

took down from its rack Cormac's own ornamented spear, and smiting Cellach therewith, killed him; the weapon then grazed one of Cormac's eyes and destroyed it. This blemish, under the law, necessitated the retirement of the king, and his son, Coirpri Lefechair, reigned in his stead. Whenever any difficult case came up for judgment the young man went and asked his father about it, and the ex-king's opinion is recorded in the book. Cennfaeladh became an author thusly: in the battle of Maghrath his head was split open and part of his brain was taken out; fortunately it was the brain of forgetfulness, so when he was recovering, and staying near a law school, whatever he heard he had by heart; "and wrote it on slates and tablets and transcribed it into a paper book." Mr. Ginnell remarks, "One may say in our present language that Cennfaeladh brought out a new and revised edition of King Cormac's work."

There is inherent proof that laymen are alone responsible for this law book. After giving the table of measures in use (and which the translators employed by the Government can only give in this fashion "twelve times the full of a hen egg in a meisrin-measure, twelve meisrin-measures in an ollderbh-measure, twelve ollderbh-measures in an oilmedhach-measure, or in an olpatraic-measure, which contains two olfeine measures") the old original Brehon or one of his commentators, goes on to say: "Four and twenty clerics set down about it and twelve laymen. They (*i.e.*, both parties) get equal quantity of food, but double ale is allowed to the laymen, in order that the clerics may not be drunk, and that their canonical hours may not be set astray on them."

In meting out punishment for crimes and misdemeanors the Irish adopted the sensible idea, "*noblesse oblige*," generally; for instance, the clergy were punished more seriously than the laity. When a layman had paid his fine for an offence, he rested under a stigma and loss of status for a time, but after this probationary period he recovered his position in society. A convicted cleric, however, never regained his former status; there was scarcely anything for him to do but retire from the world and do penance. Loss of status meant ina-