



VII. The Celts

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THE EUROPEAN SKY-GOD.

VII. THE CELTS (*continued*).

BY ARTHUR BERNARD COOK.

IT appears, then, that the King of the Wood as represented in Ultonian myth (Curoi son of King 'Oak' vanquished by Cuchulain) finds his counterpart in Arthurian romance (the Green Knight with his holly-branch vanquished by Gawain; King 'Mistletoe-branch' vanquished by Gawain and Perceval). I have next to show that the same equation holds good for that other great cycle of Irish myth, the Ossianic tales. What Cuchulain and the Red Branch Champions are to Ultonian tradition, Finn and the Fianna are to Ossianic tradition. Were Finn and the Fianna in any sense Kings of the Wood? And, if so, can their actions as such be paralleled by those of Gawain and his peers?

Finn's father was Cumhal, who according to the Leinster pedigree was a descendant of Nuada Necht, ancestor of the kings of Leinster.¹ The name *Cumhal* is one with

¹S. H. O'Grady *Silva Gadelica* ii. 99 in the *Panegyric of King Cormac* gives the Leinster pedigree thus: Finn—Cumhall—Sualtach—Baescne—Nuada Necht. Cf. J. O'Donovan in *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1856* Dublin 1859 iv. 284 f., T. Powel in *The Academy* Jan. 24, 1885, xxvii. 64. Prof. K. Meyer *ib.* Feb. 21, 1885, xxvii. 135 distinguishes three pedigrees of Finn, *vis.* (1) that of the *Lebor na hUisire* p. 41 Finn—Cumall—Trénmór, Finn's mother being Murni Munchóem, grand-daughter of Núadu mac Achi one of the druids of Cathair Mór: (2) that of the *Yellow Book of Lecan* col. 768 (? Munster pedigree) Finn—Cumall—Baescne—Fír Da Roth—Guill—Írguill—Daire—Dedad—Sin: (3) that of the *Book of Leinster* pp. 311, 378 b Finn—Cumall—Trenmor—Suaelt—Eltam (? Suaelt + Eltam = Sualtam)—Baescne—Nuada Necht.

that of the Celtic god *Camulos*,¹ and is connected by Prof. Rhys with the Old Saxon *himil* and the German *Himmel*, 'sky.'² This connexion might be supported by the relation of Nuada Necht to Nuada the sky-god.³ Again, Finn's mother Muirne was daughter of Tadg and grand-daughter of Nuada.⁴ In *The Festivities at the House of Conan of Ceann-Sleibhe* Finn states that his first name was *Glas-dioghuin* and his second name *Giolla-an-chuasain*.⁵ Mr. N. O'Kearney in a note *ad loc.* explains that *Glasdioghuin* means 'the invulnerable Glas.' But *Glas* itself was a Celtic colour-word applied to oaks, etc.,⁶ so that Finn's first name may fairly be rendered 'the invulnerable Green,' a sufficiently striking parallel to the Green Knight of Arthurian fame. Finn's second name denotes 'the boy, or wight, of the excavation.' 'The Fenian leader,' says Mr. O'Kearney, 'was so called in his youth, because he had been bred up by his foster-mother, Boghmuin, in the hollow of an oak, in order to avoid the vengeance of the clans of Moirne, and other enemies of his father.' An Irish folk-tale⁷ tells how Cumhal's mother reared young

¹ D'Arbois *Les Celtes* p. 52 f., Dottin *Manuel de l'Antiquité celtique* pp. 85, 227.

² Rhys *Hibbert Lectures* p. 38 ff.

³ *Folk-lore* xvii. 33, 39. Baiscne, son of Nuada Necht, bears a name connected with the Gaelic *boisg*, 'gleam' (see J. F. Campbell *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* Edinburgh 1862 iii. 60).

⁴ J. O'Donovan in *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1856* iv. 284. Muirne was daughter of Tadg and grand-daughter of Nuada the sky-god (S. H. O'Grady *Silva Gadelica* ii. 245 in *The Colloquy with the Ancients*, Lady Gregory *Gods and Fighting Men* p. 159), or of Nuada Necht (S. H. O'Grady *Silva Gadelica* ii. 519 in Extract x. iv. b from K. 5), or of Nuadu mac Achi (D'Arbois *L'épopée celtique* p. 379 ff. in the *Cause de la Bataille de Cluicha*, cp. *Folk-lore Record* iv. 19 'Muirrean, daughter of the powerful druid, Tadg of the luminous side' in P. Kennedy *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts* London 1866 p. 216 'The Fight of Castle Knoc').

⁵ *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1854* Dublin 1855 ii. 129.

⁶ *Folk-lore* xvii. 310 n. 5.

⁷ J. Curtin *Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland* London 1890 p. 204 ff.

Finn in a chamber cut out in the heart of a great oak-tree : after five years spent in the oak she took him out and taught him to walk ; then she pursued him down-hill with a switch, and he pursued her up-hill with it, till at the end of three days he had become a great runner. Argyllshire tales¹ relate that Cumhal's sister Los Lurgann ('Speedy Foot') got her brother, a joiner dwelling in Ulster wood, to fashion a house for her in one of the trees, where she lived with her infant charge. They pursued each other round the tree with switches of hawthorn, till he learnt to run with great speed. 'She then taught him to leap by digging a hole in the ground, which was gradually getting deeper, till at last he could spring up a wall from a hole which reached to his breast.'

Various tales are current as to the manner in which Finn became king of the Fianna. According to the Irish folk-tale² already cited, Finn came one day to a dense forest in which timber was being felled for a royal *dun*. He was told that this *dun* was attacked every evening at nightfall by an old hag and her three sons who burnt it with torches ; that the best champions in Erin, having tried in vain to save it, were then in the king's dungeons awaiting decapitation ; and that the king had promised his only daughter to any man who should save the *dun*. Finn did so and slew the nocturnal foes, but chose as his reward the condemned champions, who became his Fianna. According to *The Colloquy with the Ancients*,³ for twenty-three years in succession Aillen, son of Midhna, had come to Tara at Samain, lulled every one to sleep with his magical music, and then burnt the whole town with a

¹ Rev. J. G. Campbell *The Fiann* London 1891 (*Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition* : Argyllshire Series, iv) pp. 17 f., 24, Lady Gregory *Gods and Fighting Men* p. 159 f.

² Curtin *Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland* p. 213 ff.

³ S. H. O'Grady *Silva Gadelica* ii. 142 ff., Lady Gregory *Gods and Fighting Men* p. 164 ff.

blast from his fire-breathing mouth. Conn the Hundred-fighter, king of Ireland, at the Feast of Tara asked the assembled warriors for a man to defend the town against Aillen that night. None volunteered save Finn, then a lad of ten years only. Thanks to the spear of Fiacha, son of Congha, Finn kept awake at his watch, baffled the attack of Aillen, beheaded him, and fixed his head upon a pole. For this valiant deed Finn was made king of the Fianna, Goll, son of Morna,¹ their previous king, being the first to recognise his claim. So, just as Cuchulain became king of the warriors of Ireland by defending Curoi's *dun* against the night attack of an assailant bearing branches of oak, Finn was promoted to the kingship by defending a *dun* against the night attack of an assailant bearing torches or breathing out fire. The analogy is not without significance.

Argyllshire lore gives a different account of the matter :²

'Fionn went for service to the Clanna Mòlum; his mother gave him a bag of apples and three pins. When he entered the palace they said to him, "Food of apples, youth, we would fain get from you." He had left the bag at the door, and told them to bring it in themselves and take their pleasure. One after the other of the Clanna Mòlum went out, and not one could move the bag. At last Goll said: "The shadow of evil and evil wishes be upon you that would not bring it in, though seven times its own weight of earth were sticking to it." He went out himself, broke three of his ribs, and came in roaring. Fionn then went out and took it in on the point of a twig, and this was the first terror he struck into Clanna Mòlum. Then the palace took fire, and was burning at its two ends, and in the very middle. Fionn stuck his three wires, one in the middle and one at each end, and the fire went out. This was the second terror. His father's men had fled to the cave on the shore . . . his first action in obtaining superiority over them and evincing that "he was a worthy son of a worthy father," was by bringing a bag of apples which he left, and which by enchantment or secret sleight could not be lifted off the ground. One after another of the men in the cave was sent to bring the bag in, but they

¹ Another name for Morna was Daire Dearg ('Oak the Red'): see *The Boyish Exploits of Finn* in *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1856* iv. 291, *Revue celtique* v. 195 ff. (text only).

² Rev. J. G. Campbell *The Fianns* p. 22 f.

could make nothing of it either individually or as a body. One by one they failed to lift it from the ground. Finn (Flonn) himself then went out, and took in the bag, suspended from his little finger. This at once put him in the forefront, and even made him master of the whole band.'

The interest of this tradition is that it combines a confused remembrance of the burning *dun* test with a confused remembrance of the Otherworld apple-branch. The bag of apples brought into the palace 'on the point of a twig' is the homely counterpart of Bran's silver apple-branch, Cormac's silver branch with nine golden apples, Mael-Duin's branch with three apples on its tip, and proves that Finn too claimed to be king of the solar tree.¹ As Virgil's golden bough would follow none but the appointed hero,² so none but Finn, the destined king, could bring in the apples on the twig.

On this showing Finn was the human representative of Manannan—a conclusion which squares well with sundry other features of his legend. For Mongan, son of Manannan, was also said to have been a re-birth of Finn.³ And Finn, 'the invulnerable Green,' would fittingly embody Manannan, who appeared to Fiachna Finn as a warrior wearing 'a green cloak of one colour.'⁴ Appropriately enough, too, Finn obtained possession of Manannan's treasure-bag containing, among other things, Manannan's shirt and knife.⁵

Again, Finn, like Cormac and Tadg,⁶ had a magic cup of clay called the Cup of Virtues: by drinking from it the Fianna were always victorious. It was once stolen from Finn by Muileartach, Manus' foster-mother, who used a tree for a stick; but Finn recovered it, and along with it a certain apple, to retain which the hag fought long and furiously.⁷

¹ *Folk-lore* xvii. 156 ff.

² Verg. *Aen.* 6. 146 ff.

³ A. Nutt *The Voyage of Bran* l. 42 ff., 136 ff., il. 1 ff.

⁴ *Id. ib.* l. 72.

⁵ Lady Gregory *Gods and Fighting Men* p. 161 f.

⁶ *Folk-lore* xvii. 152 f., 155, 169.

⁷ Rev. J. G. Campbell *The Fianns* p. 131 ff.

As king of the Fianna Finn led a woodland life, and his followers were subjected to tests that were worthy of a King of the Wood. In *The Enumeration of Finn's People*¹ we read :

'No man was taken till in the ground a large hole had been made (such as to reach the fold of his belt) and he put into it with his shield and a fore-arm's length of a hazel stick. Then must nine warriors, having nine spears, with a ten furrows' width betwixt them and him, assail him and in concert let fly at him. If past that guard of his he were hurt then, he was not received into Fianship.

Not a man of them was taken till his hair had been interwoven into braids on him and he started at a run through Ireland's woods; while they, seeking to wound him, followed in his wake, there having been between him and them but one forest bough by way of interval at first. Should he be overtaken, he was wounded and not received into the Fianna after. If his weapons had quivered in his hand, he was not taken. Should a branch in the wood have disturbed anything of his hair out of its braiding, neither was he taken. If he had cracked a dry stick under his foot [as he ran] he was not accepted. Unless that [at his full speed] he had both jumped a stick level with his brow, and stooped to pass under one even with his knee, he was not taken. Also, unless without slackening his pace he could with his nail extract a thorn from his foot, he was not taken into Fianship: but if he performed all this he was of Finn's people.

A good man verily was he that had those Fianna, for he was the seventh king ruling Ireland: that is to say there were five kings of the provinces, and the king of Ireland; *he being himself the seventh, conjointly with the king of all Ireland.*'

I would suggest that the stringent rules of the Fianna are best understood as survivals from a time when the King of the Wood was expected to be a man physically perfect, who could face all comers in the fight. Further, to judge from the sentence that I have italicised together with the myth concerning the defence of Tara summarised above,² the king of the Fianna was an *alter ego* to the king of all Ireland. Indeed, Finn in a folk-tale is even called 'the monarch of Erin.'³ It may be surmised that, since the

¹S. H. O'Grady *Síða Gadelica* ii. 100, Lady Gregory *Gods and Fighting Men* p. 169 f., Squire *Mythology of the British Islands* p. 207.

²*Supra* p. 429 f.

³Curtin *Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland* p. 232 ff.

Irish king was hedged about by all manner of tabus and religious restrictions,¹ his active duties as defender of the sacred tree devolved upon the king of the Fianna. In this connexion it is noteworthy that the standards of the Fianna described in *The Lay of the Sixteen Chiefs*, a poem by Oisín contained in a manuscript of the fourteenth century, included several trees such as the mountain-ash in full bloom, the ever-green yew (Diarmuid's colours), the furze shrub, etc., while that of Finn himself was called *Gal-Greine*, 'Beam of the Sun' or 'Sun-burst,' and represented the sun with its rays.²

If Finn was thus solar champion, he must needs have kept his physical powers in a state of perfection. Now we learn from *The Festivities at the House of Conan*³ that Finn in his youth, wearing skins of the deer and roebuck and hence called *Giolla-na-g-Croiceann*, 'Wight of the Hides,' made his way to Luachar Deghadh in county Kerry, where he won as his bride Donait, daughter of Daire (the 'Oak') of Sith Daire, by leaping from cliff to cliff of a certain deep valley called Brice Bloighe, and that she bound him under an obligation to perform that leap every year. Mr. O'Kearney, commenting on the tale,⁴ says: 'There is a tradition extant which ascribes the cause of Flonn's death to his neglect of performing that annual rite or duty, and another which records his death in attempting

¹ Miss E. Hull, 'Old Irish Tabus, or *Geasa*' in *Folk-lore* xii. 41 ff., has shown that e.g. King Conchobar, though he was reputed to be the wisest of men and the bravest of warriors, was not as a rule permitted either to pronounce judgment or to fight in person.

² *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1857* Dublin 1860 v. 160, 207. Cp. Miss Brooke *Reliques of Irish Poetry* Dublin 1789 p. 58:

'Bright waving from its staff, in air,
Gall-greina high was rais'd,
 With gems that India's wealth declare,
 In radiant pomp it blaz'd.'

³ *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1854* li. 129 ff.

⁴ *ib.* li. 130 n. 6, cp. 30 f.

to leap over the dark terrific chasm, after having neglected to do so till after the expiration of a year and a day. There is a deep glen called *Gleann Dealgain* the (Glen of the river Dealgan), in the county of Waterford, about three miles distant from the town of Dungarvan, on the Waterford road, where it is traditionally related that Fionn Mac Chumhaill made an extraordinary leap on every May-day morning. The stupendous depth of the place is fearful to behold when compared with the narrow expanse at the top; and it is said that Fionn was under a *geasa* (pledge) to leap this glen forwards and backwards before sunrise on the mornings of May-day; but that on a certain morning, as he was on his way to make the leap, he met a red-haired woman milking cows on the way-side, from whom he asked a drink, which she sternly refused, not knowing who it was that asked her for it. When Fionn found his request refused, he foresaw that his days were numbered, and he cursed the red-haired woman; but nevertheless he made towards the glen, which he leaped forward; but in leaping it backwards he fell into the glen, and the imprint of his hands, knees, etc., are still visible on a greenish stone, which lies in the bottom of the glen.¹ This yearly trial was, if I mistake not, the superannuation test of a woodland king.

Other jumpers besides Finn appear to have been woodland kings. Prof. Kuno Meyer cites from the *Senchas Mór* the following tale of *Finn and the Man in the Tree*:²

'Some time afterwards they (i.e. the Fian) carried off captive women from Dún Iascaig in the land of the Dési. A beautiful maiden was taken by them. Finn's mind desired the woman for himself. She set her heart on a servant whom they had, even Derg Corra son of Ua Daigre. For this was his practice. While food was being cooked by them, the lad jumped to and fro across the cooking hearth. It was for that the maiden loved him. And one day she said to him that he should come to her and lie with her. Derg Corra did not accept that on account of Finn . . . She incited Finn against him and said: "Let us set upon him by force!" Thereupon Finn said to him: "Go

¹ *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1854* il. 130 n. 6, cp. 30 f.

² *Revue celtique* xxv. 344 ff.

hence, said he, out of my sight, and thou shalt have a truce of three days and three nights, and after that beware of me !”

Then Derg Corra went into exile and took up his abode in a wood and used to go about on shanks of deer (*si uerum est*) for his lightness. One day as Finn was in the wood seeking him he saw a man in the top of a tree, a blackbird on his right shoulder and in his left hand a white vessel of bronze, filled with water, in which was a skittish trout, and a stag at the foot of the tree. And this was the practice of the man, cracking nuts; and he would give half the kernel of a nut to the blackbird that was on his right shoulder while he would himself eat the other half; and he would take an apple out of the bronze vessel that was in his left hand, divide it in two, throw one half to the stag that was at the foot of the tree, and then eat the other half himself. And on it he would drink a sip of the bronze vessel that was in his hand, so that he and the trout and the stag and the blackbird drank together. Then his followers asked of Finn who he in the tree was, for they did not recognise him on account of the hood of disguise which he wore.

Then Finn put his thumb into his mouth. When he took it out again, his *imbas* illumined him and he chanted an incantation and said: . . . “Tis Derg Corra son of Ua Daigre,” said he, “that is in the tree.”

All the accessories of this peculiar figure, the nuts,¹ the apple,² the vessel of bronze,³ the blackbird,⁴ the fish,⁵ and the stag,⁶ have met us before as concomitants of the

¹ *Folk-lore* xvii. 58 f., 61, 165, 311 n. 1, 330.

² *Ib.* xvii. 56 ff., 61, 144, 147 f., 152 ff., 159 f., 162, 169 ff., 308 ff.

³ *Ib.* xvii. 152 f., 155, 168, 173, 309 f., cp. *supra* p. 431.

⁴ *Ib.* xvii. 165 ff., 313 f. ⁵ *Ib.* xvii. 39 ff., 43, 62, 152, 162, 329 f.

⁶ *Ib.* xvii. 46 f., 342. The statement that Derg Corra used to go about on shanks of deer reminds us that Finn too was closely related to the same animal. His mother was transformed into a fawn (D. Hyde *Beside the Fire* London 1890 p. 14 ff.). He married Sadbh, who had previously been turned into a fawn by Fear Doirche, the Dark Druid of the Men of Dea, and was later on forced to resume her animal shape by the same magician (P. Kennedy *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts* p. 235 ff., Lady Gregory *Gods and Fighting Men* p. 174 ff.). Sadbh was by Finn the mother of *Oisín*, the ‘Little Fawn’ (O’Curry *Manuscript Materials* p. 304), who would not eat the shin-bone of a deer lest it should be that of his own mother. It is said in Skye that Oisín’s mother (or nurse) was a deer; and that fur like deer’s fur grew on his forehead, where it had been licked by her (Rev. J. G. Campbell *The Fians* p. 78 ff., Rev. D. MacInnes *Folk and Hero Tales* London 1890 (*Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition: Argyllshire Series*, ii.) p. 470 f., D. Hyde *Beside the Fire* p. 178). Finn himself was on one occasion changed into a grey fawn;

divine king. If we may venture to regard Derg Corra as such, he will provide a parallel to the *rex Nemorensis*, inasmuch as the former, like the latter,¹ was a run-away slave.

Another run-away, though no slave, was Diarmuid, whose father, according to one account was Core,² according to another Donn.³ It must be premised that Finn had wooed and won as his bride Grainne, daughter of King Cormac. *The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne*⁴ states that Oisín and Diórúing were sent by Finn to Tara that they might ask Cormac for the hand of his daughter, and that Grainne, who had refused all other suitors, at once gave her consent. Another version⁵ has it that Finn chose Grainne as his wife because she outstripped all other women in a race up a certain high hill in Munster thenceforward called *Slienamon*, i.e. *Sliabh na Bhan Fionn*, the 'Hill of the Fair Women.' Or again, it was because she proved herself the wisest of women by answering all his hard questions.⁶ Yet another form of the legend⁷ says that, when Finn went to Grainne, she, wishing to escape him, demanded as a bridal-gift a couple of every wild animal that was in Ireland, to be brought in one drove until they were on the rampart of Tara,—a task that Cailte performed on

and endured, among other metamorphoses, one hundred years as a stag (J. Bonwick *Irish Druids and Old Irish Religions* London 1894 p. 53 without citing sources).

¹ Serv. in Verg. *Aen.* 6. 136.

² Rhys *Hibbert Lacturus* p. 505 n. 1.

³ S. H. O'Grady *Silva Gadelica* ii. 179.

⁴ *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1855* Dublin 1857 iii. 41 ff., Lady Gregory *Gods and Fighting Men* p. 343 f., P. W. Joyce *Old Celtic Romances* p. 274 ff.

⁵ P. Kennedy *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts* p. 223.

⁶ J. F. Campbell *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* iii. 36 ff.

⁷ *Book of Lecan* p. 181 a, 2, published by Prof. K. Meyer in the *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 1897 i. 458 ff.

Finn's behalf. However that may be,¹ at the wedding-feast in Tara Grainne, deeming Finn too old to be her partner, made love first to Oisín and, when he refused her, then to Diarmuid. He too turned a deaf ear to her request; but she put him under bonds of danger and destruction that he should flee with her that very night ere Finn and Cormac recovered from their cups. Since Finn, whenever he slept in Tara, kept the keys of the town, Grainne passed out through a postern-gate, and Diarmuid, who was forbidden by a tabu from passing through a postern, leapt the wall. They escaped together to *Doire dha bhoth*, the 'Oak-grove of the two huts,' in Clanrickard, where Diarmuid cut the trees of the grove and made of them a hut with seven doors. Next day Finn and the Fianna went in pursuit, and came up with the fugitives in the Oak-grove. At this critical moment Aonghus of the Brugh, foster-father of Diarmuid, spirited away Grainne under his mantle, while Diarmuid himself with a mighty leap sprang out beyond Finn and the Fianna, and that through the very door which Finn was guarding. Diarmuid came up with Aonghus and Grainne at Ros da shoileach, where they slept that night. At dawn Aonghus departed, after advising Diarmuid not to go into a tree with but one trunk, or a cave with but one door, or an island with but one approach; never to eat his meal where he had cooked it; never to lie where he had eaten; and never to rise where he had lain. In other words, he was to be constantly on his guard against Finn, and even to change his place of sleeping in the night.

Of his next adventures—how he was helped by young Muadhan, who caught salmon for him on a rod of a

¹ From this point I follow *The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne* (*Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1855* iii. 47 ff., *Lady Gregory Gods and Fighting Men* p. 344 ff., P. W. Joyce *Old Celtic Romances* London 1894 p. 277 ff.). Cp. the Highland versions given by J. F. Campbell *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* iii. 39 ff., 54 L, 55 ff.

quicken-tree baited with a holly berry, and how he encountered and bound three Green Champions from Muir n-locht,¹ whom Finn had sent to arrest him—we need not speak in detail. But when he reached the cantred of *Ui Fhiachrach*, i.e. the 'Hy Fiachrach' of the Moy, who were in the counties of Sligo and Mayo, he went to the *Searbhan Lochlannach*, the 'Surly one of Lochlann,' and got from him license to hunt, provided that he abstained from his berries.

Meantime Finn had fallen in with two men, whose fathers had been at the slaying of Finn's father Cumhal. These men now wished to join the Fianna. Finn allowed them to do so, but demanded as an eric, or compensation for his father's death, either the head of a warrior or a fist-ful of the berries of the quicken-tree of Dubhros. Oisín explained to them that the warrior in question was Diarmuid, and further told them all about the said quicken-tree.

A certain dispute had once arisen between two daughters of Manannan, Aoife who loved the son of Lughaidh, i.e. sister's son to Finn, and Aine who loved Lir of Sith Fhionnchaidh. Each of them said that her own man was the better hurler. This led to a great hurling-match between the Fianna and the Tuatha Dé Danann on a plain by Loch Lein. For three days and three nights they played without either side scoring a goal; and then the Tuatha Dé Danann took their departure. Now the Tuatha Dé Danann had brought with them from the Land of Promise crimson nuts, catkin apples, and fragrant berries. And, as they passed through the Hy Fiachrach, one of these berries fell from them, and grew into a quicken-tree of marvellous virtue: no sickness

¹S. H. O'Grady in *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1855* liii. 82 n. 1 understands 'the Iccian Sea, so called probably from the Roman town in Gaul called Portus Iccius.' Lady Gregory, however, prints *Muir-na-locht*; and the followers of the Green Champions are called 'the men of Lochlann' (O'Grady *op. cit.* p. 93).

could seize on any one who ate three of its berries, but he felt the exhilaration of wine and the satisfying of old mead,¹ and were it at the age of a century he that tasted them would return again to be thirty years old. When the Tuatha Dé Danann heard that these powers belonged to the quicken-tree, they sent the Searbhan Lochlannach, a youth of their own people, to guard it. He was a thick-boned, large-nosed, crooked-tusked, red-eyed, swart-bodied giant of the children of wicked Cam, the son of Naoi,² whom neither weapon could wound, nor fire burn, nor water drown. He had but one eye in the middle of his forehead; he wore a thick collar of iron round his body; and he was fated not to die till he should be struck thrice with his own iron club. He slept in the top of the quicken-tree by night, and remained at its foot by day to watch it. Moreover he made a wilderness of the cantreds around, so that Finn and the Fianna dared not hunt there for fear of him.

Undeterred by these explanations, the men who wished to join the Fianna sought out Diarmuid and challenged him to fight. Diarmuid fought them and bound them both. Hereupon Grainne, who was already pregnant, declared that she should die unless she tasted the berries of the quicken-tree. Diarmuid repaired to Searbhan, and found him asleep. He waked him with a stroke of his

¹ Prof. Rhys *Hibbert Lectures* p. 359 conjectures 'that the berries of the rowan were used in some early period in the brewing of an intoxicating drink, or, better still, of the first intoxicating drink ever known to the Teuto-Celtic Aryans.' This is in part confirmed by J. Cameron *Gaelic Names of Plants* Edinburgh 1883 p. 24, who says of the rowan-tree: 'The Highlanders formerly used to distil the fruit into a very good spirit.' Similarly J. Evelyn *Silva* York 1776 p. 219: 'Some highly commend the juice of the berries, which, fermenting of itself, if well preserved, makes an excellent drink against the spleen and scurvy: Ale and beer brewed with these berries, being ripe, is an incomparable drink, familiar in Wales, where this tree is reputed so sacred, that there is not a church-yard without one of them planted in it (as among us the Yew).'

² *I.e.* 'Ham or Cham, the son of Noah' (O'Grady *op. cit.* p. 120 n. 1).

foot, and asked for some berries, which Searbhan refused to grant. The result was a furious fight, in which Diarmuid gripped the giant's club and dealt him three mighty blows with his own weapon. Searbhan fell dead upon the spot. Diarmuid plucked the berries for Grainne, and gave some also to the two men as their eric. When the latter had returned to Finn, Diarmuid and Grainne went into the top of the quicken-tree and laid them in the bed of Searbhan, and—says the narrative—the berries below were but bitter berries compared to the berries that were above upon the tree.

Finn and the Fianna next followed the track of Diarmuid to the foot of the quicken-tree, and, finding the berries unguarded, ate their fill of them. During the mid-day heat Finn and Oisín played chess together beneath the tree. Diarmuid, who saw that Oisín could only win by one move, dropped a berry on the right piece; and this he did again and yet again, till the Fianna shouted in astonishment. Finn, however, called up to Diarmuid to ask him if he was in the tree. Diarmuid answered that he and Grainne were there in the bed of Searbhan, and promptly gave Grainne three kisses in the presence of all.

Finn then made a cordon of Fianna about the tree, and promised to reward any man who would mount it and avenge him upon Diarmuid. Again Aonghus came to the rescue, and, when Diarmuid kicked down Garbh of Sliabh Cua, his first assailant, into the midst of the Fianna, changed the shape of the man into that of Diarmuid himself: the Fianna at once beheaded him, when lo, he took the form of Garbh once more. Next Garbh of Sliabh Crot attacked the tree: he too was flung down in the likeness of Diarmuid, beheaded by the Fianna, and restored to his own form. After that, Garbh of Sliabh Guaire met with precisely the same fate. And so did nine Garbhs in succession, till Finn was full of

anguish and sore discouraged. Aonghus at this moment of danger carried off Grainne, as before, beneath his magic mantle. But Oscar besought Finn to forgive Diarmuid, and, when he would not, boldly promised Diarmuid his own protection and bade him come down from the tree. Diarmuid at last made his mighty leap, landed far beyond Finn and the Fianna, and thus, escorted by Oscar, made his way to the Brugh upon the Boyne, where he rejoined Grainne and Aonghus.

Certain elements in this important tale may have been borrowed from the book of Genesis; but in the main it furnishes a curious parallel to the custom of the Arician grove. Here, as there, a sacred tree is guarded day and night by an armed defender. Here, as there, this defender has to encounter in single fight one champion after another, the terms of the encounter being a violent death or possession of the tree. Here, as there, the original guardian of the tree is of more than mortal mould. Professor Rhys regards Diarmuid as a 'solar hero'¹ and Grainne his wife as related to the Celtic Apollo *Grannus*,² who was certainly a sun-god.³ If so, Diarmuid would be the Virbius and Grainne the Diana of this Irish Nemi; for Virbius was by some identified with the sun,⁴ and Diana Nemorensis too had solar pretensions.⁵

¹ Rhys *Hibbert Lectures* pp. 146, 506, *Arthurian Legend* p. 14.

² *Id. Hibbert Lectures* p. 510.

³ Inscriptions mentioning Apollo *Grannus* are collected by H. Dessau *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae* Berlin 1902 ii. 1. 216 f. nos. 4646—4652. Of the derivations recorded by Holder *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* p. 2038 the most attractive is that put forward by Rhys (*Hibbert Lectures* p. 22) and D'Arbois (*Les Celtes* p. 55), which connects the name with the Irish *gromn* or *gorm*, 'a fire-brand,' and *grían*, 'the sun' (glossed by *Apollo*, *sol*, etc.). It might thus, as Holder points out, be related to the Greek *γρῦνός* or *γρῦνός*, 'the trunk of an old oak tree,' and to the *Gryneum nemus* of Apollo (Verg. *æl.* 6. 72 f.).

⁴ Serv. in Verg. *Æn.* 7. 776.

⁵ Birt in Roscher *Lex. d. gr. u. röm. Myth.* i. 1005 f.

Dr. Joyce compares Diarmuid with Adonis;¹ for the former, like the latter, was slain by a monstrous boar.² But this need not conflict with our inference, since Servius long ago remarked that Virbius was related to Diana as Adonis to Aphrodite³—a point of fundamental significance, as Dr. Frazer has recently shown.⁴ The statement that each successive assailant was transformed into Diarmuid, and therefore beheaded, may contain a last trace of the belief that every would-be defender of the sacred tree in turn posed as the sky-god incarnate and in that capacity was ultimately done to death.

A variant of the same legend, collected by Mr. Leland L. Duncan⁵ at Kiltubbrid in the neighbouring county Leitrim, adds details of considerable interest:

The fairies of the land beat the fairies of the lake at a hurling-match, and celebrated their victory by feasting and dancing in Doolas Woods. The food that they ate was berries much resembling the mountain-ash. When they left the fairy-lands their king made them promise not to lose a berry; for, if they did, a tree of many branches would spring up, and if an old woman of eighty ate one of those berries she would become as youthful as though she were sixteen, and if a little maid ate one she would become a flower of beauty. Despite the king's command a little fairy drank too freely of the mountain-dew and lost a berry, which at once grew into a tree of many branches. The fairy-king was about to marry a fairy-queen, who sent to Doolas Woods for butterflies' wings to make herself and her maids of honour clothes for the occasion. The heralds, whom she sent, found the beautiful fairy-tree surrounded by birds and bees. The queen told the king, who discovered the culprit, a fairy-fiddler and -piper called Pinkeen, and despatched him to the giant-lands to find a giant strong enough to guard the fairy-tree and to sleep in its branches at night. Pinkeen,

¹ P. W. Joyce *A Social History of Ancient Ireland* i. 532.

² *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1855* iii. 171 ff., Lady Gregory *Gods and Fighting Men* p. 389 ff., P. W. Joyce *Old Celtic Romances* London 1894 p. 334 ff.

³ Serv. in Verg. *Æn.* 5. 95, 7. 84, 761.

⁴ J. G. Frazer *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship* London 1905 p. 25 ff.

⁵ *Folk-lore* vii. 321 ff.

having crossed a high mountain and a great mist, met a giant named Sharving the Surly, gave him some of the berries, and asked him to guard the tree. He gladly consented, and, traversing the mist and the mountain, entered fairy-land with Pinkeen and was installed as guardian of the tree. All this time there were two kings contending in the same province. The rightful king was slain by the intruder, his son Moranna sent adrift on the sea, and his daughter Rosaline robbed of her beauty by means of a spell. One evening a robin, seeing Rosaline's grief, flew off to Doolas Woods to get her a berry from the fairy-tree. There she was met by her cousin, the robin of the wood, who told her that times had changed very much since she was there last, for that there was a great giant guarding the tree, that he slept every night in the branches, and that his breath was poison to birds and bees. "Every day," she says "there comes a warrior to give battle to the giant; and the giant, when the warrior comes, bounds high in the air and plucks a branch off the tree and puts it under his belt; and when he's exhausted fighting he takes a handful of the berries and eats them, and that revives his strength, and he strikes down the warrior with a mighty blow, for neither weapons, nor fire, nor water can kill him, but only three strokes of his own iron club. That iron club is girted to his waist with an iron band, and from the iron band there was a chain, and nothing can kill him but three strokes of his own club. Nothing in the world was as ugly as he, for there was only one eye in his forehead, which blazes like a coal, and no warrior was able to defeat him." The robin of the wood further advised her cousin to wait for the morrow's attack and peck a berry from the branch while the giant was busy fighting his opponent. She did so and flew back with it to Rosaline, who on swallowing it became twice as beautiful as she had been at first. Just then a prince arrived at the king's castle and gave his name as the Prince of the Sunny Valleys. While he was being entertained, Moranna, the banished brother of Rosaline, returned and was proclaimed king instead of the usurper, who was put to death. The Prince of the Sunny Valleys carried off Rosaline as his bride, and the robin with her.

The substantial identity of this folk-tale and the myth of Diarmuid at Dubhros is obvious. The quicken-tree of Dubhros reappears as the fairy-tree of Doolas Woods resembling the mountain-ash. Searbhan is Sharving the Surly. Diarmuid, the solar hero, and Grainne, daughter of King Cormac, become the Prince of the Sunny Valleys and Rosaline the king's daughter. Indeed, the old names still linger in the locality; for at Kiltubbrid, where Mr. Duncan took down the tale, there is a cromlech called by the peasantry *Leaba Dearmud* i

Graine or 'Darby and Graine's Bed,'¹ and several other cromlechs in the neighbourhood are known by the same name.² But the folk-tale is chiefly valuable for the further light that it throws on the branch and the birds of the sacred tree. It will be remembered that at Nemi run-away slaves who succeeded in breaking a branch from the guarded tree might challenge the priestly king to a single combat; and, as Servius puts it, 'the branch must needs be the reason of one man's death.'³ Thanks to the Irish parallel, we can now see why whoso aspired to be King of the Wood at Nemi must first break a branch from Diana's tree. The berries of the quicken-tree at Dubhros (the mountain-ash of Doolas Woods) were the food of the Tuatha Dé Danann (the fairies of the land). As such they bestowed concentrated and supernatural strength upon the eater. For the time being he fed upon the food of the gods and himself posed as a god. Mael-Duin, who subsisted for 120 days on his Otherworld apple-branch,⁴ and Connla, who fed continually upon his Elysian apple,⁵ had a similar⁶ celestial diet and played a like celestial rôle. This makes it almost certain that the branch of the tree at Nemi was a branch bearing berries or apples of peculiar strength. Dr. Frazer conjectured that it was the mistletoe growing on an oak.⁷ And this may well have been the case. For, apart from

¹ S. Lewis *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* ed. 2 London 1847 ii. 179 s.v. 'Kiltubrid.'

² W. C. Borlase *The Dolmens of Ireland* London 1897 i. 193 ff.

³ Serv. in Verg. *Aen.* 6. 136.

⁴ *Folk-lore* xvii. 156, 169.

⁵ *Ib.* xvii. 147, 154, 169.

⁶ E. Step *Wayside and Woodland Trees* London 1905 p. 106 says of the mountain-ash: 'The fruit are miniature apples, of the size of holly-berries, bright scarlet without and yellow within.' The fruit of the mountain-ash (*pyrus aucuparia* Gaert.) bears in fact a strong family resemblance to the small yellow and red fruit of the crab or wild apple (*pyrus malus* L.).

⁷ J. G. Frazer *The Golden Bough* ed. 2 iii. 449 ff.

the Virgilian comparison¹ and the Servian comment on which he relies, I have shown² from Greek and Latin sources that the mistletoe was called 'the sweat of the oak,' *i.e.* the quintessence or life-blood of the oak, and I might add that a Gaelic name for the mistletoe is *sùgh dharich*, 'the sap or substance of the oak.'³ Moreover, just as the giant of Dubhros could not be burnt with fire or drowned in water, so it was believed by the ancients that the mistletoe⁴ and a tree resembling the mistletoe-bearing oak could not be harmed by fire or water.⁵ Nevertheless it remains possible that the sacred tree at Nemi was not an oak at all, but an apple-tree. The Silver Bough of Irish myth, which, as Miss Hull pointed out,⁶ affords the closest parallel to the Golden Bough of Italian myth, was certainly an apple-branch. Besides, Prof. Furtwängler⁷ holds that we have a representation of Diana Nemorensis in a series of gems, which exhibit a draped female figure standing by an altar with a stag at her side: she holds a branch in one hand and a cup, sometimes full of fruit, in the other.⁸ A similarly posed male figure holding a sacrificial knife he regards as Virbius.⁹ If these identifications were certain, we could be sure that the sacred tree at Nemi was not an oak, for in one instance¹⁰ at least the branch has round fruit on it, probably apples. Again, an actual votive offering in the form of an apple made of terra cotta was found

¹ Verg. *Aen.* 6. 205 ff., Serv. in Verg. *Aen.* 6. 136. ² *Folk-lore* xv. 424.

³ J. Cameron *Gaelic Names of Plants* p. 33 f.

⁴ Plin. *nat. hist.* 13. 119, cp. *ib.* 33. 94, Theophr. *de igne* 61.

⁵ *Id. ib.* 13. 119. ⁶ *Folk-lore* xii. 431 ff., cp. xvii. 156 n. 1.

⁷ A. Furtwängler *Die antiken Gemmen* Leipzig and Berlin 1900 iii. 231.

⁸ *Id. ib.* i. pl. xx. 66, xxii. 18, 26, 30, 32, ii. 101, 108 f., *id. Beschreibung der geschnittenen Steine im Antiquarium* Berlin 1896 nos. 856-861.

⁹ *Id. Die antiken Gemmen* i. pl. xxii. 19, ii. 108, iii. 231 f., *Beschr. d. geschn. Steine im Antiq.* nos. 854, 855.

¹⁰ *Id. Die antiken Gemmen* i. pl. xxii. 18, ii. 108.

by Lord Savile in Diana's precinct at Nemi.¹ Lastly, Grattius² in his poem on hunting describes as follows the huntsman's festival: 'In the glades beneath the sky we fashion cross-road altars; we set up split torches at Diana's woodland rite; the puppies are wreathed with their wonted adornment; and in the midmost part of the glade men lay their very weapons upon flowers, weapons that are idle during these rites and this festal time of peace. Then comes the cask; the cakes that smoke on their green tray are brought forward, the kid with horns just budding from his gentle brow, and the apples still hanging on their boughs, after the manner of the lustral rite, whereby our whole company purifies itself for the goddess and praises her for the year's capture.' It is a legitimate inference from this passage that apple-branches played an important part in the ritual of Diana Nemorensis. And the word here used for 'boughs' (*ramos*) is the same as that used by Servius in speaking of the 'bough' broken from the sacred tree. It might be urged too that, if Servius had meant the mistletoe, he would have been careful to say so, or at least to specify 'a particular bough,' whereas what he does say is 'if any one had been able to break thence a bough' (*si quis exinde ramum potuisset auferre*)³—which distinctly suggests 'any bough,' and so favours the apple-branch or oak-branch as against the mistletoe-branch explanation. This, however, is not the right place for discussing whether the tree at Nemi was a mistletoe-bearing oak, or an apple-tree, or for that matter a mistletoe-bearing apple-tree. My point is that the Irish parallels go to prove that the branch in question had berries or fruit popularly regarded as the food of the gods, and that the bearer of the branch *ipso facto* assumed the position of a god.

¹G. H. Wallis *Illustrated Catalogue of Classical Antiquities from the site of the Temple of Diana, Nemi, Italy* Nottingham 1893 p. 15 no. 69.

²Gratt. *cyneg.* 483 ff.

³Serv. in Verg. *Aen.* 6. 136.

Further, the two robins of Doolas Woods may correspond to the two birds associated with Virgil's Golden Bough. The berries of the mountain-ash are, as old John Evelyn¹ has it, 'such a tempting bait for the Thrushes, that as long as they last, you shall be sure of their company.' Mr. Step² says of them: 'They ripen in September, and are then a great attraction to thrushes, blackbirds, and their kind, who rapidly strip the tree of them. Though this at first sight may appear like frustrating the tree's object in producing fruit, it is not really so, the attractive flesh being a mere bait to induce the birds to pass the seeds through their intestines, and thus get them sown far and wide.' Aeneas was directed to the Golden Bough by two pigeons (*columbae*),³ and, according to Pliny,⁴ mistletoe cannot grow unless it be passed through the maw of birds, especially of the wood-pigeon (*palumbes*) and the thrush.⁵ Athenaeus⁶ too states that a mistletoe-plant springs from the droppings of a pigeon (*oivás*) that has fed upon mistletoe.⁷ Naturally birds that fed on food divine were themselves deemed sacred; and it is probable that the robins⁸ of Doolas

¹ Evelyn *Silva* p. 219.

² Step *Wayside and Woodland Trees*, p. 106 f.

³ Verg. *Aen.* 6. 190 ff.

⁴ Plin. *nat. hist.* 16. 247.

⁵ The *missel*-thrush (*turdus viscivorus* L.) was called *ξοβόπος* or *ξοφάγος* by the Greeks, and is known as *viscada* in Italy (D'Arcy W. Thompson *A Glossary of Greek Birds* Oxford 1895 p. 70). Hence Erasmus *Chiliad.* 1 cent. 1 adag. 55 *turdus ipse sibi malum cacat.*

⁶ Athen. 394 E.

⁷ The botanical facts are set out by Prof. H. M. Ward *Trees* iii. 266: 'The viscin of the fruit (sc. mistletoe) prevents birds from swallowing the seed, which they therefore rub off on to branches while cleaning the beak: the seed is then washed into a crevice by rain, and germinates.' The same view is recorded in Dr. A. Hunter's notes on Evelyn's *Silva* p. 8 f.

⁸ On the robin as a sacred bird see C. Swainson *The Folk Lore and Provincial Names of British Birds* London 1886 p. 13 ff.: note especially the Scotch and Breton belief that the robin has some of God's blood within his veins (p. 15 f.), and the Welsh and Breton tales of the robin as a fire-bringer (p. 16 f.).

Woods, like the pigeons of the Golden Bough, were essentially connected with the sacred tree, perhaps as embodying the souls of previous Kings of the Wood.¹

The bed of Diarmuid and Grainne is nowadays usually identified by the Irish peasantry with a rude stone monument of some sort. Cromlechs often bear the name *Leaba Diarmada agus Grainne*, 'the Bed of Diarmuid and Grainne,' and are associated with run-away couples and illicit unions. A girl who goes there with a stranger will be certain to grant him all that he asks; and it is believed that, if a woman be barren, a visit with her husband to 'Darby and Grania's Bed' will cure her.² But our myth in mentioning the Oak-grove of the two huts and the quicken-tree of Dubhros hints rather at a connexion with trees. So too an Irish poem by Dallan Forgaill³ states that—

'Tolgne was the Druidic priest of Crann Greine'—

i.e. 'of the Tree dedicated to Grian.' This, if I am not in error, implies an organised cult of the celestial tree.⁴ A folk-tale printed by Dr. Hyde⁵ connects *Granya Òi*,

¹ *Folk-lore* xvii. 168 f.

² W. C. Borlase *The Dolmens of Ireland* London 1897 iii. 841 ff. (citing Dutton *Surv. of Clars* p. 78), cp. index p. 1210, W. G. Wood-Martin *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland* London 1902 i. 348 f.

³ *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for 1857* Dublin 1860 v. 153.

⁴ See *Folk-lore* xvii. 69.

⁵ D. Hyde *Beside the Fire* London 1890 p. 167 ff. 'William of the Tree.' An Irish queen falls sick and dies, but first puts the king under *gassa* not to marry again till the grass is a foot high over her grave. Her daughter keeps it clipped. The king discovers her and vows to marry the first woman that he meets. This is an old hag, who on becoming queen falsely accuses her step-daughter of killing the king's hound. The king takes his daughter to a great wood, hangs her on a tree, and cuts off her hands and feet. As he departs, a thorn runs into his foot, and his daughter prays that he may never get better till she recovers hands and feet. Out of the king's foot grows a tree, which makes him open the window to let the top of it out. A gentleman passing by has heard the king's daughter screeching, taken her home, and married her. She bears him three sons at a birth. *Granya*

'Granya the Virgin,' with an Irish king and a tree. But a better parallel to the myth of Diarmuid and Grainne occurs in another tale edited by the same scholar, viz. *The Adventures of the Children of the King of Norway*:¹

Cod, eldest son of Ioruaídh king of Norway, who was great-grandson of Daire Red-green, once entered a cave leading to wonder-land. Here he found a lake out of which bright-white birds kept rising. Puzzled at the sight, Cod dived down into the lake and saw a beautiful girl resplendent with satin and gold and gems: she was whittling a white rod, the chips of which flew off and away in the form of birds. She gave her name as *Grian Gnídís-sholais*, 'Bright-faced Sun,' daughter of the King of the Forest of Wonders, and presented Cod with her own rod, bidding him whittle it for a while himself. As he did so, evil and feebleness of every kind ceased to affect him. He learnt from her that the King of the Forest possessed another such rod, but would not part with it for love or hatred or fear. Next morning, when the sun shone full, Grian showed Cod the way towards the Forest. On the outskirts of it he encountered three ugly black giants clad in the skins of wild-deer and roebuck. They told him that in the middle of it was a Tree of Virtue (*Bile Buadhach*) adorned with every colour and all the fruits of life: so marvellous was it that he who set eyes on it could hardly part from it for ever, and no man entering the Forest had ever come out again. Cod pressed on till he saw the Tree of Virtues (*Bile na mBuadh*) in the distance. But now there met him a band of thirteen headless men including a king-warrior, who told Cod that he was Iollan, son of the King of Almain, and that his twelve comrades were his foster-brothers, children of the King of the Land-of-Snow.² Love for the daughter of King Under-Wave had induced

Öi comes and puts hands and feet on her, bidding her take the boys at a year old to the king, tell her story before them, rub her hand on the stump of the tree, and so cure the king. She does so, and the tree falls off the king's foot. Next day he hangs the hag, and gives his estate to his daughter and her husband.

Mr. A. Nutt *ib.* p. 195 shrewdly suggests that there is here a *contaminatio* of the Virgin Mary and Grainne, the wife of Finn.

¹ D. Hyde in *Irish Texts Society* London 1899 l. 50 ff.

² A poem inserted in the text names the son of the King of Almaine; Breasal the lively, of the rough words, the good son of the King of the Land-of-Snow; Fiachadh and the furious Fionn, to whom women used to come on adventures; Corc and Cairbrè the shouting; Uathne and the mighty Arthur, who gave not submission to heroes; Laighne the Red and Tuireann; Feachtna the White and Béinné. The princes are here twelve in number, and

him to go in quest of the Tree of Virtues—for she would have none but the man who should bring her that Tree—and his foster-brothers had gone with him; but they had all been forced to behead one another through the enchantment of a little man with a harp. Cod buried them in one grave, and had scarcely done so when he saw the same harper advancing towards him. Cod leaped upon him and dashed his harp against a rock; but the little man gathered up the pieces, and it was whole again. Cod seized him a second time and severed his head from his body: thereupon the harper walked off with his head in one hand and his harp in the other. There next appeared a wondrous ox with golden horns, which blew a horn-trumpet and summoned all the cats and hags and spectres of the Forest. Cod speared the ox and amid a perfect pandemonium of sound—the creatures screaming, bellowing, moaning, stamping, the stones and trees shaking and thundering—collected the various beasts and drove them into a cave. Soon afterwards he beheld a queen with a bevy of fair women carrying the ox on a bier. At this he drew his sword and chopped the bier to bits. At length he reached the Tree of Virtues, plucked a great shoulder-load of its branches, and built himself a booth with them. He kindled a big fire for the night, but was tormented by the cries of hideous monsters till he arose, gathered them together, and again drove them into the cave. Returning from this task he found his fire extinguished and his booth changed into a close oak-wood of thin trees, smooth and very high, their tops laden with snow, while bitter winds were blowing and cold linns of water welling between them. After that, a hideous giant met Cod beside the Forest: he was clad in the skins of hornless deer and roebuck; he had two goats'-horns growing through his skull, a circular jet-black hand, and a single leg like a ship's mast; in one hand he held a thick club-staff of iron, in the other a thong attached to a wild-calf. Cod drove his sword through the head of the giant, who fell like a prime oak, but rose again and made for the cave's mouth with Cod on his shoulder and the sword through his head. Cod gripped the sword handle till he made fragments of it and so slipped on to the ground. Looking back he saw the giant transformed into a pillar of stone. Unable to withdraw his sword, Cod snatched the Fomorian club that the giant had and returned through the Forest, where he found trees and stones in one flag of ice. And now he was met by a maiden bearing a shining beautiful lamp, who proved to be Grian the Bright-faced. She welcomed him to her own palace, a *cathair* of unequalled splendour, where the King of the Forest sat on a golden throne surrounded by his knights and ladies. Cod declared that, had it not been for Grian, he would have severed their heads from their bodies and have seized the *cathair* for himself by force. As it was, the King of the Forest of his own accord vacated his throne for Cod, while all the people accepted him as chieftain and lord, swearing by the sun and moon to be faithful to

only one of them is a son of the King of the Land-of-Snow. Elsewhere too the poems inserted in the text contain a variant tradition (D. Hyde *ib.* p. xi.).

him thenceforward. Grian too took her seat on a beautiful throne; and a great feast was made ready for all who were present. The next day Cod received the wondrous rod, and returned with Grian to the lake where he had met her at the first.

This is but a meagre outline of one episode in *The Adventures of the Children of the King of Norway*—a tale which, from the view point of comparative mythology, would repay detailed study—but it will suffice to show that Grian the sun-goddess in her subaqueous wonderland had a marvellous fruit-tree growing in an enchanted forest; that a number of princely champions went in quest of the tree, which was defended by a little harper with a magic harp, a hideous giant with an iron club, and a king known as the King of the Forest of Wonders; that this king and his daughter Grian possessed white rods of peculiar power; that Cod, the successful champion, thanks to the virtue of Grian's rod, vanquished the defenders of the tree, plucked some of its boughs, and himself became King of the Forest. All this savours strongly of the *rex Nemorensis*, and in particular resembles the other Irish tales concerned with Grainne and her tree. The harper with his magic harp recalls Tolgne the druid of Grian's tree.¹ The giant with an iron club has met us before at Dubhros in the person of Searbhhan Lochlannach.² The rod which, when whittled, conferred supernatural strength is like the branch of the mountain-ash borne by Sharving the Surly in Doolas Woods.³ The story as a whole strengthens our conviction that Diarmuid in the cantred of Hy Fiachrach played the part of *rex Nemorensis*.

Fortunately the Dubhros myth can be brought into connexion with actual custom. For, not only were Irish kings often inaugurated under a sacred tree,⁴ but Dr.

¹ *Supra* p. 448.

² *Supra* p. 439 ff.

³ *Supra* p. 443 ff.

⁴ P. W. Joyce *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places* ed. 2 Dublin 1870 p. 481 f.

O'Donovan in *The Genealogies, Tribes, and Customs of Hy-Fiachrach* makes clear two noteworthy facts with regard to the very locality in which Diarmuid's tree is said to have grown. On the one hand, the O'Dubhda (O'Dowd), king of this district, was in historical times inaugurated by means of a rod (*virga*) held over his head by Mac Firis, his *ollamh* or chief poet.¹ On the other hand, the name Diarmuid occurs repeatedly in the pedigree of O'Dubhda and in the collateral branches of the royal family.² The original Diarmuid is often styled 'Dermot of the Bright Face'³—a name that must be set beside that of 'Grian the Bright-faced'⁴ as well suited to a personage with solar powers. The meaning of the word *Diarmuid* is a matter of conjecture.⁵ But we shall not be

¹J. O'Donovan *The Genealogies, Tribes, and Customs of Hy-Fiachrach* Dublin 1844 p. 440 ff. Inauguration by means of a rod was common throughout Ireland; the rod was usually a straight white wand, free from knots in the wood, and deemed symbolic of rectitude, candour, and equity (O'Donovan *ib.* p. 425 ff.). My suggestion is that the rod was originally in all cases a branch of the *bile* or sacred tree beneath which the king was inaugurated.

²*Id. ib.* Genealogical Table opposite p. 476. According to Highland tradition, the Clann Campbell, represented by the Duke of Argyll, descend from Diarmuid, and their crest is a boar's head in memory of his death (P. W. Joyce *Old Celtic Romances* p. 439): cp. J. F. Campbell *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* Edinburgh 1860 i. xxxiii. f., iii. 45, 50 ff., 82 ff.

³P. W. Joyce *op. cit.* p. 438. J. Bonwick *Irish Druids and Old Irish Religions* p. 194 states that 'one bard sings of "Diarmuid with a fiery face."' A folk-tale in J. Curtin *Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland* p. 344 calls him the 'Son of the Monarch of Light.'

⁴*Supra* p. 449.

⁵Prof. Rhys *Celtic Folklore* II. 691 suggests connexion with the Welsh name *Bodermud* or *Bodermud* analysed into *Bod-Dermyd*. Bruno Güterbock is reported in the *Revue celtique* xviii. 108 to take *Diarmuid* for **diarmit*, i.e. **dia-airmitin*, 'honour of God.' A. MacBain *An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* Inverness 1896 p. 358 says: 'Zimmer explains the name as *Dia-ermit*, "God-reverencing," from *dia* and *ermit*: **ar-ment*, "on-minding," root *ment*, as in *dearmad*, q.v.' W. C. Borlase *The Dolmens of Ireland* London 1897 iii. 898 cp. the Lapp deity *Thermes*,

far wrong in supposing that Diarmuid himself was at once human and divine, a king believed to be the consort of Grainne, the sun-goddess, and as such installed as defender of Grainne's tree.

Again, we may recognise a certain Scandinavian element in these tales. Cod was the eldest son of the King of Norway; and we shall find that some features of his story are best paralleled by incidents recorded in old Norse mythology.¹ Searbhan too bore the epithet *Lochlannach*. Now *Lochlann* denotes 'of Norway,'² and appears as the modern name *Lachlan*, which means 'Norwegian.'³ It is therefore interesting to find that the badge of the Clann McLachlan is the rowan-tree,⁴ the very tree guarded by Searbhan *Lochlannach*.

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(To be concluded in our next.)

who was a thunder-god, the word *tiermes* or *diermes* meaning 'thunder' (see J. A. Friis *Lexicon Lapponicum* Christianiae 1887 pp. 130 s.v. 'Diermes,' 725 s.v. 'Tiermes'). Dr. Whitley Stokes, in answer to a query from me, kindly sends the following note (dated Aug. 24, 1906): '*Diarmait*. The oldest O. Ir. form may have been **Diormit*, as we see from the latinised *Diormitius*, Thea. pal.-hib. II. xxii. 275, 278, 281. This suggests *diformenti*- cf. *format*? In the later *Diarmit*, *Dermait*, *ia*, *?* supplants *io*-. *Dilformit* 'one without envy'???, a Greek *Ἀφθόρος*, if there was such a name.' This would establish an interesting analogy between *Diarmait* and Nudos *Liberatis*.

¹ I must reserve my evidence on this point for another occasion.

² Dr. Whitley Stokes in Stokes and Windisch *Irische Texte* iv. 370.

³ A. MacBain *An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* p. 362 s.v. 'Lachlan': 'probably from *Lochlann*, Scandinavia, possibly commencing as *Mac-Lochlainne*, a Scandinavian ('son of L.').'

⁴ J. Cameron *Gaelic Names of Plants* p. 24.