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CLASS. P No. 492

LAW V.

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THE

INVASION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE COLLEGIANS," &c.

One foot on sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never. *Shakspeare.*

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE INVASION.

CHAPTER XLII.

FINDING Inguar willing to embrace his service, the Vikingr Gurmund did not suffer him to meet with farther injury. He learned from the crew that they were bent on the invasion of certain islands in the south and west, which were already not unknown to the Norwegian arms; and, from their description of one in particular, he had no doubt it was the same which had formed the sub-

ject of the Norwegian minstrel's praise at the festival of Odin.

The fleet of the conqueror divided on its arrival in what were termed, by ancient geographers, the Hyperborean seas. Part sailed for Gaul, and part, under the command of Gurmund himself, directed its course towards the isle of Inismore, which, however, was not intended to be the object of the invasion. Proceeding southward, they anchored for a day and night on the shores of Powisy, near the mouth of the dangerous Dee. As, leaning over the prow of his vessel, he viewed in silence the shores of merry England, Inguar was seized with a strong desire of separating himself from his new companions, and seeking alone his fortune in this new and fertile country. He felt no inclination to share either the good or evil fortune of the Norwegians, and though his latter life had given him something

of the mechanical courage of a warrior, the adventures he coveted were not those of military life. The level coast lay distant only half a mile, and the fall of night afforded him, ere long, an opportunity of indulging his inclination. Letting himself quietly down into the darkened waters, while his companions slept beneath their skiolds, he had swam more than half the way when a full bright moon arose to light him through the remainder. The tide was at low water mark when he wrung his dripping garments on the beach, so that a long tract of mingled stones and mud lay between him and the strand. Passing this dreary space, on which the only objects he discerned were the bodies of some pirates gibbetted according to the law of the country at low water mark, until they were washed over by three successive tides, the Swede pursued his way along the banks of the Dee, and arrived at morning within sight of the

valley where stood in earlier times the celebrated monastery of Bangor. Its ruins still extended over a mile and a half of land, and the traces of monastic agriculture were still apparent, though near two centuries had passed since the fearful massacre of Legacester, in which above a thousand of the brotherhood had perished. Wandering alone amid the ruins, Inguar was met by some monks, who had taken up their abode in a little corner of the vale. Attracted by his strange attire they questioned him, and discovering by his signs that he was in want of an employment, received him into their abode. Here he remained undisturbed for many years, during which, by the exertion of a mind, not of the lowest capacity, he made himself master not only of the language of the country, but of nearly all the popular learning of the day. Within the last year he had left the valley, and taken up the profession of a travelling book-

vender (in those days no inglorious calling), transcribing frequently with his own hand the volumes which he offered for sale. It was in one of those excursions he arrived at the school-house of Vuscfræa, and made the acquaintance of the young Northumbrian.

Seated on the banks of the Nene, beneath the ashen grove, with the city of Cair Dorme upon their left, and the water murmuring at their feet, the Scandinavian related as much of the foregoing narrative as he could in prudence communicate to Kenric. Having devoted some hours to refreshment and repose, they then continued their journey along the Gwethelin highway, and arrived at length upon those dreary fens that surrounded the city of Cair Grant, the metropolis of the East Angles. Pleased as he was in some respects with his companion, Kenric imagined that it scarce became the relative of duke Elfwin,

and the distinguished pupil of Alcuin, to make an intimate of a travelling book-vender. They accordingly separated on their arrival in Cair Grant, a town at that time superior in size, but little in appearance, to that which he had left. The first step which the young Northumbrian took on entering the place, was to issue challenges to the professors in the various schools to dispute publicly with him on certain branches of science and literature. Though not invariably successful, he distinguished himself sufficiently to attract general attention and applause; and to procure him the immediate offer of several chairs of instruction in the schools. It unfortunately happened, however, in this as in other cases, that what was easily gained was not highly valued, and Kenric was scarcely well fixed in one condition when his unsatisfied and restless temper made him long for another. By these means, before a year had

elapsed, his character was so disadvantageously known in the place, that none who wished to avoid caprice and quarrelling would enter into an engagement with the great Northumbrian scholar.

At first this general disinclination had only the effect of wounding Kenric's pride, and waking a sense of wrong. By degrees, however, when it began to affect his fortunes in the most practical manner, his confidence in his own propriety of conduct began to be shaken. He could not, nevertheless, bring himself in any instance to sue where he was accustomed to be sued, and he preferred leaving East Anglia altogether for some more favourable scene.

The morning on which he adopted this resolution was in the depth of winter. Crossing the Wandleburie hills, famous for the Vandal camp, and in after days for Gervase of Tilbury's spectral knight, he reached the beautiful city of

Cair Wattelin* (the Verolamium of the Romans), where he passed some days in amusement and repose. Continuing his journey from thence to the city of Cair Lud,† he fell, in the very outskirts of the future emporium of trade and commerce, into the hands of a body of rogues or palliards, who, after leaving him senseless on the road, deprived him of every thing except his books and clothing. Recovering consciousness, he wandered along, still much enfeebled; and, entering the city by that part which now bears the name of Highgate, walked along the streets in the utmost dejection, both of mind and frame. In this state of destitution, sitting down to rest upon the shore of the Thames, he heard a familiar voice pronounce his name, and turning, beheld with surprize and joy the figure of the Scandinavian book-vender. The latter manifested

* St. Albans. † London.

the utmost sympathy at his misfortune, and understanding the object of his journey to Cair Lud, conveyed him, by several turnings, to the house of an inhabitant of Inisfail, who was an acquaintance of his own. On entering the dwelling, Kenric was presented to an old man whose countenance, though far from being well-favoured, gave strong indications of Milesian origin. He received Inguar with the manner both of a friend and a superior, and at his request bestowed the utmost kindness and attention on the wounded Northumbrian, whose hurts by this time gave him keen uneasiness. They had him conveyed to a sleeping room, where his bruises were dressed, and all his wants supplied, with a care and tenderness that excited both his admiration and his gratitude.

Expressing these feelings to Inguar in the course of his recovery, the latter informed him

that the old man was one of the petty princes of Inisfail, who had been obliged to seek refuge in exile from the injustice of his own tribe, and from the ambition of a young usurper, who had not only deprived him of his just inheritance, but even pursued his life with the fiercest rancour, and defamed his character with the most atrocious calumnies. Although the old man used every effort in his power to resist this unjust invasion of his rights, the malice of the usurper had prevailed. The adherents of the rightful heir being either dispersed or slain, he was himself, with difficulty, able to preserve his life by voluntary banishment. Deeply interested, no less by these circumstances than by the old man's personal kindness to himself, Kenric expressed the warmest commiseration at what he heard, and the strongest detestation of the conduct of the usurper. Enauiring into the names of the parties and the scene of the

events described, Inguar replied that motives of prudence at present obliged the exile to keep both a secret. He had not yet given up all hope of regaining his inheritance, and his chief hope in doing so lay in the precaution with which the task was undertaken. To Kenric the circumstances of the case appeared so strong, that he thought no course of proceedings could be too open for the purpose of procuring sympathy and succour, but Inguar shook his head at the suggestion, and told him he knew nothing of such affairs.

In a few nights after, the indisposition of Kenric being at its height, and Inguar, who attended him most closely, being absent on some necessary business, the aged exile came to watch beside his bed. Kenric could not forbear introducing the subject which had interested him so much, and the exile, not displeased at the warmth

with which he spoke, gave him a detail of his wrongs and his misfortunes, which deepened tenfold the impression already made by the narrative of Inguar. The conversation dropped at length, and both were for a long time silent. During one portion of his narrative, Kenric observed him several times turn deadly pale, and glance hurriedly aside, with an emotion that more nearly resembled fear, than the natural indignation excited by the consciousness of wrong. This circumstance led the Northumbrian to suspect that the exile, as is said of the Merovingian kings, might have lost his inheritance to his incapacity.

Towards midnight, as the Northumbrian lay yet awake, his surprise and curiosity were both strongly excited by hearing the voice of the exile seeming to address some person present in a deep and earnest whisper:

"Why shouldst thou hesitate?" he said. "Is not our cause, our creed, our wrong, the very same? Is he not equally the foe of both?"

Kenric looked around, and saw with increased surprise that the exile spoke in his sleep. His shoulder rested against the wall, and his countenance expressed the keenest sensations of anxiety, impatience, and entreaty.

Suddenly, while Kenric gazed upon the old man, his manner wholly changed.

"He ne'er will do it," he said, in a tone of contempt; "he is too soft of heart; I must myself—" Then beckoning rapidly with his hand, "Quick, Eimhir, quick! He comes! They say thou art an archer in a thousand; now prove it. Ha! well done! Thou shalt have gold for it. Give me the bow and quiver—now begone."

Regarding what he heard as nothing more than the incoherence of a fancy excited by the

sense of wrong and unfettered by sleep, Kenric made no account of these expressions. Mentioning what had past, on the following day, to Inguar, the latter informed him that the old exile was subject to a disorder which visited him at long intervals, and frequently affected his mind in the most violent manner. In such cases it was remarkable, he said, that nature often hurried into violent contraries, the gentlest persons becoming most furious, the purest most debased, and the holiest most profane. On the recovery of Kenric, the pressing instances of the old man, and his continued kindness, induced him to give up, for some time longer, the idea of separating from the latter, and the prolongation of the acquaintance deepened the feeling of attachment into a species of devotion.

In the course of a fortnight after his first introduction to the exile, the latter, one day, en-

tered his apartment with a countenance bright with joy. He informed the Northumbrian that all now was ready for the progress of the scheme by which he designed to recover possession of his patrimonial inheritance in Inisfail; and he proposed that Kenric should accompany him in his expedition. The latter, ever desirous of change, assented with readiness and even ardour. Preparations were instantly made for their departure, and the Northumbrian learned with pleasure that the friends whom the exile had at length engaged to espouse his cause, awaited him with a fleet of moderate force not far from the mouth of the Thames.

His feelings, however, changed considerably, when Inguar, who was also of their number, by an inadvertence, suffered him to understand that these friends were no other than a fleet of the Scandinavian Vikingr, with whom the exile had

contrived to form a correspondence, and whom he had easily induced, by hopes of profit, to undertake his cause. Kenric, who had no objection to assist the exile in what seemed to him an honourable warfare, was, however, by no means inclined to join his arms to those of the Vikingr. He remonstrated, in the strongest terms, on the imprudence, and even the hideous impropriety, of introducing, into the bosom of a well-ordered country, a horde of such untutored savages, no matter how excellent the purpose. His arguments, however, appeared to make no impression on the exile; and, after a long discussion, the old man cut it short, by saying:

"It is plain, then, Kenric, that I must no longer count on thy assistance. I am satisfied that we should part, but only under one condition. What thou hast learned of my design was told thee under an impression which thou hast

now destroyed. Since thou canst not aid, thou wilt not at least betray me."

"I should be base, indeed," said Kenric, warmly, "if I could be capable of abusing hospitality like that which I have met from thee."

"Thou wilt promise, then," said the exile, "that not a word shall escape thee, without my desire, of what has passed between us on this subject?"

"I freely pledge myself to that," said the Northumbrian, "and deeply grieve that I can do no more."

On the following evening Kenric bade farewell to Inguar and his host, and remained long looking after their small skiff, as it glided swiftly down the Thames. It surprised him that the exile, knowing his destitute condition, had left him at parting without any means of providing for his immediate wants; but he willingly attributed it to

mere abstraction of mind. Once more, thrown back upon his own resources, he passed some miserable months between the cities of Cair Lud and Oder,* until, at length, his spirits lowered by continual disappointment, and his mind tormented with self-reproach, he took the road which led to the Northumbers, without any definite knowledge of his own intentions.

* Bristol.

CHAPTER XLIII.

In the meantime, Elim, pursuing his journey to the isle of Huy, turned out of his course to visit that part of Northumberland which contained the home of his early associate. What had become of Kenric since they parted? What line of life had he embraced? Had he assumed the profession of arms, of which he had spoken with so much enthusiasm on the morning of their separation at Muingharidh? And in whatever condition he had since embraced his part, was the recollection of their friendship still alive within him, and

would his joy at their meeting be now less fervent than his own?

Such thoughts as these passed frequently through the mind of the Ithian as he travelled towards Kenric's native town, in a swinging carriage, such as those used by the wealthier Anglo-Saxons of the period. Arriving in the Dene, he took up his abode in one of those houses of entertainment, established for the accommodation of travellers of his nation. In the course of the evening he made many enquiries, concerning Kenric's family, of his host, a person filling a place almost exactly similar to that of the beatach in his native island; but that his establishment was supported by charitable contributions from wealthy inhabitants of Inisfail, and not by a grant of lands from the civil authorities. This person could give him little information, except that he had heard of such a person as Kenric, a scholar in

high repute, who had left his family in the town, very abruptly, some years before. He was now, he believed, leading a suspected life in East Anglia, a portion of the Heptarchy, which, from the neglected condition of its government, and dissensions concerning the regal succession, was fast relapsing into Paganism.

This intelligence, scanty as it was, excited to an intense degree the desire of Elim to learn something further of his friend. After many enquiries, he was able to discover the residences of his father and uncle, but he preferred seeking for information at the hands of the latter, whom he had already seen when the old man came to leave his nephew, Kenric, at Muingharidh. Accordingly, choosing a time when he should be most likely to find him at leisure, he left his lodging, and rambled in the direction of the school.

The lecture was hardly ended, when he ar-

rived at the little bridge which had been the scene of Kenric's early visions. Elim waited until the house was emptied of its noisy throng, which was dispersed in different directions, reminding him of his own boyhood and Deochain Assain. He did not, however, suffer these thoughts at present to delay his purpose long, but presented himself at the door of the school-master's house, and was instantly admitted into the presence of Vuscfræa.

The uncle of Kenric regarded him with a harsh and suspicious eye, as soon as he heard him introduce himself as his nephew's friend.

"His friend, say'st thou?" he said, in a severe tone; "and what friend pray? A friend of the schools, or of the taverns? A friend to perplex his brain with damning subtleties, or make it drunk with the wassail cup at midnight? Ha, cunning one! A friend to flatter his accursed vanity, and drag him headlong and blindfold to

destruction with thyself? A friend to the false gods of the East Angles, is it? Ha!"

"No such friend, father," answered Elim, mildly, "but the friend of his boyhood, and one of his oldest school companions at Muingharidh."

"Muingharidh!" exclaimed Vuscfræa, in an altered voice, and surveying Elim now with a less harsh attention. "That has a different sound, indeed."

Now, without farther roughness, he bade Elim take his seat, and heard his enquiries for his youthful friend with calmness. Little could he obtain from him, however, in addition to what he had already learned from the lips of his host. Kenric was, at present, he said, in East Anglia, nor was it likely, owing to some family occurrences, that he would return to Northumberland for a considerable time. When Elim endeavoured to procure some contradiction or cor-

roboration of what his host had repeated to him as the common voice of rumour respecting the present pursuits of Kenric, his uncle evaded the questions, or answered them with a morose reserve.

Still, all night long, he thought or dreamed of Kenric, and his thoughts and visions were of an unpeaceful kind. Rising early in the morning, he left his lodging, and passing through the outskirts of the little town, continued his walk for some distance along the banks of the river; until the winter sun, not fully above the horizon when he had set out, made the objects more distinct around him. The place through which he rambled was a valley, fertile and agreeable in the summer season, though now disrobed by the rending blasts of winter, and looking wild with its naked woods and groves. At a short distance from the spot on which he stood, appeared an

Anglo-Saxon temple of simple architecture, with a burying-ground attached. The building was of moderate size, with a porch supported by six simple columns, between which appeared within a lofty arched doorway, oblong and narrow, like that of a portcullis. While he stood contemplating the edifice, the morning suddenly changed. The clouds arose in dreary masses from behind the northern mountains, and a heavy sleet was driven athwart the prospect, by a keen and searching wind. There was no nearer shelter than the humble wooden dwelling of the person who was charged with the care of the house of worship, and whose door stood open at this early hour. Wrapping his Irish cloak around his person, Elim walked rapidly towards the place, and reached it in time to escape the bitterness of the shower.

Here, while he awaited the subsiding of the inclement gust, he observed the figure of a man

in a sitting posture, between the pillars of the temple, his hands clasped around his knees and his head resting upon them, as if he were not aware that the snow was driving full upon his person. So motionless was his attitude, that but for the wind which occasionally lifted the folds of his attire, Elim would have doubted whether he beheld a living being, or its inanimate resemblance. Perplexed at this appearance, and moved with compassion, Elim, as soon as the shower was over, went towards the temple, and gently shaking the poor wretch in order to awaken his attention, placed a scrubal (a small coin of his country,) in his hand. The latter received it with an absent look, like one awaked from a deep sleep, and Elim, after advising him to look out speedily for shelter, departed from the place.

He had proceeded a considerable way on his return, pursuing such reflections as the incident

might naturally suggest, when he suddenly felt some one pluck his cloak from behind; turning round, he beheld the wasted figure of the stranger whom he had been assisting. The latter, taking Elim's hand between his own cramped fingers, replaced the coin, and said:

"Do not rob thyself, stranger. Thou art charitable, but I am not in want of this."

Elim could not avoid smiling at this precise display of independence, while he blushed at his mistake.

"I ask thy forgiveness for my alms," said he, "but if thou wilt not receive it, thou must need fire and food at least. Come with me, then, where I too must be indebted to charity for both."

With some persuasion, the stranger agreed to accompany him, though not until he had explained the nature of the establishment in which he re-

sided. Some further difficulty arose in consequence of the rule of the place, the stranger declaring himself unentitled to its hospitality on the score of country. But this objection Elim undertook to obviate.

They found the refectory thronged with strangers of Elim's nation, who were already assembled for the morning meal of the establishment, and conversing busily according to their different vocations. To Elim the novelty of the scene afforded considerable entertainment, but the stranger who accompanied him, drawing close to the blazing log which lay upon the hearth, did not seem to pay much attention to what passed around him. One spoke of the wars of Charlemagne, another of the increasing ravages of the Northmen; a merchant returning from Amalfi, after disposing of his winter stock of furs, excited the interest of an attentive group with tales of

the ruthless Lombard cavalry, whose hoofs resounded now in the fertile vineyards and cornfields of Italy; while another knot of listeners were entertained with the narrative of a pilgrim, relating accounts not less affecting of the spreading power of the Saracens in Spain. The appearance of the customary refreshments interrupted these discourses, and Elim's attention was turned from the distresses on the continent to the figure of the stranger whom he had invited.

The latter was a man of a thin shape, with a very worn and piercing expression of countenance; his eyes restless, his hair and beard disordered, and his dress, though of showy material, looking much abused. As their refection proceeded, Elim observed him listening sometimes with a look of disdain to the conversation of those around him, and sometimes gazing on his own features with increasing earnestness. Not desiring to pro-

long an acquaintance so entirely casual, Elim took no notice of this circumstance, but, as soon as their meal was ended, arose with the rest, and stood near the fire. In a few minutes, while many voices spoke around him, he heard one, lower but more earnest than the others, saying, as if to some one near him :

" Those who lead lives the steadiest, are least altered by the change of time. It is no wonder that I should recognize you first. Have you quite forgot me, Elim ? "

At the sound of his own name, Elim turned quickly round, and beheld the stranger in the act of addressing him. The change from boyhood to maturity had been so great, that even yet it was with difficulty Elim was able to recognize the face of Kenric, his Anglo-Saxon schoolfellow.

CHAPTER XLIV.

NEITHER the place, nor the presence of so many strangers could restrain the delight of Elim at beholding his old friend so unexpectedly. He even forgot Kenric's own wretchedness, and the distressing circumstances under which he had found him; he forgot every thing but himself, he heard nothing, he saw nothing for the time but Kenric, and embraced him with a glowing heart.

"Most gladly met, dear Kenric," he exclaimed, with eyes full of eagerness and delight. "It was to seek thee I came hither, and I have been

searching for thee in every corner. Where hast thou hidden thyself? I was at thine uncle's. How long hast thou returned from East-Anglia?"

"Not long," answered Kenric, more calmly, and seeming a little confused at the transports of his friend; "let us come to some more convenient place, and I will tell thee all."

Elim hastened to find his birrede, and drew it quickly on his head. They left the house, and returned together to the fields without the town, walking rapidly, and conversing, as they hurried along, in broken sentences.

"And what brought thee among the Saxons, Elim?" asked Kenric, after they had passed the outermost habitations, and found themselves entirely alone.

"Nay, nay," said Elim, "thou hast not heeded half my queries yet. How dull my eyes were when they knew thee not. How thin thou art!

How miserably thin! but no matter, thou must be fattened shortly. Come, give an account of thyself, quickly; why thou hast left East Anglia—why thou art in town unknown to thy uncle—and why——"

Suddenly the recollection of the morning scene at the temple, darted on Elim's mind, and he stopped short, conceiving at once that he had been obtruding his boisterous joy upon a mind suffering, perhaps, at this instant, under some recent and deep affliction. For what else could account for the singular apathy he had manifested in so dreary a situation?

Kenric, however, did not justify this surmise in his present conversation. With a briskness not inferior to that of Elim's joy, he proceeded to answer the questions asked him by his friend.

"I have had adventures enough, Elim, since I saw thee last," he said; "some good, some

evil, some tolerable enough, and some glorious ones."

"How glorious, Kenric?" asked Elim.

"I will tell thee presently," replied his friend. "Dost thou see that old castle on the hill?"

"I do," answered Elim; "is that your father's?"

"Pish, no!" said Kenric, with a contemptuous smile; "ah, poor old times! old times! Elfwin, one of our great dukes, lives there. I gave him a glorious beating once by his own fireside, upon a question of chronology."

"What question?" asked Elim.

"Oh, I had forgot," replied Kenric, with a short laugh; "one long at rest, now, and let us leave it so. But, duke as he was, thou wouldst laugh to see how ill he took the defeat. He was silly enough to tell my father not to bring

me to the castle any more. So much for scholastic dukes!"

"Dost thou intend returning to East Anglia again, Kenric?" asked Elim.

"Think too, of his denying me his patronage, because I proved myself most worthy of it, upon his own arguments. His patronage! These nobles think that land and gold is all. My father may value his patronage as highly as he pleases, but it is not the first nor only point on which he and I have differed."

Elim, who did not feel much entertainment in this, endeavoured to turn the discourse, and obtain from his friend, an account of those varied adventures of which he had spoken. Kenric seemed to desire no better amusement than that of relating them, nor any higher prize than an individual willing to listen. He hurried quickly enough over his life at Muingharidh, after Elim

had left that seminary; confessing to the latter that it had been rather dull, as had been likewise the first few months which followed his arrival in Northumberland. The weather lightened, however, a little, he said, when his uncle (a laughable old fellow, a schoolmaster in the town), procured him an introduction to Alcuin, at the time when he was about leaving England, on the invitation of the famous Charlemagne, and whom he accompanied into Gaul.

"What!" exclaimed Elim, "hast thou then, Kenric, been a traveller?"

"Only over half Europe," replied his friend, pleased at the deferential air in which this was spoken; "but that's a trifle."

"And at the Court of Charlemagne! What Kenric! Didst thou ever see the Emperor?"

"Pooh, yes, a hundred times. This dagger was his gift."

"To thee, Kenric!"

"Pish, aye—they said he loved the renown of letters not less than that of arms; so he gathered all the light he could around him, and fancied, or made Europe fancy, it his own, though his head, meanwhile, continued as opaque as the round ball in the centre of a candelabrum. He gave me this for writing a treatise, which, without vanity, (a thing you will give me credit for despising,) in the opinion of better judges, had something in it. I suppose I must keep it about me, as the giver was an emperor, although, to say the truth, I never valued it."

"Never valued the gift of Charlemagne!" Elim exclaimed, involuntarily.

"Never, in truth," said Kenric; "besides, it is so beautiful a toy that many will be asking where it was procured; and then thou knowest it looks so like display to begin telling its history—

I wrote such a thing—and such and such things were said of it by such and such great scholars—Charlemagne read it, and declared so and so, and gave me this dagger, wrought by his own armourer, and worn by himself in his wars against the Jutes, as a mark of his imperial admiration. There are many fellows, I know, who can say these things of themselves without difficulty, but for my part I have not the face for such a thing."

Elim made no reply, and Kenric proceeded.

"So much the worse for myself perhaps. If I were able to do as others do, I might thrive as others thrive. But Tours! But Bavaria! There, indeed, my dear Elim, the sun began to shine upon my course. There, indeed, I may truly say that I gave something like an appearance of rationality to their foolish applause, which was as ridiculous as it was loud and general already. If ever I could bring myself to indulge in self-

complacency, I will only say that I do not know a period of my life at which it would have been more excusable. And even you, Elim, who so far excel me in modesty, would pardon me for yielding a little, when my unfinished scrap, a thing carelessly done, and the work of an idle fortnight, obtained the applause of the most learned men in Tours. Not that it was by any means such an effort as I would wish to found a reputation upon—for never were less pains bestowed on any thing of the kind—but people will have their fancies. Sometimes, they say, these things come involuntarily. You shall see it, and judge for yourself."

CHAPTER XLV.

Elim thanked him, and he ran on in the same strain during their walk, relating with the utmost minuteness, several circumstances of his continental life, in which, even Elim's affection could hardly enable him to take an interest. It would seem that East Anglia and Cair Lud had not been the scene of so many of Kenric's "glorious" adventures, as he termed them, for he hurried quickly, and with little distinctness, over that portion of his story.

"I would not have left the south," he said,

"but that I longed to see my mother. I have reasons for wishing to see her, and if I could do so, without the risk of meeting my father—"

"The risk of meeting thy father!" exclaimed Elim, in astonishment.

Kenric looked confused, for in relating his narrative he had suppressed all mention of the domestic dissention which preceded his departure. Finding, however, that he could do so no longer, without suffering in the good opinion of his friend, he gave him a detail of the occurrence, which made Elim wonder at Ailred, and excited his strong indignation against the duke.

"I omitted mentioning the circumstance to thee before," said he, "because one does not like to implicate others, more especially of one's own kin, and those to whom one owes a natural deference; but in truth, dear Elim, I am not

a voluntary exile from my home. However," he added, perceiving that his friend began to look grave, "this is a subject not adapted for the day of meeting, so it had better be deferred until there is occasion for it. And now that I have done so much for you, tell me some news of Muingharidh and Inisfail.

As they continued to stroll along the river side, Elim entered on this task with pleasure, but was surprized at the little interest which his friend appeared to take in his accounts of their old school-fellows, and the little attention which he seemed to pay to anything he said. Every instant Kenric interrupted him with some silly jest, or some anecdote about himself, of which the tale reminded him. Elim, indeed, could not avoid remarking that a great change had taken place in Kenric since they studied together at Deochain Assain, and this change became

more observable as the day advanced, and restraint gave place to increasing familiarity.

Some days elapsed before Kenric renewed the conversation respecting his state of alienation from his family, which he had interrupted on that of their meeting. At first, Elim, whom Kenric had still left ignorant of the origin of the dissension, did not like to hear more of the story, but consented readily on Kenric's telling him that he wished to employ his mediation between his father and himself.

"Little did I imagine, Elim," said Kenric, out of a reverie, as they sat one evening alone together, "when I left Muingbaridh, that I should ever live to be an outcast from my father's dwelling."

"An outcast! Kenric?" said Elim, in a tone of surprize.

"Aye, by whose fault is not for me to judge,"

replied his friend. "My own, perhaps, for being blind enough to prefer my principles to my interest. My father wished me to bend to the duke on a debated point between us, and I refused. The duke grew stern, and my father took his part against me. So that I must either have compromised my principle (which I should despise to do), or take the step I did."

"Your father against you!" exclaimed Elim, "that was unfortunate! This could not, of course, have been the dispute on which you seemed to laugh so heartily, the other day, at having defeated Elfwin, by his own fireside.

"This—what dispute? Oh, I remember—no—yes—not altogether, Elim;—a part of the same thing. Indeed, I may say the same, although that was only the beginning of the difference."

"I pity you, Kenric. Could Domnona

do nothing to make things even again; you seem to speak so gratefully of her affection, one would think she must have had some influence."

"And so she had, Elim; and if anything could have prevailed with me, her wishes would have done so."

"*Her* wishes!" said Elim, in increased surprize. "What, was she too opposed to you? Thou hast a fervent spirit, that could support thee singly in the maintenance of principle against such powerful influences."

"They only strengthened me," said Kenric, hastily; "for you know," he added, restraining himself again, "one would not give up one's principle for parent or uncle."

"What sayest thou, Kenric? Uncle? Was Vuscfræa too in the enemy's ranks?"

"He was."

"All four against thee?" continued Elim, laughing.

"All four. Why dost thou laugh?" said Kenric, frowning; "dost thou doubt me?"

"Nay," answered Elim, "I only laughed to think what a hard battle I shall have to fight for you against the whole. So begin, and furnish me with a store of good reasons; for it would be rashly done to enter such a field with an empty quiver."

"Perhaps it would be better not enter it at all," said Kenric, vexed, "for where duke, and father, and mother, and uncle, are already on the other side, who knows how long the friend might continue on mine?"

"Ah," said Elim, "I see thou hast not lost thy old way of taking a jest too seriously. Well thou shalt find me a better soldier than thou thinkest."

"Forgive me for what I said," returned

Kenric; "I ought to know it well. Go, then, Elim, without more words. I will furnish thee with no reasons, for reasoning throve but indifferently with me before. Thou canst do for me what I cannot for myself. Thou mayest argue ill, but thou canst do better; thou canst plead."

Elim, who felt pleased, he scarce knew wherefore, at this last speech, made no reply, but turned the discourse to some other subject.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Early on the following morning, he made his appearance at the door of Ailred's dwelling. The latter had already left the house, but a sickly looking female, wrapt up from head to foot in the close folds of the Anglo-Saxon attire, received him in the outer apartment. Elim, who concluded that he beheld the mother of his friend, introduced himself as he had done at the house of Vuscfræa, by mentioning Kenric's name, but with more precaution. The glow which spread over the wasted face of the woman, and her

sudden eagerness of manner, showed that he was right in his conjecture.

"Come in," said Domnona; "it is a long time now since I heard his name, but neither he, nor his, can ever be unwelcome. The friend of Kenric? Thou comest from East Anglia, then?"

Elim answered in the negative. "I am a native of Inisfail," he said, "and one of Kenric's early schoolfellows."

"I know thee already," said Domnona; "thy name was seldom absent from his lips for a long time after his return from Muingharidh. Thou art Elim, the Ithian. Thou art welcome for thine own sake now, as thou wert for his before."

Thus introduced, Elim proceeded to acquaint Domnona with the object of his visit, but could obtain little encouragement from her in his hope of finding Ailred grown more lenient.

"Speak to him," she said, "speak thyself to my husband, and may he hear thee kindly; but if Kenric be not changed, neither, I fear, will he find his father so."

While she was speaking, Ailred entered. He stopped short on the threshold, surveying the Ithian with a sullen eye, while Domnona went into an inner apartment, leaving Elim to say to her husband what he had said already to herself.

Ailred returned with stiffness the greeting with which Elim prefaced his business, and listened to him with a contracted brow until he had heard the name of Kenric.

"What! Kenric sent thee, did he?" he exclaimed, with a look of harsh satisfaction. "He has found out at last that he was in the wrong, hath he? Hath the world taught him wisdom? I thought it would. I told him what it was to follow his own way."

"I think with thee," said Elim, mildly, "that obedience is at all times a safer course than the way of pride and of self-will."

"What couldst thou say else? Thou hast good reason to think it. If thou beest Kenric's friend, I would thy friendship could convince his stubborn will of that. Thou art rational in what thou sayest: be seated."

"Nay," answered Elim, "it needs but little reason to perceive it. We are born to obey; it is the lot of every creature."

"Most true, most true," said Ailred, nodding his head, in decided approbation.

"It is the foundation of all order," continued Elim, "and the duty of all dependent beings. None such are exempt from obedience. I have already told my friend I thought thou hadst reason in requiring it of him. Subject or king, son or sire, vassal or lord, slave or master, all owe obedience,

each in his own place; the highest on earth still owes it to a higher in heaven, and if any break loose to follow his own will, the will is accursed that breaks the moral harmony of such a system."

"I would," cried Ailred, "that Kenric had thy principles. Thou never wert in Gaul; thou never scratchedst sheep-skin in Bavaria; thou hast not, like the book-men, fifty heads on thy shoulders instead of the single one that nature gave thee at thy birth."

"Nay," continued Elim, willing to go as far with Ailred as he could, "the humblest mind can understand these truths. Obedience is safe, and he who despises safety is not brave but a fool, for safety is the end of danger. So I told Kenric."

"Thou never hadst, young man," said Ailred, increasing in satisfaction, "thou never hadst, as

he had, the thoughts of fifty brains, scraped out of dusty parchments, to addle thine own. I could hear thee for ever upon obedience."

"It is a blessed virtue," continued Elim; "when simplest, it is best; when most implicit, happiest. He only is free from obedience who has no superior, and where is he on earth? I said as much to thy son."

"Whoever thou art," exclaimed Ailred, "thou art a treasure of a friend to Kenric. Domnona, here! The log is cold upon the hearth. I would he had thy principles. Wilt thou be refreshed? Domnona!"

"Do not disturb thy wife," said Elim; "I need nothing but a little farther conversation with thyself. I come, on behalf of Kenric, to obtain for him a re-admission to the house and the affections of his parents."

"Is he willing, truly?" asked the Anglo

Saxon: "what saith he to thy principle? Does he remember still my wish about the duke? Will he comply on that point?"

"I believe," replied Elim, "thou wilt find him willing, in all reason, to show himself a good son."

"*In all reason,* says he?" exclaimed Ailred, "he may keep himself and all his reason in East Anglia. I know well what Kenric means by all reason. He means so far as it shall please himself. I am no dupe, although I never cost my father a herd of kine for books. Kenric may tarry, in all reason, where he is, until, reason or unreason, he is prepared to do my pleasure."

"I had hoped," said Elim, "that when thou hadst considered his sufferings, thou wouldst act kindly with him, and be his father again."

"Which is the juster, now I pray you,"

said Ailred; "which is the more fitting, that he should yield to me or I to him?"

"O, surely he," said Elim, "but is it not easier for thy wisdom to bear with his folly, than for his folly to understand thy wisdom?"

"Thou comest then after all," said Ailred, "to preach submission to me, instead of bearing it from him. Is this what all thy implicit doctrine comes to? Away with thee, youth, away with thee! If thou beest Kenric's friend, go spend thine eloquence on him. What ado hadst thou to come preaching to me of obedience? Wilt thou advise Kenric to make submission to the duke?"

"I know not the question in dispute between them," answered Elim.

"Of what avail is that? neither do I," cried Ailred. "Some knotty trash of stars and moonshine, which might as well be one thing as the other, for aught that either knew about the matter."

"Kenric hath a scruple upon it I believe," said Elim, "and methinks the duke, if he be a Christian duke, might well indulge him in his love of principle."

"It matters little, youth," said Ailred, "what the duke is besides—he is the duke; that is enough for Kenric, and must not be gainsaid."

"And what shall I answer to Kenric," asked Elim, with gentleness, "when he tells me that, in adhering to his principle (for he seems to think it is a point of principle), he is no way disobedient?"

"How is he to make that appear?" asked Ailred, looking suspicious.

"Surely he will say," answered Elim, "that no one ever deemed it right to obey the lesser law against the greater."

"And thou wilt be at a loss, for all thy eloquence, what to reply?" cried Ailred; "then

hear me, youth: do thou and he deliberate the point between you in East-Anglia until you are agreed, for here my pleasure shall be law, and the only law for him to act upon. Thou mayest assure him I will have no other."

"I will do so," said Elim, tossing his head, "but I fear he will only tell me that the obedience thou demandest is such a one," he added, reverentially lowering his face, "as we only owe to the law that cannot err."

"It is well," cried Ailred; "thou are fit to fight in such a cause as Kenric's. Thou art a fitting companion for my son. Hast thou, thyself, no subtle notion concerning the moon's age, to fling in a duke's face, and turn thy father's care to nought? Thou hast, I am certain, simple as thou seemest. The friend of Kenric? one of his East-Anglian friends, with whom Vuscfræa says he wastes the night over the wassail cup and tœfl

stone? Not that a game of tœfl could do him half the hurt his brain receives from those unprofitable scrolls on which he doats. I would, and so Vuscfræa heard me say, that a harmless bowl amongst a merry company had ever been the limit of Kenric's trespass. It were better than the drunkenness of the mind, caused by the flimsy dreams of chicaning casuists. The fumes of the one are off with the next morning wind, but for the other there is little hope of cure; no morning; no awakening."

"It is a sad truth," said the Ithian.

"Aye, sayest thou? I value not thine acquiescence now," said Ailred; "thou art as supple an eel as the rest, and canst wriggle from side to side as readily. Perhaps thou art one of those who could serve him both ways? exhaust his purse of its metal at the tavern, and his head of its natural reason at the school? though, in truth,

his stock in either, when he left Northumberland, was hardly worth the pilfering. And wert thou one of these East-Anglian friends?"

"My attire might tell thee," answered Elim, "that I am no native of Inismore. I was the schoolfellow of Kenric when he studied at Muingharidh."

"A scholar here or there, it is the same," cried Ailred; "the same herd of cunning simpletons they are, I think, throughout all Europe."

"Am I to tell my friend, then," asked the Ithian, "that I have failed in my design to serve him?"

"Say what thou wilt to him," cried Ailred, waving his hand, as if to end the conversation, "but ay no more to me."

Elim did not think it necessary to press any farther his self-exculpation from the home charge made by Ailred; and not seeing any probability

of effecting more good for his friend at this interview, he shortly after left the house. He did not depart, however, with any appearance of discouragement, but seemed, as in fact he was, determined still to persevere in his efforts to effect a reconciliation.

CHAPTER XLVII.

As he passed the end of the building, a small window frame was thrown open, and he saw Domnona, who had not made her appearance during the discourse, beckoning to him with an anxious visage from within.

"One word," she said, "before thou goest, Elim. Let me know the place where thy friend is to be found, if his father or I should have occasion to send for him."

Elim named his own lodging, and the window was closed again. On his arrival there, he

found Kenric expecting his return, and related to him the interview which had taken place between Ailred and himself. A motive of compassion for his friend, made him suppress, so far as he could consistently do so, all mention of the mere harshness of Ailred; and it was even with pain he communicated, in a mitigated way, the account of his disappointment. But the manner in which his friend received the account, led him to perceive that such delicacy was superfluous. Kenric looked only vexed; and two or three times, as he listened to certain parts of Elim's narrative, the latter, with a disagreeable sensation, observed him endeavouring to suppress a smile.

"Be it so," he exclaimed, when it was concluded, "I have done enough to please him; and as to the duke, it is nothing but pride in him, a vice which I despise and hate. I should con-

sider it downright criminal in me to flatter any man's pride, as my fath—as I see some people do."

"What was the question in dispute between you?" asked Elim.

"The question is a matter of no import," answered Kenric; "it is the fact of my submitting to Elfwin, because he is the duke, that makes the difficulty between my father and mysef."

"Well," answered Elim, "and if the question be one of indifference, as Ailred seems to think it is, since we are not dukes ourselves, we may remember that there is something due to rank."

"Rank!" cried Kenric; "the order of mind is higher than the order of place."

"Aye," replied Elim, "and there is an order higher than either, Kenric; the order of

the heart. I remember we both thought so at Muingharidh."

The Anglo-Saxon started, and looked upon his friend, bitterly mortified, yet not knowing whether to take his words in grief or anger. Elim, however, did not seem inclined, either to add any thing to what he had said, or take any thing from it, so the conversation dropped for a time.

With a different feeling, however, Kenric appeared to listen to the account which Elim shortly afterwards gave of Domnona's message from the window. It affected him much, and he awaited with suppressed anxiety the arrival of the communication which her words had led him to expect.

In the meantime, Elim found himself compelled to proceed upon his journey, the time being nearly exhausted which he had proposed

devoting to his Northumbrian visit. Kenric did not ask him to renew his efforts with Ailred, a circumstance with which Elim was in no way dissatisfied, for he had lost heart in the cause soon after his first interview. Still, however, though he strongly suspected his friend of erring in this point, he was far from feeling towards him the least diminution of affection or esteem. Where any thing agreeable occurred in Kenric's conduct, he opened his heart to it as to a glow of sunshine, and to all that seemed to indicate a deteriorated principle, he strove to close his eyes with affectionate incredulity.

Perceiving, however, the occasional fits of depression to which his friend became daily more and more subjected, he felt the difficulty increase of leaving him in this unsettled state of mind. He proposed to him that they should both re-

turn to Inisfail, until a farther lapse of time should soften the obstacles to a reconciliation with Ailred; and he was doubly induced to press this step in the hope that it might be of advantage to the mind of Kenric himself. The latter listened to his instances with pleasure, and was only deterred from at once yielding his consent by a feeling similar to that which had induced him to replace the scrubal in the hand of Elim, on the morning he had found him at the temple porch.

On the evening before Elim's departure for Huy, Kenric had promised to give him a decisive answer with respect to his invitation, and the former walked out alone, leaving him to complete his final deliberations at their lodging. As he passed the school-house of Vuscfræa, he suddenly met the gray-headed old disciplinarian returning to his dwelling, and supporting him-

self as he walked, with an oaken staff. Recognising Elim, he accosted him with less than his accustomed harshness, and after learning from him that he had found his nephew since they parted, and that he hoped, at present, to bring him back to Inisfail, he said, after looking to the right and to the left.

"Thou art young and trusting, and shouldst be wary. Mark this," he continued, touching Elim's arm with the head of his staff: "confidence in the simple-minded is often as dangerous as suspicion is injurious in the ill-intentioned."

"What mean you, father?" asked Elim, with a smile.

"Beware of Kenric," answered the schoolmaster.

"Of Kenric! of my oldest friend!" exclaimed Elim.

"Of him," replied Vuscfræa. "Of thy friend and of my nephew. I say, beware of him."

"I am certain," said Elim, warmly, "he intends, he never intended, aught but good to me."

"I bid thee not," returned the old man, "to beware of his intentions, but of himself. There is another to whom he never intended aught but good, and yet has wrought much evil; I mean himself. I warn you, youth, beware of him. I know enough of his life in East-Anglia to justify my charity in placing you upon your guard, but not enough to sanction me in saying more. Farewell!"

The feeling of surprize with which Elim heard him, turned, as the old man spoke, to indignation.

"Father," said he, "I have no right to charge

thee with injustice, but yet bear this in mind: there is a kind of men who cannot pass from youth to age without losing their good humour together with their hair, and who employ themselves in finding cause of censure, and in thwarting the innocent enjoyment of the young, as if they imagined that a late want of charity might atone for an early want of wisdom. I am far from charging thee with this moroseness; I speak not in reproof, but warning. If thou have a specific charge to make against my friend, out with it. If he have disgraced his name and rendered himself unworthy of confidence 'tis fit I know it before I yield him mine. What act has Kenric done to justify so dark an intimation?"

"I speak not from his acts," replied Vuscfræa, "so much as from my knowledge of his character."

"It is enough," said Elim; "thy caution then was needless, we are but too apt to judge amiss of that without an instigator."

"Do as thou wilt," replied the hoary pedagogue; "whatever be thy judgmnt of thyself, I cannot help it. I have done my part in warning thee. It rests with thyself to use or to forget my caution."

With these words he hurried off, as if with the design of avoiding any farther question or remark from Elim. The latter was deeply impressed by the apparent sincerity and earnestness of manner with which he had addressed him, but he could not bring himself to entertain the unwelcome doubt which his words were intended to impart.

"He is a good old man," said he, "but over harsh and cautious. He said even worse than this of myself, before I had been well inside

his door, at our first interview. Yet why," he added, stopping short, for in the earnestness of these reflections he had been walking at a rapid pace, "why, if there be no need of such a precaution, should I reject the hint with a disturbed mind? Those conversations, do they resemble Kenric's early dialogues? And yet why should he be the very same? How could he, without prejudice to the natural growth of feeling and of mind, remain entirely what he was in boyhood? Ah, let me not deceive myself, Kenric is changed, and it is not the right change that has been made in him? It is not growth, but ugly alteration. It is the work of something more than time, and Vuscfræa is right and kind, and prudence is necessary. I will use it, therefore, till I have learned to see more clearly."

Settling his mind into a state of calmness, Elim now proceeded with a guarded, though not

distrustful heart to find his friend. On entering the lodging, the latter met him, in an agitation which partook of joy and of anxiety.

"Elim," said he, "I am to see her; I am about to see Domnona. She has sent me word to meet her after dusk upon the bridge, and I have been wishing thee the wings of Hermes ever since, for thy delay was torturing. And yet now thou art come, what do I want of thee? Nothing but to give joy to thy good heart, for I know no surer way of doing so than by telling thee that mine is full of rapture. My mother, Elim, whom I have not seen for a whole year, and whom I left without ———" he paused, and seemed with difficulty to suppress a burst of anguish. "Why should I foolishly seek to make thee understand my joy, my extacy? Thou knowest her not, thou knowest not all her excellence, her early care, her doating love of me, her piety,

her gentleness; ah, gentleness! ah, gentleness that she has suffered for! ah, gentleness that I have made bitter to myself and her; but what of this? Farewell! retire not for thy life to rest till my return. I will go with thee to Inisfail, anywhere. Thou mayest see that half my preparations are already made; complete them for me, and I will be thy companion in the morning."

He hurried off, leaving Elim surprised, delighted, and ashamed. Surprised at the unexpected burst of feeling, delighted at the first stroke that since their meeting had thoroughly reminded him of his early friend, and ashamed of what he thought the meanness of his own conduct in even parleying for an instant with a doubt. Flinging off at once all thought of old Vuscfræa's intimation, he set with alacrity about making Kenric's preparations for departure, deeming himself happy in the fortune

which had ensured to him for so long a time the companion shipof a friend so ardent and deserving.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

In the meantime Kenric hastened to the place of rendezvous. Attached to a degree even beyond what he himself imagined to his indulgent parent, he forgot, for the moment, in the one idea of meeting her, his father, the duke, the lunations, equinoxes, and even himself. A broad moon had just succeeded, and in part displaced the light of the sun (which was already set when he arrived upon the bridge), and cast the shadows of the passengers, who crossed at lingering intervals, in tapering elongation over the surface of the stream.

In a short time, while he continued walking to and fro in restless expectation, the place became entirely deserted, and favourable for the promised interview.

A figure, wrapt in the Anglo-Saxon mantle, and moving slowly towards the bridge, was the first that fixed his attention with keenness of interest. He waited, leaning against the paling that served for a battlement, until it approached the centre, and then advancing, said in a low voice.

"Is it my mother?"

Without replying in words, Domnona opened her arms, and they embraced in silence. The joy of Kenric, however, was mingled with a pang of dismal anguish, when, on putting back the hood from his mother's brow, he beheld the thin and haggard countenance it had concealed.

"What ails thee, Kenric?" asked Domnona,

in a gentle voice, "why dost thou turn from me, child?"

Kenric paused, his mind greatly troubled, with his face bent downward, and not daring to look again into that of his parent.

"I stole out, as soon as thy father left the house," she said, "to see thee, for I dared not be absent in the day. Thou hast grown tall, Kenric, and stouter. If I were not thy mother, I would have passed thee ere thou spokest. What ails thee? Wilt thou not tell me some news of thy fortunes?"

"Ah, mother!"

"Well, my child?"

"Thou art so changed, so ill, so utterly wasted, I never thought thou couldst look so wretched."

"Do not trouble thyself for that," said Domnona, "if I could see you all reconciled again I

would be well enough. Vuscfræa, whom I have just parted with, tells me thou art meditating a voyage to Inisfail with thy friend Elim. If so, before thou goest, I have some parcels for thee; some tunics long since made, and hose and a mantle, only waiting for an opportunity to be sent. They would have reached thee in East-Anglia had any offered. They are all thy mother's work. I thought thine own must needs be worn ere now, and thou hadst no one in that distant country to care for thee. It was a comfort to me to make them, and to think, as the work went on, that I had only to call thee in and bid thee wear them; but thou canst not think how lonesome I felt when they were all finished, and thou so far away from me."

"Mother," whispered Kenric, "you are paining me, although you do not know it."

"What, darling! I am sorry for it. Ah,

this was ever thy way, Kenric; thou wert ever feeling and easily touched. I cannot stay much longer now, for Ailred will return about this hour, and if he find me absent, nothing less than the pleasure of having seen thee could pay for the discomfort it would cause me."

Kenric sighed deeply.

"I have been thinking, and thinking, upon this business," said Domnona, "until my brain is as addled as ever a scholar of them all in Ailred's mind. I believe if you could make matters understood, there is none so wrong as the rest imagine; ah, why dost thou moan so, Kenric? Principle, thou knowest, is above every thing, and I know thou canst not but be right, or thou wouldst never have held out so long away from us all. Don't let it prey upon thee, darling. Time may cure all, and hope. But do not blame thy father for his views, for Ailred has a great deal on his

mind to trouble him, and thou dost not know what reason he had to be grateful to Elfwin. And do not think too harshly of the duke, even if thou deem him wrong; these men of birth and grand estate, thou knowest, are always apt to fight for their own way, and find it harder to own themselves in fault than a poor person. So much the worse for them, thou knowest, my son, and we ought to rejoice that we are poor and humble. Why dost thou moan again? art thou not glad to see me?

"Well, I must now return—nay, do not leave the bridge till I am out of sight, for it would be a fearful thing if Ailred saw thee with me, whatever he might say of meeting me alone. Farewell! I will send; when dost thou leave the town?"

"At dawn of day."

"To-morrow! oh, so soon? farewell, my

child! I'll send the tunics and the other garments then to night by Webba to thy lodging. Love Elim, for if he were thy brother he could not say more for thee than he did to Ailred. Once more farewell! Thy mother's blessing go along with thee, and if thou be wrong, may heaven forgive thee too!"

So saying, she departed, gathering her mantle again around her head, and leaving Kenric in a state of mind different from what he had anticipated from this wished for interview. Bewildered by a crowd of thoughts, some terrible and wholly new to him, some exquisitely painful, he walked almost instinctively toward the lodging, and would have given much to be once more reconciled to his offended friends.

Elim, who expected to see him return as he had departed, in delight, was greatly perplexed by the absence of mind and dejection which he

manifested. At first he supposed that Domnona had disappointed him, but being undeceived on this point, he was compelled, with grief, to attribute what he beheld to the nature of the interview. He pitied Kenric doubly, because the latter, now, for the first time, made no communication of his feelings.

In a little time, the arrival of Webba with the bundle of garments aroused his friend in some degree from his extreme depression. He had been so thoroughly miserable under the influence of his remorse, and so penetrated by his mother's words and sickly appearance, that he thought several times of hurrying to his father's house, without delay, and flinging himself at the feet of Ailred to implore his pardon. When the bundle came, he took it apart, and examined it in private. Elim, who watched him with some uneasiness, observed, after he returned, that he

strove to hide his face during the evening as if he had been weeping, which was indeed the case. The relief which he found in tears took off in some degree the poignancy of self-reproach, and left him more capable of mastering the good suggestions which he had been striving to resist already. During the night, Elim, whose bed of rushes and log-pillow were placed in the same apartment, heard him often starting in his sleep, and muttering his mother's name.

CHAPTER XLIX.

A DEEP sleep fell on Kenric before morning, and when Elim came to tell him that the carriage was ready for their journey, he awoke hurriedly, like one who had lost all recollection of the events of the preceding day. The journey tended still more to dissipate the gloom which had oppressed him, and before they reached the coast from whence they were to embark for Huy, he seemed to have recovered the same degree of animation which he had shown, with few exceptions, since their meeting. He conversed freely with Elim of his adventures since he left his home, and

intimated more than he had hitherto done of his life in East Anglia, though this part of his story was always approached with evident reserve. He described the schools of Cair Grant, and dwelt much on the account of his own difficulties on his first arrival, not omitting to do himself ample justice for the energy with which he had surmounted them.

"But the hardest thing to bear," he continued, "was the character of the persons with whom I was at first obliged to associate. To one, you know, accustomed as I was on the continent (and in this instance the worse for me) to the conversation of the first men in Europe, to the tables of Eginhard, of Alcuin, of Virgil, of Claude Clement, and John Scot, and of others not less celebrated, imagine what it was to mingle with a crew no way superior to the ragged rout of Fearbolgs and Danaans, that thrust themselves

upon our lectures at Deochain Assain, in pursuit of the fruits rather than the flowers of Parnassus, looking merely for the immunities of literature, and no way disposed to advance its interests. From the little you know of me, you may judge (without my going to talk nonsense you know) whether I was a fit companion for persons of that description. And then, one could not be trumpetting one's own praises, and telling people one was this and that, and could do so and so. I know there are persons that can do it, but I don't envy them. Besides, even if the duty one owes to one's own interests were to urge one to say what one was, by some awkward chance it never has the effect. It always looks like vanity, at least they think so, and one does'nt like to be suspected for what is beneath one, you know. Coarse minded people, when they hear you tell any thing of yourself that is on one side

more than another, will never be persuaded but you praise yourself. For that reason, I always avoid it, and very often to my own serious disadvantage. The malice of men, Elim, is detestable; and if it were only their malice, but their coarseness! I cannot tell you with what anguish it was that I observed after some time the effect of the society I was obliged to keep on my own manner and discourse. Of that, I will only say, without vanity (for you know all those things are nonsense between you and me), but I will only say, the knowledge of courts was not, of course, you know, lost upon me. It was painful then, Elim, to observe the Gallic polish of my own manner wearing slowly off, and to detect in my own habits the same lack of refinement which had offended and depressed me at the first in them. Even at table, and in our evening meetings, it was with an aching heart I missed that courtesy of manner

and habitual minuteness of attention for which the subjects of Charlemagne were most remarkable. And then for one who hates pride so heartily as to sacrifice his domestic peace rather than flatter it, to sit listening for hours to the foolishness of literary egotism; to sit out an evening among companions with whom a paltry vanity, a foppery of nouns and verbs, were but poorly compensated by a flippancy that was meant for wit, and an exaggerated turn of sentiment and of expression! Well, they may say what they will of dukes and rank, but honest plain humility is over all."

Elim wondered where his friend could have picked up the strange ideas of duty and of virtue which escaped his lips from time to time, and often censured himself for a strong inclination to smile at sentiments which ought to have moved his indignation. It surprised him, moreover, to

observe, that notwithstanding the genuine and deep concern which Kenric had displayed during the evening previous to their departure, he had completed the decoration of his person on the following morning with the care of a young girl. From these follies, however, frequently as they were forced on his attention, he turned away his eyes as much as possible.

In the course of a few days they reached the lonely island of Iona, where Elim found the late Ard-righ of Inisfail employed in tilling a small garden near the shore. Elim presented his credentials, and had little difficulty in accomplishing the object of his journey. The exiled monarch expressed the liveliest delight at the prospective happiness of his early favourite, and accorded his assent without delay. After spending a few days in the isle of the recluses, they prepared once more to take the sea.

"Well, Elim," said Kenric, as they stood on the shore, laying his hand upon the shoulder of his friend, "what an ingrate I should be if ever I forget the events of the last moon!"

He said these words so often, that Elim at length turned round and exclaimed, with a laugh:

"One would think thou wert meditating some evil against me already, thou seemest to dwell upon it so earnestly. Thou art a strange being—one who did not know thee as well as I do, would say thou distrustedst thine own heart. But come, if we stay here debating of our propensities and inclinations, and all the rest about our beloved selves, the tide may leave our vessel."

They directed their course southward until the woody shores and highlands of Ulladh broke upon their eyes. The winds blew fair, the vessel spread her canvass to receive them, and the morning of the third day's sail beheld the voyagers

entering the mouth of that river (since so fatally renowned), which flowed by the ancient city of *Inbher Colpa. Pursuing their course along the banks of the stream, they were surprised to see its surface enlivened at a distance by a number of coities, currachs, noevogs, and other shallow craft, filled with company gaily dressed, and bearing banners in their prows of various devices. These ensigns were marked in large characters, with the words "Mac Mahon a-bo," "O'Hanlon a-bo," "O'Kelly a-bo," and many other northern patronymics.

Their vessel at length lowered sail on the borders of Conal Muirtheimhne.† Springing to his native soil, Elim lay down for some moments in silent joy, with his bosom pressed against the earth. Kenric followed, smiling at his enthusiasm, and wishing that he could share it. Turn-

* Drogheda. † Lowth.

ing to a Heremonian fisherman, who, with a piece of horse-skin and hempen cord, was repairing his little noevog upon the river side, Elim learned that this gay company were the representatives of the various septs from the northern principality of Orgial of the Golden Hostage, who were proceeding to the Feis Tamrach, or grand national assembly of the princes of the island.

They passed the night at Slane, an inconsiderable town, where the Northumbrian learned from his friend the nature of the assembly of which the fishermen had spoken.

"The Feis of *Tamrach," said he, "is an assembly of the Ard-righ, the Righs, Airighs and petty authorities of the island, which is convened every third year, in order to revise and frame laws, examine the national records, and deliberate on the state of the island. The present

* Pronounced *Tara*.

sitting, however, must be convened for some extraordinary occasion, for scarcely two years have elapsed since it was last dissolved."

What this extraordinary occasion was, they learned on the following day. Hiring a carbudh at Slane, they proceeded in the direction of the Feis. The roads, as they advanced, were crowded with strangers from all quarters of the isle, presenting the most animating spectacle, from their great numbers, and the variety of their costume and equipments. Here they beheld a carbudh, highly decorated, and filled with company in the gayest attire; there a karr, laden with tributary swords, embroidered cloaks, copper cauldrons, and followed by tributary droves of oxen, swine, or sheep; there might be seen the banner of a chieftain, bearing the device of some Heberian, Irian, or Heremonian sept, and followed by the gleaming spears and plumeless

cathbhars of a long line of mounted galloglachs. Here came a wandering crotarie, with his silent clarsech hanging at his back; and there a *cleasamnaigh*, or half-witted jester, amused a merry crowd with satirical tales and pointed repartees.

Stopping for refreshment at the house of a beatach, at no great distance from the royal dwelling, they learned that the successor of Donacha, Aodh the sixth, had summoned the Feis, at this extraordinary time, for taking immediate measures against the northern Fionn Geinte (or white strangers), for such were the Vikingr named in the language of Inisfail. It had become every day more certain that this island could not much longer escape the visitation of those pirates, and the Ard-righ had resolved on taking early steps to prevent their effecting a descent. It was now the evil appeared of the narrow and jealous

spirit of pride by which the princes of the isle were governed. Some, resenting a trifling breach of etiquette in the mode of summons, refused altogether to attend the Feis; others disputed about precedence and right; and many had insults from their neighbours to avenge, and injuries to redress, which occupied all the force at their disposal.

It was intended that Elim should, at the approaching Feis, take his place, for the first time, in the great council of the nation, but he had no expectation that the time would have been thus anticipated. It was arranged between him and Kenric that the latter should remain at the house of the beatach, while Elim hastened at once to Inbhersceine, in order that he might return and make his appearance at the Feis with the requisite state. Without delaying an hour even to visit the royal palace close at hand, the

young chieftain hurried back to his sept, his bosom throbbing with anxiety and ardour.

During the absence of his friend, Kenric remained at the dwelling of the beatach, listening to the conversation of the guests, observing the various groups which passed onward to the great camp around the hill of Tamrach, and sometimes walking out to enjoy the neighbouring scenery. One day a strong desire possessed him of visiting the palace all alone, and mingling, unknown, in its festivities. Attiring himself in the plain but handsome Anglo-Saxon attire which he had received from Domnona, he waited the approach of evening, and took the road which conducted to the Kempe. For nearly a mile around the hill, on which the royal residence of Tamrach stood, the ground was covered with the tents of the various chieftains who had obeyed the summons of the Ard-righ, and Kenric found a difficulty in

making his way through the merry multitude and reaching the entrance of the palace. A lofty gateway, thrown open, revealed the brilliant interior, which consisted of a great hall, leading, as Kenric could perceive, by many doorways, to the different compartments of the building. The Northumbrian, meeting no obstacle at the outer gateway, presented himself at that, which, as he could conjecture from the sound of music and dancing from within, was the principal scene of amusement. Announcing himself as an Anglo-Saxon Ollamh, he was instantly admitted, and a scene of splendour burst upon his sight, which rendered him, for some time, incapable of using it with distinctness. The apartment was of great extent, brilliantly lighted up with a number of pendant lamps, and thronged with chieftains and ladies in the rich and varied costume of their different septs. Neither the Ard-righ nor any of the

four great provincial kings were present, but the diminution of splendour which their absence occasioned was more than compensated by a diminution of form. Bursts of music occasionally broke from the harps of musicians placed in different quarters of the room, and these were varied with songs and dancing, while the greater portion of the company walked slowly through the apartment, or conversed in scattered groups. Taking his place apart, at a little distance from the grand entrance, Kenric contemplated in silence the various figures that made up the courtly assemblage.

The conversation of a number of ladies, who sat near in a group, diverted his attention from the moving crowd. They had just entered from the doorway leading to the Hall of Ladies, a department of the building in which, as in the female senate of the Heliogabalus, discussion some-

times run as high, if not as warm, as in the masculine councils of the Feis. Debates on costume, and on precedence; on the comparative sanctity of different religious establishments; eloquent eulogies pronounced on the sternness with which this prelate denounced transgression, and on the beauty of the pearls which that prince wore behind his ears, such were, for the most part, the entertainments of the circle in the Grianan na Ninghean. To hear these ladies, one would have supposed that every pilgrim that ever lodged a night beneath their bawn was a model of perfection.

Apart from these, and not appearing to be interested in their conversation, Kenric observed a young woman, in a simple dress, and holding a cruit in her hand, her features half concealed by the large white veil, which, in the usual fashion, was fastened beneath her bosom with a golden

bodkin. While the Northumbrian admired the exceeding beauty of the figure, and so much of the countenance as he could behold, a man approached, richly dressed, in a deep coloured sagum, and bearing the golden collar which announced the princely rank of the wearer. He whispered a few words to the young woman, after which he fell back to a little distance, while she, without hesitation, ran a short prelude on her little cruit, and sung to its music the following words :

THE PHANTOM CITY.

I.

A story I heard on the cliffs of the west,
That oft through the breakers dividing,
A city is seen on the ocean's wild breast
In turreted majesty riding.
But brief is the glimpse of that phantom so bright,
Soon close the white waters to screen it,
And the bodement, they say, of the wonderful sight,
Is death to the eyes that have seen it.

II.

I said when they told me the wonderful tale,
My country, is this not thy story ?
Thus oft through the breakers of discord, we hail
A promise of peace and of glory.

Soon gulphed in those waters of hatred again,
No longer our fancy can find it;
But woe to our hearts when we see it in vain,
For ruin and death come behind it.

It was not the exquisite richness of the voice, nor the delicacy of the accompaniment, nor the feeling which animated both, that fixed the attention of Kenric, and absorbed his whole mind for several minutes after the fair melodist had ceased. It was the conviction now flashing on his recollection that somewhere he had both seen and heard the songstress long before, and under circumstances of touching interest. Unable, notwithstanding his most earnest efforts, to call to mind the occasion on which he had beheld her, yet every moment feeling more assured that this was not the first occasion of their meeting, the young Northumbrian arose from his place, and took his seat on a tripod which stood unoccupied, at a little distance, on the left of the fair

stranger. His birrede and ring were sufficient, in Inisfail, to entitle him to claim equality with the noblest at the Feis; and he found no difficulty in entering into conversation with the lady. There was, however, in the extreme sweetness with which she heard him, a secret distance, not of pride, but dignity, which, while it repressed, enchanted him the more. There was, moreover, amid all her grace, and the accomplished cheerfulness of her manner, a depth and ease that fixed the attention, and indicated a high-toned character. The longer he observed, the more convinced was Kenric that he had seen the form before, and the farther was he, at the same time, from recalling the particulars of place and time. As the conversation continued, the young stranger seemed amused by the inquisitive restlessness of Kenric, as well as by his unconscious vanity. Soon after, the return of her friend with a circle

of courtly acquaintances, obliged him to retire to another part of the chamber, where he had, ere long, an opportunity of seeing her moving through the graceful and varied figure of the national dance.

It was moonlight when he left the hall of the palace. Thridding his way once more through the still noisy camp of the assembled chieftains, he took the road which led to the dwelling of the beatach, where he arrived at midnight.

On the following morning he arose more thoughtful than usual. After a hasty breakfast, he turned almost instinctively in the direction of the palace of Tamrach, and found himself, ere long, in the camp of the chieftains. Looking up to a banner which waved almost immediately above his head, he saw that it was embroidered with the figure of a bloody hand, and the motto, "First in the onset—last in the retreat," announced the

ensign of the Dal Gassian kings of Munster. The sight of the banner brought to his mind the morning when he had pointed it out to his friend Elim at the convent of Muingharidh. While the recollection was passing through his mind, he was startled by hearing a strange voice at a little distance, exclaim:

"Kenric, the Northumbrian!"

Turning his head, he beheld a young curaidhe, or knight, on horseback, handsomely attired, whom he at once recognized as the person who bespoke the song of the unknown minstrel at the Feis the night before. Approaching the young scholar, with a smiling air, the stranger said:

"It is many years since we have met, and yet I recognized thee almost at a glance. Dost thou remember Airtree, thy school-companion at Muingharidh?"

The Northumbrian returned the young

prince's greeting with a cordial spirit. Having learned the occasion of his presence at the Feis, and ascertained his present abode, Airtree rode on to superintend his troops in going through their daily exercise.

For some moments after his departure Kenric remained lost in thought. The appearance of Airtree had solved the difficulty which perplexed him. The fair unknown was the daughter of Carthan, whom, in company with Airtree, her cousin, he had once attended at Muingharidh, in the refectory of strangers.

It had so happened that Elim never spoke to Kenric of his connexion with the daughter of Carthan. This was partly occasioned by the excessive egotism of the Northumbrian, which prevented Elim in their private conversations from dwelling much upon his own affairs, and partly by his desire that his friend should form

an unbiassed judgment of his choice before it was made known to him. He had indeed related to him the adventure of the Druid's Valley, but without adding anything of the consequences to which it led.

On the following evening Kenric again appeared at the Feis, and being observed by Airtree, was by him made known to Aithne in his proper character. They now conversed, though still on general subjects, with greater freedom than before, and Aithne did not refrain from suffering the young scholar to perceive, in the plainest manner, the amusement which she found in the curious egotism with which his discourse was garnished.

"The world a ball! and people in the stars!" she said, as the evening drew to a close; "what thinkest thou, Airtree, of thy Anglo-Saxon friend's intelligence? It is the strangest I have

heard since I left the Coom, to please my royal uncle."

"'Twere best," said Airtree, "to answer that by the light of the stars themselves, for the guests are already departing from the Feis."

"I grieve, lady," said Kenric, "that no tongue to-night was eloquent enough to obtain thy song."

"I have few melodies," said Aithne, while her cousin bound a fibula which made fast the mantle on her shoulder, "except those which relate the actions of our race, and Airtree is unwilling that their deeds should be celebrated by one of their own descendants at a public Feis, although (without vanity, a thing I hate,) neither he nor I need be ashamed of them."

"Thou ralliest me, lady," said the Northumbrian.

"What! thinkest thou I speak in jest of my

ancestry?" cried the fair minstrel. "Without vanity, I do assure thee that for four long centuries our lands were held as free allodial tenure by twelve successive chieftains of our blood, son after sire, and thanist after ruler."

"Thou wholly misconceivest me, most sweet-voiced lady," said the Anglo-Saxon. "I did not mean to say that thou spakest in jest of thy descent, but in thy echoing me."

"Sweet-voiced, because I was echoing thee?" said the maiden. "I do assure thee if thou meanest my song, the words were mine, the very air was mine, and for the sweetness of the voice, long ere I could have echoed thee, that too was mine, without vanity, a thing I hate. Farewell!"

So saying, she glided away with her kinsman, leaving Kenric too well pleased to be mortified. He also left the palace, filled with the one

idea, and listening in fancy to the sweet song which he had heard, and which haunted him through the moonlight scenery that lay between the Kempe of Tamrach and the dwelling of the beatach.

At the gray of dawn, while the last lines of the young minstrel's song still mingled with the dreams of Kenric, he was awakened from his couch by the touch and voice of Elim: springing up in haste, he beheld the young Ithian standing between him and the dusky light, and still in his travelling attire. After the natural expressions of delight on both sides, the young chieftain addressed his friend:

"I have ridden a night's journey before my friends," said he, "to let thee know of their approach. To day the great national council of the Feis begins, and I, for the first time, take a place in the senate of Inisfail. The ceremonies

will be splendid, so that if thou desirest to see the pageantry, thou must cease dreaming. Be ready, therefore, at my return, and I will introduce thee in our company. At present I must return to Matha, who, ere now, is past the boundaries of Meath."

He departed without farther time for conversation, and Kenric, attiring himself in all the elegance he could command, awaited the arrival of O'Haedha. He returned ere noon, and entered the apartment in which Kenric still remained, with a countenance of mingled ardour and anxiety.

"Kenric," said he, "I can make thee known this evening to a friend, of whom thou hast heard me speak ere now. Thou rememberest what I told thee of the Druid's Coom?"

"Of thy escape from the resentment of a hoary Druid, through the interference of his youthful

niece? I recollect the tale. But, Elim, I too, have had an adventure since we parted."

"Reserve the telling it," said Elim, "until we have leisure for an evening's conversation. At present we have not an hour to lose."

Ascending the carbudh with his friend, Kenric was soon in sight of the hill of Tamrach. In the hall he was made known to Matha, to the aged O'Driscol and his son, who, with the principal members of the two septs, were awaiting the return of the officer, who had gone to arrange the arms of the two chieftains in their rightful places, and to announce to the Ard-righ the desire of O'Haedha to be presented to his sovereign, and to take the usual vows.

Soon after the entrance was thrown open, and the regal pomp of Tamrach unfolded to the eyes of the Northumbrian. On a lofty throne, over which was suspended a flag of green, with the

figures of a harp and snake interwoven, sat Aodh, the Ard-righ, in the crimson canabhas, the crown, and sceptre. Around him, on thrones less elevated than his own, and wearing, like him, the asion on their heads, and the sceptre in their hands, were the Righs of Muimhean, Coige Laighean, and Ulladh; and behind, at a spear's length, the sovereign of Conacht, the asylum of the degraded Fearbolgs, once masters of the isle, but dispossessed by succeeding colonists. Over each throne was suspended a banner with an appropriate device. At a spear's length from the kings sat the prelates and other dignitaries of the religion lately introduced, together with a few chief priests of the aboriginal worship, and after them the Ollamhs, or doctors in literature, or music, sitting, where virtue and earning ought to sit, close around the thrones of power. In fair succession after them sat the curaidhe, or knights, the airrighs, flaths,

and other lesser princes; the beatachs, brughnibs, and other smaller proprietors of cantreds, town, and plough-lands, whether held freely as *saorba* from the civil authorities for the purpose of charity and hospitality, or from the allodial owners by feudal or by military tenure. Beyond those sat the inferior military officers, and still nearer to the gateway a select number of the artisans, agriculturists, galloglachs, and kerne, who came in the retinue of the princes. Over every seat were hung the shield and arms of the proprietor, and the utmost care was taken for the exact maintenance of order, by the enactment of sumptuary laws, which, as in modern China, carried the distinctions of rank even into the article of dress. Royal, learned, noble, gentle, official and mechanical, all had their costume allotted in colour and in form, the number of hues diminishing from class to class, from the chief king,

who shone in dyes as numerous as the classes whom he ruled, to the poor kerne who sat before the entrance in solitary saffron.

While they waited the moment when Elim was to be presented to the Ard-righ, the two friends conversed on the occasion of the present Feis, the constitution of the isle, the character of its inhabitants, and the causes of that unhappy spirit of disunion, which, in so singular a degree, distinguished the people of the country from almost all the nations of the world. Many and curious were the theories which Kenric spun, in order to account for such nationalities as this. Sometimes he said it was all owing to the circumstance that Partholan, the first who colonized the country in the year of the world 1956, was a parricide, and that his disordered temperament was not yet wholly eradicated from the constitutions of his posterity. At another time it was the bogs

and marshes, at another the close woods. Now it was the rain, and now the sure solution might be found in the continual west-wind that drove in the saline vapours of the Atlantic, in an almost perpetual current over the face of the country. Perceiving that Elim smiled at these and other equally acute remarks, as supposing them too far fetched, Kenric would often turn and pause to pity his friend for his ignorance of metaphysics.

"I believe," said Elim, "a more satisfactory cause might be discovered, and one besides more within reach of a remedy than those you have named."

"And what might that be, Elim?" said his friend, in an encouraging tone.

"Bad laws, Kenric; bad laws of property and of succession."

"And what are they?" asked Kenric.

"In the first place," answered Elim, "the

laws of gavel-kind by which, on the death of every owner of land to a certain amount, the possessions of the whole sept are thrown together, and re-allotted to the different heads of families, according to the antiquity of their descent. Thus no one can ever call the land he holds his own, and the motive to improvement is destroyed. On these occasions, therefore, when the wealthy finds himself reduced to poverty, and the active and industrious fares no better than the indolent, debates and discontent arise which always end in enmity, often in bloodshed. Fathers point out to their children the rich possessions of which their ancestors was thus legally plundered to support the family pretensions of some indolent sluggard, the spirit of discontent becomes hereditary, and outlives for ages the circumstances in which it had its origin. The value attached to industry is diminished, and our kerne in general assume, in

the course of time, the haughty, restless, and dissatisfied spirit of their superiors, who are thus compelled to fall from time to time into their class."

"But it seems, nevertheless," said Kenric, "as if the cause of disunion were more in yourselves than in the law, for what can be more admirable than a statute by which all individual interests are sacrificed to the glory of the sept?"

"It has a romantic beauty," said Elim, "but it is false at heart. We must often, in framing laws, consider men, not as they ought to be, but as they are. If the world were one great monastery, whose profession was the renunciation of those very passions which form the springs of nearly all the machinery of society, such statutes might be feasible. But the world will be the world as long as it exists, and the directing mind

will fail most miserably which seeks to move it with a lever of which it will take no hold, or which uncharitably refuses to do thel imited good it can, because it is not able to do the unlimited good which it desires. All attempts that ever have been made to establish a general system of community of property in the world have failed egregiously. It is a dream of perfection impracticable even in single households, with all the force of natural affection to sustain it, and how much more in tribes or nations? It is too much opposed to human covetousness, which is ever selfish and solitary in its tendencies, and covetousness, generally speaking, is a passion which no restraint is able to subdue, excepting a sincere feeling of religion, a virtue which prophecy and experience both forbid us to suppose will ever influence the mass of mankind. But this unhappy law has worse effects than that of the im-

mediate discontent. Strife and envy are fomented between the different families of the tribe, and enmities perpetuated amongst them which it at length becomes a glory to sustain and to indulge. Idleness too is encouraged, for no youth of a lofty name, however great his poverty, will stoop to learn the arts of husbandry or of merchandise, while he is by birth entitled to his portion, however pitiful, of the gavelled estates of the sept. Such gentry are they who disturb the peace of the industrious, and make the country unsafe by their extortions and their rapine. And in addition to this, there is the law of thanistry, in appearance yet more specious than the other, and in its theory one of the most just and admirable systems of succession ever devised. The plan (as thou art perhaps aware) is simply this; that while property descends in a lineal course (subject, however, to the law of gavel), the rank, the

title, and the power of the chief or head shall always remain with the oldest of the stock (a regulation to which my own case, owing to peculiar circumstances, forms an exception). By this it is proposed that power shall never fall into the hands of the young and inexperienced, and it removes the necessity for that dangerous bait to ambition called a regency. The power of government thus neither descends from father to son, nor is it wholly elective. The eldest of the name, next to the chief, not only succeeds him at his death, but is proclaimed and known as his successor in his life time. The monarch has his Roy-damna, the chieftain his thanist, and even the clerical prelate his comarbhar, all heirs by blood, though not by lineage; elective, yet only elective from the immediate sept. This shifting of power from house to house is, however, full of difficulties, and it

often happens that the son or other relative nearer allied than the thanist to the king or chieftain, disputes the claim of the legal successor, loth to behold both the sign and substance of authority depart from his paternal threshold. These are the two peculiar laws of Inisfail, and both, in their results, afford a proof of what a deal of mischief very beautiful laws may do when they are only considered in themselves, and not with relation to the natures on which they are to operate. This custom of framing laws, and, because they are good and right, forcing them on a people who are unprepared for them, constitutes in civil policy the same mistake that in religion we term fanaticism. In such cases both the legislator and the moralist, in expecting too much from human nature are sure of disappointment. It often happens, likewise, that this disappointment changes them from philanthropists to tyrants; showing

how little either true benevolence or true charity had to do with their fine-spun schemes, and that they were, in fact, merely worshippers of their own fancies, and not real lovers of their race. We must often be satisfied to do a little good, rather than do mischief by attempting too much, or fail in our duty by attempting none at all. But the evil of all this, dear Kenric, is, that while the laws remain unchanged, the national character degenerates, and even the good tendencies of the people, their courage, love of enterprize, and other useful qualities, are called in to make their civil enmities respectable, and to shed the light of a false glory around the basest of their vices, a cruel and selfish spirit of revenge."

"If your judgment be such," said Kenric, "or legislators who err on the right side, and seek to force men to their good, what say you of those who take the other course, who make oppressive

and unjust enactments, and seek to carry them by manifest power ?"

"I say, heaven forgive them!" replied the Ithian.

CHAPTER L.

At this moment an officer advanced to summon Elim to the foot of the throne. He was accompanied by the elder O'Driscol, while Matha, and his friends of both septs, remained to witness with anxious interest the ceremony of his presentation. He was attired in his full costume as an Airrigh, or tributary prince, wearing round his neck the fleasg, or golden torques, of knighthood; a cota or inner tunic of plaided woollen stuff, bound with a girdle, in which was stuck a richly ornamented skene; a truis striped with

the three brilliant colours invented by Uachadan, the famous goldsmith of Cualgne, sandal-brogs, and a cochal or mantle of bright green descending to the knees, and fastened on the breast by a dealg fallaine, or clasp, in which was set one of the most beautiful sapphires that the kingdom of Ciar afforded. The monarch, Aodh. bent down from the *breas-fhora*, or throne of state, to hear his distinctly worded vow of true allegiance, and said, as Elim arose from his knee :

"I rejoice that we shall have the assistance of O'Haedha and his counsel in the present Feis. I am not ignorant of the good it has wrought in the principalities of Muimhean."

The young chieftain replied by a profound obeisance, and retired to his friends, who in a group received him in a shaded corner of the hall. While he was receiving their congratulations, however, he looked around for Kenric, who was

not in the circle as he had been when Elim parted from it. He saw him at a little distance, leaning against one of the wooden pillars which supported the entrance of the hall, and eyeing the scene of happiness with a fallen countenance and a disordered brow. Perceiving that he was observed, he suddenly changed his attitude, and advanced to join his good wishes to those of the rest, with an appearance of genuine pleasure.

"If thou desirest," said Elim, to his friend, after those congratulations were at an end, "to be present at the council of the Feis, thou must follow me into another apartment of the palace. We did not arrive in time for the opening of the Feis, so that if you wish to learn more fully the details of this triennial pageant, you must be satisfied, as we proceed, with my description."

Kenric thanked him, and the Ithian gave the

following account of the Feis, while he hastened to the tents of his sept, in order to change his dress for the purpose of appearing in the council.

"The palace we have left," said he, "has been for more than two thousand years the residence of the Ard-righs of Inisfail, being founded, as our senachies relate, by the invader Heremon himself. It became, some centuries after its foundation, the scene of a triennial legislative assembly, under the auspices of Eochaidh, the Ollamh Fodhla, and it is by his regulations that its proceedings have been since directed. It is now the fourth of November. The Feis commenced three days before the first, and I have reason, as thou knowest (though thou knowest not all my reason yet) for remembering November eve with joy. The first two days were spent in arranging the camp of the chieftains, in visits,

and in acts of general courtesy at meeting. On the third, the opening of the festival was celebrated with songs, chorusses, and concerts in the open air, terminated by illuminations at evening, and the usual signs of public joy. The next three days were devoted to sports and games in the day, and banquets in the evening. These terminated yesterday, and now the business of the Feis commences. If thou wilt accompany me, thou shalt hear a discussion on the condition of the isle, and in the evening I will introduce thee to a friend, who, when I left thee here, I expected to find nearer home."

The Northumbrian again expressed his gratitude to Elim, but in a manner which the latter observed with perplexity. It was not sullenness, nor melancholy, and yet partook of both. Elim endeavoured, as they again approached the palace, to rouse his attention by pointing out to him the

various portions of the building, and telling the uses to which each was destined.

"The hall," he said, "in which we saw the Ard-righ to day, is named the Moidh Cuarta, or banquetting hall, and it is there also we are about to meet again for the despatch of business, but the doors will be open now to none beneath the rank of beatach. Besides this hall there is the Realta na Fileadh, in which the brehouns, senachies, and fileas, have their several apartments; the first to hear appeals from the tributary kingdoms; the second to examine into the national annals or psalters, to collect those which are made in the different provinces of the isle, and embody them into one great history called the Senachas More; and the third for a purpose which can only be appreciated in a country where poetry forms a portion of the practical business of the state, that is to say, for the regulation of

the affairs of literature. For in Inisfail, young Northumbrian philosopher, it becomes thee to remember that all are poets, if not by nature, at least by education. Our senachies record their histories in verse; our clergy are continually harping; our bishops, nay our prelates, take their turn; and even our kings themselves are no strangers to the calling. Yet I remember one unhappy occasion in which a desperate revenge was taken for the very imputation of such a capacity. But such creatures are we, that we cannot bear with even the most ignorant species of contempt. There is likewise attached to the palace the Mur Ollamhan, a college which once superseded in rank all those throughout the isle, though now that dignity is transferred to the great school of Ardmacha. To conclude, there is likewise one magnificent apartment, called the Grianan na Ninghean, or the Hall of Queens, whose name

declares its use. That building, which thou seest at a distance amongst the trees, is the Caircer na Nguiall, or state prison, which, as thou mayest perceive, is guarded by a party of the Teagh Leach, or household troops of Aodh, as the palace is guarded by his Laochs, or body guards."

They had now arrived at the entrance of the Moidh Cuarta, and were admitted to the council. The Ard-righ, as before, was seated on the lofty breas-fhora, with his face directed to the west. On his left sat Airtree, the king of Leath Mogha, on his right the king of Ulladh; before him the Righ of Coige Laighean, and behind the Righ of Conacht. Benches were placed in front for other orders of the state. The hereditary marshal, standard-bearer, and treasurer, had places assigned to them at no great distance from the throne. In the first row sat the prelates of the church; in the second, a spear's length from

these, sat the curaidhe, or knights, as chief of the nobility; and behind this bench, each a spear's length apart, were those of the beatachs and officers deputed from towns and cities, and from the states of Albany and other colonies. Amongst these last, Kenric recognized his former school companions at Muingharidh, the Danaan, and Fearbolg, together with Rolust the young Scot, while Airtree occupied a place on the bench of *curaidhe* in front.

Elim was conducted to his place, and soon after the discussion opened. The affairs of police and trade being reserved for the regular triennial Feis, the Ard-righ at once proceeded to the business of this special assembly. He laid before them the accounts which had reached him of a threatened invasion on the part of the notorious Loch Lannoch, or Fionn Geinte, as the northmen were termed in Inisfail. A sea

chief, named Gurmund, had sailed from the shores of Inismore and Gaul (around which he had been hovering for several years), at the head of a considerable fleet, and with the avowed design of effecting a descent upon the coasts of Inisfail, though at what point the attempt might first be made it was impossible to say. It became, therefore, the princes of the Five Kingdoms, to put all their power into action for the safety of the isle, and it was with the view of inciting them to the necessary measures, and promoting general concert in their adoption, that the present assembly had been called. He regretted, however, that a greater willingness had not been shown on the part of the chieftains to co-operate in a proceeding so essential to the very existence of their native country, and he now called on those who were present to deliver their opinions in succession.

The kings of course were the first to claim attention. The Righ of Coige Laighean declared that his kingdom was good for little else than to pay the taxes imposed on it by the Ardrighs from time to time. In addition to the tax of Jughaine More, which they had to pay in common with all the inhabitants of the isle, there were the particular tributes of Eidersgeoil, and the Boroimhe Laighean, alone sufficient to impoverish the country, &c. &c. The king of Ulladh complained that he had enough to do to maintain his power against the encroachments of the Orgiallians and others. Airtree, the Dal Gassian king of Leath Mogha, declared himself ready to do all in his power, but feared lest the Eogenachts should take occasion to possess themselves of the sovereignty; and the Righ of Conacht murmured loudly against the oppression of his Danaan subjects. The clergy, who spoke next,

urged, in general terms, the necessity of concord and harmony. Airtree, the young prince of Leath Mogha, suggested that any chief refusing to contribute his assistance, or making civil war on any pretence whatever in such a crisis, should be put under the ban of the isle, and reduced to obedience by force of arms. It now became Elim's turn to speak, who saw here an opportunity afforded him of enforcing the great alteration he had long been waiting for, and he did so with eloquence and modesty. His opinions were heard with attention and applause. The great defects in the national code which he pointed out as the radical cause of the disunion they now found so dangerous, and which, he feared, would sooner or later prove fatal to the liberties of the kingdom, were evils which it would take time to remedy, but his final proposition was the one eventually adopted. This was, that the mo-

narch on whose shores the descent might first be made, should be entrusted with the care of repelling the invasion, and that it should be deemed an act of treason to the state not only to make war on his dominions when thus engaged, but even to refuse him any assistance which might be esteemed necessary by the national Feis.

The effect of Elim's address was the more perceptible from the total absence of anything like display. As the council ended, few were heard speaking in praise of his ability; on the contrary there were many orators of the day more generally admired and more loudly applauded; but the minds of all his hearers were full of the consideration of the abuses he had named, which now, for the first time, appeared to many in the light of abuses. The real merit of his eloquence was perceived by few; but he was himself amused by observing that even those who

charged it with dullness, for its want of tinsel, had all its details, and much of its very language, perfectly by heart; while the influence of the speaker became so much the more general, inasmuch as few perceived that he had acquired any influence whatever.

One of those few was Kenric. He had talent to observe with surprise as well as with feelings of another kind the real ability and the real superiority of his friend. He felt still convinced that Elim's natural qualities were not equal to his own, and yet he well knew that if he had had a share in this discussion he could not have persuaded so successfully nor wrought so much good. He looked back to his past hopes and his present situation, to the condition of the Heptarchy, so like in its discords to that of Inisfail, to the prospects of high influence opened to him by Elfwin's proffered introduction to the

court of Offa, and his own weak and foolish rejection of his fortunes. What Elim now, with his lesser ability but superior virtue, was doing for Inisfail, he too might have effected for his native land, and a dreadful feeling seized upon his heart when he looked back upon his past career, and saw arising in hideous array behind him the prospect of great talents sacrificed to selfish passion.

There was, likewise, another circumstance in Elim's manner which excited the surprise of Kenric. In their private conversation he had always considered the Ithian as deficient in social qualifications, a circumstance which was entirely attributable to the humility of the latter and his own engrossing egotism. But now he was astonished to perceive the real difference there was between them with regard to these acquirements. He wondered at the easy dignity and grace which Elim manifested in situations which appeared to

him peculiarly embarassing, and could not help feeling with surprise and shame that he had hitherto known little of his friend. While these thoughts passed through his mind, as he sat in a corner of the banquetting room at evening, he beheld the Ithian approaching him through a crowd of brilliant guests.

"Come, Kenric," he exclaimed, "I now can make thee known to the friend of whom I spoke. It is the fairy of the Druid's Coom. Follow me quickly and see if she be a fitting heroine for so wild a scene and for so strange a tale."

Flinging off, with a strong effort, the thoughts which had been oppressing him, and resolving to be gay in spite of himself, the Anglo-Saxon, whose thoughts were elsewhere, followed the Ithian with an incurious eye, but started with real delight and wonder when he looked on Aithne.

"What! nimble-limbed and sweet-tongued

spirit of the Feis!" said Kenric, "art thou indeed the lady of the Coom?"

"Great reader of the stars," answered Aithne, playfully imitating his manner, "art thou indeed the wonder for whom Elim bid me be prepared."

"And fairest and brightest of all the stars that glitter," continued the Northumbrian, "sweet moon, but scarfed in mist, like Inisfail's own Dian, art thou indeed that generous Druid's niece? What say you to a trip to the Antipodes? O brightest of all the planets, I could give all the glory of earth, to follow in thy orbit, a poor satellite."

"What means he, Elim, dost thou know?" said Aithne, turning to the Ithian, with a tone of enquiring simplicity. "Thou studiedst with him, and thou art more learned than I. Does he flatter or jeer me, which?"

"Nay," answered Elim, "if I can understand either the one or the other of you, you may send me to the Zodiac for a new sign to the astrologers. You know each other then? How long?"

"The rising and the setting of a single sun," said Kenric. "We met some evenings since at the Feis, fair Aithne sung and danced, and I talked of the stars, and so we parted friends. I told thee I had had an adventure in thine absence."

"An adventure thou mayest call it in truth," replied the Ithian. "But I am glad you have anticipated my design, and become friends even earlier than I hoped."

At this, an officer approached the group, and informed O'Haedha that his presence was wanted in the outer hall. Leaving Kenric to lead Aithne to her seat, he followed the officer,

and found outside his seneschal Moyel, who exclaimed, on seeing his chieftain, in a whispering tone:

"O'Haedha, I have seen him!"

"Seen whom?" asked Elim.

"The Ard-Draithe of the Coom na Druid," answered Moyel, "whom every one exclaimed against for being absent from the Feis. He is even this instant standing in disguise outside the porch."

O'Haedha instantly left the palace, and found indeed Tuathal standing near the entrance, and just using as much disguise as might attract suspicion without effecting the purpose of concealment. His eyes were fixed with so much delight upon a jester who was performing pranks before the entrance of the palace, that he did not perceive the approach of Elim until he had laid his hand upon his arm.

"Tuathal," said the Ithian, "is it thou?"

The Ard-Draithe started in alarm, and would have fled, but Elim, who was tempted to laugh at his grotesque expression of uneasiness, retained without ceremony the hold which he had taken.

"Come into the Feis," said Elim, "there are friends within who will be glad to see thee."

"No, no! Samhuin sees I dare not," said the Ard-Draithe.

"And wherefore, good Tuathal?" asked Elim, smiling, but with an earnest eye. "Why need this mystery in coming to the Feis? Had not Moyel recognized thee at the porch, thou wouldst have left the palace without our being conscious of your presence. What deep design occasioned all this secrecy?"

"Design! deep design!" exclaimed the young Ard-Draithe, starting with a frightened

look. "Oh, hear him, bright Samhuin—have we a deep design? Oh, Elim! Elim! We came to the Feis—hear the whole truth—we came in private—because—because we came in private—for a certain reason—there's the plain truth now; art thou satisfied?"

"A word with you, Tuathal," said the Ithian, "I would advise you to look closely to the ground on which you stand. There have been many rumours at the Feis, respecting the Druid tribes and the Fionne Geinte, and Aodh did not suffer me to leave his presence this even till he had hinted at the questionable loyalty of the Hooded People."

"O bright Samhuin!" cried Tuathal, looking still more frightened, "do but hear this! Disloyalty amongst the Hooded People! And thou believest it, Elim?"

"I only spoke," replied the Ithian, "to place

you on your guard. This affectation of disguise, believe me, will do little to remove suspicion, added, likewise, that thou wert wanting amongst the number of those new princes, who, like myself, came forward to vow allegiance to the Ard-righ."

Tuathal's uneasiness increased.

"I did not take the vows," said he, "because —because—to be candid with thee—I—I—had a reason for it."

'I feel thy confidence," said Elim; "use mine as it pleases thee; and now to talk of pleasanter matters, Matha is most desirous that Aithne should be left with us if thou art bent upon returning instantly."

Although Tuathal refused this request at first, "for a reason," he eventually yielded to the wishes of the Ithian; doing so, nevertheless, in the manner of one who was desirous to comply,

but dreaded a chiding from some superior for his complaisance.

"Thou sayest the truth," he said, "Rath-Aidan is her home, almost as much as Coom na Druid, and Matha has some right to direct her movements. And yet I am afraid that—but no matter—I have but a small troop of galloglachs, and she will be safer in O'Driscol's guardianship, for what is valour against numbers after all?"

To Aithne's undisguised delight, this arrangement was completed, and Tuathal shortly after took his departure. During the three days which ensued, Kenric appeared hourly to increase in spirit and in happiness, and it was with sorrow he beheld the morning break, which was to light them on their journey to Inbhersceine, although he was to travel in the company of those who alone had given the festival its charm.

"I know not," he said, as they prepared for

their departure, "to what I should attribute the change in spirits which I feel within the last few days; but that they have been changed, and happily, I know."

"Think a while," said Elim, with a smile, "and perhaps thou wilt discover."

Elim was an active, Kenric a passive, thinker; Elim directed his thoughts; Kenric followed them; Elim selected those that served his purpose, rejecting the idle and the useless, while all, in the vulgar phrase, was grist that came to Kenric's mill. What Elim therefore meant by thinking, Kenric understood of musing, and in that sense complied with his friend's wish, while the latter followed the officer who came to summon him into the hall. After spending half an hour in a waking dream, he concluded that Elim meant occupation, but this idea he himself rejected as much too simple to please him.

CHAPTER LI.

Travelling with rapidity, the travellers soon reached the frontier of Shior Muimhean, and from henceforth their journey was conducted with greater rapidity and less precaution. The carbudhs which bore the Canfinny and his guests passed on, accompanied only by the guard of hobbelers, and leaving the galloglachs and kerne to follow, under the direction of their captains of hundreds and of fifties. They travelled by the sacred towers of Caisil, by the walls of Emly, and through the Ithian territory of Corca Luighe,

from which the family of Elim had emigrated about a century before to Inbhersceine.

As Elim and the Northumbrian preceded the rest of the party by a few days' journey, they arrived, almost alone, in the mountains of the Vallis Juncosa, before mentioned. Descending the steep of Esk, they perceived at a distance a train of about a dozen persons on foot, seeming to follow a single individual on horseback, who, by his handsome attire, and the easy jog of his hobbie, appeared to exercise a kind of authority over the rest. He wore a hanging bonnet or birrede of green, and a fringed robe, with a truis of various colours. In answer to Kenric's enquiries, Elim informed him that this man exercised the same profession as old Dubhthach, their own hereditary *dresbdeartach*, or story-teller, with the difference that this stranger, like a human circulating library of extravagant

fiction, pursued his vocation in a wandering manner, and was not confined to a particular sept or household. In the ancient Druid colleges, this profession had been regularly taught, and various degrees conferred, according to the proficiency of the student, and his capaciousness of retention. The individual whom they now beheld, from the number of his followers, he judged to be an Anstruth, or *dresbdeartach*, of the second degree, for there were, he said, no less than seven in all. They were called the *Ollamh*, the *Anstruth*, the *Cli*, the *Canaith*, the *Doss*, the *Mac-fuirruidh*, and the *Fochlucan*. When the course of education, prescribed to this singular order was complete, it was their custom to travel thus through the country, under the authority of the college license, from the dwelling of one chieftain to another, where they were received with the distinction due to their

rank, and with the welcome appropriate to their mirthful character, and where their entertainment and reward was proportioned to their powers of amusement and instruction. For instance, the Ollamh, who held the highest degree, and ranked, in all Druidical assemblies, even before the nobility themselves, was obliged, in order to attain his rank, to retain in mind no less than three hundred and fifty stories of past times, in consideration of which he was entertained for a whole moon with the most hospitable attention, and received at his departure a fee of twenty milch kine. He was attended in all his wanderings by four and twenty followers or pupils, whose duty it was to provide for all his wants, and to lay up in their memories, for their own advancement, the legends, whether fabulous or historical, which they heard him deliver in the various assemblies to which he was invited. A

dresbdeartach of this rank, however, seldom appeared to any company inferior to those who met in the courts of the Ard-righ, or the provincial kings. The *Anstruth*, who was next in rank, and retained but half as many legends as the former, condescended to amuse the evening banquets of the Airrigh, the Canfinny, the Tiarna, and other chieftains. He was attended by a dozen pupils, his time of entertainment lasted half a moon, and his fee was also twenty kine. The *Cli* enjoyed the peculiar privilege of an immunity, during the ten days which was the term of his entertainment, from accusations of any kind whatever. His fee was five cows and ten heifers, and he was attended by eight students. The reward of the *Canaith* was variable at the pleasure of the host, but his six pupils were free from all arraignment for debt or any other charge. The *Doss*, whose fifty

tales were recited in metre, was recompensed according to the species of composition, and his four attendants were entitled to the same free entertainment as himself. The *Mac-fuirruidh*, whose pupils were but three, received the same number of milch kine for his forty legends, and his period of free entertainment was limited to three days: while the poor *Fochlucan*, last of the legendary tribe, was content to trudge merrily a-foot, attended by his two disciples, from cuddy to coshering, where he retained his thirty legends (the number which he must acquire before he could procure his degree) for the fee of a single cow or two young heifers. At a period when the luxuries of the newspaper, the magazine, and the new novel hot-pressed, and flying on the wings of steam from shire to shire, were enjoyments yet unheard of, this singular class of individuals were not the least

considered, nor the least important part of the community to which they belonged.

By the time O'Haedha had communicated this information to his young friend, their carbudh had overtaken the *Anstruth.* On the approach of the travellers, he accosted them in a strain of verbose compliment, after the manner of his order:

"Saint Fachan, Saint Carthag, Saint Brendan, Saint Aidan, Saint Molua the Leper, the holy abbot Saint Evinus, and all the other sanctified children of this happy isle, holy, more holy, and most holy, to say nothing of its great apostle Mangonius the Patrician, obtain by their powerful orisons all happiness and grace for the young chief of the O'Haedhas."

O'Haedha returned a suitable answer to this learned greeting, and they passed on, supposing that they should see no more of the Anstruth.

As they left him behind, however, Kenric observed the story-teller glance at himself with an expression which afterwards occurred to him as singular, although, at the time, he did not dwell upon it. In little more than a week after their departure from the Feis of Tamrach, the household of Rath-Aidan were rejoiced by the sight of their long absent chieftain.

CHAPTER LII.

INTELLIGENCE having been received that the invasion would certainly fall upon the coast of Muimhean, Airtree, the monarch of Leath-Mogha, prepared to take the most active steps for their defence. O'Haedha was summoned to Luimneach even before the arrival of Matha and their guests, leaving Kenric at Rath-Aidan to await their coming.

In the midst of the delight which he felt amongst his new acquaintances, Kenric no longer retained the slightest shade of the depression

which the recollection of his sunken fortunes and forsaken home occasioned. Health, life, and animation returned to his frame and features, and the whole household was made joyous by the lively raillery which was certain to take place whenever the Ard-Draithe's niece and he got into company. A joyous moon passed over, and Kenric no longer, as he had done for some time before the first interview with Aithne at the Feis, indulged a low-spirited reserve towards his acquaintances, but mingled freely in their sports and conversations, and seemed like one upon whose mind some sunny prospect had unexpectedly opened from the future. Their evenings were now spent, for the most part, in festivity and recreation, and their days in field-sports, or in viewing those parts of the coast or the interior which were remarkable either for their natural or historical interest. They visited

the floating islands of Lough Quinlan, the fearful track which winds along the breast of the Drung and Cahircanawy mountains, the glen of Clanagalt, (the paradise of lunatics,) and other scenes of interest, which still, from age to age, continue to attract the eyes of falling and arising generations.

On the return of Elim, nevertheless, the gaiety of Kenric seemed to diminish. There was a degree of intimacy between him and Aithne which, though he at once perceived he could not understand, and without having any definite notion of the state of his own mind, the circumstance depressed and saddened him. The chieftain, however, was for some time too closely occupied in the affairs of his sept to take particular notice of what he considered a part of the constitutional weakness of the Northumbrian's mind.

As they rode together one afternoon through

a part of the territory in which Elim had been erecting a line of raths or forts, for the defence of an exposed position near the coast, he endeavoured to enter into conversation with the latter on his favourite topic, the condition of the isle, but the Northumbrian was incorrigibly absent. Elim at length was piqued to notice it.

"It seems to me, however, Kenric," he said, "as if thou didst not take that interest in this subject which I observed thee manifest at Tamrach. Art thou weary of Inisfail so soon?"

"I am not ungrateful, Elim," replied Kenric, hastily.

"Longing for home, then?"

"No, in truth. My conscience reproaches me that I think so seldom of Northumberland. Good Elim, question me not. I hardly know myself what is the matter with me, and how should I be able to reveal it?"

"Thou wantest some amusement," answered Elim, "and I have found it for thee, if thou art willing to undertake it."

"Let me understand its nature," said the Anglo-Saxon, "whatever it may be, I have little doubt it will be welcome."

"I have been telling Aithne of thy treatise," answered Elim, "and her curiosity is strongly excited on the subject. If thou wouldst read her thy book, thou wouldst, I think, be pleased to find a listener so interested and so intelligent."

"My poor volume!" said Kenric, with a smile, while his eyes sparkled with delight at the proposal, "I had almost myself forgotten what every body seems to have forgot. I am pleased, most pleased, at thy proposal, Elim. Thou knowest I do not love the vanity of such display, but I will tell thee at another time why I am willing to waive this delicacy at present."

They turned the conversation now to subjects of indifference, and reached the Rath in time to join the family at their evening meal.

CHAPTER LIII.

A MOON had changed after this discourse took place, when Elim introduced his friend to the wonders of that subterranean stream, which still flows under the caverned roofs of Ballybeggan. While he pursued his tranquil amusement in the dimly lighted flood, and Kenric gazed on the enormous stalactytes which depended from the rocky ceiling overhead, the latter suddenly exclaimed:

"This would be a scene for thy friend of the Coom to revel in. We have lost half the plea-

sure of the day in not bringing her to share the wonder with us."

"She does enjoy these scenes," said Elim.

"What a gifted mind is her's!" continued Kenric, "what a fervent fancy! what a keen perception of the true and beautiful! what dignity! what animation! what a ready heart for the appreciation of what is really excellent, whether it be in nature, or in science, in what she understands from long acquaintance, or in what she learns for the first time. I assure you (without meaning to boast of my own little work, which you know would be ridiculous of course) I have met few persons more capable of critically judging on whatever little merits it may have. She likes the style exceedingly, but that of course is fancy."

Elim listened in silence, and said, after a pause, in a low voice:

"When we are next alone together I have something of importance to communicate with respect to Aithne."

Kenric heard these words with a thrill of surprize and curiosity. What could this secret be in which himself and Aithne were so nearly interested? A thousand surmises of a nature at once delicious and chimerical arose within his mind. Could it be that Elim's eyes were sharper sighted than his own?—that Aithne—the thought was too extravagant, yet was it quite impossible?

Moyel, who loitered near, and observed what passed between his master and the Anglo-Saxon, approached the latter, and said:

"You know how to please the chief. There are few things he likes to hear more than the praise of Aithne."

"And why?" asked Kenric, quickly.

"Why!" exclaimed Moyel, with astonish-

ment; "why do I love to hear that Meibhe is the neatest hand at quern and griddle of any daughter of the sept? Because she is to be the mistress of his house."

"Aithne!" said Kenric, turning pale on a sudden, and staring on the seneschal.

"If thou tarriest in Rath-Aidan for another moon," said Moyel, "thou mayest dance the rinceadh at the marriage feast."

He was silent; and Kenric, grievously oppressed, sat down for a while on a jutting rock at the side of the recess. Here he was rejoined by Elim, who, after sending Moyel a little way before, said, as he walked homeward slowly with the Northumbrian:

"I owe thee an apology, my friend, for having so longed deferred a confidence that ought to have been made at our first meeting. But many reasons urged me to delay it; thou mayest

perhaps, have gathered already, from thine own observation, if not from the conjectures of our friends, that Aithne is to be the mistress of Rath-Aidan."

"I never once suspected it," said Kenric.

"Nay," answered Elim, "do not reply as if I made a charge upon thee. Tomorrow we commence the preparations, and Aithne returns to the Coom, in order that the nuptials may there be celebrated in her own paternal residence. Our apprehensions with respect to this invasion of the Loch Lannoch are diminishing as time advances, although it is certain that the fleet have appeared on the coasts, and many suspect a treasonable intercourse on the part of some discontented chiefs in Inisfail. But this must rest with time."

Kenric made no reply, but followed his friend in the deepest depression of mind, not unmingled with some degree of indignation at what

he considered an undue degree of reserve and want of confidence. In the course of the evening, while all were making merry in the hall, a loud sound was heard from the buabhal, or horn, which hung at the outer entrance of the Rath. Moyel was instantly despatched to ascertain the cause of the interruption, and returned, in a few moments, followed by a grave looking man of a singularly dark expression of countenance, and his hair and beard as black as a raven's wing. His attire consisted of a green cap of a conical form, the point of which hung down behind, a long cloak, which, opening in front, disclosed a pair of closely fitting truis, and a sort of hair-covered buskin, fastened about the ankles with thongs of leather. In all respects his dress was that of a travelling scholar, with the exception of the girdle, in which, instead of the Irish skene, there appeared a handsec like that which the

Anglo-Saxons constantly wore upon their persons.

Kenric and the Ithian had little difficulty in recognizing the Anstruth whom they had overtaken upon their journey through the wilds of Esk. While the company were perusing his curious dress and aspect, he advanced towards the table, and seemed as if deliberating which of the party he should first address. At length, fixing his eye on Matha, he laid aside his cap and girdle with a look of respectful deference, and said:—

"Health to thee, Matha, and to thy son, whose beard I kiss. Shall a wandering anstruth remain to make the company merry with his store of tales, or shall he pass on to the next Bawn to look for more willing hearers?"

"We had store enough already of thy ware for the evening," answered Matha, "but thou art welcome notwithstanding."

A place was arranged for the stranger, and Matha, turning to the senachie of her own house, bade him exert his memory to entertain her guests. The old man seemed to feel a pleasure in complying, and chose for his subject the sufferings of the bards of Inisfail, at the time when that numerous body, having, by the abuse of their privileges, brought on themselves the wrath of the other sovereigns of the isle, were received by Connor, king of Ulladh, into his dominions, and protected by his power until the storm had been appeased. The history was given with simplicity and feeling, and few of the hearers refused their applause to Connor, although all agreed that the licentiousness of the exiled body deserved the chastisement they had received.

The strange Anstruth soon after proffered his services, and finding the company willing to attend to him, related the following anecdote:

"It is now four hundred years and upwards since Fiothill, the Ard-brehon of King Cormoc, lay on his death-bed, expecting the moment of his dissolution. You may all suppose, my worthy hearers, that a man, in his situation, must have abundant opportunities of coming at a knowledge of the nature of men, aye, and of women too, and you may judge what he thought of both by the story I am about to tell you.

"One morning, finding himself more unwell than usual, he called his son, Flaithrighe, to his bed-side, and gave him the following advice:

"'My son, there are four great errors into which you may be tempted to fall, in case you should succeed me in this office, and it is against these I wish to caution you before I die. My first caution to you, therefore, is, never to undertake the tuition of a king's son. Secondly, never to confide a secret of importance to a woman. A

third advice I give you is, to beware how you assist in raising a person of low birth and education to an exalted rank; and, fourthly, I warn you not to entrust the management of your affairs, nor of your money, to a sister.' "

Here there was a general exclamation of disapproval from many of the female auditors, some asserting that he was a slanderous old man, and that it was his own evil heart that led him to judge so harshly of the character of others. The stranger seemed to take no notice of these remarks, but when they had subsided continued his story:

" Having finished his counsel, the old Ardbrehon turned his head upon his couch, and died. The son, who was a fellow of a curious disposition, resolved to put his father's wisdom to the proof, and, accordingly, like other sons in similar circumstances, lost no time in breaking every one of these dying injunctions, one after another.

He took upon himself the education of the infant son of the Ard-righ, and, resigning the station of Ard-brehon, in which he had succeeded his father, used his influence in promoting to that office the son of a rustic in his neighbourhood, whose family had been, for some centuries, dependent on his own. Having succeeded in this, he retired, with his wife and his young pupil, to a sequestered part of the country, committing the management of his household, and other possessions, to a sister, whom he had always dearly loved. Having spent some time in this altered condition, he one day determined to put to the proof the justness of his father's counsel.

"Taking the royal infant in his arms, he hurried into the recesses of the wood, where he committed the child to the care of some foresters, with whom he was acquainted, giving them money for its maintenance, and command-

ing them to restore it to any person who should bear them a certain token from him. He now returned to his wife, who, missing the infant, enquired what had become of it. Flaithrighe evaded the question, and some days passed away without the child's appearing. The wife now expecting, from the moody silence of her husband, that all was not as it ought to be, became more pressing in her instances, and Flaithrighe at length told her (with the strictest injunctions of secrecy) that, in order to forward some private views of his own, he had taken away the life of his royal pupil. The wife, after expressing a great deal of horror at the occurrence, agreed with him that it would be more prudent to keep the affair a secret; and, accordingly, treasured it up in her mind, for a favourable opportunity of turning it to some account.

"It so happened, that, after this disclosure,

Flaithrighe discovered another secret, which had remained concealed from his observation ever since his marriage, though that event had taken place a great many years before. He found out that his wife was not by any means the submissive sort of woman he always took her for, and, as he was rather fond of his authority, this circumstance occasioned a great dilemma in the household; for, strange to relate, they seemed at a loss to know which was head. At length, on one occasion, when Flaithrighe persisted, in the most obstinate manner, in asserting this distinction for himself, the poor woman, not knowing what to do with him, went off to the Ard-righ, and told him the whole story, resolving that, if he were determined to be her head, she would let him know he was not so sure of his own.

"The monarch, distracted beyond all conception at the murder of his child, sent off a party

of his Franc Amhuis, to have Flaithrighe apprehended with the utmost despatch. They found the latter considering in his own mind what it could be that had now kept his wife a whole day absent from his house. At the first sight of the soldiers, however, the difficulty was cleared up, and he shook his head, thinking of his poor father.

"There was no time to be lost in making a public example of so heinous a delinquent; so the Ard-brehon, who was at this moment sitting in judgment in the Rath of Tamrach, was commanded to use all expedition in forwarding the ends of the law against the murderer. The latter, to show his great zeal in his office, and his pure love of justice, had the offender brought before him on the instant, making no account whatever, after such an occurrence, of the benefits he had conferred upon himself. He con-

sulted the Breithe Nimhe, or Celestial Judgments (that celebrated book of laws, compounded by Forchern, and his two colleagues, at the request of Connor, king of Ulladh), in order to discover what punishment should be inflicted for such guilt as this. Death was the least, and, in memory of his own obligations, he was weak enough to render it no heavier. The poor convict acknowledged that the decision was not an unjust one, but yet requested a few words in private with his judge, conjuring him, by the memory of former favours given and received, not to refuse this moderate request. But the virtuous Ardbrehon would hear nothing of such leniency. 'It was not so much,' he said, 'for the heinousness of the crime itself as for the ingratitude it manifested towards the Ard-righ—the Ard-righ his patron and benefactor, that he felt disposed to shew no mercy to the criminal.' On hearing this answer,

Flaithrighe sighed again, and thought of the death-bed counsel of Fiothill.

"The gaoler, observing his depression of mind, and remembering his worthy father, bade him not despair so soon, for there was a report about the neighbourhood that this conscientious Ard-brehon was about to be married to the sister of his former patron, 'and, perhaps,' added this man, 'her influence might do you more service with him than any thing you could say for yourself.' Listening to this advice, Flaithrighe resolved to follow it, and accordingly wrote her an oraiun, reminding her of their old affection, of the pleasant days they had spent together, &c., and concluded by requesting that she would use all her influence with the Ard-brehon to have his life preserved.

"This message placed the good woman in a great deal of perplexity. She had always loved her brother with an affection equal to his own,

for he had always been very kind to her. But it occurred to her that, in the natural course of things, if he were to escape this punishment (than which, nothing, assuredly, could be more just or better merited,) he would come to reclaim the property he had left in her keeping, and then farewell, for her, all hope of union with the Ard-brehon. After deliberating the matter in her own mind until it was almost bewildered, on a sudden, the idea entered her head, that surely nothing could be more proper than to consult the Ard-brehon himself in a case where he was so nearly interested. The latter heard her to the end with patience, and then asked if she had considered well what a heinous crime it was, from motives of personal love, or friendship, to screen a murderer from justice? The sister of Flaithrighe replied, that the case had not appeared to her in this light before; and, after a little farther conver-

sation with this exemplary judge, she hurried away, full of admiration at his disinterestedness, and of horror at the danger she herself had run of being a sharer in her brother's guilt. She sent the latter a message to that effect, deploring her inability (from conscientious motives) to comply with his request, and entreating him, in the most affectionate manner, to use all the means in his power to turn the little time he had remaining to the best account.

"Now fully convinced of the correctness of his father's observation of human nature, Flaithrighe sent off a private messenger, with the token agreed upon, to the foresters in whose care he had left the infant, requiring them to be present at the place and moment appointed for the execution. In order to render the punishment as exemplary as it was condign, the spot selected for carrying it into effect was a plain before the

royal Kempe of Tamrach; and, such was the estimation in which the culprit had once been held, that this plain was crowded at an early hour. The Ard-righ himself had a throne erected opposite the scaffold, where he sat, awaiting, with a stern aspect, the consummation of justice on the head of the infamous traitor to whom he had rashly confided a trust so precious to his people and to himself.

"At length, with a dejected attitude and countenance, the son of the Ard-brehon was brought forth, guarded and manacled as his crime deserved. Having ascended the scaffold, while all the multitude were awaiting the moment of his execution, he suddenly raised his head, and requested permission to address a few words to the Ard-righ himself. This being granted, Flaithrighe advanced to the front of the scaffold, and spoke as follows:

"'I often imagined, O my just monarch and kind benefactor, that men, and women too, were a great deal better at bottom than the generality of old people imagine them to be, and that human nature was not so strongly inclined to wickedness as we are told it is; but I have now made experience of the fact, and am thoroughly convinced that, little virtue as there is in the world, there would be less if temptation were still more general than it is. I likewise believe, that he who would think well of his fellow-creatures must not be trying their strength for his own curiosity, for I myself, by such an impertinence, have turned three angels into as many devils.'

"With these words he related his adventure to the Ard-righ, and concluded his narrative by calling on the foresters to produce the child, the sight of which gave exceeding great joy to the

Ard-righ. After embracing the infant, and committing it to the care of a proper attendant, he turned to Flaithrighe, and answered him in the following words:

"'Thy father was wiser than thou, and his dying words still truer than thou yet hast proved them. These three serpents, whom thou hast caressed to sting thee, shall be consigned to the misery and disgrace they have deserved; but it is fair that thou shouldst share the evil which thy presumptuous curiosity has occasioned. Let the whole four, tempter and tempted,' said he, to his guards, 'be cast out from our dominions, and let a crier precede them with a trumpet, to declare the cause of their banishment.'

"This sentence," continued the Anstruth, "was carried into effect upon the spot, and Flaithrighe, together with the three ingrates, was ejected from the domain of the Ard-righ, abashed at

this unexpected verification of the only portion of his father's dying charge which had remained yet unjustified by the event."

CHAPTER LIV.

WHILE the company were occupied in making their comments on the conduct of the different characters in this story, Kenric observed the stranger fix his eyes earnestly upon himself, and use a secret sign, as if to invite him to a conference within the dwelling. The action surprized him, and his curiosity, always, with him, an active quality, would not suffer him to treat it with neglect. Accordingly, observing the moment when the stranger left the company, he took an opportunity of following him, in a little time, and, finding

him standing outside, enquired the meaning of the sign he had made.

"There was no need for me," said the stranger, "to make signs to bid thee follow me when I found thee starving in Cair Lud."

The Anglo-Saxon started back, and raised his hands in astonishment.

"Inguar!" he exclaimed, "Inguar, and in the dress of an Anstruth. Is it thou that comest to call me from the feast?"

"Hush! hush!" replied the Swede. "Remember thou art under a pledge, if thou canst not aid, at least that thou wilt not betray us."

"May no friend of mine," said Kenric, "ever feel the torture which that pledge has cost me since I came to Inisfail. I am glad that we have met, for the mystery was burning in my bosom, and I longed to let thee know that I am determined on revealing it."

"Revealing it!" exclaimed the Scandinavian, "betraying it, thou shouldst have said. Betraying a cause which well thou knowest to be a just and good one; a benefactor who has ardently befriended thee, and who would have been still more thy friend if thou wouldst suffer it."

"I deny not," answered Kenric, "the justness of the cause, nor the benefits of Baseg. But I do deny the justness of the means he uses to advance his rights, and the idea that any gratitude could excuse such double dealing in myself. I tell thee I am resolved to make known the hidden spring of this invasion. Let Baseg seek his right by open means, let him seek for justice on this usurper, whoever he may be, from the equity of his countrymen, but let him not endeavour to secure a selfish end by taking part with the enemies, not alone of Inisfail, but of all mankind."

"Thou talkest at random," answered Inguar,

"without knowing aught of the difficulties which you would urge the injured exile to surmount. His enemy is now too long established in his unlawful power, his influence too great amongst the princes of his nation, and the number of Baseg's friends too few to leave a hope that any thing could be gained by an appeal to justice. But he abhors, more deeply than thyself, the crime with which thou dost not hesitate to charge him. It is not taking part with the enemies of Inisfail, to use their aid against one who is himself her enemy by holding power in violation of her laws. If thou wouldst but consent to speak to Baseg, thou soon mightest learn to weigh his motives differently."

"What sayest thou?" cried the Northumbrian. "Is Baseg then at hand?"

"Thou canst see him," answered Inguar, "in less than a day's journey. The fleet of Gur-

mund are already on the coast; but thou knowest little of our friend if thou suppose that my countrymen, of whom thou speakest so hardly, and yet not unjustly neither, shall ever be employed in Inisfail for other than the justest ends. Arouse thyself, therefore, and say whether thou art willing to be our friend and thine own together, for the affair requires despatch and energy."

He was about to furnish the young Northumbrian with an account of his adventures since he left Cair Lud, and the motives which had induced him to assume his present disguise, when the door of Matha's dwelling opened, and two cloaked figures were seen issuing from the illuminated hall within.

"Come this way," said the stranger, going hastily toward the grove which screened the dwelling toward the north, and beckoning Kenric to

follow him :— "let us find a place where we may not be interrupted."

The two persons who had made their appearance at the door of the house were the Ard-Draithe's niece and her friend Matha. They walked slowly toward the earthen enbankment which surrounded the place, and overlooked the tranquil valley, with its stream and rustic bridges. The scene presented a beautiful though solitary night-view, and had something of the solemn in its serenity. It seemed as if the friends had been conversing already, and had interrupted their discourse, for after they reached the bank, while Aithne stood gazing on the landscape, she suddenly addressed her friend as follows:

"Whatever be the cause of his dejection, I would he were now here that we might cheer it. There is a moon and starlight, after his own taste. He is weak and fanciful, but, underneath

his folly, I can see some thought and feeling."

"And I," said Matha, "underneath his talent, can see much danger to himself and others."

"I hope thou art mistaken," answered Aithne; "at all events his foibles are original and amusing, and I shall miss him from our circle when he goes. I shall never see the moon upon the bay without remembering his small treatise, and how he hated vanity. Wilt thou tell me more of his history?"

"Thou must even content thyself with what thou knowest, for the present," said Matha, "for I see the door already opening, and Elim coming forth to seek us."

Aithne threw down her veil, with a feeling of disappointment, and fastened it with a golden bodkin to her waist.

"Have either of you seen Kenric?" asked

Elim, as he approached, "or the talkative Anstruth? Why have you all deserted our circle in the house?"

"We were about returning to it," answered Matha, "and so were thy other guests, for yonder I see them issuing together from the grove."

"Together!" exclaimed Elim.

"Together, it appears," said Aithne.

"That's strange," said Elim, "for I did not think they were acquainted."

"I am sure," said Aithne, "they did not speak to one another in the house."

"But what of that?" said Elim, with a rapid self-recollection; "an Anstruth is not long in making an acquaintance. They are often more familiar than agreeable."

They were now joined by Kenric and the stranger, the latter falling modestly behind as they drew near the group. Kenric, who seemed,

by some late impulse, to have been restored to his customary foppishness of manner, addressed himself to Aithne, as he mingled with the group, and turned the tassel of his hanging bonnet conceitedly on one side:

"My lessons have not been lost upon thee, Aithne," he said; "thou art of my taste already, since thou preferrest the light of the stars, on such a night as this, to that of Matha's rushen torches."

"I am of thy taste so far," replied Aithne, in a quiet tone, "and so are Elim, and Matha, and the worthy Anstruth at thy back."

"He!" exclaimed Kenric, "twish! he knows nothing of the matter. He never read a sentence of my book, nor is aware, I dare say, at this instant, whether the stars above his head be carbuncles of Ciar, no bigger than a nut a-piece, or rolling globes of earth, like this beneath us."

"Perhaps," said Aithne, "he knows as much about it as he cares, or wants to know, for any purpose he has of them besides the light they give him on his way."

"Yet scarce so much, thou wilt confess," said Kenric, "as he would know had he perused my little treatise."

"Yet quite as much, perchance," said Aithne, "as thy little treatise could ever bring him to believe."

"Thou art sharp upon me, maiden," said Kenric; "but I love to see jests glimmering, though the points be turned against myself. Yes, this indeed," he continued, throwing back his sagum over his left shoulder, and gazing, with an affected attitude, upon the skies; "this indeed, fair Aithne, is a night for such a study. In nights like this, it was, that first the system burst in all its glory on my soul! In nights like

this have I sat, for hours, upon the roof of my Bavarian dwelling, watching the courses of those celestial lights which (without a boast) I think my treatise (not to speak vainly of it) has fairly demonstrated to be habitable. It requires, thou knowest, some outward stimulus, some excitement to arouse within one—the—(not to talk nonsense you know)—the thing, you know, that does those things—the———"

"The genius," said Aithne, "I will help thee to a word."

"Tush, but that's nonsense; well, we'll leave it so; we will not trifle about words; the genius, Aithne. Aye, then it was I felt it stir within me. Oh, Aithne, then my soul expanded! then it became mighty in my bosom, and worthy to grapple with the grandeur of the subject!"

"What a clever man he must have been," said Aithne, "from whom you took it all."

"All what?" said Kenric.

"All that is in thy book," returned Aithne; "the man who taught thee all that thou hast written about."

"Oh, Virgil dost thou mean?" said Kenric, "yes—yes—he—that is—yes. The discovery—the discovery, as thou sayest was his—at least the first announcement of the system in our day—but then, poh—poh! Yes, yes—he had his merit, there is no denying it—the discoverer has the merit of—of—discovery—and far be it from me to rob him of his laurels. Let those who cannot earn them, pilfer them. I envy not their spoils. Aye, Virgil—Virgil had indeed his merit, and well he wore it, for I hardly knew which to like more about him, his merit, or his modesty. He was now, I might say, a truly unaffectedly modest man. He even confessed—averred, I should say, rather—to a mutual friend, that he attributed more of the

success of his own theory, at Rome and elsewhere, to my small volume, than to all he ever said or wrote himself upon the subject. It seems nonsense in me to talk of such a thing, but I mention it only as a proof of the man's modesty, for it was that, of course, you know, deceived him. It is true, indeed, that others said the same, as I feel bound in justice to confess—but, boh!" *

"I am sure," said Aithne, "thou art very gifted. But where is Elim?"

"Yonder, with Matha, near the rampart," answered Kenric, indicating the place with his hand.

* The industrious Mr. Stanihurst labours to prove that this unseemly interjection was not an innovation of the pale. "There is," he says, "a cholerike, or disdainfull interiection used in the Irish language, called *boagh*, which is as much in English as *twish*. The Irish both in ancient time, and to this daie, commonlie use it, and therefore English conquerors call them Irish poghes, or pogh morrice. Which tawnting terme is at this daie verie wrongfullie ascribed to them of the English pale." This elaborate disquisition he indicates by the margina l note "Irish Boagh."

"And there comes thy strange friend," replied Aithne, looking around; "there, in the shadow of the house, more near us than I had supposed. Go ask him what he thinks about the moon, for Matha beckons me away."

CHAPTER LV.

Saying this, she crossed the Rath to where Elim and his parent stood. The latter was still much perplexed by this sudden intimacy between his friend and the Anstruth. Although he believed it possible, as his last words to Aithne and to Matha intimated, that the circumstance might be accounted for by the habitual forwardness common to individuals of that garrulous class, the conjecture did not fully satisfy his mind. Unable to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, and equally unwilling to leave the subject unconcluded, he

resolved to question Kenric on it without delay, and for this purpose drew him back a little, while Aithne and Matha proceeded to the house. Kenric, with some reserve, complied with Elim's desire, and slackened his pace to please him.

"Kenric," said Elim, "do you know this stranger?"

"I do," replied the Anglo-Saxon, without hesitation.

"Because, I thought," resumed Elim, after a pause, "that when first he entered the Rath thou didst not seem to recognize him as an acquaintance?"

"Nor did I then," replied the Northumbrian, "but soon after I observed him making a sign to me, which I obeyed, and he made himself known to me as soon as I came out."

"And who—but it is enough," said Elim,

"this is all I had to ask thee, Kenric." So saying, they followed their friends into the house.

The period during which the pretended Anstruth, by virtue of his rank, was entitled to the hospitalities of Rath-Aidan, rolled pleasantly away for the greater portion of its inmates. Inguar was as perfectly adept in all the shades of the character he had assumed as if he had been educated in no other. His stories, though not so numerous as those required in the highest grade of his profession, were cunningly varied, and adapted, as his penetration suggested, to the character of the listener. He did not, however, wait for the expiration of the full term of his entertainment, but took his leave on the sixth morning, at the head of his twelve followers. At his departure, Elim ordered him the customary fee in kine, which the men drove before them down the valley,

while Inguar staid without the Rath, to bid farewell to the Northumbrian.

"Thou hast startled, yet aroused me, by thy news," said Kenric. "Is it possible that Baseg is indeed in Inisfail?"

"I tell thee it is so," replied the Swede, "and in the full condition to avenge his wrongs. Whether thou join thy former friends or no, their success is certain; and thou wilt only have missed a golden opportunity of gratitude, without working any good to Inisfail."

"And where is Baseg now?" asked Kenric, after a long pause.

"He is near enough at hand," Inguar replied, "but the common oath by which we all are bound forbids me to disclose the place of his concealment."

"It is not worth thy while to stint thy confidence," said Kenric, "after thou hast left so much

in my power. But well thou knowest, as that smile declares, that it is not I who dare betray thee."

"I do not think thou wouldst," said Inguar, "but I am not disposed to be reserved with thee. In a fortnight hence I will return to bring thee to our friends, and thou mayest learn the whole with thine own eyes and ears; the sum of Baseg's wrong, and his enemy's usurpation."

Kenric consented, and the pretended Anstruth hastened on his journey.

The following day was the softest of a delicious spring, and Kenric sat alone upon the shores of the bay, watching some fishermen, who, armed with harpoons, and seated in their horse-skin currachs, were striking at the huge sunfish which abounded on those coasts in the warmer seasons. Here he observed Elim and Moyel, employed in loosening the little yew vessel in which the former

was about to visit a Dun which he had caused to be erected on the island in the bay. The sight of the tranquil picture awakened thoughts of grief and self-reproach within the Anglo-Saxon's mind, and he dwelt long upon the contemplation of his past career, and of the course which Inguar now held out to him.

Perceiving the Anglo-Saxon, where he sat, the chieftain waved his hand in order that he might approach, and said, when he had reached the spot:

"I was about taking Moyel to the island, but, since I see thee idle, I will let him go alone."

While Moyel rowed the little coiti, a kind of skiff, formed of the hollowed trunk of a prodigious elm, away from shore, the Northumbrian stood waiting for Elim's speech, and weighing in his hand one of those ponderous

marcasites which still abound upon this strand, and which have been since so much admired by wandering geologists.

"Kenric," said Elim, after a long silence, "I would that thou wert once more in Northumberland."

Kenric started in extreme surprize, and gazed upon his friend.

"And why, Elim?" he asked, with a tone of slight upbraiding.

Elim was silent for some time, and looked upon the earth.

"For thine own safety, Kenric," said the Ithian. "Whatever be the truth of these reports, it is certain that Inisfail, ere long, is doomed to feel the shock of war, and the territory of Rath-Aidan will not be suffered to continue undisquieted in the tumult."

"Thou judgest me severely, Elim," said

Kenric, colouring deeply, "if thou deemest that I would so long continue in Rath-Aidan for my pleasure, and forsake it when its sun became overcast."

"Do not misconceive so old a friend," said Elim; "I had no such thought in my mind. There are occasions, I know, in which strangers may lend their aid to the injured party in a civil contest, but this is not one of them. Thou couldst not aid me in the least, not half so well as any one of the heap of able-bodied kerne whom the first day's fight shall leave to fatten the disputed land. Thou wouldst thus be lost to society in one high pursuit, without rendering it any service in another."

Kenric made no reply, but the impression made on him by Elim's generosity was not momentary. After spending some farther time in their inspection of the new fortification, they

sought the Rath together, Elim for the purposes of business, Kenric to meditate on the scene that had taken place, and to prepare for the approaching trial.

CHAPTER LVI.

In the meantime, an important alteration had taken place in Coom na Druid. On his joining the fleet of Gurmund, near the Thames, Baseg, for he indeed was the wily exile to whom Kenric was indebted for seasonable relief, at once directed the force of the Vikingr to the western shores of Inisfail. Their voyage, however, was not conducted with so much secrecy as to hinder their sails from being descried from many parts of the isle, and hence the alarm which had given occasion to the special Feis. Secrecy, neverthe-

less, was to be the spirit of their expedition. After they had completed their voyage, and arrived upon the southern coast, it was determined that the Vikingr should keep the open seas in the day-time, and lurk, in their usual manner, in the bays at night, while Baseg went on shore to sound his former friends amongst the Hooded People. The person on whose aid he chiefly depended was the haughty Druidess, Eira, the mother of Tuathal, already mentioned, who had been his most strenuous advocate in the days of the late Ard-Draithe, and whose predilections in his favour were said, by many, to be founded on other grounds besides a conviction of the justice of his cause.

Assuming the dress of a ceanuighe, which he had provided for the occasion, and taking Inguar with him, in the quality of an attendant, the banished thanist left, in a currach, the

Vikingr's ship, and sped rapidly to those shores which he had not now beheld for nearly a quarter of a century. They travelled far on foot, by the light of a pale crescent, before Baseg ventured to make any enquiry concerning his route. It were idle to attempt a transcript of the feelings with which he trod the scenes of those numerous conflicts which had ended in his own expulsion from his native land, nor of those with which he looked upon the lonely Coom itself, all lovely with its midnight scenery. The first person whom the travellers met, as they descended to the bosom of the valley, was an old acquaintance of the thanist. They had almost reached the green at the mountain's foot, when they encountered a figure approaching from the borders of the lake, and muttering to himself, as if in repetition of some charm. On the approach of the stranger he stopped short, and gave the customary challenge.

Instead of answering directly, the thanist advanced until he came so near as to make his person plainly visible in the moonlight.

"Eogan Bel," said he, "is it possible thou hast forgotten Baseg?"

The superstitious dresbdeartach, conceiving that it was the ghost of the Ithian, for whose wrongs the people of the Coom had suffered so severely, without uttering another word, turned round upon his heel and fled, with all his might, in the direction of his own house. After a moment's mirth at his expense, the thanist said:

"So much for old acquaintance. Our better course, Inguar, or Ciaran (since we must fit thee with a name to suit thy dress), will be to proceed at once to the dwelling of Eogan, and make our appeal where we may have a chance of obtaining his attention. If none of my old friends be living, we can claim a night's hos-

pitality under our disguise, and consider, ere the morn, what shall be done. I can easily at least prevail on Eogan to keep our secret, if the Coom has changed its character."

They proceeded accordingly to the house of the dresbdeartach, whom they found in the act of communicating, to his terrified household, the wonderful vision he had just beheld. With some difficulty Baseg was enabled to make it appear that he was indeed himself, and no ghostly representative. Eogan Bel, whom he had formerly impressed with the deepest veneration for his character, expressed the liveliest delight at his return, but gave him little comfort in his answers. He iuformed him of the death of the Ard-Draithe, the impatience which Tuathal daily manifested of their exclusive mode of life; and the present situation of the Coom. After brief consideration of these circumstances, Baseg resolved at once to

present himself to Eira and her son, and bade Inguar follow him in the direction of the Dun. They pursued their way in silence. It happened that Tuathal and the Druidess were seated still beside their hearth, though most of the household had retired to rest. Aithne had, on that morning, left the Coom on the invitation of her uncle, the Righ of Leath Mogha, who wished that she should accompany him to the Feis of Tamrach; and Tuathal gave strong symptoms of a desire to follow her example.

"Thou go the Feis!" cried Eira, "and with what object wouldst thou?"

"What object? every object!" exclaimed the young Ard-Draithe. "Am I never to see aught beyond these hills? Am I an Ard-Draithe, or a prisoner? Can I not have the liberty of a poor kern like Duach? He goes to the Feis, while his lord is cooped in the Coom."

"Thou most unreasonable!" answered Eira, "the late Ard-Draithe, weak though he was in suffering Christian influence, was strong compared with thee. Thou wishest to take part in the gaieties of those who have enslaved thy race, and sell the remnant of their independence for the gratification of thine eyes and ears."

"I see not," said Tuathal, "why we should make ourselves miserable because they wish we should be so."

"Thy predecessor," said the sharp-eyed Druidess, "would have died ere he had thought of such a degradation. And there was one besides—"

"Aye, now it comes!" exclaimed Tuathal; "I knew that we should soon have him upon the floor. Old Baseg, thou wouldst say. I wonder much thou didst not make thine own of him when he was in the Coom, he is so seldom absent from thy thoughts."

It is not possible to say in what language Eira might have given expression to the indignation which this speech excited in her breast, had not a sudden interruption cut short the rising torrent of reproach, and verified a proverb probably not then in use. It was the sound of a horn at the bridge, followed by the challenge of a sentinel. In a short time, Eimhir, the archer, appeared at the entrance of the Dun, to announce the approach of two Druid ceanuighes, who claimed repose and entertainment for the night.

"They are late, but welcome," was the answer of Eira. "Banba, prepare refreshment for the strangers, and let Geide and Fiacha strew two couches of dry rushes in the common sleeping-room."

Baseg and Inguar now appeared at the threshold, and were received with hospitality. The lapse of time, and the total change from the

bloom of manhood to old age, assisted the design of Baseg in avoiding, for a time, the recognition of Eira, until a long course of conversation had enabled him to discover that he might, with perfect safety, reveal his real name. He took an opportunity of doing so when the young Ard-Draithe was absent from the building. The announcement was received by Eira with the most enthusiastic joy. Still greater was her delight when she learned the object of his re-appearance in the Coom, and the prospects which he had of re-establishing his claim to Gormadark and the title of O'Haedha. She listened with pleasure to his accounts of the warlike character of his new allies, and at once engaged to use her utmost influence in forwarding his views. Tuathal now was introduced into the conference. For him, any thing of novelty was certain to have allurements, and his friendship was entirely gained

when it was proposed that he should be gratified in his desire of proceeding to the Feis, in order to collect what information was afloat with regard to the designs of the Vikingr's fleet.

In the meantime, it was determined that Baseg and Inguar should continue private at the Dun, while Eira exerted the deputed authority of her son to maintain a vigorous exercise of military discipline, a quality in which, to do Tuathal justice, he had taken care that his sept should not be deficient. Secrecy was still to be the moving principle of Baseg's plans, and this was impressed on Tuathal at his departure. How he observed it has been already seen. After his interview with Elim, before the entrance of the palace, he did not deem it safe to remain any longer in the precincts of the Kempe, but reaching the small troop which he had left beyond the frontiers of the royal demesne, at once gave orders

to return with speed. As the boundaries of Meath receded from his view, the young Ard-Draithe began to feel more anxiety respecting the probability of Baseg's not approving the step which he had taken in leaving Aithne, over whose movements, as a subject, he had lawful control, in the hands of the Ithians. Totally incapable as he was, however, of forming any scheme to avert what he dreaded, he only endeavoured to divert his mind from the idea of it, by calling on Eogan Bel, his old senachie, to supply him with a song or story.

"Since thou leavest the choice to myself," said Eogan, with a smile, "I will abide by the common opinion, which says, that the song is for the hall, and the story for the road, though both are excellent anywhere."

So saying, and making his hobbie take a softer pace, while he laid his finger musingly

against his brow, he called to mind the following narrative, which he related, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the whole party, as they journeyed over the dreary and uneven road :

THE CLOAK OF DUNGALACH.

"You all have heard, I dare say, my worthy companions, of Gaul Mac Morni, and of the famous fight of Maigh Lena, not far from where we ride, and perhaps the name of Dungalach, a champion scarce inferior to himself in valour, stature, honour, and descent, may have reached your ears. If Gaul were able to ford the Shannon at the flood, Dungalach could follow at the ebb ; and if Gaul killed sixty heroes to his share in a morning, Dungalach came little short of the half hundred.

"Well, worthy children of Modharuidh, it so happened, that on the eve of the famous battle of Maigh Lena, this Dungalach came to the neigh-

bourhood, in order to assist his prince and chief. As he gallopped along in haste, for he had been absent from the Clana Morni for some days, and Gaul was wondering where he could be tarrying, an aged woman suddenly appeared upon his road, and charged him to halt, on peril of his life. He drew up his horse, and asked her what she wanted?

"'Don't you know me?' says the woman.

"'Why wouldn't I know my fosterer?' said Dungalach.

"'If I be your fosterer then,' said the woman, 'heed my word. Do you go to-morrow to the fight of Maigh Lena?'

"'Is Gaul,' said the hero, 'to be there, and is Dungalach to be absent?'

"'You're bent on going, then, I see,' said the woman.

"'Go I will,' said Dungalach.

"Well, children of Modharuith, not to make their talk as tiresome as our own, the woman bade Dungalach tarry at lea t until she could learn his fate for him. He gave his consent, and she bade him ride softly up to the summit of a neighbouring hill, while she sat looking on a broken cloud, and to bring her word what he should see.

"He went as he was bidden, and returned, saying:

"'I saw a woman, dressed in scarlet, and with ornaments of gold.'

"'Thou hast seen a fatal sign,' said the woman, shaking her head. 'Ascend that hill on the east, and see if thou art promised better luck.'

He went, and returned.

"'I saw,' said he, 'a woman, dressed in yellow, and with silver ornaments.'

" 'The vision is more fatal than the other,' answered the woman, still keeping her eye upon the broken cloud, which parted every instant more and more. 'Again, Dungalach, ascend that hill to the north, and tell me what thou seest.'

" Again Dungalach went, and once more returned to where the diviner sat.

" 'I have seen nothing,' said he, 'but the grass-grown cairn, through which the wind whistles on the summ it.'

" 'The cairn is the sign,' said the woman, 'and the most fatal one of all. Thou diest to-morrow if thou go to the fight of Maigh Lena.'

" 'It is settled, I must go,' said Dungalach; 'so, unless thou hast some means of averting the omens, thou dost but waste thy time.'

"The woman remained silent for a while, and then, taking up the cloak which she bore upon her arm, she handed it to Dungalach.

"'Wear this around thee in the fight,' she said, 'and it will serve thee better than thine armour.'

"Well, excellent hearers of the Coom, what think you was the property of this cloak? Its power was such that it made the wearer invisible, and so very invisible, that on his return that night to his own home, which lay near the field of action, his very pigs, although they say that animal can see the wind, could not see Dungalach.

"On the following day, Dungalach, hid in his cloak, was fighting manfully by his chieftain's side, who wondered from whence the havoc proceeded which he witnessed all around him. Once, when a huge giant, being seven and twenty

feet in his brogs, was about to cleave the prince's head in two with his battle-axe, that office was performed for his own by some invisible weapon. At another time, when Gaul had swung his own huge battle-axe in air to crush a troublesome Dal Gas, the man was mowed from the field before the blow descended. At length the hero paused, and, gazing around him, exclaimed to his followers:

"'These must be the blows of Dungalach, and yet I do not see the man.'

"When he had said these words, he heard a voice, which seemed that of Dungalach, exclaiming aloud:

"'It were shame for Dungalach if he owed safety to a covering which deprives his chieftain of the pleasure of seeing him fighting by his side!'

"Saying this, he flung aside the cloak, and,

grieved am I to say, children of Modharuith, that, in appearing before the eyes of Gaul, he received an arrow in the neck, which left him dead upon the field."

CHAPTER LVII.

By the time the senachie had come to a conclusion, the cross-road was in sight, where stood one of those places of entertainment in which the whole party was to spend the night; and Tuathal, leaving his men to see all in order for the evening, retired, weary and anxious, to the apartment where he was to rest.

The sleeping, as well as dining-rooms, in the houses of the beatachs, were common to all strangers. This, in which now the Ard-Draithe sought repose, was furnished with a score

of rush beds, several of which were already occupied by sojourning travellers. The floor was the hard clay, and the couches themselves consisted of nothing more than rushes shaken down upon it. As Tuathal lay awake, he heard a conversation pass between some of those already couched, in the farther end of the apartment, which added much to the alarm he had already suffered from Elim's intimations at the Feis.

"For my part," said one, "if it be not the beginning of a new colony in the isle I have no skill in the chronicles. A village where I sold peltry, but a moon since, is already peopled by the Fionn Geinte."

"They say," observed a fat brughnib, who lay on his back, attending to what was said, "that some septs have conspired to help them into the interior; and a neighbour of mine, who

sometime crosses the crags of Gleanamhain for red-deer skins, avers, that he saw the Raven standard, planted on a hillock, near the southern coast."

"If it be so," exclaimed a third, "it is time for peaceful men to look about them. It was not for nothing the shower of blood was seen at Magh Laighean."

"Since thou speakest of portents and of prodigies," said the brughnib, "I may tell thee of a prodigy under thine eye at this moment. This house thou stoppest in now has the reputation of being troubled with unearthly visitors."

"Thou dost not say it!" exclaimed Tuathal, incautiously, for the legends of his native valley, operating on a character not naturally strong, had added to his other foibles an excessive degree of superstition.

"I can but tell thee," returned the brughnib,

"what befel a near acquaintance of a friend of mine, beneath this very roof. He heard and laughed at the same tale that I tell thee, and went to rest, as near as I can judge by the sound of thy voice, in the bed which thou now occupiest. In the morning, to his utter astonishment, he found himself with his head in the place where he had left his heels, and his heels in like manner put for his head. He made all sorts of enquiries, but he might as well have set about sounding Lough Quinlan, where the islands float, they say, for want of a bottom."

"I would," exclaimed a hoarse and grumbling voice, in a distant corner of the apartment, like that of one unwillingly awaked from rest, "that the tongues of all talkative ceanuighes, that break the rest of drowsy travellers, were floating on Lough Quinlan also. Does no one consider how far it is to the next walled town?"

This rebuke lowered the conversation to indistinct whispers, and finally to perfect silence; but enough had been said to keep Tuathal on the watch all night. Whenever he attempted to doze, a pair of hands seemed darting down to serve him like the friend of the brughnib. Towards midnight, while he was still keeping a keen look out from side to side, and wiping the perspiration from his brow, he saw the hurdle door open, and a man enter, bearing in his hand a splinter of bog-pine lighted. Tuathal rose aghast upon his elbow, unable, through fear, to waken his companions, and staring on the new comer, who, wrapt in a long dark cloak of the freize of Ciar, and fixing full his eye upon himself, approached the couch on which he lay. Perceiving the Ard-Draithe at length preparing to raise an alarm, he lifted one finger by way of caution, and smiled.

"O fair Samhuin!" exclaimed Tuathal, much relieved, "is it thou, dear Inguar?"

"The same," replied the stranger, speaking low, "the thanist was uneasy at thy stay, and bade me hurry on the road to meet thee."

"And why, good Inguar?" said the Ard-Draithe, anxiously. "Has anything happened at the Coom?"

"Not yet," said Inguar, whispering, "but the alarm is spreading, and he feared lest it might reach the ears of Aodh in time to have thee intercepted on the way. Is Aithne in the house?"

"I left her," replied Tuathal, with some hesitation, "at the Feis, under the guardianship of some friends."

"I am sorry thou hast done so," said Inguar. "The thanist will be sorely disappointed, for he held it of the utmost importance that Aithne

should be detained for the present in her native valley. Thou knowest how powerful a hostage she would be, if report speak truth, to work upon the Ithian, in case of his refusing to give up his usurped possession."

"Then," exclaimed Tuathal, raising his hands in terror, "I am a lost man, Inguar, for it was in the hands of Elim, and his friends, I left her."

"Hush! do not speak so loud," said Inguar; "that was indeed unfortunate. I know not how it can be mended now, for the alarm may, by these means, reach Rath-Aidan, and then, farewell contrivance."

"But what is to be done?" said Tuathal, still distressed. "I dread the rage of Baseg. One would suppose, to hear him storming in the Dun at times, that he was the Ard-Draithe, and not I."

"We will find means to appease him, ere we re-enter the Dun," replied Inguar; "and now, Ard-Draithe, rise and follow me. We have not a moment to lose, and thy troop are already caparisoned upon the road. I took care of that before I came to wake thee."

"Samhuin keep me tranquil," said the Ard-Draithe. "I resemble more a brogless daltin than the chieftain of the Coom. Not only Baseg, whom I fear for his long head alone, though, if he look not well to what he says, he may find my brazen gen a little longer, but even his creatures thrust themselves into my office of command. How dared you send my galloglachs to horse without my orders?"

Inguar made some trifling excuse, which he hardly waited to conclude, when he urged the Ard-Draithe to hasten forth and head his troop, as mischief might come of his delaying now to

chide. The latter consented, murmuring much at the intrusive temper both of Baseg and his follower.

After travelling all day at a rapid pace, they entered, towards evening, the famous city of Kildoir. The troop of galloglachs, increased, since Inguar joined them, to a considerable number, encamped without the gates; while Inguar and Tuathal, accompanied only by their daltins, rode on towards the dwelling of a beatach, whose windows looked toward the cathedral church. It was the eve of a festival, and the streets were crowded with people, thronging to and from this celebrated building, distinguished throughout Europe by the splendour of its interior decorations, but more than all by the celebrity of its foundress. The strong light, which was thrown from the edifice by the many rushen torches burning within, produced an effect which brought for-

cibly to Inguar's mind the night on which he had first been introduced by Kurner to the interior of the famous temple of Upsal.

Leaving Tuathal to order refreshment at the beatach's, Inguar stole out alone, and filled with the remembrance of Sitheod, to view this edifice, of which he had heard so much, even in the most distant towns of Inismore.

"Proud walls!" said he, as he gazed upon the building, "you shall be humbled too! Detested southern race, the blood of the Cimbri was not all shed upon the chariot-spokes and waggons at Verceil! Many a fair southern clime has learned already how full and strong it beats in the hearts and limbs of their northern progeny. And thou, too, beautiful and gifted isle, thou, too, shalt feel the Vikingr's foot of mail upon thy breast, and tremble at the Scandinavian battle-axe. That worship thou abhorrest shall occupy thy temples;

and Odin, he whom the doctors of the south denounce as a fugitive impostor, that Scythian Sigge, whom you would lower to a human cheat, the creature of the wretched Mithridates, shall soon compel thy children to reverence, as he is reverenced in Sitheod, the Supercilious and the Incendiary."

He returned to the beatach's, contrasting in his mind the scene of peace which he had just beheld, with those which were so soon about to follow, and contemplating with triumph the approaching day, when the Head of Mimer might issue oracles from the shrine of Conlath, and the warlike deities of the Scandinavian worship possess the places occupied at present by the effigies of the departed members of this peaceful sect; by idols to adore, not images to commemorate.

On the following morning, Tuathal and his galloglachs were early on the road, and, with

little farther adventure worth relating, arrived in the mountains of Gleanamhain. It was night before they rode into the Coom, and they found the Dun surrounded by armed galloglachs and kerne. Tuathal entered the dwelling of his predecessors, dreading to meet, notwithstanding his consciousness of actual power, the anger of a man so much his superior in capacity as Baseg.

The latter, meanwhile, expected the arrival of the young Ard-Draithe with the utmost impatience. It was only after his departure to the Feis, that he had heard the rumour of the approaching alliance between Aithne and the present ruler of Rath-Aidan, and his politic brain could not but see the importance of retaining possession of her person. His knowledge of the pliant temper of Tuathal made him fear a thousand chances might arise to wrest her from his care; and, as it proved, his fear was not unfounded.

On entering the Dun, the first object on which Tuathal's eye reposed was, the figure of the thanist, standing, in the midst of the apartment, distinguished by its extraordinary bulk and height, the mass of snow-white curly hair, surrounding a forehead unusually prominent, and a face, large of feature, and singularly expressive of subtlety and vindictiveness. He welcomed Tuathal with delight, but used no effort to conceal his disappointment when he heard that Aithne had been left behind. He rebuked him with little emotion, but with the utmost severity, and only abated the quiet insolence of his language when Tuathal's patience seemed about to fail him. In this dilemma, Inguar interposed his adroit capacity, and proposed that he should travel to Rath-Aidan, in the popular character in which he has been seen amusing the inmates of that household. His residence in the Coom would not have been sufficient to

enable him to undertake a task so full of jeopardy, but for a circumstance which gave him no less surprize than joy. In making the first steps towards acquiring a perfect knowledge of the written language of the country, with which, as it was spoken, his long intimacy with Baseg had already rendered him familiar, he discovered that it differed little from the Ira-letur, in which he had been instructed by the Magus, Kurner, and in which he wrote the runes for the fortune-seekers of the city. It has already appeared in what manner he carried his plan into execution. Nothing, however, could exceed his astonishment, well mastered as it was, on beholding Kenric, whom he had left in the city of Cair Lud, returning from the Feis in the same carbudh with the young Ithian chief. That he, whom Baseg and himself had, in another country, been labouring to make a partner in their plot, should thus,

upon their very arrival in Inisfail, appear, as if by magic, by the very side of him against whom it was directed, was an enigma for which even Inguar's ingenuity could find no solution. The first idea which occurred to him was, that the Northumbrian, subsequently to their parting, had discovered the whole of their designs, and had betrayed them for his own advantage. The motive seemed against his character, and yet what other inference could be drawn? To ascertain the truth, Inguar resolved to postpone, for a time, the making his appearance at the Rath; and to employ the interval in striving to learn the cause of this extraordinary conjunction. It was fully explained, when he understood that Kenric and Elim had been schoolfellows in boyhood, and that the latter had only within the last moon arrived from Inismore. Yet the danger was great that the renewal of

their intimacy might occasion an unconscious betrayal of the design they had in hand, although it was true that Kenric's solemn promise was engaged to secrecy. Not being aware how nearly Elim was concerned in the transaction, nothing appeared more probable than that he might inadvertently suffer circumstances to escape him which would be amply sufficient to excite the suspicions of the Ithian. In this predicament there seemed but one course to be pursued, and that a desperate one. This was, immediately to obtain admission to the Rath, to seek an interview with the Northumbrian, and if it should not be possible to prevail on him to aid their cause, at least to enforce a strict observance of the pledge of secrecy he had given. His twelve followers, who, though figuring as the peaceable pupils of an anstruth, were some of the hardiest of Tuathal's kerne, were provided, underneath their

woollen tunics, with skenes and sharp-edged gens, so that, even in case of a discovery, the Anstruth stood little risk of personal danger.

Having succeeded in obtaining the consent of Kenric to give an interview to Baseg in his place of concealment, Inguar returned exulting to the Coom, driving before him, under cover of the night, the present of kine which he had obtained from the liberality of Elim. In the dusk of morn, as Baseg and Tuathal walked together on the borders of the lake, they observed, with astonishment, a herd of kine, descending the pass between the mountains, and followed by the Anstruth on horseback, and his men on foot. The cattle lowed as they entered the strange retreat, and were answered by the numerous herds that were waking to their daily pasture, along the mountain sides and in the vale.

"Hail to O'Haedha! most potent chief of

Gormadark, I greet thee," said the Swede, in a low tone, as they met.

"How now, good Inguar," said the thanist, "was it to drive kine we sent thee to Rath-Aidan?"

"Great chief," said Inguar, "shall a man pursue his calling and not have his fees? These kine are mine by the most peaceful means. My worthy and intelligent pupils, on whom, from this day forward, I confer the honourable degree of Fochlucan, can tell thee how they were obtained."

Much mirth was excited by the announcement that the cattle were a gift from Elim to his unsuspected enemy.

"Thou shalt have ample compensation, Inguar," said the thanist. "Meanwhile, I take these kine as earnest of the more important rights I seek to obtain from that

usurper. Let them be slain without delay, and conveyed by trusty hands to the fleet of Gurmund."

CHAPTER LVIII.

The Swede communicated to the thanist, without loss of time, the particulars of his journey, and of its success. Gratified as Baseg was to learn that the secret spring of the invasion was still entirely unsuspected, his astonishment even exceeded that of Inguar on hearing that the Northumbrian was at Rath-Aidan, and that he had consented to a meeting with himself. There was no doubt that Kenric would not take such a step without using the necessary precautions to secure himself against stratagem, but even if this

were not the case, he had nothing of violence to apprehend at the hands of Baseg. The thanist's real feelings toward the Northumbrian were those of friendship and attachment; one of those unaccountable predilections to which human minds, however stern and ill-regulated, are frequently accessible, and more especially towards those who have once become the objects of their kindness.

The subtle glance of Inguar, however, on the first evening of his sojourn at Inbhersceine, had discovered the existence of a new influence, by which he yet might hope to work on Kenric's resolution. His growing attachment to the daughter of Carthan, though a secret to himself, did not long remain so to the observant Swede. Nothing was yet known, though much had been suspected, in the Coom, of the approaching union; for Duach, the only person who had

obtained a glimpse into the secret, preserved it with fidelity.

In the meantime, the day was fixed on which Aithne was once more to bid adieu, though but for a short space, to the valley of Rath-Aidan. It had been privately arranged, that Elim should proceed in state, immediately after her arrival in the Coom, to make in public the suit which he had already gained in private; and Kenric was now formally admitted by Elim to the family confidence. He bore his part with tolerable spirit; rallied Aithne with even more than his accustomed liveliness; congratulated Matha and his friend with a fervour that was new to his manner, and then hurried from the dwelling to some solitary place, where he might indulge, without restraint, the tide of strange and mingling feelings that hurried him along. Directing his steps to the sea-shore, as if he felt

that the prospect of the wide expanse of ocean might give relief to the tumult in his breast, he arrived ere long before the cottage of Clothra, where Elim, in his childhood, had so narrowly escaped the snare of Baseg.

Here, seated in the sunset, beneath a lofty elm, he remained for a long time, musing on the happy fortune which awaited Elim, and on his own doubtful course. As is customary, he felt the awakening struggles of one passion dispel the charm which he had hitherto found in another, and one year of domestic happiness seemed now to him of more worth than the renown of nations and of ages.

"Why is this?" he said, in a mournful tone. "What is it thus turns all my hopes and projects into woe and disappointment? It is not so with Elim; even when he is mistaken, his happiness remains unaltered; his mind is always even and

serene; affliction seems turned to sweetness when it falls on him; nothing appears to thwart the still augmenting prosperity of his career. Yet let me not deceive myself. It is the fault of my own breast, the error of my own inconstant and ambitious heart, that crosses all my fortunes. The happiness that seems easy of attainment I disregard, and it is only when it begins to fly my reach that I see my folly in not seizing it. Some friend, some guiding genius, come to tell me when I ought to take, and when neglect the occasions that my fortune offers!"

While he spoke, the lengthened shadow of a man was cast, from behind him, along the sward on which he sat. Starting at the thought that he might be overheard, he looked over his shoulder, and beheld, standing on a high ridge of earth between him and the setting sun, the individual whom he had come here to seek.

"What! Kenric," said the Swede, "thou art true to thine appointment."

"We are punctual, both," replied the scholar. "Well, what of Baseg?"

"Hush! speak that word below thy breath," said Inguar. "Did I not warn thee that our hope still lay in secrecy? The usurper holds his court within our neighbourhood, and should our movements be revealed, ere our plot is ripe for action, 'twere better we had staid in Inismore. But hasten now, for there is not a moment to be lost; I have two horses ready, near the mountain road, and we shall be in the place by moon-rise if we use despatch."

"My friends," said Kenric, "must first be apprized of my intention to remain so long away from them. Farewell, awhile; go thou to the place of meeting, and I will join thee shortly."

Inguar departed, and before the twilight had

entirely faded from the horizon, once more beheld the Northumbrian, descending the craggy road which winded through the vale of Rath-Aidan. They mounted in silence, and rode rapidly onward, accompanied by their wild-haired daltins, through the mountain passes, into which Elim had once pursued the thanist of the Coom. The night and the succeeding day passed over, and nothing was seen of Kenric at Rath-Aidan, although he had named the following forenoon as the utmost limit of his absence.

CHAPTER LIX.

It was the deep noon of a bright star-lit night, when Kenric, his bosom filled with a thousand strong emotions, rode, for the first time, into the Coom na Druid. On the way, Inguar had taken occasion to make him gradually intimate with the nature of the projected enterprise; the degree of power and wealth which all who shared in its success were to enjoy; the nature of the cause itself, and of the means by which it was to be advanced.

"If we succeed," concluded Inguar, "we possess all that can make life worth holding—love,

power, and affluence. If we should fail, the Father of Battles, who loves to see good blows, will reward us in his palaces, the abodes of the valiant dead. There shall we eat our fill of Serimner, the great boar, which cook Andrimner lays at eve before the heroes, as perfect as if it had not been consumed at morn. There shall we see the Incendiary, who sends showers of arrows into the fight, sitting alone at table, and nourishing his wolves with the food which he requires not himself, for the hot and maddening wine is all his diet. Here, too, shall we behold Hugin and Munsien, the great ravens, sitting on his shoulder, and croaking in his ears, at feasting time, the tidings they have gathered on earth throughout the day."

Kenric listened for some time in silence to these anticipations, wondering to see that, with all the acute talent of the Swede, his long resi-

dence in Europe, and his obligations to many of its inhabitants, his hatred of its manners and its doctrines continued as inveterate as if had he never left Sitheod.

"Peace, Inguar!" he exclaimed, at length, "and tell me what fair vale is this?"

"It is the possession of a chieftain friendly to our cause," replied Inguar.

Both simultaneously reined up their steeds to gaze upon the quiet starlit scene. A river winded glistening far beneath them, and the scattered lights, which gleamed from the peillices on either side, gave to the uneven concave an air of greater magnitude as well as beauty. The sounds of festive merriment were also heard, though softened in the distance; and the night was so calm that the gurgling of the river, as it broke upon some stony shallows, rose softly to their ears. The mind of Kenric, lulled by the tranquil loveliness

of the night scene, was stolen away from the contemplation of the moral horrors in which he was invited to partake, and he murmured involuntarily in a low voice, "How beautiful! how exquisitely beautiful!"

As they rode down the vale, they passed through various groups of armed men, accoutred in dress and weapons of different forms and hues, from the saffron mantle of the western mountains to the beautiful purple of Ossruidhe. They challenged as the travellers passed them, and were answered by Inguar, who let the Anglo-Saxon know that they were some allied tribes whom Baseg had induced to enter into his design, and who flocked from far and near to join his standard. Some of these were under arms, as if keeping guard, while others lay at length, beside their watchfires, or danced to the shrill sound of the piobh mala, or the tinkling crotalin.

Passing a narrow bridge, which was also guarded by centinels on either end, they found themselves before the entrance of a somewhat extensive building. Here Inguar and the Northumbrian dismounted, committing their horses to the care of the daltins who attended them. The door was presently thrown open, and Kenric was introduced to the presence of Baseg.

"Thou art welcome," said the thanist, warmly; "the more so that thy coming is a prodigy. Thou seest that we are fated to be friends."

Kenric returned his greeting with equal cordiality, and a conversation ensued upon the present hopes and prospects of the thanist. So just appeared the intentions of the old man, so moderate his views, so prudent the precautions he had taken to prevent the evils which might be expected to arise from the employment of the northern weapons in his cause, that his resolution

to remain aloof was almost shaken. A feast was made in the Dun to do him honour, at which he was made known to the young Ard-Draithe, and to Eira. The night passed merrily away with mirth and dancing, and Kenric did not refuse to enter into the spirit of the scene. He was frequently rallied by Inguar, in the course of the evening, on the intimate understanding which, he said, appeared to exist between the daughter of Carthan and himself. It is singular that, notwithstanding his knowledge of the groundlessness of these insinuations, the Northumbrian was not displeased to hear them urged.

On the following morning, taking the scholar into a private grotto, which had been made by Aithne, near the river side, Baseg proceeded, at Kenric's wish, to disclose, in detail, the circumstances which had deprived him of his inheritance, with the names and places which had been

hitherto kept concealed. With the feeling of one who has escaped a precipice, the Northumbrian learned that the person whom he had for so long a time been taught to regard with abhorrence and with condemnation, was the friend of his boyhood and his youth; that the usurper whom he had been desired to execrate was Elim, the young chieftain of Rath-Aidan!

CHAPTER LX.

Before the return of Kenric to Rath-Aidan, the perplexity of his friends had given way to uneasiness. The Northumbrian had bidden farewell to his young host for a few days, stating his desire to make an excursion into the country, in company with the Anstruth, whom he had seen and entertained at Inbhersceine. Astonished at the proposition, and still more at the suddenness with which it was made and executed, the Ithian had, however, no right, as he supposed, to penetrate what the Northumbrian chose

to keep a mystery. He offered, accordingly, but few objections to his departure, only urging that it should not be protracted beyond the time he had named.

His perplexity, however, was soon changed into alarm, when more than half a moon went by and there came no tidings of the Northumbrian. It might be possible that his absence was voluntarily prolonged, but it was also not unlikely that the whole might be a scheme for his destruction. While he was meditating, in the deepest anxiety, on these circumstances, Matha entered the apartment in which he stood, with a countenance which announced some communication of importance.

"Elim," she said, as soon as they were alone, "I have intelligence to give which does not admit of an hour's delay. Have you the best reason to rely on the integrity of your Northumbrian friend?"

O'Haedha seemed astonished at the question.

"Surely, Matha," said he, "thou canst not but have seen the intimate confidence that was between us?"

"I talk not of my own surmises," answered Matha, "but wish to learn the truth. Hast thou the fullest reason to be assured of the integrity of Kenric?"

"I have never experienced any thing that could lead me to distrust him," answered Elim.

"Thou hesitatest, then," said Matha, with a smile, "to answer me directly. It is enough. Let Moyel enter!" she exclaimed, to an attendant, who waited in an outer apartment.

Soon after, the voice of the seneschal was heard without, addressing another person in a voice of encouragement and quaint condolence. The door opened, and Moyel appeared, sup-

porting the aged fosterer of Elim, Clothra, whom years had now almost reduced to helplessness of body and of mind. Encouraged by Matha, and prompted by the seneschal, she afforded, at intervals, and with the efforts of an intellect almost extinct, the glimpses of a transaction which excited, to the highest, the astonishment and anxiety of Elim.

"She was seated," she said, "according to her custom, when the weather permitted it, near a hedge row, at the foot of her small garden, when a voice, which seemed that of the Anglo-Saxon Ollamh, whom O'Haedha had frequently brought with him when he visited their dwelling, struck upon her ear. He was joined soon after by another, and they spoke together in low tones, and in sentences of which she could only gather scattered words, concerning a 'plot,' and 'secrecy.' But the circumstance which remained

most deeply engraved upon her mind was, the tone in which she had heard the Northumbrian ask—'*Well, what of Baseg?*'"

The name of Baseg had never, on any occasion that he could call to mind, entered into the conversations of Elim and his friend. He could hardly, therefore, imagine that Clothra's statement could be other than a mistake. But the old woman was most tenacious of the point, and most distinct in her remembrance of the words, and the accent of the speaker.

Scarcely had Clothra ended her communication, when an officer entered to announce the approach of the physician of the sept, Fighnin, with his three inseparable assistants. They were admitted, Fighnin advancing in front, while the three daltadhs, as they entered one by one, stept aside, and fell into line in a gloomy corner of the chamber.

"Well, sage Fighnin," said Elim, "what causes this unexpected visit?"

"If it be not matter of importance," answered Fighnin, "thou mayest even call it frivolous likewise. What I have to communicate I myself have witnessed, and my three assistants also can substantiate."

The three daltadhs, to whom he turned by way of appeal, bowed, with a simultaneous movement of assent, from the darksome shade inwhich they stood; which action they repeated, with great solemnity, at every appeal made by Fighnin, in the course of the following narrative:

"I, Fighnin," continued the physician, "wearied with my diurnal duties, was seated on the quiet green before my dwelling, in the sunset last evening, when a strange ceanuighe made his appearance from beneath the trees, seated on a hobbie, on which, with difficulty, he

preserved his seat. As he came near, the cause of his weakness was apparent. An arrow, bearing the feather of no bird that I have ever seen, was buried deep in the flesh beneath his shoulder. My three assistants can declare it. We assisted him from his horse, and conveyed him to our dwelling, where the weapon was removed, and where he now remains in process of recovery. To our enquiries he would answer little, but on this morning desired that we should communicate the circumstance to O'Haedha, and added a request, which I trust thou wilt excuse, in one disabled in body, and consequently not over sound in mind."

"Speak it, I pray you, Fighnin, without delay," said Elim.

"He had the face to desire that thou shouldst visit him," replied the physician; "a chimerical demand, which can be easily reversed

by conveying him hither between some of the kerne. The danger will not be very great, provided the men be careful and the litter easy. This is the whole amount of my communication, and if thou see reason to doubt of any of the particulars, my three assistants will declare if I have not spoken the truth."

"It is so," answered the three, in unison.

Elim immediately prepared to accompany the physician to his dwelling, while Clothra was re-conducted by Moyel to her cottage near the shore. On his arrival at the apartment of the wounded man, he had little difficulty in recognizing the ceanuighe whom he had overtaken in the Cloun na Galth, on his journey to Inismore, and from whom he had first received intelligence of the appearance of the Fionn Geinte on the coasts of Ulladh. After answering the enquiries which Elim made respecting

his present condition, the merchant asked, in his turn, if the Ithian or his people had lately suffered any depredation on their kine?

The chieftain replied in the negative.

"My motive for enquiring," said the merchant, "is this. From trading long in the territories of the south, I have become familiar to a nicety with the various septs and their possessions, and I am certain that I saw, only yester even, a number of the small kine of Rath-Aidan in the hands of an armed party, strangers to the sept."

Elim earnestly desired the particulars.

"I arrived," said the merchant, "late in the dusk of yesterday's twilight, on the crags which overlook a lonesome bay to the eastward of Ross Ailithri. The sound of voices in so solitary a place made me proceed with caution, and fastening my hobbie in a thicket, I ascended the

eminence with caution, in order to observe the cause of what had startled me. Five or six currachs, of a peculiar shape, lay close to shore, and a number of men, some in armour, and some attired in the dress of mountaineers, but of a sept with which I am unacquainted, were occupied in slaughtering the kine I have described, and loading the small craft with the dismembered carcasses. The mountaineers drew off, and left the shore before the boats put out to sea. Soon after, the armed mariners embarked, and I ventured from my place of secrecy. They had not gone so far from land but that I was perceived, and a flight of arrows reached me from the water. One only happened to reach its aim, and has, I fear, inflicted deeper injury than Fighnin will allow. Endeavour now to call to mind if any of thy kine were missing within the year."

After long recollection, the circumstance of

the fee which he had given to the strange Anstruth, recurred to the mind of Elim, and became instantly associated with the information given by Clothra. Both combined, excited a degree of suspicion which, indefinite as it was, seemed strongly warranted, and which was changed to certainty by the farther communications of the wounded ceanuighe.

The patient was attended by a nun, one of those cenobitical virgins of Inisfail, from amongst whose number Rome was continually selecting some of the brightest ornaments of its calendar. In these days, when our sensibilities are grown so fine, and our charity so cold, it might be hazardous even to describe what then was actually performed without reluctance. Let it be enough to say, that a work of mercy, similar to that which is applauded in the wife of Edward the Black Prince, and which, as exerted by a mother toward

a child, has afforded a subject for an accomplished foreign pen, was performed toward the wounded stranger by one of those holy maids, whose charity enabled them to triumph over the strongest repugnances of nature. In thus, however, affording relief to the festered wound of the ceanuighe, the ministering saint was enabled to discover that it had been inflicted with a poisoned weapon, and the turn which the disorder took, ere long, exemplified the truth of the announcement.

Being made aware of his condition, the ceanuighe exhibited the keenest distress of mind, and entreated the immediate presence of a confessor. His desire was complied with, and after having received the parting rites of his religion, he now again requested an interview with the Ithian chief. Once more, Fighnin, with many prefaces, announced this new desire of the wounded man to Elim, who at once repaired to his bedside.

"Hast thou yet," asked the patient, "called to mind if any plunder was at any time committed on thy kine?"

"The only time," replied O'Haedha, "at which they were diminished by plunder is long since past; and then full restitution was made by the chief of the marauders, Conraoi, the Ard-Draithe of the Hooded people."

The merchant, for a considerable time after Elim spoke those words, remained without reply, or even motion. At length, turning his face with an expression of the deepest earnestness on O'Haedha, he said, in a low voice:

"He whom thou esteemest the murderer of thy father, Conall?"

"The same," said Elim, in astonishment, "the same, although his deed is now forgotten in his cairn."

"Thou wrongest his ashes by the thought,"

said the merchant. " 'Tis not on him the blood of Conall rests."

In his transient intercourse with the Ard-Draithe, Elim had, as long since mentioned, frequently remarked the singular unconsciousness of any remembered injury to himself which had been manifested by Conraoi. This startling announcement of the wounded man seemed so much in harmony with his own observation, that he listened, with the most intense anxiety, for the disclosure which this introduction taught him to expect.

The ceanuighe had been in his youth a dependent in the Rath of Gormadark, the lonely dwelling of the thanist Baseg. By services rendered to his family and to himself, he had been attached to Baseg in a degree which the proud and selfish manners of the latter did not allow him often to experience. Previous to the wedding of Conall, recorded in our opening chapter,

he had for a considerable time resided at Rath-Aidan, in compliance with the wishes of the chief, who loved him with an affection that not even injury itself could shake. More than once in the course of their friendship, the life of Conall had been ineffectually aimed at, and the proofs that these attempts originated in the instigation of his thanist and declared successor, amounted almost to demonstration. The chieftain, however, who esteemed the bravery of Baseg, with an excess of confidence which often accompanies a generous nature, not only pardoned Baseg on his penitence, but did not take the slightest precautions to guard against a recurrence of such practises. His rashness brought upon him the natural consequences.

A certain moral timidity of character, which could be changed to obstinacy but not to firmness, was a weakness that distinguished Baseg.

This had for a considerable time prevented his avowing a secret passion he had entertained for Matha, the elder daughter of O'Driscol, the Canfinny of Cleir. While he deliberated, Conall, entirely ignorant of his views and hopes, defeated both by sueing, himself, in the same quarter, with success. With astonishment and rage, beyond what it is easy to express, the thanist heard him communicate in confidence to himself the prosperous reception he had met at Cleir, and the happiness which he expected to enjoy from so desirable an union. He had the cunning, however, to disguise feelings, the disclosure of which could not tend to their removal.

On the day which followed the return of Conall and his bride to Inbhersceine, the thanist arrived at Gormadark, where the ceanuighe, then scarcely entered on the age of manhood, was almost his sole attendant. For many months he seemed to

be wholly absorbed in gloomy thoughts, and even from his former confidant withheld the slightest intimation of his feelings. The ceanuighe had heard that Conall was threatened, at the wedding feast, by the Ard-Draithe of the Coom na Druid; but many months went by, and the menace was almost forgotten. Ere the year had ended, he observed that Baseg often left his home for days together, and on one occasion he brought with him, late at night, to Gormadark, a stranger, whom the thanist scarcely permitted the ceanuighe to behold even for an instant. The visitor remained till dawn; and during the night was heard at intervals to maintain a long debate with Baseg. From what could be gathered in broken sentences of their conversation, it appeared that his guest was urging Baseg to some undertaking in which the latter was unwilling to embark, and when they left the house together at dawn, the dissatis-

faction that appeared upon their countenances seemed to show that they had not yet arrived at any adjustment of the matter in dispute.

In a few days after, while the ceanuighe was standing, at noon, in the glen of Gormadark, at no great distance from the lonesome dwelling, and wondering at the protracted absence of the thanist, the latter appeared on horseback, gallopping, at a prodigious rate, in the direction of the desolate Rath. On approaching the ceanuighe, he commanded him instantly to follow him to a neighbouring height, where they found an archer, lying, as if in ambush, among the heath. They heard the sounds of an affray as they approached, and some shielings appeared on fire at a distance.

"Well, Eimhir," said the thanist, as he approached the archer, "canst thou see *him* amongst them yet?"

"He has not yet appeared," replied the latter.

Commanding the ceanuighe to remain beside the stranger, the thanist gallopped now, with an almost winged speed, in the direction of Rath-Aidan. By subsequent calculation, this seemed to be the time when Matha, standing on the ramparts, beheld him approaching at full speed, and sent him, unknowing what she did, to the assistance of his brother.

On returning to the place where he had left the archer and the ceanuighe, Baseg dismounted, with a bound, and committed his horse to the keeping of the latter, exclaiming, at the same instant, in a voice of the deepest agitation:

"Quick, Eimhir, quick! They say thou art an archer in a thousand—now, follow me, and prove it. He is in the Glen of Oaks."

They hurried together down a craggy steep,

leaving the ceanuighe to hold the thanist's horse. In a short time the latter beheld them hurrying up the opposite ascent, the summit of which, as he knew, overlooked the Glen of Oaks, in which he still could hear the din of combat. He could discern the two figures on the opposite summit, the archer seeming to wait the favourable moment to discharge his missile—often raising and often lowering the bended bow, while the thanist watched his aim, without a motion. At length the shaft was sped, and a loud cry of many voices from the distant glen seemed to announce his murderous success. Immediately both figures vanished from the height, and, shortly after, a horseman, the same who had spent a night at Gormadark, appeared gallopping from the glen towards the interior of the country. Before the return of Baseg, the great disaster of the day had reached the ears of the ceanuighe himself. All

knew, ere long, that Conall was no more, but few, like Baseg's horror-struck attendant, were aware to what hand, and to whose instigation, he owed his death wound.

It was the dark of eve, before the thanist returned to the spot where the ceanuighe awaited him, and from which the latter feared to move without his orders. Fearful of affording the slightest clue to a detection of the dreadful truth, the thanist had caused the arrow to be extracted from the frame of his dead kinsman, and, unobserved, concealed it underneath his mantle.

His crime consummated, his gloomy passion gratified at length, the miserable fratricide fled with the speed of guilt from the paradise which, by a single blow, he had turned into a waste of grief and fear. He had crossed the Glen of Oaks, he had passed the adjoining valley, he had

hurried up the lonesome steep of rock, he had gained the solitary spot where his horse awaited him, before one moment of connected thought had visited his brain. It was now night-fall, and the ceanuighe, to whose care he had entrusted the weary animal, wondered at the absence of mind manifested by his master. While he prepared the horse for the departure of the thanist, Baseg, hiding within the folds of his tunic the arrow and the bloody hand which held it, remained seated on a rock beside the horse, hiding his face from the arising moonlight, and brooding stilly over his own breast. The strangeness of the place, the hour, the silence, and the sudden rest from violent exertion, produced, as he afterwards confessed to the ceanuighe, a desolation in his mind, of which he never had before the faintest experience. It seemed for the time as if all had left him, even the fiends that tempted,

and the passions that had been their engines. A horrid feeling of abandonment sunk like a night-mare down upon his soul, and left his memory dreadfully distinct. It would be to share his agony to endeavour to describe or to contemplate it.

Suddenly, while the ceanuighe was busy with the horse, the thought occurred to him of the bloody arrow and the bloody hand. Dropping on his knees, he tore up the grassy mould with his fingers, buried the weapon in the earth, and kneaded the soil above it with his hands. Before he rose, he darted a wild glance on either side, and stooping with his face to the earth, said, in hurried whispers:

"There, there—lie there, O cursed instrument! Let no one ever look upon thee more. In pride, in horrid hate, I first directed, and now in blood, and gloom, and in despair, I here

resign thee, instrument of hell! Hark! peace! was that the Ard-Draithe's voice that spoke? He warned me to beware of this in vain!"

He continued for some time striving to cleanse his hands, by rubbing them with the broken earth, while he spoke unconsciously to himself. Fear, terrible remorse, and damp despair possessed him as he hurried from the place, and turned his horse's head in the direction of Gormadark. The animal sped along the mountain passes with a wild and terrified haste, as if his back were crossed by some unearthly rider. The scourge of mad Orestes, the intense and horrid agony of passion sated by unnatural violence, oppressed the breast of the fratricide with a smothering influence. That fellest image of an outraged conscience, the undying worm that burrows in the heart, already fixed its poisoned tooth in Baseg's. The running streams

seemed tinged with Conall's blood, the rustling trees seemed starting at the murderer's approach, the rushing wind seemed shrieking to all nature to beware of the false friend—the blood-stained Baseg. If he looked to heaven, the clouds seemed flying fast before his face, or gathering in gloom for his destruction; the earth, as he passed on, seemed glad to escape from under him. Whatever he heard, saw, smelled, or felt, as he sped onward, seemed to bear the hue, scent, sound, or touch of death and crime; for it surely brought to his senses some portion of the ghastly scene which he had just performed. The surface of the world seemed changed since Conall had been slain by Baseg, there seemed no part of universal nature unmoved by the shock of that accursed, vengeful blow.

"The murderer!" he muttered to himself—"the murderer, that dreadfnl epithet! that dread-

ful, dreadful word! Is it possible? Am I a murderer? Is it done indeed? Is it done? or have I only dreamed of it? Tell me, some spirit, something whisper me that I am dreaming still; that I am only plotting Conall's death; that 'tis not done; that I can yet stop short; that this is not his blood upon my hand; that I have not yet dealt that horrid stroke; that I am even as I was yesterday—not guiltier than yesterday! I now would give a thousand, thousand lives to be again even that accursed thing that I was yesterday! For every thing but this there was a remedy; I never took a step before in crime, however deep, that might not be retraced. Neglected duty might be paid with diligence; but there's no remedy, no recal for this! Not all the tears that sorrow ever shed, not all the sighs contrition ever breathed, not all the heart-aches, all the dagger-pains that conscience fixes

in the brain and breast, not all that man could act or suffer, can waken Conall now from his repose. The deed is done, the dreadful height is reached, the keystone of the bridge is passed that spanned the fiery gulf; the tangled clue can never more be freed; eternal death awaits me in the labyrinth. Oh, woe and horror! I am lost most miserably!"

Arrived at Gormadark, he hurried to his sleeping-room, and flung himself upon his bed of rushes. No peace, however, here awaited him. The fearful sense of ruin fast approaching, and wholly unavoidable, made him writhe and turn in anguish as he lay. The terror of the mariner, who, venturing too far within the influence of the dreadful maw of the northern maelstroom, first hears its fatal thunder gradually encreasing on his ear, then sees his canvas trembling on the yards, and feels, at length, his vessel,

rocked and powerless, hurried, circle after circle, into the destructive centre of the gulf, resembled but with a faint similitude, the tumultuous anguish that filled the soul of Baseg. A stern and barren remorse stole upon his mind, and made the flesh creep, even to his very extremities. It was no longer with him as in his former self-reproaching interviews with Conall, for now he could not shed a tear. A strange and dry anxiety of soul came over him, and the agonies of his spirit were felt in the very muscles of his frame. He would have given a world to be able to weep as he had done when pardoned by his brother; but a horrid dryness had parched up his nature, and the feeling of a barren and gloomy terror was all that remained to him. It seemed as if his very breast was withered up with the influence of that direst of passions to which the human heart is subject—blank and unprofitable re-

morse, unsoftened by repentance, unrelieved by hope.

The dreadful passion grew upon him as the night came down, and filled his nerves with suffering. A night of frightful dreams it was to him, and spectre-ridden slumbers. Sometimes his brother's shade seemed fixing its cold eyes on his, with one hand gathering the war cloak on his bosom, and the other pointing upward covertly, and as if by stealth. For many days he held no communion with any of the inmates of his own abode, farther than his absolute necessities required. The impossibility, however, of preserving his secret with safety to his reason, compelled him to make a confidant, and he revealed the whole to the ceanuighe. On two occasions, long since past, he had, he said, been guilty of abortive practises, having the same object as this which had now so fatally

succeeded; but the repeated generosity of Conall had produced so deep an impression on his mind, that he sincerely determined never again to give occasion for its exercise. In this resolution he had persevered until the unhappy occasion which preceded Conall's marriage, and which gave new fire to all his former passions. The incident of the quarrel which took place during the marriage feast, between the Druid chieftain and the bridegroom, suggested to him a new channel through which they might be gratified, with more security than before. He sought the friendship of the Ard-Draithe, and they exchanged a mutual confidence; the former, however, only supposing that Baseg aimed at the power of O'Haedha, and far from suspecting the lengths to which his unnatural hatred now desired to extend itself. The Druid was anxious immediately to march his troops to Inbhersceine,

and was astonished to observe that Baseg, who had been at first his warmest instigator, seemed now reluctant to proceed. The truth was, Baseg, secretly conscious of the nature of his own design, and of its atrocious motive, hung back, when all appeared to favour its completion; for he had to overcome the remorses of the fratricide, where Conraoi had only to contend with the mercies of the common foe, In the conversation which they had held at night at Gormadark, the thanist, who, though obstinate, to a ferocious degree, when once embarked in evil, yet wavered long ere good was quite relinquished, endeavoured to prevail on the Ard-Draithe to pursue the war without requiring his assistance or connivance. His proposal, however was rejected by the Druid; and with a degree of reproach that confirmed the thanist in the guilty course he medttated. He hired a dexterous

archer of the Coom, to ensure the issue of his own designs, and did not leave the valley until Conraoi and his troops had set out on their incursion. The rest was already known to the ceanuighe, who had been himself almost an eye-witness to the fall of the confiding Conall.

Scarcely had Baseg communicated these events to his dependent, when the Ard-Draithe appeared at their dwelling, for the first time since the night which he had spent in disputation with the thanist. The manner of the latter, on hearing him announced, was such as terrified the confidant. The poor wretch seemed almost unable at his approach to repress an outburst of delirious rage. By one of those revulsions of feeling to which weak minds are liable, he seemed disposed to treat the Ard-Draithe with the same abhorrence as if, in instigating him to undertake

the war, he had acted with the fullest knowledge of his secret motive.

These feelings did not diminish when the Ard-Draithe entered the apartment where the thanist sat. The deepest anguish, and a fury that almost touched the verge of lunacy, possessed the soul of this pitiable creature at the sight of the unconscious instigator of his crime. The torrent of his remorse burst forth at once, and turmoil and distraction rent his nature.

"Avoid my sight, accursed reptile!" he exclaimed, crossing his arms before his face, and bending down his head, as if in loathing. "Away, and let me never more be plagued with sight, or sound, or touch, of thee. Let seas, let mountains separate us, Conraoi! Return, and let thy native mountains hide thee! Be satisfied, for all has been accomplished."

He paused, and Conraoi, without changing

his position, remained gazing, in astonishment, upon him.

"Aye, it has reached that end," continued Baseg, with a somewhat altered tone. "Thy triumph now is fearfully complete. The end of blood is answered."

"The end of blood!" said Conraoi, in amazement.

"Didst thou not hear it then?" said Baseg, hastily; "I thought the island rung of it these ten days. Didst thou not hear what I had done to Conall?"

"*Thou* done to him?" exclaimed Conraoi, shrinking, and looking pale.

"Yes. What is this?" continued the wretched thanist, looking strangely on the attitude of surprize and fear which the Ard-Draithe had assumed. "Thou startest like a virgin at the tidings! Thou turnest aside, and lettest thy flesh

grow pale, as if the deed had horror even for thee! Thou daring hypocrite! dost thou presume to say that thou art one of the innocent wonderers?"

"Answer me, if thou canst, in moderate words," said Conraoi, still trembling anxiously. "Hast thou shed the blood of Conall, the Ithian chief?"

"He is dead, and by my means," said Baseg, shuddering.

"Unhappy wretch!" cried the Ard-Draithe, taking up the ball of wrath. "Comest thou with hands all reeking, after such a treason, to vent thy foul and ugly rage on me? Begone, blood-stained man, and rail at those who equal thee in thine enormity. *My* end, the end of blood? *My* triumph consummated? When did I ever hint so dire a treachery? When did I ever urge thee to a murder? These hands, 'tis true, are

far from spotless hands; but never, never have they yet been stained with blood, shed thus with the stab of secret murder."

The thanist, silent, stared ghastlily on the earth.

"Oh blind!" continued Conraoi! "Oh, murderous and blind! Our jeopardy was imminent already, but thou hast made our ruin almost certain. Haste now, and let us not consume the time, the precious purchase of security, in idiot, vain upbraidings. The death of Conall has raised a cry of vengeance, almost to the utmost boundaries of Leath Mogha, and disastrous will our undertaking be if not most promptly settled either by peace or triumph."

By an effort, violent, but necessary, Baseg now compelled himself to enter into a dispassionate arrangement of their affairs. It was finally decided that their connection should still

be kept a mystery; that Baseg should assert his claim to the title of O'Haedha, and then avert the gathering storm from the head of his ally. The failure of this scheme, owing to the promptitude of Matha, and the subsequent misfortunes of the Hooded People are already known.

It was after his numerous defeats, and his public apostacy to the Druid creed, that the miserable thanist formed the resolution of bidding farewell to the land which he had stained with his enormities. He communicated his intention to the young confidant, whose secrecy he insured by kindness shown to his friends and to himself, by gifts of wealth beyond what the latter ever expected to possess, and by reminding him of long accumulating debts of gratitude. They arrived together in Ross Ailithri, whence the thanist proposed to embark for Inismore, when a conversation accidentally started at the pub-

lic table of a beatach, respecting the approaching baptism of the infant Elim, suggested to him the last resource of endeavouring to possess himself of the person of his helpless rival. His dependent, who had now for the first time taken up the calling of ceanuighe (although we have, for the sake of distinction, given him that title throughout the preceding narrative), took care, by private information, opportunely given, to render his design abortive. He it was from whom, as the reader has long since been made aware, the mother of Elim received the warning at the time of her departure from the cathedral of Ross Ailithri.

The thanist, cunning as he was passionate, suspected, from the invariable discomfiture of his plans, and the evident difficulty with which the ceanuighe had been wrought upon to keep his guilt concealed, that he was indebted for his

ill-success to the unextinguished honesty of the latter. He made, therefore, one farther effort to accomplish his desire, without admitting the ceanuighe into his confidence; and, as we have already mentioned long before, almost achieved his end, by bribing a person to seek the cottage of Elim's foster parents, in the disguise of one of those merchants who traded in ger-falcons (a bird even at that time held in high estimation). After the failure of this last effort, the thanist prepared at once to put his design of voluntary exile into execution.

Before he embarked, he visited once more alone the scenes where Conall and himself had dwelt together. In his boyish years Baseg had been distinguished, not only by a degree of talent beyond the ordinary standard, but by a long continued and apparently fervent piety. It may, therefore, be imagined with how little ease of

mind he trod those scenes which, at every step, reminded him of early happiness and early virtue, with a conscience stained by crime, and a creed assumed for earthly interests. Standing on the summit of an eminence which overlooked the valley of Rath Aidan and the distant bay, he paused to contemplate the sunset scene in silence.

"Ye venomed thoughts!" he murmured, deep in anguish; "ye serpent fancies, breathing of hell and guilt, why did I ever heed your idiot guile? But no, it was not you, you are innocent—it was not you that stamped the burning brand upon my spirit. You never could have wounded, could have blinded me, if I had not myself supplied the means. 'Time was, you only moved my careless scorn, as now my deep disgust and fell abhorrence. It was my own false heart that wrought my ruin; if this be ruin, this wild gloomy laby-

rinth, in which my reason, hope, and all are lost. What now can tear it from my brain and bosom? what cure my poisoned heart? what help me to think simply as of old? It is in vain; in vain I writhe and turn! In vain I stretch my arms to look for peace—the sunny calm that shone upon my childhood. The smoke of hell conceals it from my view, and leaves me smothering with foreseen destruction! Ah, Baseg! is it come to this at last? Must I then yield? Are these despairing thoughts become my own? And is the way entirely closed behind me? And shall I feel no more those blessed influences that softened my young heart in happier days, and moulded it to penitence and virtue?"

The sound of mirthful music from the valley, for the moment, checked the train of these reflections. The cheerful sounds, proceeding, from that grove which once had veiled the seat of

Conall's power, struck on his ear as he was about descending to mingle in the scene of mirth. He shuddered at the deep familiar sound, and at the changes which it brought to his recollection. New torments fell upon his guilty spirit. Thoughts fierce as burning arrows pierced his soul, and he sat, gasping for air, upon the height, as if his sufferings would have stifled him. He gazed intently on the Rath and its environs, now darkening in the twilight, except upon the spot where he was standing, and which was lighted by the sun, just sinking far away in the waves of Inbhersceine. It was the spot where Conall had bestowed upon him that confidence for which he suffered so severely. A fit of thrilling and increasing anguish succeeded these remembrances and fears. The holy truths which he had dared to slight, the duties he had left unexecuted, the avenging law he had transgressed, the eternal covenant he

had renounced, seemed gathering in silent gloom above his head, and mustering for his ruin. The creeping torture grew upon his frame, he dashed himself against the earth in agony, as if he would, if possible, have hid himself for ever in its bosom. A maniac tumult seemed to rend his brain; he writhed; he shook with terror as he lay upon the crag. The faithless! the apostate! the false traitor! The coward recreant to his first allegiance! The dastard renegade to his first debt of gratitude! The outcast hypocrite! the thing of scorn and loathing to all bright and virtuous beings! The prey, and sport, and mock of all the fiends—the ingrate, and the fratricide.

Such were the feelings, or a faint resemblance to the feelings, which attended Baseg during his farewell visit to the scenes of his early life. On leaving Inisfail, he gradually became hardened to their impressions, and, except in dreams, or when

his nature was enfeebled by physical disease, he never displayed those dreadful symptoms of remorse, which at the first he had found so incontroulable. Still, even through the lapse of time which intervened between his banishment and his return, the horrid passion had not ceased to haunt him; and those who were accustomed to watch his hours of slumber and of sickness could tell, that the phantasma of a hurried scene of violence and passion continued to possess his memory.

The above, in the leading circumstances, was the disclosure made by the wounded ceanuighe to Elim, as he sat by his bedside. On being asked by the latter what ground he had for the caution which he gave him some months before (on the day after he had overtaken him in the Cloun na Galth), the ceanuighe replied, that he was aware that Baseg still existed in the neighbouring isle, and that he was far from having relinquished

all hope of re-establishing his right to the inheritance which he had forfeited. Exhausted by this long narration, the patient now requested that he might he left to his repose, and Elim returned to Rath-Aidan, in a state of mind to which, till then, he had been a stranger.

CHAPTER LXI.

More than a fortnight had now elapsed since Kenric left the Rath, and Elim's perplexity and alarm were increased in a high degree. The Northumbrian at length returned, but it was evident to all, as soon as he had reached Rath-Aidan, from his altered spirits, his haggard complexion, and his fitful manner, that something had occurred to agitate his mind to its foundation. In vain did he strive to meet the hospitable joy with which he was received; in vain did he strive to return with ease the greeting of his friends, and the

cordial delight of Aithne. The eye of Matha, kindly as its expression was, seemed to search his very soul, and he appeared to feel as if he were already a traitor to his friend in his own thoughts.

During the following day it became more evident that something had occurred to change his usual temper. In vain did he endeavour to sustain his usual part in conversation; and the efforts which he made seemed only to increase his subsequent depressions.

On the second day after his return, he accompanied Elim, in quality of steersman, on a trip to the little island in the bay, where the latter, as already mentioned, had erected a kind of Dun, as a place of refuge, in case of danger to the helpless inmates of the Rath. It was plain that the confidence which once united them, no longer existed in the mind of either. Both therefore

were reserved in their demeanour, and, with the exception of a few remarks of a general nature, the excursion passed in silence. The chief design on both sides, which was that of affording an opportunity for mutual explanation, was thus defeated, and they returned still more estranged than when they had set out.

Aithne, who was even more unacquainted than Elim with any cause for Kenric's strange demeanour, endeavoured at first to rally him out of his contemplative moods, so improperly indulged in the midst of their social recreations. She was the more disposed to use her efforts in restoring him to his self recollection, as it was observed that, towards her, his manner was even still more altered than to others.

"Kenric," she said, "the planets say that thou hast played them false. The Pleiads weep, and Orion growls indignantly at thy neglect.

What wonder dost thou brood upon, good Kenric? Why art thou altered? Thou dost not speak with half the freedom thou wast wont to use with us; and me thou sometimes even seemest to avoid."

"Do not disturb thyself with Kenric's follies, Aithne," said the Northumbrian, looking away from her.

"Why then," said Aithne, bending forward, with a look of serious and yet kind reproof, "why then art thou changed, good Kenric? Art thou unwell in health, or hast thou heard ill tidings from thy home in Inismore?"

"Neither, kind Aithne," Kenric answered; "neither one nor the other."

"I am very glad to hear it," replied the maiden, "for although I grieve to see thee sad without a cause, I had rather see thee so than know thou hadst one. Good Kenric, do not be

so melancholy. Walk not alone so much, nor think so deeply, or at least so sadly. My father—my dear father, used to say, that thought, like water, should be kept running to continue wholesome."

"Thy father spoke the truth," said Kenric, "and so did mine, at times," he added, to himself.

"Then, wherefore dost thou go so much alone?" said Aithne. "Resume thy mirth—resume thy cheerfulness. I would be grieved to see thee altered thus, for I know no one after Elim, and my almost parent, Matha, whom I should miss so much from Inbhersceine, for all thy noble scorn of vanity."

Kenric hastily looked round upon her, and then turned away his head, as if afraid to gaze long upon the bright and happy countenance from which this speech, so well intended, yet,

to him, so full of danger, unconsciously proceeded.

"Thou wilt thyself be altered, Aithne," said the Northumbrian, "when thou art the lady of Rath-Aidan."

"Except in being the lady of Rath-Aidan," answered Aithne, "I will be ever what thou seest me—the merrier, perhaps, for being happier."

Kenric was silent, but his demeanour did not mend. On the day following that of his excursion with Elim to the island, while he stood in a deserted chamber of the Rath, deliberating still upon the course he should adopt, the figured hanging which served for a door was put aside, and Aithne entered, with a countenance more anxious than Kenric had ever seen it.

"I have been longing to see thee alone, Kenric, for the purpose of endeavouring once more to learn in what we have offended thee?"

"Thou, Aithne! thou offend me!" exclaimed the Northumbrian, with a tone of mingled surprize and tenderness, "thou never didst, thou never couldst offend me. Of all the beings who have any influence over me, thou art the very last that could offend me. I am very weak and wayward in my mind, but not at all offended."

"I spoke not of myself," said Aithne, anxiously. "Thy friends, the people of the Rath, the very kerne, have all remarked thy change, and many an evil word it has brought on thee."

Kenric was silent for a time, and seemed, from an occasional shivering that shook his frame, like that of a person shrinking from an ice blast, to be making an effort to take some decided resolution.

"Aithne," he said, at length, in a voice which seemed to her the most mournful she had ever heard, "I am rather dull in spirits, for I am never now to see Rath-Aidan more."

Aithne looked stunned at this intelligence, and uttered an exclamation of surprise and grief.

"Not see Rath-Aidan any more!" she exclaimed. "What! Kenric, art thou leaving us for ever?"

The Northumbrian was unable to answer for some time, for he did not expect that Aithne would have felt so lively a sorrow at the news he told, and her tone of heartfelt grief increased the difficulty of his situation.

"It is little wonder," he said, at length, "that I should feel sad at going, Aithne, for I never spent so happy a time as I have done since my arrival, nor ever hope to do again."

"And wherefore leave us then?" said Aithne. "Thou art not returning to Northumberland?"

"Not yet, at least," replied the Anglo-Saxon.

"Where then ?" said Aithne, pressingly. "Why wouldst thou forsake us ? I know that we are simple and unlearned, but Elim is not so; and if thou findest no pleasure in our converse, the pleasure thou bestowest should keep thee with us."

She paused on a sudden, for Kenric's action startled her. He took a few hurried paces toward the entrance, paused for a long time, his face covered with his hand, and his cloak drawn tight around his person. He then slowly returned, and exposed to her view a countenance, that expressed in a fearful degree, by its mottled paleness and the disorder of the moistened hair, the ravages of internal conflict. He gazed upon Aithne, for a time, and strove to say something, but seemed incapable of articulating a sound, and at length hastened from her presence without speaking. Hurrying into the air, he sat down on the

hill side, inhaling the fresh breeze with a triumphant yet exhausted look, like that of the successful combatant in a manual contest.

THE END OF VOL. III.

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