

MARCH OF THE ULTONIANS

(A fragment from the Cuchulain Saga)

RESTED at Slane the Army of the West,
And slumber wrapped the camp; — but in his
sleep

Cormac Conlongas started from his couch,
Grasping his axe, and babbling that he saw
A field red-heapt with slaughter! After that
Dubhtach, the "Ulster Beetle," cried aloud.
The two had dreamt of strife, and soon would
sound

The stormy clash of shields.

Then fell o'er all
Uneasy fear, and banished was their sleep.
Now when the morning broke, King Ailell spoke:
"Cuailne and Ulster we have harried long,
While the great Northern armies lay entranced,
O'ercome by Druid spells, and Conchobar
Moaned in his troubled dreams. Good share of
spoils

We carry with us from their plundered lands;
Now is it time that homeward to Magh Ai
Our chariots turned; but ere we westward wheel,
Glance let us take across the Meathian plain
In search of foeman; for 'tis surely meet
A King should combat, nor all times retreat."
Then forth they sent the herald, keen MacRoth,
Who climbed a nearby hill and searched afar