

of such fleet limbs. At last the Big Amadhán thought it better to bring the chaso to an end. So he poised his spear, and making an accurate and very strong cast, it entered at the beast's haunch, and came out at his breast. Up came the dog, and leaped with joy round the gaisca, and licked his hands.

It was not long till the master of the hunt came up. He had a gold-hafted sword by his side, and two long sharp spears in his hand; a gold brooch held his cloak, and a gold band went round his bircedh. "I thank you, good fellow," said he, "for killing that deer for me. Will you help my men to cut it up?" "I killed him for myself and my wife," said the Big Amadhán, "you shall not taste a morsel of it." "Well at least allow my dog to come to me." "First tell me your name and title." "I am the Enchanter of the Black Valley and the owner of the White Dog, the fleetest hound within the four seas." "You are so no more; the dog is mine." "You are unjust; you should be content with the deer."

Maev had hastened after her husband and was now come up. She took his left arm within her two, and lovingly looked up in his face. "Though you have done me wrong," said the enchanter, "I wish you joy of your beautiful wife. Where is your lios or caisliod, and what is the name of your tribe?" "I have neither land nor fort. I live by the might of my arm. A druid I met this morning deprived me of my legs, and till I recover them I will despoil and discomfort every brother druid of his that I meet." "Well, well; give me my dog, and come yourself and wife, and live with me in my dun, where you can express no wish which shall not be satisfied." "But how shall I recover my legs?" "I, you please me, even your legs shall be restored. I will get the Druid of the Gold Cup into my power, and force him to give them up." The big hero looked at his wife, she looked at him, and he agreed to the offer.

So he stooped, and taking the legs of the deer in his hands, he set it round his neck; Maev sat on its side, and so the two men, the woman, and the dog went on, and nothing is said of their journey till they came to the end of the valley.

There, on a near hill, was a fort, and every stone, and defence, and gate of it was of yellow gold.

"What is the name of that dun?" said the Gaisca, "and who is its chief?"

"That," said the enchanter, "is *Dun an Oir* (fort of gold), and I am its chief, and there you shall be entertained till you displease me."

So they entered the gates, and the Amadhán laid down his load at the door, and the druid brought him and his wife where his own wife was lying on her soft couch. Said the lady to Maev of the silken robe,—

"What is your name, beautiful woman, and the name of him you obey?"

"The Big Amadhán is he called, and he has never met his equal in battle and conflict. I am Maev, and his love for me is only equalled by mine for him."

"But why, O fair Maev of the silken robe, does he want all below the knees?"

"The druidic cup of mead it was, O lady of *Dun an Oir*, my sorrow be on it! But the longest road has an end, and the master of the cup will be one day under the foot of the Big Amadhán. By your hand, lady, he has subdued all the kings and chiefs of broad Erin."

So they made three divisions of the night; the first they spent at the table, the second in conversation, and the third was given to rest. Next morning the druid and the Gaisca were walking on the ramparts, and thus spoke the master of *Dun an Oir*.

"I go to chase the deer from *Dundealgan* (*Dundalk*) to *Glann a Smoll* (*Glen of Thrushes*), and your duty will be to let neither king nor chief within my gates; and if by your neglect they should get in, allow them not to quit till I return. My wife is very beautiful, and in my absence, when hunting, many a young prince and *Tiernach* would be well pleased to pay her their false compliments. This is the only kind of service I shall ever require at your hands. Ask of me in return anything you will."

Away went the master of *Dun an Oir*, and away with him went his white dog. The lady reclined on her couch, and the Big Fool lay on the floor. After a while, he felt such a weight of sleep on his eyes that he could not keep them open.

"By the hand of your husband, O lady," said he, "I fear I shall be found wanting in my duty. I could not continue awake even to be made *Ard-Righ* at *Tara*. All in my power I will perform. Here I lie along at your feet, and no intruder can approach you without disturbing me. O, hard fortune, why did I undertake such duty!"

After some time he was aroused by something passing over his body, and opening his eyes he saw a stranger in a cloak attempting to kiss the lady. Springing up, and taking him by the arm, he swung him to the opposite wall.

"Stay there, man of evil design, till the return of the druidic master. Here I lie at the door to bar your passage."

"It 'ill beseeems a big Amadhán like you to lay hands on a chief. Come from your post, I command."

"Yes, at the return of the master." "I took one of your legs from the druid of the gold cup. I will give it you if you leave the pass free."

Maev, who was listening outside, came in and said,

"Agree to what the chief asks." "Bring my leg, and let me see how it fits."

He produced it, and it was found full of life. "Now I am free; leave the door."

"No, by your hand, I am worse now with one short and one long leg than I was."

The magic chief fastened on the other.

"Now I demand my reward. Otherwise you shall be sung by every bard in wide Erin, as the ungrateful Amadhán."

"I value not their lying songs a dry rash. You shall not quit this *grianan** of the golden castle till the return of its chief. I could not prevent your entrance, I will certainly prevent your departure."

The lady of the fort and the wife of the Amadhán raised their voices against this resolution, but the huge Gaisca was deaf to their words. At last the man in the cloak flung it off, and there stood the Druid of the White Dog and of *Dun an Oir*. He seized the Amadhán in his arms, and kissed him on both cheeks, and tears began to fall from the eyes of Maev.

"Thou faithful man," said the Druid, "it was I who gave thee the enchanted drink, and did all the rest to have thee for a dweller in my fort. Now when I choose I can go to chase the wolves and deer from *Loch Lene* to the *Sea of Noyle*.† When I am fatigued and remain at home to rest, you may go in search of adventures. I will be as faithful a guardian to thy wife as you were of mine. While all are in the dun together, we shall be as happy as friendship, and love, and the wine and mead cup, and the songs of the travelling bards can make us."

Intermixed with tales of the wild and wonderful, we sometimes meet in the old Gaelic collections with a few of a more commonplace character illustrative of the advantage of observing certain moral maxims or time-honoured proverbs. The MS. from which we have obtained the following story does not explain what the colour of the soles of the dying king had to do in the narrative.

THE THREE ADVICES WHICH THE KING WITH THE RED SOLES GAVE TO HIS SON.‡

When the chief of the *Bonna Dearriga* was on his death-bed he gave his son three counsels, and said misfortune would attend him if he did not follow them. The first was never to bring home a beast from a fair after having been offered a fair price for it; the second never to call in

* Summer chamber: the Celtic predecessor of the modern boudoir.

† *Sraoith na Maile Ruadh* (Stream of Red Billows), the sea between Ireland and Scotland.

‡ This is the corrupt wording of our MS. is "Seal na Bonna Dearriga na trí chloirí do lug a dha mac."

§ Now Telltown in Meath. Centuries before the Christian Era meetings were held there for the purpose of negotiating marriages, and hiring of servants, and transacting other matters of business.

ragged clothes on a friend when he wanted a favour from him; the third not to marry a wife with whose family he was not well acquainted.

The name of the young chief was *Illan*, called *Don* from his brown hair, and the first thing he set about doing after the funeral was to test the wisdom of his father's counsels. So he went to the fair of *Tailtean* with a fine mare of his, and rode up and down. He asked twenty gold rings for his beast, but the highest bid he got was only nineteen. To work out his design he would not abate a scerpal, but rode home on her back in the evening. He could have readily crossed a ford that lay in his way near home; for sheer devilment he leaped the river higher up, where the banks on both sides were steep. The poor beast stumbled as she came near the edge, and was flung head foremost into the rocky bed, and killed. He was pitched forward, but his fall was broken by some shrubs that were growing in the face of the opposite bank. He was as sorry for the poor mare as any young fellow, fond of horses and dogs, could be. When he got home he sent a *giolla* to take off the animal's two fore-legs at the knee, and these he hung up in the great hall of his dun, having first had them properly dried and prepared.

Next day he repaired again to the fair, and got into conversation with a rich chief of *Oriel*, whose handsome daughter had come to the meeting to purchase some cows. *Illan* offered his services as he knew most of the bodachs and the bodachs' wives who were there for the object of selling. A word to them from the handsome and popular young chief,—and good bargains were given to the lady. So pleased was her father, ay and she too, with this civility that he forthwith received an invitation to hunt and fish at the northern rath, and very willingly he accepted it. So he returned home in a very pleasant state of mind, and was anxious that this second experiment should succeed better than the first.

The visit was paid, and in the mornings there were pleasant walks in the woods with the young lady, while her little brother and sister were chasing one another through the trees, and the hunting and fishing went on afterwards, and there were feasts of venison, and wild boar, and drinking of wine and mead in the evenings, and stories in verse recited by bards, and sometimes moonlight walks on the ramparts of the fort, and at last marriage was proposed and accepted.

One morning as *Illan* was musing on the happiness that was before him, an attendant on his promised bride walked into his room. "Great must be your surprise, *O Illan Don*," said she, "at this my visit, but my respect for you will not allow me to see you fall into the pit that is gaping for you. Your affianced bride is an unchaste woman. You have remarked the deformed *Fergus Rua* who plays on the small *clarsech*, and is the possessor of three fifty stories. He often attends in her room late in the evening to play soft music to her and to put her to sleep with this soft music and his stories of the *Danaan* druids. Who would suspect the weak deformed creature or the young lady of noble birth? By your hand, O *Illan* of the brown hair, if you marry her, you will bring disgrace on yourself and your clan. You do not trust my words! Then trust to your own senses. She would most willingly break off all connection with the lame wretch since she first laid eyes on you, but he has sworn to expose her before you and her father. When the household is at rest this night, wait at the entrance of the passage that leads to the women's apartments. I will meet you there. To-morrow morning you will require no one's advice for your direction."

Before the sun tinged the purple clouds, next morning, *Illan* was crossing the outer moat of the lios, and lying behind him on the back of his trusty steed, was some long object carefully folded in skins. "Tell your honoured chief," said he to the attendant who was conducting him, that I am obliged on a sudden to depart, and that I request him by his regard for me to return my visit a fortnight hence, and to bring his fair daughter with him. On he rode and muttered from time to time, "Oh had I slain the guilty pair, it would be a well merited death! the de-