sackcloth. He had little of any substance. In order to know whether he would be a truthful and good messenger, ⁵ he said to him, promising him . . . : 'Go now,' said Mongán, 'until

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thou reach the fairy knoll of Lethet Oidni, ¹ and bring a precious stone which I have there, and for thyself take a pound of white silver, in which are twelve ounces. Thou shalt have help from them. ² This is thy journey ³ from here, to Cnoc Bane. ⁴ Thou wilt find welcome in the fairy knoll of Cnoc [5] Bane for my sake. Thence to Duma Granerit. ⁵ Thence to the fairy knoll of Lethet Oidni. Take the stone for me, and go to the stream of Lethet Oidni, where thou wilt find a pound of gold, in which are nine ounces. Take that with thee for me.'

The man went on his journey. In the fairy knoll of Cnoc [10] Bane he found a noble-looking couple ⁶ to meet him. They gave great welcome to a messenger of Mongán's. It was his due. He went further. He found another couple in Durna Granerit, where he had the same welcome. He went to the fairy knoll of Lethet Oidni, where again he found another couple. [15] They gave great welcome to a man of Mongán's. He was most hospitably entertained, as on the other nights. There was a marvellous chamber

7 at the side of the couple's house. Mongán had told him that he should ask for its key. He did so. 8 The key was brought to him. He opens it. He had been told [20] not to take anything out of the house except what he had been sent for. He does so. The key he gave back to the couple;

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his stone, however, and his pound of silver he took with him. Thereupon he went to the stream of Lethet Oidni, out of which he took his pound of gold. He went back to Mongán, to whom he gave his stone and his gold. He himself takes his silver. [5] These were his wanderings.

Footnotes

54:1 *i.e.* one of Forgoll's pupils.

54:2 *Aiciucht*, from Lat. *acceptum*. Perhaps this refers to the tract called *Uraicept ma n-écsine*, which formed part of the first year's studies of the aspiring poet. See Thurneysen, *Mittelir. Versl.*, p. 115.

54:3 *i.e.* to a beginner it seems as if he would never reach the end of his studies. The cloak of sackcloth was probably the professional garb of the bardic student.

54:4 Lit. 'thon wilt reach according to proper order the sections (*dréchtu*) concerning *druimmne*.' The course of study was divided into *dréicht* or portions (see Thurneysen, l.c., p. 115). According to one authority this course extended over 12 years, and in the last year certain metres were taught, which were called *druimmne súithe*, 'height (lit. ridge) of wisdom.' (See Thurneysen, l.c., p. 119.)

54:5 *lit.* whether his journey would be truthful and good.

55:1 Not identified, so far as I know.

55:2 *i.e.* from the people of the *síd*, the fairies.

55:3 lit. these are thy journeys, the stages of thy journey.

55:4 'The name of a hill situated in the plain of Magh-Leamhna, otherwise called Clossach, in Tyrone,' O'Don. F.M., A.D. 111, note. Cf. Cnoc Báne la Airgiallu, LL. 24 a, S.

55:5 Not identified, so far as I know; but see Trip. Life; p. 311.

55:6 *sainredach* lit. special, seems sometimes, like *sain* itself, to have the meaning of 'specially fine, distinguished, excellent,' as in *inna cáine sainredchæ* 'of singular beauty,' Ml. 37 b, to. Or does it here mean 'a special couple,' *i.e.* separate, by themselves?

55:7 *airecol* n., borrowed from Lat. *oraculum*, has come to mean any detached house of one chamber; here it is a treasure-house.

55:8 Lit. it was done so.

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