

A life immortal. Queenly was her brow ;  
 Fulgent her eye ; her countenance beauteous, save  
 When wrath o'erflamed her beauty. With her dwelt  
 Ailill her husband, trivial man and quaint,  
 And early old. He had not chosen her :  
 She chose a consort who should rule her not ;  
 And tossed him to her throne. In youth her lover,  
 Was Conchobar, great Uladh's king :  
 She had not found him docile to her will  
 And to her sire returned."

In the encounter with his Queen, Ailill, like the positive and selfish fellow he was, claimed a superiority, for the reason that he was the sole possessor of the far-famed white bull, Fionbannah ; and his spouse, not to be outdone, resolved to gain, by hook or crook, possession of an ox of greater parts. When the dispute was at its height, MacRoth, "old Connaught's herald," informed the Queen, that Cenor Conchobar, King of Uladh, or Ulster, "boasted a bull, lordlier than ours, a broader bulk, and black," adding that this bovine marvel was in the charge of Daré, and her majesty despatched MacRoth to supplicate for the purchase of the remarkable animal. Daré, with true Celtic gallantry, no sooner heard the plaint of the Queen's herald, than he consented to send to her the extraordinary beast, called Donn Coulgné ; because his "lovings shake Cualgné's shore," a by no means conclusive reason. But learning later on that MacRoth boasted he, Daré, had done so through dread, the order was rescinded, and MacRoth hooted from the gate of the Castle by the professional clown of the establishment. The herald made his way to Cruachan, the royal abode of Queen Meave, as best he could, and told his story—to suit himself we may be sure. Meave immediately summoned her great allies, "from East and West and South," harangued them, and declared war against Ulster. Soon after Faythleen, the Witch, met Queen Meave, and prophesied calamity, but promised that in aid of Meave, she (Faythleen) would breathe over the realm of Uladh, a spirit of imbecility.

" And on her son's  
 Imbecile spirit, and a heartless mind  
 And base soul-sickness."

The second book is entitled "The Deeds of Cuchullain." Unaided, Cuchullain affected the whole army of Meave, by very