

JOSEPH JACOBS

IRISH TALES



Чтение в оригинале (Каро)

Джозеф Джейкобс

**Irish Tales / Ирландские
сказки. Книга для чтения
на английском языке**

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В книгу вошли старинные ирландские сказки, собранные знаменитым английским фольклористом Джозефом Джейкобсом (1854–1916). Сказки, передававшиеся из уст в уста с XI века, порой забавные и лукавые, порой загадочные и волшебные. Их герои-кельты умные и глупые, добрые и злые, жадные и щедрые. В этих сказках слышны будущие европейские и русские сказания о Бременских музыкантах, Золушке, Гусях-Лебедях и Жар-птицах, а добро всегда побеждает зло.

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Джозеф Джейкобс
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Комментарии, словарь Е. Г. Тигонен

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Hudden and Dudden and Donald O'Neary

There was once upon a time two farmers, and their names were Hudden and Dudden. They had poultry in their yards, sheep on the uplands, and scores of cattle in the meadow-land alongside the river. But for all that they weren't happy. For just between their two farms there lived a poor man by the name of Donald O'Neary. He had a hovel over his head¹ and a strip of grass that was barely enough to keep his one cow, Daisy, from starving, and, though she did her best, it was but seldom that Donald got a drink of milk or a roll of butter from Daisy. You would think there was little here to make Hudden and Dudden jealous, but so it is, the more one has the more one wants, and Donald's neighbours lay awake of nights scheming how they might get hold of his little strip of grassland. Daisy, poor thing, they never thought of; she was just a bag of bones.

One day Hudden met Dudden, and they were soon grumbling as usual, and all to the tune of, 'If only we could get that vagabond Donald O'Neary out of the country.'

'Let's kill Daisy,' said Hudden at last; 'if that doesn't make him clear out, nothing will.'

No sooner said than agreed, and it wasn't dark before Hudden and Dudden crept up to the little shed where lay poor Daisy trying her best to chew the cud, though she hadn't had as much grass in the day as would cover your hand. And when Donald came to see if Daisy was all snug for the night, the poor beast had only time to lick his hand once before she died.

Well, Donald was a shrewd fellow, and downhearted though he was, began to think if he could get any good out of Daisy's death. He thought and he thought, and the next day you could have seen him trudging off early to the fair, Daisy's hide over his shoulder, every penny he had jingling in his pockets. Just before he got to the fair, he made several slits in the hide, put a penny in each slit, walked into the best inn of the town as bold as if it belonged to him, and, hanging the hide up to a nail in the wall, sat down.

'Some of your best whiskey,' says he to the landlord. But the landlord didn't like his looks. 'Is it fearing I won't pay you, you are?' says Donald. 'Why, I have a hide here that gives me all the money I want.' And with that he hit it a whack with his stick and out hopped a penny. The landlord opened his eyes, as you may fancy.

'What'll you take for that hide?'

'It's not for sale, my good man.'

'Will you take a gold piece?'

'It's not for sale, I tell you. Hasn't it kept me and mine for years?' and with that Donald hit the hide another whack and out jumped a second penny.

Well, the long and the short of it² was that Donald let the hide go, and, that very evening, who but he should walk up to Hudden's door?

'Good evening, Hudden. Will you lend me your best pair of scales?'

Hudden stared and Hudden scratched his head, but he lent the scales.

When Donald was safe at home, he pulled out his pocketful of bright gold and began to weigh each piece in the scales. But Hudden had put a lump of butter at the bottom, and so the last piece of gold stuck fast to the scales when he took them back to Hudden.

If Hudden had stared before, he stared ten times more now, and no sooner was Donald's back turned, than he was off as hard as he could pelt to Dudden's.

'Good evening, Dudden. That vagabond, bad luck to him –'

'You mean Donald O'Neary?'

'And who else should I mean? He's back here weighing out sackfuls of gold.'

¹ had a hovel over his head – (разг.) жил в сарае

² the long and the short of it – (устар.) короче говоря

'How do you know that?'

'Here are my scales that he borrowed, and here's a gold piece still sticking to them.'

Off they went together, and they came to Donald's door. Donald had finished making the last pile of ten gold pieces. And he couldn't finish because a piece had stuck to the scales.

In they walked without an 'If you please' or 'By your leave'³.

'Well, I never!⁴ That was all *they* could say.

'Good evening, Hudden; good-evening, Dudden. Ah! You thought you had played me a fine trick, but you never did me a better turn in all your lives. When I found poor Daisy dead, I thought to myself, 'Well, her hide may fetch something'; and it did. Hides are worth their weight in gold in the market just now.'

Hudden nudged Dudden, and Dudden winked at Hudden.

'Good evening, Donald O'Neary.'

'Good evening, kind friends.'

The next day there wasn't a cow or a calf that belonged to Hudden or Dudden but her hide was going to the fair in Hudden's biggest cart drawn by Dudden's strongest pair of horses.

When they came to the fair, each one took a hide over his arm, and there they were walking through the fair, bawling out at the top of their voices, 'Hides to sell! Hides to sell!'

Out came the tanner.

'How much for your hides, my good men?'

'Their weight in gold.'

'It's early in the day to come out of the tavern.' That was all the tanner said, and back he went to his yard.

'Hides to sell! Fine fresh hides to sell!'

Out came the cobbler.

'How much for your hides, my men?'

'Their weight in gold.'

'Is it making game of me you are! Take that for your pains,' and the cobbler dealt Hudden a blow that made him stagger.

Up the people came running from one end of the fair to the other. 'What's the matter? What's the matter?' cried they.

'Here are a couple of vagabonds selling hides at their weight in gold,' said the cobbler.

'Hold 'em fast; hold 'em fast!' bawled the innkeeper, who was the last to come up, he was so fat. 'I'll wager it's one of the rogues who tricked me out of thirty gold pieces yesterday for a wretched hide.'

It was more kicks than halfpence that Hudden and Dudden got before they were well on their way home again, and they didn't run the slower because all the dogs of the town were at their heels⁵.

Well, as you may fancy, if they loved Donald little before, they loved him less now.

'What's the matter, friends?' said he, as he saw them tearing along, their hats knocked in, and their coats torn off, and their faces black and blue. 'Is it fighting you've been? Or mayhap you met the police, in luck to them?'

'We'll police you, you vagabond. It's mighty smart you thought yourself, deluding us with your lying tales.'

'Who deluded you? Didn't you see the gold with your own two eyes?'

But it was no use talking. Pay for it he must, and should. There was a meal-sack handy, and into it Hudden and Dudden popped Donald O'Neary, tied him up tight, ran a pole through the knot,

³ without an 'If you please' or 'By your leave' – (*устар.*) не сказав ни «позвольте», ни «с вашего разрешения»

⁴ Well, I never! – (*воскл.*) Ну ничего себе!

⁵ were at their heels – (*разг.*) бежали за ними (чуть не хватали за пятки)

and off they started for the Brown Lake of the Bog, each with a pole-end on his shoulder, and Donald O'Neary between.

But the Brown Lake was far, the road was dusty, Hudden and Dudden were sore and weary, and parched with thirst. There was an inn by the roadside.

'Let's go in,' said Hudden; 'I'm dead beat⁶. It's heavy he is for the little he had to eat.'

If Hudden was willing, so was Dudden. As for Donald, you may be sure his leave wasn't asked, but he was lumped down at the inn door for all the world as if⁷ he had been a sack of potatoes.

'Sit still, you vagabond,' said Dudden; 'if we don't mind waiting, you needn't.'

Donald held his peace, but after a while he heard the glasses clink, and Hudden singing away at the top of his voice.

'I won't have her, I tell you; I won't have her!' said Donald. But nobody heeded what he said.

'I won't have her, I tell you; I won't have her!' said Donald, and this time he said it louder; but nobody heeded what he said.

'I won't have her, I tell you; I won't have her!' said Donald; and this time he said it as loud as he could.

'And who won't you have, may I be so bold as to ask?' said a farmer, who had just come up with a drove of cattle and was turning in for a glass.

'It's the king's daughter. They are bothering the life out of me to marry her.'

'You're the lucky fellow. I'd give something to be in your shoes.'

'Do you see that now! Wouldn't it be a fine thing for a farmer to be marrying a princess, all dressed in gold and jewels?'

'Jewels, do you say? Ah, now, couldn't you take me with you?'

'Well, you're an honest fellow, and as I don't care for the king's daughter, though she's as beautiful as the day, and is covered with jewels from top to toe, you shall have her. Just undo the cord, and let me out; they tied me up tight, as they knew I'd run away from her.'

Out crawled Donald, in crept the farmer.

'Now lie still, and don't mind the shaking; it's only rumbling over the palace steps you'll be. And maybe they'll abuse you for a vagabond, who won't have the king's daughter; but you needn't mind that. Ah! It's a deal I'm giving up for you, sure as it is that I don't care for the princess.'

'Take my cattle in exchange,' said the farmer; and you may guess it wasn't long before Donald was at their tails driving them homewards.

Out came Hudden and Dudden, and the one took one end of the pole, and the other the other.

'I'm thinking he's heavier,' said Hudden.

'Ah, never mind,' said Dudden; 'it's only a step now to the Brown Lake.'

'I'll have her now! I'll have her now!' bawled the farmer, from inside the sack.

'By my faith⁸, and you shall though,' said Hudden, and he laid his stick across the sack.

'I'll have her! I'll have her!' bawled the farmer, louder than ever.

'Well, here you are,' said Dudden, for they were now come to the Brown Lake, and, unslinging the sack, they pitched it plump into the lake.

'You'll not be playing your tricks on us any longer,' said Hudden.

'True for you,' said Dudden. 'Ah, Donald, my boy, it was an ill day when you borrowed my scales.'

Off they went, with a light step and an easy heart, but when they were near home, who should they see but Donald O'Neary, and all around him the cows were grazing, and the calves were kicking up their heels and butting their heads together.

⁶ **I'm dead beat** – (разг.) я совершенно выбился из сил

⁷ **for all the world as if** – (устар.) точно так, как если бы

⁸ **By my faith** – от лат. **bona fide**, по чести говоря; клянусь честью

‘Is it you, Donald?’ said Dudden. ‘Faith, you’ve been quicker than we have.’

‘True for you, Dudden, and let me thank you kindly; the turn was good, if the will was ill⁹. You’ll have heard, like me, that the Brown Lake leads to the Land of Promise. I always put it down as lies, but it is just as true as my word. Look at the cattle.’

Hudden stared, and Dudden gaped; but they couldn’t get over the cattle; fine fat cattle they were too.

‘It’s only the worst I could bring up with me,’ said Donald O’Neary; ‘the others were so fat, there was no driving them. Faith, too, it’s little wonder they didn’t care to leave, with grass as far as you could see, and as sweet and juicy as fresh butter.’

‘Ah, now, Donald, we haven’t always been friends,’ said Dudden, ‘but, as I was just saying, you were ever a decent lad, and you’ll show us the way, won’t you?’

‘I don’t see that I’m called upon to do that; there is a power more cattle down there. Why shouldn’t I have them all to myself?’

‘Faith, they may well say, the richer you get, the harder the heart. You always were a neighbourly lad, Donald. You wouldn’t wish to keep the luck all to yourself?’

‘True for you, Hudden, though ’tis a bad example you set me. But I’ll not be thinking of old times. There is plenty for all there, so come along with me.’

Off they trudged, with a light heart and an eager step. When they came to the Brown Lake, the sky was full of little white clouds, and, if the sky was full, the lake was as full.

‘Ah now! Look, there they are,’ cried Donald, as he pointed to the clouds in the lake.

‘Where? Where?’ cried Hudden and, ‘Don’t be greedy!’ cried Dudden, as he jumped his hardest to be up first with the fat cattle. But if he jumped first, Hudden wasn’t long behind.

They never came back. Maybe they got too fat, like the cattle. As for Donald O’Neary, he had cattle and sheep all his days to his heart’s content.

⁹ **the turn was good, if the will was ill** – ср. русск. посл. Не рой другому яму, сам в нее попадешь

The Story of Deirdre

There was a man in Ireland once who was called Malcolm Harper. The man was a right good man, and he had a goodly-share of this world's goods. He had a wife, but no family. What did Malcolm hear but that a soothsayer had come home to the place, and as the man was a right good man, he wished that the soothsayer might come near them. Whether it was that he was invited or that he came of himself, the soothsayer came to the house of Malcolm.

'Are you doing any soothsaying?' says Malcolm.

'Yes, I am doing a little. Are you in need of soothsaying?'

'Well, I do not mind taking soothsaying from you, if you had soothsaying for me, and you would be willing to do it.'

'Well, I will do soothsaying for you. What kind of soothsaying do you want?'

'Well, the soothsaying I wanted was that you would tell me my lot or what will happen to me, if you can give me knowledge of it.'

'Well, I am going out, and when I return, I will tell you.'

And the soothsayer went forth out of the house and he was not long outside when he returned.

'Well,' said the soothsayer, 'I saw in my second sight that it is on account of a daughter of yours that the greatest amount of blood shall be shed that has ever been shed in Erin since time and race began. And the three most famous heroes that ever were found will lose their heads on her account.'

After a time, a daughter was born to Malcolm; he did not allow a living being to come to his house, only himself and the nurse. He asked this woman, 'Will you yourself bring up the child to keep her in hiding far away where eye will not see a sight of her nor ear hear a word about her?'

The woman said she would, so Malcolm got three men, and he took them away to a large mountain, distant and far from reach without the knowledge or notice of anyone. He caused there a hillock, round and green, to be dug out of the middle, and the hole thus made to be covered carefully over so that a little company could dwell there together. This was done.

Deirdre and her foster-mother dwelt in the bothy mid the hills without the knowledge or the suspicion of any living person about them and without anything occurring, until Deirdre was sixteen years of age. Deirdre grew like the white sapling, straight and trim as the rash on the moss. She was the creature of fairest form, of loveliest aspect, and of gentlest nature that existed between earth and heaven in all Ireland – whatever colour of hue she had before, there was nobody that looked into her face but she would blush fiery red over it.

The woman that had charge of her, gave Deirdre every information and skill of which she herself had knowledge and skill. There was not a blade of grass growing from root, nor a bird singing in the wood, nor a star shining from heaven but Deirdre had a name for it. But one thing, she did not wish her to have either part or parley with any single living man of the rest of the world. But on a gloomy winter night, with black, scowling clouds, a hunter of game was wearily travelling the hills, and what happened but that he missed the trail of the hunt, and lost his course and companions. A drowsiness came upon the man as he wearily wandered over the hills, and he lay down by the side of the beautiful green knoll in which Deirdre lived, and he slept. The man was faint from hunger and wandering, and benumbed with cold, and a deep sleep fell upon him. When he lay down beside the green hill where Deirdre was, a troubled dream came to the man, and he thought that he enjoyed the warmth of a fairy broch, the fairies being inside playing music. The hunter shouted out in his dream, if there was anyone in the broch, to let him in for the Holy One's sake¹⁰. Deirdre heard the voice and said to her foster mother, 'O foster-mother, what cry is that?'

¹⁰ for the Holy One's sake – (устар.) ради Бога

‘It is nothing at all, Deirdre – merely the birds of the air astray and seeking each other. But let them go past to the bosky glade. There is no shelter or house for them here.’

‘Oh, foster-mother, the bird asked to get inside for the sake of the God of the Elements, and you yourself tell me that anything that is asked in His name we ought to do. If you will not allow the bird that is being benumbed with cold, and done to death with hunger, to be let in, I do not think much of your language or your faith. But since I give credence to your language and to your faith, which you taught me, I will myself let in the bird.’ And Deirdre arose and drew the bolt from the leaf of the door, and she let in the hunter. She placed a seat in the place for sitting, food in the place for eating, and drink in the place for drinking for the man who came to the house.

‘Oh, for this life and raiment, you man that came in, keep restraint on your tongue¹¹!’ said the old woman. ‘It is not a great thing for you to keep your mouth shut and your tongue quiet when you get a home and shelter of a hearth on a gloomy winter’s night.’

‘Well,’ said the hunter, ‘I may do that – keep my mouth shut and my tongue quiet, since I came to the house and received hospitality from you; but by the hand of thy father and grandfather, and by your own two hands, if some other of the people of the world saw this beauteous creature you have here hid away, they would not long leave her with you, I swear.’

‘What men are these you refer to?’ said Deirdre.

‘Well, I will tell you, young woman,’ said the hunter. ‘They art Naois, son of Uisnech, and Allen and Arden his two brothers.’

‘What like are these men when seen, if we were to see them?’ said Deirdre.

‘Why, the aspect and form of the men when seen are these,’ said the hunter. ‘They have the colour of the raven on their hair, their skin like swan on the wave in whiteness, and their cheeks as the blood of the brindled red calf, and their speed and their leap are those of the salmon of the torrent and the deer of the grey mountainside. And Naois is head and shoulders over the rest of the people of Erin.’

‘However they are,’ said the nurse, ‘be you off from here and take another road. And, king of Light and Sun! In good sooth and certainty, little are my thanks for yourself or for her that let you in!’

The hunter went away, and went straight to the palace of King Connachar. He sent word into the king that he wished to speak to him if he pleased. The king answered the message and came out to speak to the man.

‘What is the reason of your journey?’ said the king to the hunter.

‘I have only to tell you, O king,’ said the hunter, ‘that I saw the fairest creature that ever was born in Erin, and I came to tell you of it.’

‘Who is this beauty and where is she to be seen, when she was not seen before till you saw her, if you did see her?’

‘Well, I did see her,’ said the hunter. ‘But, if I did, no man else can see her unless he get directions from me as to where she is dwelling.’

‘And will you direct me to where she dwells? And the reward of your directing me will be as good as the reward of your message,’ said the king.

‘Well, I will direct you, O king, although it is likely that this will not be what they want,’ said the hunter.

Connachar, king of Ulster, sent for his nearest kinsmen, and he told them of his intent. Though early rose the song of the birds mid the rocky caves and the music of the birds in the grove, earlier than that did Connachar, king of Ulster, arise, with his little troop of dear friends, in the delightful twilight of the fresh and gentle May; the dew was heavy on each bush and flower and stem, as they went to bring Deirdre forth from the green knoll where she stayed. Many a youth was there who had

¹¹ **keep restraint on your tongue** – (устар.) держите язык за зубами

a lithe leaping and lissom step when they started whose step was faint, failing, and faltering when they reached the bothy on account of the length of the way and roughness of the road.

‘Yonder, now, down in the bottom of the glen is the bothy where the woman dwells, but I will not go nearer than this to the old woman,’ said the hunter.

Connachar with his band of kinsfolk went down to the green knoll where Deirdre dwelt and he knocked at the door of the bothy. The nurse replied, ‘No less than a king’s command and a king’s army could put me out of my bothy tonight. And I should be obliged to you, were you to tell who it is that wants me to open my bothy door.’

‘It is I, Connachar, king of Ulster.’ When the poor woman heard who was at the door, she rose with haste and let in the king and all that could get in of his retinue.

When the king saw the woman that was before him that he had been in quest of, he thought he never saw in the course of the day nor in the dream of night a creature so fair as Deirdre and he gave his full heart’s weight of love to her. Deirdre was raised on the topmost of the heroes’ shoulders and she and her foster-mother were brought to the court of King Connachar of Ulster.

With the love that Connachar had for her, he wanted to marry Deirdre right off there and then¹², will she nill she marry him. But she said to him, ‘I would be obliged to you if you will give me the respite of a year and a day.’

He said, ‘I will grant you that, hard though it is, if you will give me your unfailing promise that you will marry me at the year’s end.’ And she gave the promise. Connachar got for her a woman-teacher and merry modest maidens fair that would lie down and rise with her, that would play and speak with her. Deirdre was clever in maidenly duties and wifely understanding, and Connachar thought he never saw with bodily eye a creature that pleased him more.

Deirdre and her women companions were one day out on the hillock behind the house enjoying the scene, and drinking in the sun’s heat. What did they see coming but three men a-journeying¹³.

Deirdre was looking at the men that were coming, and wondering at them. When the men neared them, Deirdre remembered the language of the huntsman, and she said to herself that these were the three sons of Uisnech, and that this was Naois, he having what was above the bend of the two shoulders above the men of Erin all. The three brothers went past without taking any notice of them, without even glancing at the young girls on the hillock. What happened but that love for Naois struck the heart of Deirdre, so that she could not but follow after him. She girded up her raiment and went after the men that went past the base of the knoll, leaving her women attendants there. Allen and Arden had heard of the woman that Connachar, king of Ulster, had with him, and they thought that, if Naois, their brother, saw her, he would have her himself, more especially as she was not married to the king. They perceived the woman coming, and called on one another to hasten their step as they had a long distance to travel, and the dusk of night was coming on. They did so. She cried, ‘Naois, son of Uisnech, will you leave me?’

‘What piercing, shrill cry is that – the most melodious my ear ever heard, and the shrillest that ever struck my heart of all the cries I ever heard?’

‘It is anything else but the wail of the wave-swans of Connachar,’ said his brothers.

‘No! Yonder is a woman’s cry of distress,’ said Naois, and he swore he would not go farther until he saw from whom the cry came, and Naois turned back. Naois and Deirdre met, and Deirdre kissed Naois three times, and a kiss each to his brothers. With the confusion that she was in, Deirdre went into a crimson blaze of fire, and her colour came and went as rapidly as the movement of the aspen by the stream side. Naois thought he never saw a fairer creature, and Naois gave Deirdre the love that he never gave to thing, to vision, or to creature but to herself.

¹² **there and then** – (разг.) тотчас же

¹³ **three men a-journeying** – (устар.) три путешественника

Then Naois placed Deirdre on the topmost height of his shoulder, and told his brothers to keep up their pace¹⁴, and they kept up their pace. Naois thought that it would not be well for him to remain in Erin on account of the way in which Connachar, king of Ulster, his uncle's son, had gone against him because of the woman, though he had not married her; and he turned back to Alba, that is, Scotland. He reached the side of Loch Ness and made his habitation there. He could kill the salmon of the torrent from out his own door, and the deer of the grey gorge from out his window. Naois and Deirdre and Allen and Arden dwelt in a tower, and they were happy so long a time as they were there.

By this time the end of the period came at which Deirdre had to marry Connachar, king of Ulster. Connachar made up his mind to take Deirdre away by the sword whether she was married to Naois or not. So he prepared a great and gleeful feast. He sent word far and wide through Erin all to his kinspeople to come to the feast. Connachar thought to himself that Naois would not come though he should bid him; and the scheme that arose in his mind was to send for his father's brother, Ferchar Mae Ro, and to send him on an embassy to Naois. He did so; and Connachar said to Ferchar, 'Tell Naois, son of Uisnech, that I am setting forth a great and gleeful feast to my friends and kinspeople throughout the wide extent of Erin all, and that I shall not have rest by day nor sleep by night if he and Allen and Arden be not partakers of the feast.'

Ferchar Mae Ro and his three sons went on their journey, and reached the tower where Naois was dwelling by the side of Loch Etive. The sons of Uisnech gave a cordial kindly welcome to Ferchar Mae Ro and his three sons, and asked of him the news of Erin.

'The best news that I have for you,' said the hardy hero, 'is that Connachar, king of Ulster, is setting forth a great sumptuous feast to his friends and kinspeople throughout the wide extent of Erin all, and he has vowed by the earth beneath him, by the high heaven above him, and by the sun that wends to the west, that he will have no rest by day nor sleep by night if the sons of Uisnech, the sons of his own father's brother, will not come back to the land of their home and the soil of their nativity, and to the feast likewise, and he has sent us on embassy to invite you.'

'We will go with you,' said Naois.

'We will,' said his brothers.

But Deirdre did not wish to go with Ferchar Mae Ro, and she tried every prayer to turn Naois from going with him – she said, 'I saw a vision, Naois, and do you interpret it to me,' said Deirdre – then she sang:

'O Naois, son of Uisnech, hear
What was shown in a dream to me.
'There came three white doves out of the south
Flying over the sea,
'And drops of honey were in their mouth
From the hive of the honeybee.
'O Naois, son of Uisnech, hear,
What was shown in a dream to me.
'I saw three grey hawks out of the south
Come flying over the sea,
And the red red drops they bare in their mouth
They were dearer than life to me.'

Said Naois:

'It is nought but the fear of woman's heart,

¹⁴ to keep up their pace – (устар.) не отставать

And a dream of the night, Deirdre.

The day that Connachar sent the invitation to his feast will be unlucky for us if we don't go, O Deirdre.'

'You will go there,' said Ferchar Mae Ro; 'and if Connachar show kindness to you, show ye kindness to him; and if he will display wrath towards you, display ye wrath towards him, and I and my three sons will be with you.'

'We will,' said Daring Drop.

'We will,' said Hardy Holly.

'We will,' said Fiallan the Fair.

'I have three sons, and they are three heroes, and in any harm or danger that may befall you, they will be with you, and I myself will be along with them.' And Ferchar Mae Ro gave his vow and his word in presence of his arms that, in any harm or danger that came in the way of the sons of Uisnech, he and his three sons would not leave head on live body in Erin, despite sword or helmet, spear or shield, blade or mail, be they ever so good.

Deirdre was unwilling to leave Alba, but she went with Naois. Deirdre wept tears in showers and she sang:

'Dear is the land, the land over there,
Alba full of woods and lakes;
Bitter to my heart is leaving thee,
But I go away with Naois.'

Ferchar Mae Ro did not stop till he got the sons of Uisnech away with him, despite the suspicion of Deirdre.

The coracle was put to sea,
The sail was hoisted to it;
And the second morrow they arrived
On the white shores of Erin.

As soon as the sons of Uisnech landed in Erin, Ferchar Mae Ro sent word to Connachar, king of Ulster, that the men whom he wanted were come, and let him now show kindness to them.

'Well,' said Connachar, 'I did not expect that the sons of Uisnech would come, though I sent for them, and I am not quite ready to receive them. But there is a house down yonder where I keep strangers, and let them go down to it today, and my house will be ready before them tomorrow.'

But he that was up in the palace felt it long that he was not getting word as to how matters were going on for those down in the house of the strangers.

'Go you, Gelban Grednach, son of Lochlin's king, go you down and bring me information as to whether her former hue and complexion are on Deirdre. If they be, I will take her out with edge of blade and point of sword, and if not, let Naois, son of Uisnech, have her for himself,' said Connachar.

Gelban, the cheering and charming son of Lochlin's king, went down to the place of the strangers, where the sons of Uisnech and Deirdre were staying. He looked in through the bicker-hole on the floor-leaf. Now she that he gazed upon used to go into a crimson blaze of blushes when anyone looked at her. Naois looked at Deirdre and knew that someone was looking at her from the back of the door-leaf. He seized one of the dice on the table before him and fired it through the bicker-hole, and knocked the eye out of Gelban Grednach the cheerful and charming, right through the back of his head. Gelban returned back to the palace of King Connachar.

‘You were cheerful, charming, going away, but you are cheerless, charmless, returning. What has happened to you, Gelban? But have you seen her, and are Deirdre’s hue and complexion as before?’ said Con-nachar.

‘Well, I have seen Deirdre, and I saw her also truly, and while I was looking at her through the bicker-hole on the door, Naois, son of Uisnech, knocked out my eye with one of the dice in his hand. But of a truth and verity¹⁵, although he put out even my eye, it were my desire still to remain looking at her with the other eye, were it not for the hurry you told me to be in,’ said Gelban.

‘That is true,’ said Connachar. ‘Let three hundred brave heroes go down to the abode of the strangers, and let them bring hither to me Deirdre, and kill the rest.’

Connachar ordered three hundred active heroes to go down to the abode of the strangers and to take Deirdre up with them and kill the rest.

‘The pursuit is coming,’ said Deirdre.

‘Yes, but I will myself go out and stop the pursuit,’ said Naois.

‘It is not you, but we that will go,’ said Daring Drop, and Hardy Holly and Fiallan the Fair; ‘it is to us that our father entrusted your defence from harm and danger when he himself left for home.’ And the gallant youths, full noble, full manly, full handsome, with beauteous brown locks, went forth girt with battle arms fit for fierce fight and clothed with combat dress for fierce contest fit, which was burnished, bright, brilliant, bladed, blazing, on which were many pictures of beasts and birds and creeping things, lions and lithe-limbed tigers, brown eagle and harrying hawk and adder fierce; and the young heroes laid low¹⁶ three-thirds of the company.

Connachar came out in haste and cried with wrath, ‘Who is there on the floor of fight, slaughtering my men?’

‘We, the three sons of Ferchar Mae Ro.’

‘Well,’ said the king, ‘I will give a free bridge to your grandfather, a free bridge to your father, and a free bridge each to you three brothers, if you come over to my side tonight.’

‘Well, Connachar, we will not accept that offer from you nor thank you for it. Greater by far do we prefer to go home to our father and tell the deeds of heroism we have done, than accept anything on these terms from you. Naois, son of Uisnech, and Allen and Arden are as nearly related to yourself as they are to us, though you are so keen to shed their blood, and you would shed our blood also, Connachar.’ And the noble, manly, handsome youths with beauteous, brown locks returned inside. ‘We are now,’ said they, ‘going home to tell our father that you are now safe from the hands of the king.’ And the youths all fresh and tall and lithe and beautiful, went home to their father to tell that the sons of Uisnech were safe. This happened at the parting of the day and night¹⁷ in the morning twilight time, and Naois said they must go away, leave that house, and return to Alba.

Naois and Deirdre, Allan and Arden started to return to Alba. Word came to the king that the company he was in pursuit of were gone. The king then sent for Duanan Gacha Druid, the best magician he had, and he spoke to him as follows. ‘Much wealth have I expended on you, Duanan Gacha Druid, to give schooling and learning and magic mystery to you, if these people get away from me today without care, without consideration or regard for me, without chance of overtaking them, and without power to stop them.’

‘Well, I will stop them,’ said the magician, ‘until the company you send in pursuit return.’ And the magician placed a wood before them through which no man could go, but the sons of Uisnech marched through the wood without halt or hesitation, and Deirdre held on to Naois’s hand.

¹⁵ **But of a truth and verity** – (устар.) Но скажу честно 27

¹⁶ **laid low** – (устар.) убили

¹⁷ **at the parting of the day and night** – (устар.) под утро

‘What is the good of that? That will not do yet,’ said Connachar, ‘they are off without bending of their feet or stopping of their step, without heed or respect to me, and I am without power to keep up to them or opportunity to turn them back this night.’

‘I will try another plan on them,’ said the druid; and he placed before them a grey sea instead of a green plain. The three heroes stripped and tied their clothes behind their heads, and Naois placed Deirdre on the top of his shoulder.

They stretched their sides to the stream,
And sea and land were to them the same,
The rough grey ocean was the same
As meadow-land green and plain.

‘Though that be good, O Duanan, it will not make the heroes return,’ said Connachar. ‘They are gone without regard for me, and without honour to me, and without power on my part to pursue them or to force them to return this night.’

‘We shall try another method on them, since yon one did not stop them,’ said the druid. And the druid froze the grey ridged sea into hard rocky knobs, the sharpness of sword being on the one edge and the poison power of adders on the other. Then Arden cried that he was getting tired, and nearly giving over.

‘Come you, Arden, and sit on my right shoulder,’ said Naois. Arden came and sat on Naois’s shoulder.

Arden was long in this posture when he died; but though he was dead Naois would not let him go. Allen then cried out that he was getting faint and nigh-well giving up¹⁸. When Naois heard his prayer, he gave forth the piercing sigh of death, and asked Allen to lay hold of him and he would bring him to land. Allen was not long when the weakness of death came on him and his hold failed. Naois looked around, and when he saw his two well-beloved brothers dead, he cared not whether he lived or died, and he gave forth the bitter sigh of death, and his heart burst.

‘They are gone,’ said Duanan Gacha Druid to the king, ‘and I have done what you desired me. The sons of Uisnech are dead and they will trouble you no more; and you have your wife hale and whole to yourself.’

‘Blessings for that upon you and may the good results accrue to me, Duanan. I count it no loss what I spent in the schooling and teaching of you. Now dry up the flood, and let me see if I can behold Deirdre,’ said Connachar.

And Duanan Gacha Druid dried up the flood from the plain and the three sons of Uisnech were lying together dead, without breath of life, side by side on the green meadow plain and Deirdre bending above showering down her tears.

Then Deirdre said this lament. ‘Fair one, loved one, flower of beauty; beloved upright and strong; beloved noble and modest warrior. Fair one, blue-eyed, beloved of thy wife; lovely to me at the trysting-place came thy clear voice through the woods of Ireland. I cannot eat or smile henceforth. Break not today, my heart: soon enough shall lie within my grave. Strong are the waves of sorrow, but stronger is sorrow’s self, Connachar.’

The people then gathered round the heroes’ bodies and asked Connachar what was to be done with the bodies. The order that he gave was that they should dig a pit and put the three brothers in it side by side.

Deirdre kept sitting on the brink of the grave, constantly asking the grave-diggers to dig the pit wide and free. When the bodies of the brothers were put in the grave, Deirdre said: ‘Come over hither, Naois, my love, Let Arden close to Allen lie;

¹⁸ **nigh-well giving up** – (*устар.*) почти погиб; на грани смерти

If the dead had any sense to feel, Ye would have made a place for Deirdre.'

The men did as she told them. She jumped into the grave and lay down by Naois, and she was dead by his side.

The king ordered the body to be raised from out the grave and to be buried on the other side of the loch. It was done as the king bade, and the pit closed. Thereupon a fir shoot grew out of the grave of Deirdre and a fir shoot from the grave of Naois, and the two shoots united in a knot above the loch. The king ordered the shoots to be cut down, and this was done twice, until, at the third time, the wife whom the king had married caused him to stop this work of evil and his vengeance on the remains of the dead.

King O'Toole and His Goose

Och, I thought all the world, far and near, had heerd o' King O'Toole – well, well, but the darkness of mankind is untellible! Well, sir, you must know, as you didn't hear it afore, that there was a king, called King O'Toole, who was a fine old king in the old ancient times, long ago; and it was he that owned the churches in the early days. The king, you see, was the right sort; he was the real boy, and loved sport as he loved his life, and hunting in particular; and from the rising o' the sun, up he got, and away he went over the mountains after the deer; and fine times they were.

Well, it was all mighty good, as long as the king had his health; but, you see, in course of time the king grew old, by *raison*¹⁹ he was stiff in his limbs, and when he got stricken in years, his heart failed him, and he was lost entirely for want o' diversion, because he couldn't go a-hunting no longer; and, by dad, the poor king was obliged at last to get a goose to divert him. Oh, you may laugh, if you like, but it's truth I'm telling you; and the way the goose diverted him was this-away: You see, the goose used to swim across the lake, and go diving for trout, and catch fish on a Friday for the king, and flew every other day round about the lake, diverting the poor king. All went on mighty well until, by dad, the goose got stricken in years like her master, and couldn't divert him no longer, and then it was that the poor king was lost entirely. The king was walkin' one mornin' by the edge of the lake, lamentin' his cruel fate²⁰, and thinking of drowning himself, that could get no diversion in life, when all of a sudden, turning round the corner, who should he meet but a mighty decent young man coming up to him.

'God save you,' says the king to the young man.

'God save you kindly, King O'Toole,' says the young man.

'True for you,' says the king. 'I am King O'Toole,' says he, 'prince and plennypennytinchery of these parts,' says he; 'but how came ye to know that?' says he.

'Oh, never mind,' says St. Kavin.

You see it was St. Kavin, sure enough – the saint himself in disguise, and nobody else. 'Oh, never mind,' says he, 'I know more than that. May I make bold to ask how is your goose, King O'Toole?' says he.

'Blur-an-agers, how came ye to know about my goose?' says the king.

'Oh, no matter; I was given to understand it,' says St. Kavin.

After some more talk the king says, 'What are you?'

'I'm an honest man,' says St. Kavin.

'Well, honest man,' says the king, 'and how is it you make your money so aisy?'

'By makin' old things as good as new,' says St. Ka-vin.

'Is it a tinker you are?' says the king.

'No,' says the saint; 'I'm no tinker by trade, King O'Toole; I've a better trade than a tinker,' says he. 'What would you say,' says he, 'if I made your old goose as good as new?'

My dear, at the word of making his goose as good as new, you'd think the poor old king's eyes were ready to jump out of his head. With that the king whistled, and down came the poor goose, just like a hound, waddling up to the poor cripple, her master, and as like him as two peas. The minute the saint clapped his eyes on the goose, 'I'll do the job for you,' says he, 'King O'Toole.'

'By *Jaminee*?' says King O'Toole. 'If you do, I'll say you're the cleverest fellow in the seven parishes.'

¹⁹ *by raison* – (устар.) по этой причине

²⁰ *lamentin' his cruel fate* – (устар.) оплакивая свою жестокую судьбу

‘Oh, by dad,’ says St. Kevin, ‘you must say more nor that – my horn’s not so soft all out,’ says he, ‘as to repair your old goose for nothing; what’ll you gi’ me if I do the job for you? – that’s the chat,’ says St. Kevin.

‘I’ll give you whatever you ask,’ says the king; ‘isn’t that fair?’

‘Divil a fairer,’ says the saint; ‘That’s the way to do business. Now,’ says he, ‘this is the bargain I’ll make with you, King O’Toole: will you gi’ me all the ground the goose flies over, the first offer, after I make her as good as new?’

‘I will,’ says the king.

‘You won’t go back o’ your word?’ says St. Kevin. ‘Honour bright!’ says King O’Toole, holding out his fist.

‘Honour bright!’ says St. Kevin, back agin, ‘it’s a bargain. Come here!’ says he to the poor old goose, ‘come here, you unfortunate ould cripple, and it’s I that’ll make you the sporting bird.’ With that, my dear, he took up the goose by the two wings – ‘Criss o’ my cross an you,’ says he, markin’ her to grace with the blessed sign at the same minute – and throwing her up in the air. ‘Whew,’ says he, jist givin’ her a blast to help her; and with that, my jewel, she took to her heels²¹, flyin’ like one o’ the eagles themselves, and cutting as many capers as a swallow before a shower of rain.

Well, my dear, it was a beautiful sight to see the king standing with his mouth open, looking at his poor old goose flying as light as a lark, and better than ever she was: and when she lit at his feet, patted her on the head, and ‘*Ma vourneen*,’ says he, ‘but you are the *darlint* o’ the world.’

‘And what do you say to me,’ says St. Kevin, ‘for making her the like?’

‘By Jabers,’ says the king, ‘I say nothing beats the art o’ man, barring the bees.’

‘And do you say no more nor that?’ says St. Kevin.

‘And that I’m beholden to you,’ says the king.

‘But will you gi’e all the ground the goose flew over?’ says St. Kevin.

‘I will,’ says King O’Toole, ‘and you’re welcome to it,’ says he. ‘Though it’s the last acre I have to give.’

‘But you’ll keep your word true?’ says the saint.

‘As true as the sun,’ says the king.

‘It’s well for you, King O’Toole, that you said that word,’ says he; ‘for if you didn’t say that word, the devil the bit o’ your goose would ever fly agin.’

When the king was as good as his word, St. Kevin was pleased with him, and then it was that he made himself known to the king. ‘And,’ says he, ‘King O’Toole, you’re a decent man, for I only came here to try you. You don’t know me,’ says he, ‘because I’m disguised.’

‘Musha! Then,’ says the king, ‘Who are you?’

‘I’m St. Kevin,’ said the saint, blessing himself.

‘Oh, queen of heaven!’ says the king, making the sign of the cross between his eyes, and falling down on his knees before the saint. ‘Is it the great St. Kevin,’ says he, ‘that I’ve been discoursing all this time without knowing it,’ says he, ‘all as one as if he was a lump of a *gossoon*? – and so you’re a saint?’ says the king.

‘I am,’ says St. Kevin.

‘By Jabers, I thought I was only talking to a dacent boy,’ says the king.

‘Well, you know the difference now,’ says the saint. ‘I’m St. Kevin,’ says he, ‘the greatest of all the saints.’

And so the king had his goose as good as new, to divert him as long as he lived and the saint supported him after he came into his property, as I told you, until the day of his death – and that was soon after; for the poor goose thought he was catching a trout one Friday; but, my jewel, it was a mistake he made – and instead of a trout, it was a thieving horse-eel; and instead of the goose killing

²¹ **took to her heels** – (разг.) пустилась наутек (улизнула, удрала)

a trout for the king's supper – by dad, the eel killed the king's goose – and small blame to him²²; but he didn't ate her, because he darn't ate what St. Kavin had laid his blessed hands on.

²² **and small blame to him** – (разг.) и его нельзя за это винить

Jack and His Comrades

Once there was a poor widow, as often there has been, and she had one son. A very scarce summer²³ came, and they didn't know how they'd live till the new potatoes would be fit for eating. So Jack said to his mother one evening, 'Mother, bake my cake, and kill my hen, till I go seek my fortune; and if I meet it, never fear but I'll soon be back to share it with you.'

So she did as he asked her, and he set out at break of day on his journey. His mother came along with him to the yard gate, and says she, 'Jack, which would you rather have, half the cake and half the hen with my blessing, or the whole of 'em with my curse?'

'O Musha, mother,' says Jack, 'why do you ax me that question? Sure you know I wouldn't have your curse and Damer's estate along with it.'

'Well, then, Jack,' says she, 'here's the whole lot of 'em, with my thousand blessings along with them.' So she stood on the yard fence and blessed him as far as her eyes could see him.

Well, he went along and along till he was tired, and ne'er a farmer's house he went into wanted a boy. At last his road led by the side of a bog, and there was a poor ass up to his shoulders near a big bunch of grass he was striving to come at.

'Ah, then, Jack asthore,' says he, 'help me out or I'll be drowned.'

'Never say't twice²⁴,' says Jack, and he pitched in big stones and sods into the slob, till the ass got good ground under him.

'Thank you, Jack,' says he, when he was out on the hard road; 'I'll do as much for you another time. Where are you going?'

'Faith, I'm going to seek my fortune till harvest comes in, God bless it!'

'And if you like,' says the ass, 'I'll go along with you; who knows what luck we may have!'

'With all my heart, it's getting late, let us be jogging.'

Well, they were going through a village, and a whole army of gossoons were hunting a poor dog with a kettle tied to his tail. He ran up to Jack for protection, and the ass let such a roar out of him, that the little thieves took to their heels as if the ould boy was after them²⁵.

'More power to you, Jack,' says the dog. 'I'm much obleeged to you; where is the baste and yourself going?'

'We're going to seek our fortune till harvest comes in.'

'And wouldn't I be proud to go with you!' says the dog. 'And get rid of them ill-conducted boys; purshuin' to 'em.'

'Well, well, throw your tail over your arm, and come along.'

They got outside the town, and sat down under an old wall, and Jack pulled out his bread and meat, and shared with the dog; and the ass made his dinner on a bunch of thistles. While they were eating and chatting, what should come by but a poor half-starved cat, and the moll-row he gave out of him would make your heart ache.

'You look as if you saw the tops of nine houses since breakfast²⁶,' says Jack; 'here's a bone and something on it.'

'May your child never know a hungry belly!' says Tom. 'It's myself that's in need of your kindness. May I be so bold as to ask where yez are all going?'

'We're going to seek out fortune till the harvest comes in, and you may join us if you like.'

'And that I'll do with a heart and a half,' says the cat, 'and thank'ee for asking me.'

²³ **A very scarce summer** – (устар.) Очень засушливое лето

²⁴ **Never say't twice** – (разг.) Можете не повторять (я понял)

²⁵ **as if the ould boy was after them** – (устар.) как будто за ними гнался сам дьявол

²⁶ **saw the tops of nine houses since breakfast** – (устар.) давненько завтракали

Off they set again, and just as the shadows of the trees were three times as long as themselves, they heard a great cackling in a field inside the road, and out over the ditch jumped a fox with a fine black cock in his mouth.

‘Oh, you anointed villain!’ says the ass, roaring like thunder.

‘At him, good dog!’ says Jack, and the word wasn’t out of his mouth when Coley was in full sweep after the Red Dog. Reynard dropped his prize like a hot potato, and was off like shot, and the poor cock came back fluttering and trembling to Jack and his comrades.

‘O Musha, naybours!’ says he. ‘Wasn’t it the heighth o’ luck that threw you in my way! Maybe I won’t remember your kindness if ever I find you in hardship; and where in the world are you all going?’

‘We’re going to seek our fortune till the harvest comes in; you may join our party if you like, and sit on Neddy’s crupper when your legs and wings are tired.’

Well, the march began again, and just as the sun was gone down they looked around, and there was neither cabin nor farm house in sight.

‘Well, well,’ says Jack, ‘the worse luck now the better another time²⁷, and it’s only a summer night after all. We’ll go into the wood, and make our bed on the long grass.’

No sooner said than done.²⁸ Jack stretched himself on a bunch of dry grass, the ass lay near him, the dog and cat lay in the ass’s warm lap, and the cock went to roost in the next tree.

Well, the soundness of deep sleep was over them all, when the cock took a notion of crowing.

‘Bother you, Black Cock!’ says the ass. ‘You disturbed me from as nice a wisp of hay as ever I tasted. What’s the matter?’

‘It’s daybreak that’s the matter: don’t you see light yonder?’

‘I see a light indeed,’ says Jack, ‘but it’s from a candle it’s coming, and not from the sun. As you’ve roused us we may as well go over, and ask for lodging.’

So they all shook themselves, and went on through grass, and rocks, and briars, till they got down into a hollow, and there was the light coming through the shadow, and along with it came singing, and laughing, and cursing.

‘Easy, boys!’ says Jack. ‘Walk on your tippy toes²⁹ till we see what sort of people we have to deal with.’

So they crept near the window, and there they saw six robbers inside, with pistols, and blunderbushes, and cutlashes, sitting at a table, eating roast beef and pork, and drinking mulled beer, and wine, and whiskey punch.

‘Wasn’t that a fine haul we made at the Lord of Dunlavin’s!’ says one ugly-looking thief with his mouth full. ‘And it’s little we’d get only for the honest porter! Here’s his purty health!’

‘The porter’s purty health!’ cried out every one of them, and Jack bent his finger at his comrades.

‘Close your ranks, my men,’ says he in a whisper, ‘and let everyone mind the word of command.’

So the ass put his fore-hoofs on the sill of the window, the dog got on the ass’s head, the cat on the dog’s head, and the cock on the cat’s head. Then Jack made a sign, and they all sung out like mad.

‘Hee-haw, hee-haw!’ roared the ass; ‘Bow-wow!’ barked die dog; ‘Meaw-meaw!’ cried the cat; ‘Cockadoodle-doo!’ crowed the cock.

‘Level your pistols!’ cried Jack, ‘and make smithereens of ’em. Don’t leave a mother’s son of ’em alive; present, fire!’

With that they gave another halloo, and smashed every pane in the window. The robbers were frightened out of their lives³⁰. They blew out the candles, threw down the table, and skelped out at the back door as if they were in earnest, and never drew rein till they were in the very heart of the

²⁷ **the worse luck now the better another time** – (*устар.*) в другой раз повезет

²⁸ **No sooner said than done.** – (*посл.*) Сказано – сделано.

²⁹ **Walk on your tippy toes** – (*устар.*) Ведите себя тихо (ходите на цыпочках)

³⁰ **were frightened out of their lives** – (*разг.*) были до смерти напуганы

wood. Jack and his party got into the room, closed the shutters, lighted the candles, and ate and drank till hunger and thirst were gone.

Then they lay down to rest – Jack in the bed, the ass in the stable, the dog on the doormat, the cat by the fire, and the cock on the perch.

At first the robbers were very glad to find themselves safe in the thick wood, but they soon began to get vexed.

‘This damp grass is very different from our warm room,’ says one.

‘I was obliged to drop a fine pig’s foot,’ says another.

‘I didn’t get a tayspoonful of my last tumbler,’ says another.

‘And all the Lord of Dunlavin’s gold and silver that we left behind!’ says the last.

‘I think I’ll venture back,’ says the captain, ‘and see if we can recover anything.’

‘That’s a good boy!’ said they all, and away he went.

The lights were all out, and so he groped his way to the fire, and there the cat flew in his face, and tore him with teeth and claws. He let a roar out of him, and made for the room door, to look for a candle inside. He trod on the dog’s tail, and if he did, he got the marks of his teeth in his arms, and legs, and thighs.

‘Thousand murders!’ cried he; ‘I wish I was out of this unlucky house.’

When he got to the street door, the cock dropped down upon him with his claws and bill, and what the cat and dog done to him was only a flay-bite to what he got from the cock.

‘Oh, tatteration to you all, you unfeeling vagabones!’ says he, when he recovered his breath; and he staggered and spun round and round till he reeled into the stable, back foremost, but the ass received him with a kick on the broadest part of his small clothes³¹, and laid him comfortably on the dunghill.

When he came to himself, he scratched his head, and began to think what happened him; and as soon as he found that his legs were able to carry him, he crawled away, dragging one foot after another, till he reached the wood.

‘Well, well,’ cried them all, when he came within hearing, ‘any chance of our property?’

‘You may say chance,’ says he, ‘and it’s itself is the poor chance all out. Ah, will any of you pull a bed of dry grass for me? All the sticking-plaster in Enniscorthy will be too little for the cuts and bruises I have on me. Ah, if you only knew what I have gone through for you! When I got to the kitchen fire, looking for a sod of lighted turf, what should be there but an old woman carding flax, and you may see the marks she left on my face with the cards. I made to the room door as fast as I could, and who should I stumble over but a cobbler and his seat, and if he did not work at me with his awls and his pinchers you may call me a rogue. Well, I got away from him somehow, but when I was passing through the door, it must be the divel himself that pounced down on me with his claws, and his teeth, that were equal to sixpenny nails, and his wings – ill luck be in his road! Well, at last I reached the stable, and there, by way of salute, I got a pelt from a sledgehammer that sent me half a mile off. If you don’t believe me, I’ll give you leave to go and judge for yourselves.’

‘Oh, my poor captain,’ says they, ‘we believe you to the nines³². Catch us, indeed, going within a hen’s race of that unlucky cabin!’

Well, before the sun shook his doublet next morning, Jack and his comrades were up and about³³. They made a hearty breakfast on what was left the night beforehand then they all agreed to set off to the castle of the Lord of Dunlavin, and give him back all his gold and silver. Jack put it all in the two ends of a sack and laid it across Neddy’s back, and all took the road in their hands. Away they went, through bogs, up hills, down dales, and sometimes along the yellow high road, till they

³¹ **a kick on the broadest part of his small clothes** – (*устар.*) пинок под зад

³² **believe you to the nines** – (*разг.*) верим каждому слову

³³ **were up and about** – (*разг.*) были уже на ногах

came to the hall door of the Lord of Dunlavin, and who should be there, airing his powdered head, his white stockings, and his red breeches, but the thief of a porter.

He gave a cross look to the visitors, and says he to Jack, 'What do you want here, my fine fellow? There isn't room for you all.'

'We want,' says Jack, 'what I'm sure you haven't to give us – and that is, common civility.'

'Come, be off, you lazy strollers!' says he. 'While a cat 'ud be licking her ear, or I'll let the dogs at you.'

'Would you tell a body,' says the cock that was perched on the ass's head, 'who was it that opened the door for the robbers the other night?'

Ah! Maybe the porter's red face didn't turn the colour of his frill, and the Lord of Dunlavin and his pretty daughter, that were standing at the parlour window unknownst to the porter, put out their heads.

'I'd be glad, Barney,' says the master, 'to hear your answer to the gentleman with the red comb on him.'

'Ah, my lord, don't believe the rascal; sure I didn't open the door to the six robbers.'

'And how did you know there were six, you poor innocent?' said the lord.

'Never mind, sir,' says Jack, 'all your gold and silver is there in that sack, and I don't think you will begrudge us our supper and bed after our long march from the wood of Athsalach.'

'Begrudge, indeed! Not one of you will ever see a poor day if I can help it.'

So all were welcomed to their heart's content, and the ass and the dog and the cock got the best posts in the farmyard, and the cat took possession of the kitchen. The lord took Jack in hand, dressed him from top to toe in broadcloth, and frills as white as snow, and turnpumps, and put a watch in his fob. When they sat down to dinner, the lady of the house said Jack had the air of a born gentleman about him, and the lord said he'd make him his steward. Jack brought his mother, and settled her comfortably near the castle, and all were as happy as you please.

The Shee an Gannon and the Gruagach Gaire

The Shee an Gannon was born in the morning, named at noon, and went in the evening to ask his daughter of the king of Erin.

‘I will give you my daughter in marriage,’ said the king of Erin; ‘you won’t get her, though, unless you go and bring me back the tidings that I want, and tell me what it is that put a stop to the laughing of the Gruagach Gaire, who before this laughed always, and laughed so loud that the whole world heard him. There are twelve iron spikes out here in the garden behind my castle. On eleven of the spikes are the heads of kings’ sons who came seeking my daughter in marriage, and all of them went away to get the knowledge I wanted. Not one was able to get it and tell me what stopped the Gruagach Gaire from laughing. I took the heads off them all when they came back without the tidings for which they went, and I’m greatly in dread that your head’ll be on the twelfth spike, for I’ll do the same to you that I did to the eleven kings’ sons unless you tell what put a stop to the laughing of the Gruagach.’

The Shee an Gannon made no answer, but left the king and pushed away to know could he find why the Gruagach was silent.

He took a glen at a step, a hill at a leap³⁴, and travelled all day till evening. Then he came to a house. The master of the house asked him what sort was he, and he said, ‘A young man looking for hire.’

‘Well,’ said the master of the house, ‘I was going tomorrow to look for a man to mind my cows. If you’ll work for me, you’ll have a good place, the best food a man could have to eat in this world, and a soft bed to lie on.’

The Shee an Gannon took service, and ate his supper. Then the master of the house said, ‘I am the Gruagach Gaire; now that you are my man and have eaten your supper, you’ll have a bed of silk to sleep on.’

Next morning after breakfast the Gruagach said to the Shee an Gannon, ‘Go out now and loosen my five golden cows and my bull without horns, and drive them to pasture; but when you have them out on the grass, be careful you don’t let them go near the land of the giant.’

The new cowboy drove the cattle to pasture, and when near the land of the giant, he saw it was covered with woods and surrounded by a high wall. He went up, put his back against the wall, and threw in a great stretch of it; then he went inside and threw out another great stretch of the wall, and put the five golden cows and the bull without horns on the land of the giant.

Then he climbed a tree, ate the sweet apples himself, and threw the sour ones down to the cattle of the Gruagach Gaire.

Soon a great crashing was heard in the woods – the noise of young trees bending, and old trees breaking. The cowboy looked around, and saw a five-headed giant pushing through the trees; and soon he was before him.

‘Poor miserable creature!’ said the giant. ‘But weren’t you impudent to come to my land and trouble me in this way? You’re too big for one bite, and too small for two. I don’t know what to do, but tear you to pieces.’

‘You nasty brute,’ said the cowboy, coming down to him from the tree, ‘’tis little I care for you;’ and then they went at each other. So great was the noise between them that there was nothing in the world but what was looking on and listening to the combat.

They fought till late in the afternoon, when the giant was getting the upper hand³⁵; and then the cowboy thought that if the giant should kill him, his father and mother would never find him or set

³⁴ took a glen at a step, a hill at a leap – (устар.) шел семимильными шагами

³⁵ was getting the upper hand – (разг.) начал побеждать 52

eyes on him again, and he would never get the daughter of the king of Erin. The heart in his body grew strong at this thought. He sprang on the giant, and with the first squeeze and thrust he put him to his knees in the hard ground, with the second thrust to his waist, and with the third to his shoulders.

‘I have you at last; you’re done for now!’ said the cowboy.

Then he took out his knife, cut the five heads off the giant, and when he had them off he cut out the tongues and threw the heads over the wall.

Then he put the tongues in his pocket and drove home the cattle. That evening the Gruagach couldn’t find vessels enough in all his place to hold the milk of the five golden cows.

But when the cowboy was on the way home with the cattle, the son of the king of Tisean came and took the giant’s heads and claimed the princess in marriage when the Gruagach Gaire should laugh.

After supper the cowboy would give no talk to his master, but kept his mind to himself, and went to the bed of silk to sleep³⁶.

On the morning the cowboy rose before his master, and the first words he said to the Gruagach were, ‘What keeps you from laughing, you who used to laugh so loud that the whole world heard you?’

‘I’m sorry,’ said the Gruagach, ‘that the daughter of the king of Erin sent you here.’

‘If you don’t tell me of your own will, I’ll make you tell me,’ said the cowboy; and he put a face on himself that was terrible to look at, and running through the house like a madman, could find nothing that would give pain enough to the Gruagach but some ropes made of untanned sheepskin hanging on the wall.

He took these down, caught the Gruagach, fastened him by the three smalls, and tied him so that his little toes were whispering to his ears. When he was in this state the Gruagach said, ‘I’ll tell you what stopped my laughing if you set me free.’

So the cowboy unbound him, the two sat down together, and the Gruagach said, ‘I lived in this castle here with my twelve sons. We ate, drank, played cards, and enjoyed ourselves, till one day when my sons and I were playing, a slender brown hare came rushing in, jumped on to the hearth, tossed up the ashes to the rafters and ran away.

‘On another day he came again; but if he did, we were ready for him, my twelve sons and myself. As soon as he tossed up the ashes and ran off we made after him, and followed him till nightfall, when he went into a glen. We saw a light before us. I ran on, and came to a house with a great apartment, where there was a man named Yellow Face with twelve daughters, and the hare was tied to the side of the room near the women.

‘There was a large pot over the fire in the room, and a great stork boiling in the pot. The man of the house said to me, ‘There are bundles of rushes at the end of the room, go there and sit down with your men!’

‘He went into the next room and brought out two pikes, one of wood, the other of iron, and asked me which of the pikes would I take. I said, ‘I’ll take the iron one;’ for I thought in my heart that if an attack should come on me, I could defend myself better with the iron than the wooden pike.

‘Yellow Face gave me the iron pike, and the first chance of taking what I could out of the pot on the point of the pike. I got but a small piece of the stork, and the man of the house took all the rest on his wooden pike. We had to fast that night³⁷; and when the man and his twelve daughters ate the flesh of the stork, they hurled the bare bones in the faces of my sons and myself.

‘We had to stop all night that way, beaten on the faces by the bones of the stork.

‘Next morning, when we were going away, the man of the house asked me to stay a while; and going into the next room, he brought out twelve loops of iron and one of wood, and said to me: ‘Put

³⁶ **went to the bed of silk to sleep** – *ср. русск.* спал на пуховой перине

³⁷ **had to fast that night** – (*зд.*) пришлось лечь спать голодными

the heads of your twelve sons into the iron loops, and keep my own head into the wooden one;’ and I said, ‘I’ll put the twelve heads of my sons in the iron loops, and keep my own out of the wooden one.’

‘He put the iron loops on the necks of my twelve sons, and put the wooden one on his own neck. Then he snapped the loops one after another, till he took the heads off my twelve sons and threw the heads and bodies out of the house; but he did nothing to hurt his own neck.’

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