

Of Uladh and her vengeance. King and chief  
Scanned each his prize with careless-seeming eye ;  
Yet oft their followers strove, while onward paced  
The royal arbiters with wands high held,  
Ruling the wrangling crew."

Before the process was completed, King Conor of Ulster, was discovered advancing, whereat Ailill hastened to transfer the supreme command to Fergus. After a glorious battle Fergus struck the usurping but brave King Conor Conchobar to earth, thus avenging himself on his chief foe. The Ulidians returned to the attack, and just as the battle was again about being lost by them, Cuchullain awakes from a visioned sleep, he hastens to the aid of his countrymen in their dire distress, he leads a final onset for Ulster, and Queen Meave is driven in utter overthrow across the Shannon River.

Although the Achillean return of Cuchullain to the host of Ulster from the forest where he lay wounded and spellbound, and other peculiarities presently to be mentioned, lend the poem a pronounced epical tinge and inspire it with the spirit of patriotic action, out of which springs the epics and the drama, nevertheless it is scarcely a Classical Epic in the strict meaning of the words ; since it does not relate a story in which a whole nation feel profoundly interested ; nor does it find its inspiration in a crisis to which an entire people trace their freedom, or happiness, or greatness, unless, indeed, we are disposed to consider the ancient principality of Connaught a separate and distinct nation, though its monarchs, in common with the three remaining monarchs of the four provinces into which Erin was divided then as now, was always in theory and generally in reality subservient to the Chief King, or Ard Righ, at Tara, a separate nation : nor would such an arrangement seem outlandish to our modern mind which is accustomed to it in all its essentials by the relations subsisting between each of the "sovereign" States that compose the republic of the United States and the federal power at Washington. Furthermore, Meave and her allies, drawn as they were from all points except Ulster and even thence in small numbers under Fergus, fairly represented three-fourths of the fighting strength of Erin. But over against these weighty facts must be set the ancient