

The Fate of the Children of Turenn

And Lugh of the Long Hand was at that time at Teamhair with the King of Ireland, and it was showed to him that the Fomor were after landing at Eas Dara. And when he knew that, he made ready Manannan's horse, the Aonbharr, at the time of the battle of the day and night; and he went where Nuada the king was, and told him how the Fomor had landed at Eas Dara and had spoiled Bodb Dearg's country; "And it is what I want," he said, "to get help from you to give battle to them." But Nuada was not minded to avenge the destruction that was done on Bodb Dearg and not on himself and Lugh was not well pleased with his answer, and he went riding out of Teamhair westward.

And presently he saw three armed men coming towards him, his own father Cian, with his brothers Cu and Cethe, that were the three sons of Cainte, and they saluted him. "What is the cause of your early rising?" they said. "It is good cause I have for it," said Lugh, "for the Fomor are come into Ireland and have robbed Bodb Dearg; and what help will you give me against them?" he said.

"Each one of us will keep off a hundred from you in the battle," said they. "That is a good help," said Lugh; "but there is a help I would sooner have from you than that: to gather the Riders of the Sidhe to me from every place where they are."

So Cu and Cethe went towards the south, and Cian set out northward, and he did not stop till he reached the Plain of Muirthemne. And as he was going across the plain he saw three armed men before him, that were the three sons of Turenn, son of Ogma. And it is the way it was between the three Sons of Turenn and the three Sons of Cainte, they were in hatred and enmity towards one another, so that whenever they met there was sure to be fighting among them.

Then Cian said: "If my two brothers had been here it is a brave fight we would make; but since they are not, it is best for me to fall back." Then he saw a great herd of pigs near him, and he struck himself with a Druid rod that put on him the shape of a pig of the herd, and he began rooting up the ground like the rest.

Then Brian, one of the sons of Turenn, said to his brothers: "Did you see that armed man that was walking the plain a while ago?" "We did see him," said they. "Do you know what was it took him away?" said Brian. "We do not know that," said they. "It is a pity you not to be keeping a better watch over the plains of the open country in time of war," said Brian; "and I know well what happened him, for he struck himself with his Druid rod into the shape of a pig of these pigs, and he is rooting up the ground now like any one of them; and whoever he is, he is no friend to us."

"That is bad for us," said the other two, "for the pigs belong to some one of the Tuatha de Danaan, and even if we kill them all, the Druid pig might chance to escape us in the end."

"It is badly you got your learning in the city of learning," said Brian, "when you cannot tell an enchanted beast from a natural beast." And while he was saying that, he struck his two brothers with his Druid rod, and he turned them into two thin, fast hounds, and they began to yelp sharply on the track of the enchanted pig.

And it was not long before the pig fell out from among the others, and not one of the others made away but only itself, and it made for a wood, and at the edge of the wood Brian gave a cast of his spear that went through its body. And the pig cried out, and it said: "It is a bad thing you have done to have made a cast at me when you knew me." "It seems to me you have the talk of a man," said Brian. "I was a man indeed," said he; "I am Cian, son of Cainte, and give me your protection now."

"I swear by the gods of the air," said Brian, "that if the life came back seven times to you I would take it from you every time." "If that is so," said Cian, "give me one request: let me go into my own shape again." "We will do that," said Brian, "for it is easier to me to kill a man than a pig."

So Cian took his own shape then, and he said: "Give me mercy now." "We will not give it," said Brian. "Well, I have got the better of you for all that," said Cian; "for if it was in the shape of a pig you had killed me there would only be the blood money for a pig on me; but as it is in my own shape you will kill me, there never was and never will be any person killed for whose sake a heavier fine will be paid than for myself. And the arms I am killed with," he said, "it is they will tell the deed to my son."

"It is not with weapons you will be killed, but with the stones lying on the ground," said Brian. And with that they pelted him with stones, fiercely and roughly, till all that was left of him was a poor, miserable, broken heap; and they buried him the depth of a man's body in the earth, and the earth would not receive that murder from them, but cast it up again.

Brian said it should go into the earth again, and they put it in the second time, and the second time the earth would not take it. And six times the sons of Turenn buried the body, and six times it was cast up again; but the seventh time it was put underground the earth kept it. And then they went on to join Lugh of the Long Hand for the battle.

Now as to Lugh; upon parting with his father he went forward from Teamhair westward, to the hills that were called afterwards Gairech and Ilgairech, and to the ford of the Shannon that is now called Ath Luain, and to Bearna na h-Eadargana, the Gap of Separation, and over Magh Luirg, the Plain of Following, and to Corr Slieve na Seaghsa, the Round Mountain of the Poet's Spring, and to the head of Sean-Slieve, and through the place of the bright-faced Corann, and from that to Magh Mór an Aonaigh, the Great Plain of the Fair, where the Fomor were, and the spoils of Connacht with them.

It is then Bres, son of Elathan, rose up and said: "It is a wonder to me the sun to be rising in the west to-day, and it rising in the east every other day." "It would be better for us it to be the sun," said the Druids. "What else is it?" said he. "It is the shining of the face of Lugh, son of Ethlinn," said they.

Lugh came up to them then and saluted them. "Why do you come like a friend to us?" said they. "There is good cause for that," he said, "for there is but one half of me of the Tuatha de Danaan, and the other half of yourselves. And give me back now the milch cows of the men of Ireland," he said. "May early good luck not come to you till you get either a dry or a milch cow here," said a man of them, and anger on him.

But Lugh stopped near them for three days and three nights, and at the end of that time the Riders of the Sidhe came to him. And Bodb Dearg, son of the Dagda, came with twenty-nine hundred men, and he

said: "What is the cause of your delay in giving battle?" "Waiting for you I was," said Lugh. Then the kings and chief men of the men of Ireland took their armour on them, and they raised the points of their spears over their heads, and they made close fences of their shields. And they attacked their enemies on Magh Moran Aonaigh, and their enemies answered them, and they threw their whining spears at one another, and when their spears were broken they drew their swords from their blue-bordered sheaths and began to strike at one another, and thickets of brown flames rose above them from the bitterness of their many-edged weapons.

And Lugh saw the battle pen where Bres, son of Elathan, was, and he made a fierce attack on him and on the men that were guarding him till he had made an end of two hundred of them. When Bres saw that, he gave himself up to Lugh's protection. "Give me my life this time," he said, "and I will bring the whole race of the Fomor to fight it out with you in a great battle; and I bind myself to that, by the sun and the moon, the sea and the land," he said. On that Lugh gave him his life, and then the Druids that were with him asked his protection for themselves. "By my word," said Lugh, "if the whole race of the Fomor went under my protection they would not be destroyed by me." So then Bres and the Druids set out for their own country.

Now as to Lugh and the sons of Turenn. After the battle of Magh Mór an Aonaigh, he met two of his kinsmen and asked them did they see his father in the fight. "We did not," said they. "I am sure he is not living," said Lugh; "and I give my word," he said, "there will be no food or drink go into my mouth till I get knowledge by what death my father died."

Then he set out, and the Riders of the Sidhe after him, till they came to the place where he and his father parted from one another, and from that to the place where his father went into the shape of a pig when he saw the sons of Turenn.

And when Lugh came to that place the earth spoke to him, and it said: "It is in great danger your father was here, Lugh, when he saw the sons of Turenn before him, and it is into the shape of a pig he had to go, but it is in his own shape they killed him."

Then Lugh told that to his people, and he found the spot where his father was buried, and he bade them dig there, the way he would know by what death the sons of Turenn had made an end of him.

Then they raised the body out of the grave and looked at it, and it was all one bed of wounds. And Lugh said: "It was the death of an enemy the sons of Turenn gave my dear father." And he gave him three kisses, and it is what he said: "It is bad the way I am myself after this death, for I can hear nothing with my ears, and I can see nothing with my eyes, and there is not a living pulse in my heart, with grief after my father. And you gods I worship," he said, "it is a pity I not to have come here the time this thing was done. And it is a great thing that has been done here," he said, "the people of the gods of Dana to have done treachery on one another, and it is long they will be under loss by it and be weakened by it. And Ireland will never be free from trouble from this out, east and west," he said.

Then they put Cian under the earth again, and after that there was keening made over his grave, and a stone was raised on it, and his name was written in Ogham. And Lugh said: "This hill will take its name

from Cian, although he himself is stripped and broken. And it was the sons of Turenn did this thing," he said, "and there will grief and anguish fall on them from it, and on their children after them. And it is no lying story I am telling you," he said; "and it is a pity the way I am, and my heart is broken in my breast since Cian, the brave man, is not living."

Then he bade his people to go before him to Teamhair, "But do not tell the story till I tell it myself," he said.

And when Lugh came to Teamhair he sat in the high seat of the king, and he looked about him and he saw the three sons of Turenn. And those were the three that were beyond all others at Teamhair at that time for quickness and skill, for a good hand in battle, for beauty and an honourable name.

Then Lugh bade his people to shake the chain of silence, and they did so, and they all listened. And Lugh said: "What are your minds fixed on at this time, Men of Dea?" "On yourself indeed," said they.

"I have a question to ask of you," he said. "What is the vengeance each one of you would take on the man that would kill your father?"

There was great wonder on them when they heard that, and one of the chief men among them said: "Tell us was it your own father that was killed?" "It was indeed," said Lugh; "and I see now in this house," he said, "the men that killed him, and they know themselves what way they killed him better than I know it." Then the king said: "It is not a death of one day only I would give the man that had killed my father, if he was in my power, but to cut off one of his limbs from day to day till I would make an end of him." All the chief men said the same, and the sons of Turenn like the rest.

"There are making that answer," said Lugh, "the three men that killed my father; and let them pay the fine for him now, since you are all together in the one place. And if they will not," he said, "I will not break the protection of the king's house, but they must make no attempt to quit this house till they have settled with me."

"If it was I myself had killed your father," said the king, "I would be well content you to take a fine from me for him."

"It is at us Lugh is saying all this," said the sons of Turenn among themselves. "Let us acknowledge the killing of his father to him," said Iuchar and Iucharba. "I am in dread," said Brian, "that it is wanting an acknowledgement from us he is, in the presence of all the rest, and that he will not let us off with a fine afterwards." "It is best to acknowledge it," said the others; "and let you speak it out since you are the eldest."

Then Brian, son of Turenn, said: "It is at us you are speaking, Lugh, for you are thinking we went against the sons of Cainte before now; and we did not kill your father," he said, "but we will pay the fine for him the same as if we did kill him."

"I will take a fine from you that you do not think of," said Lugh, "and I will say here what it is, and if it is

too much for you, I will let you off a share of it." "Let us hear it from you," said they.

"Here it is," said Lugh; "three apples, and the skin of a pig, and a spear, and two horses, and a chariot, and seven pigs, and a dog's whelp, and a cooking-spit, and three shouts on a hill. That is the fine I am asking," he said; "and if it is too much for you, a part of it will be taken off you presently, and if you do not think it too much, then pay it."

"It is not too much," said Brian, "or a hundred times of it would not be too much. And we think it likely," he said, "because of its smallness that you have some treachery towards us behind it."

"I do not think it too little of a fine," said Lugh; "and I give you the guarantee of the Tuatha de Danaan I will ask no other thing, and I will be faithful to you, and let you give the same pledge to me."

"It is a pity you to ask that," said Brian, "for our own pledge is as good as any pledge in the world."

"Your own pledge is not enough," said Lugh, "for it is often the like of you promised to pay a fine in this way, and would try to back out of it after."

So then the sons of Turenn bound themselves by the King of Ireland, and by Bodb Dearg, son of the Dagda, and by the chief men of the Tuatha de Danaan, that they would pay that fine to Lugh.

"It would be well for me now," said Lugh, "to give you better knowledge of the fine." "It would be well indeed," said they.

"This is the way of it then," said Lugh. "The three apples I asked of you are the three apples from the Garden in the East of the World, and no other apples will do but these, for they are the most beautiful and have most virtue in them of the apples of the whole world. And it is what they are like, they are of the colour of burned gold, and they are the size of the head of a child a month old, and there is the taste of honey on them, and they do not leave the pain of wounds or the vexation of sickness on any one that eats them, and they do not lessen by being eaten for ever. And the skin I asked of you," he said, "is the pig skin of Tuis, King of Greece, and it heals all the wounds and all the sickness of the world, and whatever danger a man may be in, if it can but overtake the life in him, it will cure him; and it is the way it was with that pig, every stream of water it would go through would be turned into wine to the end of nine days after, and every wound it touched was healed; and it is what the Druids of Greece said, that it is not in itself this virtue was, but in the skin, and they skinned it, and the skin is there ever since. And I think, too, it will not be easy for you to get it, with or without leave.

"And do you know what is the spear I am asking of you?" he said. "We do not," said they.

"It is a very deadly spear belonging to the King of Persia, the Luin it is called, and every choice thing is done by it, and its head is kept steeped in a vessel of water, the way it will not burn down the place where it is, and it will be hard to get it. And do you know what two horses and what chariot I am asking of you? They are the chariot and the two wonderful horses of Dobair, King of Siogair, and the sea is the same as land to them, and there are no faster horses than themselves, and there is no chariot equal to

that one in shape and in strength.

"And do you know what are the seven pigs I asked of you? They are the pigs of Easal, King of the Golden Pillars; and though they are killed every night, they are found alive the next day, and there will be no disease or no sickness on any person that will eat a share of them.

"And the whelp I asked of you is Fail-Inis, the whelp belonging to the King of Ioruaidh, the Cold Country. And all the wild beasts of the world would fall down at the sight of her, and she is more beautiful than the sun in his fiery wheels, and it will be hard to get her.

"And the cooking-spit I asked of you is a spit of the spits of the women of Inis Cenn-fhinne, the Island of Caer of the Fair Hair. And the three shouts you are to give on a hill must be given on the Hill of Miochaoín in the north of Lochlann. And Miochaoín and his sons are under bonds not to allow any shouts to be given on that hill; and it was with them my father got his learning, and if I would forgive you his death, they would not forgive you. And if you get through all your other voyages before you reach to them, it is my opinion they themselves will avenge him on you. And that is the fine I have asked of you," said Lugh.

There was silence and darkness on the sons of Turenn when they heard that. And they went to where their father was, and told him the fine that had been put on them. "It is bad news that is," said Turenn; "and it is to your death and your destruction you will be going, looking for those things. But for all that, if Lugh himself had a mind to help you, you could work out the fine, and all the men of the world could not do it but by the power of Manannan or of Lugh. Go then and ask the loan of Manannan's horse, the Aonbarr, from Lugh, and if he has any wish to get the fine, he will give it to you; but if he does not wish it he will say the horse is not his, and that he would not give the loan of a loan. Ask him then for the loan of Manannan's curragh, the Scuabtuinne, the Sweeper of the Waves. And he will give that, for he is under bonds not to refuse a second request, and the curragh is better for you than the horse," he said.

So the Sons of Turenn went to where Lugh was, and they saluted him, and they said they could not bring him the fine without his own help, and for that reason it would be well for them to get a loan of the Aonbarr. "I have that horse only on loan myself," said Lugh, "and I will not give a loan of a loan."

"If that is so, give us the loan of Manannan's curragh," said Brian. "I will give that," said Lugh. "What place is it?" said they. "At Brugh na Boinn," said Lugh.

Then they went back again to where Turenn was, and his daughter Ethne, their sister, with him, and they told him they had got the curragh. "It is not much the better you will be for it," said Turenn, "although Lugh would like well to get every part of this fine he could make use of before the battle with the Fomor. But he would like yourselves to come to your death looking for it."

Then they went away, and they left Turenn sorrowful and lamenting, and Ethne went with them to where the curragh was. And Brian got into it, and he said: "There is place but for one other person along with me here." And he began to find fault with its narrowness. "You ought not to be faulting the curragh," said Ethne; "and O my dear brother," she said, "it was a bad thing you did, to kill the father of

Lugh of the Long Hand; and whatever harm may come to you from it, it is but just."

"Do not say that, Ethne," they said, "for we are in good heart, and we will do brave deeds. And we would sooner be killed a hundred times over," they said, "than to meet with the death of cowards."

"My grief," said Ethne, "there is nothing more sorrowful than this, to see you driven out from your own country."

Then the three pushed out their curragh from the beautiful clear-bayed shore of Ireland. "What course shall we take first?" said they. "We will go look for the apples," said Brian, "as they were the first thing we were bade bring. And so we ask of you, curragh of Manannan that is under us, to sail to the Garden in the East of the World."

And the curragh did not neglect that order, but it sailed forward over the green-sided waves and deep places till it came to its harbour in the east of the world.

And then Brian asked his brothers: "What way have you a mind to get into the garden? For I think," he said, "the king's champions and the fighting men of the country are always guarding it, and the king himself is chief over them." "What should we do," said his brothers, "but to make straight at them and attack them, and bring away the apples or fall ourselves, since we cannot escape from these dangers that are before us without meeting our death in some place."

"It would be better," said Brian, "the story of our bravery and our craftiness to be told and to live after us, than folly and cowardice to be told of us. And what is best for us to do now," he said, "is to go in the shape of swift hawks into the garden, and the watchers have but their light spears to throw at us, and let you take good care to keep out of their reach; and after they have thrown them all, make a quick flight to the apples and let each of you bring away an apple of them in your claws, and I will bring away the third."

They said that was a good advice, and Brian struck himself and the others with his Druid rod, and changed them into beautiful hawks. And they flew towards the garden, and the watchers took notice of them and shouted on every side of them, and threw showers of spears and darts, but the hawks kept out of their reach as Brian had bade them, till all the spears were spent, and then they swept down bravely on the apples, and brought them away with them, without so much as a wound.

And the news went through the city and the whole district, and the king had three wise, crafty daughters, and they put themselves into the shape of three ospreys, and they followed the hawks to the sea, and sent flashes of lightning before them and after them, that scorched them greatly.

"It is a pity the way we are now," said the sons of Turenn, "for we will be burned through and through with this lightning if we do not get some relief." "If I can give you relief I will do it," said Brian. With that he struck himself and his brothers with the Druid rod, and they were turned into three swans, and they went down quickly into the sea, and the ospreys went away from them then, and the Sons of Turenn went into their boat.

After that they consulted together, and it is what they agreed, to go to Greece and to bring away the skin of the pig, with or without leave. So they went forward till they came near to the court of the King of Greece.

"What appearance should we put on us going in here?" said Brian. "What appearance should we go in with but our own?" said the others. "That is not what I think best," said Brian; "but to go in with the appearance of poets from Ireland, the way the high people of Greece will hold us in respect and in honour." "It would be hard for us to do that," they said, "and we without a poem, and it is little we know how to make one."

However, they put the poet's tie on their hair, and they knocked at the door of the court, and the door-keeper asked who was in it. "We are poets of Ireland," said Brian, "and we are come with a poem to the king."

The door-keeper went in and told the king that there were poets from Ireland at the door. "Let them in," said the king, "for it is in search of a good man they came so far from their own country." And the king gave orders that everything should be well set out in the court, the way they would say they had seen no place so grand in all their travels.

The sons of Turenn were let in then, having the appearance of poets, and they fell to drinking and pleasure without delay; and they thought they had never seen, and there was not in the world, a court so good as that or so large a household, or a place where they had met with better treatment.

Then the king's poets got up to give out their poems and songs. And then Brian, son of Turenn, bade his brothers to say a poem for the king. "We have no poem," said they; "and do not ask any poem of us, but the one we know before, and that is to take what we want by the strength of our hand if we are the strongest, or to fall by those that are against us if they are the strongest."

"That is not a good way to make a poem," said Brian. And with that he rose up himself and asked a hearing. And they all listened to him, and it is what he said:

"O Tuis, we do not hide your fame; we praise you as the oak among kings;
the skin of a pig, bounty without hardness, this is the reward I ask for it.

"The war of a neighbour against an ear; the fair ear of his neighbour will be against him;
he who gives us what he owns, his court will not be the scarcer for it.

"A raging army and a sudden sea are a danger to whoever goes against them.
The skin of a pig, bounty without hardness, this is the reward I ask, O Tuis."

"That is a good poem," said the king; "but I do not know a word of its meaning."

"I will tell you its meaning," said Brian. " 'O Tuis, we do not hide your fame; we praise you as the oak above the kings.' That is, as the oak is beyond the kingly trees of the wood, so are you beyond the kings of the world for open-handedness and for grandeur.

"'The skin of a pig, bounty without hardness.' That is, the skin of a pig you own is what I would wish to get from you as a reward for my poem.

"The war of a neighbour against an ear, the fair ear of his neighbour will be against him.' That is, you and I will be by the ears about the skin, unless I get it with your consent.

"And that is the meaning of the poem," said Brian.

"I would praise your poem," said the king, "if there was not so much about my pig-skin in it; and you have no good sense, man of poetry," he said, "to be asking that thing of me, and I would not give it to all the poets and the learned men and the great men of the world, since they could not take it away without my consent. But I will give you three times the full of the skin of gold as the price of your poem," he said.

"May good be with you, king," said Brian, "and I know well it was no easy thing I was asking, but I knew I would get a good ransom for it. And I am that covetous," he said, "I will not be satisfied without seeing the gold measured myself into the skin."

The king sent his servants with them then to the treasure-house to measure the gold. "Measure out the full of it to my brothers first," said Brian, "and then give good measure to myself, since it was I made the poem."

But when the skin was brought out, Brian made a quick sudden snatch at it with his left hand, and drew his sword and made a stroke at the man nearest him, and made two halves of him. And then he kept a hold of the skin and put it about himself, and the three of them rushed out of the court, cutting down every armed man before them, so that not one escaped death or wounding.

And then Brian went to where the king himself was, and the king made no delay in attacking him, and they made a hard fight of it, and at the end the King of Greece fell by the hand of Brian, son of Turenn.

The three brothers rested for a while after that, and then they said they would go and look for some other part of the fine. "We will go to Pisear, King of Persia," said Brian, "and ask him for the spear."

So they went into their boat, and they left the blue streams of the coast of Greece, and they said: "We are well on when we have the apples and the skin." And they stopped nowhere till they came to the borders of Persia.

"Let us go to the court with the appearance of poets," said Brian, "the same as we went to the King of Greece." "We are content to do that," said the others, "as all turned out so well the last time we took to poetry; not that it is easy for us to take to a calling that does not belong to us."

So they put the poet's tie on their hair, and they were as well treated as they were at the other court; and when the time came for poems Brian rose up, and it is what he said:

"It is little any spear looks to Písear;
the battle of enemies are broken,
it is not too much for Písear to
wound every one of them.

"A yew, the most beautiful of the wood,
it is called a king, it is not bulky.
May the spear drive on the whole crowd
to their wounds of death."

"That is a good poem," said the king, "but I do not understand why my own spear is brought into it, O Man of Poetry from Ireland."

"It is because it is that spear of your own I would wish to get as the reward of my poem," said Brian.

"It is little sense you have to be asking that of me," said the king; "and the people of my court never showed greater respect for poetry than now, when they did not put you to death on the spot."

When Brian heard that talk from the king, he thought of the apple that was in his hand, and he made a straight cast and hit him in the forehead, so that his brains were put out at the back of his head, and he bared the sword and made an attack on the people about him.

And the other two did not fail to do the same, and they gave him their help bravely till they had made an end of all they met of the people of the court. And then they found the spear, and its head in a cauldron of water, the way it would not set fire to the place.

And after a while they said it was time for them to go and look for the rest of the great fine that was on them, and they asked one another what way should they go. "We will go to the King of the Island of Siogair," said Brian, "for it is with him are the two horses and the chariot the Ildánach asked of us."

They went forward then and brought the spear with them, and it is proud the three champions were after all they had done. And they went on till they were come to the court of the King of Siogair.

"It is what we will do this time," said Brian, "we will go in with the appearance of paid soldiers from Ireland, and we will make friends with the king, the way we will get to know in what place the horses and the chariot are kept." And when they had settled on that they went forward to the lawn before the king's house.

The king and the chief men that were with him rose up and came through the fair that was going on there, and they saluted the king, and he asked who were they. "We are trained fighting men from Ireland," they said, "and we are earning wages from the kings of the world."

"Is it your wish to stop with me for a while?" said the king. "That is what we are wanting," said they. So then they made an agreement and took service with him.

They stopped in the court a fortnight and a month, and they never saw the horses through that time. Then Brian said: "This is a bad way we are in, to have no more news of the horses now than the first day we came to the place."

"What is best for us to do now?" said his brothers. "Let us do this," said Brian, "let us take our arms and gather our things together, and go to the king and tell him we will leave the country and this part of the world unless he will show us those horses."

So they went to the king that very day, and he asked them what did they mean by getting themselves ready for a journey. "You will hear that, high king," said Brian; "it is because trained fighting men from Ireland, like ourselves, have always trust put in them by the kings they guard, and we are used to be told the secrets and the whispers of any person we are with, and that is not the way you have treated us since we came to you. For you have two horses and a chariot that are the best in the world, as we have been told, and we have not been given a sight of them yet."

"It would be a pity you 'to go on that account," said the king, "when I would have showed them to you the first day, if I had known you had a wish to see them. And if you have a mind to see them now," he said, "you may see them; for I think there never came soldiers from Ireland to this place that were thought more of by myself and by my people than yourselves."

He sent for the horses then, and they were yoked to the chariot, and their going was as fast as the cold spring wind, and the sea was the same as the land to them. And Brian was watching the horses closely, and on a sudden he took hold of the chariot and took the chariot driver out and dashed him against the nearest rock, and made a leap into his place himself, and made a cast of the Persian spear at the king, that went through his heart. And then he and his brothers scattered the people before them, and brought away the chariot.

"We will go now to Easal, the King of the Golden Pillars," said Brian, "to look for the seven pigs the Ildánach bade us bring him." They sailed on then without delay or drawback to that high country. And it is the way the people of that country were, watching their harbours for fear of the sons of Turenn, for the story of them had been told in all parts, how they had been sent out of Ireland by force, and how they were bringing away with them all the gifted treasures of the whole world.

Easal came to the edge of the harbour to meet them, and he asked was it true what he heard, that the king of every country they had gone to had fallen by them. Brian said it was true, whatever he might wish to do to them for it. "What was it made you do that?" said Easal. Brian told him then it was the oppression and the hard sentence of another had put them to it; and he told him all that had happened, and how they had put down all that offered to stand against them until that time.

"What did you come to this country now for?" said the king. "For the pigs belonging to yourself," said Brian; "for to bring them away with us is a part of the fine."

"What way do you think to get them?" said the king. "If we get them with good-will," said Brian, "we are ready to take them thankfully; and if we do not, we are ready to do battle with yourself and your people

on the head of them, that you may fall by us, and we may bring away the pigs in spite of you."

"If that is to be the end of it," said the king, "it would be a pity to bring my people into a battle."

"It would be a pity indeed," said Brian.

Then the king whispered and took advice with his people about the matter, and it is what they agreed, to give up the pigs of their own free will to the sons of Turenn, since they could not see that any one had been able to stand against them up to that time.

Then the sons of Turenn gave their thanks to Easal, and there was wonder on them to have got the pigs like that, when they had to fight for every other part of the fine. And more than that, they had left a share of their blood in every other place till then.

Easal brought them to his own house that night, and they were served with food, and drink, and good beds, and all they could wish for. And they rose up on the morrow and came into the king's presence, and the pigs were given to them. "It is well you have done by us, giving us these pigs," said Brian, "for we did not get any share of the fine without fighting but these alone." And he made a poem for the king then, praising him, and putting a great name on him for what he had done.

"What journey are you going to make now, Sons of Turenn?" said Easal. "We are going," they said, "to the country of Ioruaidh, on account of a whelp that is there."

"Give me one request," said Easal, "and that is to bring me with you to the King of Ioruaidh, for a daughter of mine is his wife, and I would wish to persuade him to give you the whelp without a battle."

"That will please us well," they said.

So the king's ship was made ready, and we have no knowledge of what happened till they came to the delightful, wonderful coast of Ioruaidh. The people and the armies were watching the harbours and landing-places before them, and they knew them at once and shouted at them.

Then Easal went on shore peaceably, and he went to where his son-in-law, the king, was, and told him the story of the sons of Turenn from beginning to end. "What has brought them to this country?" said the King of Ioruaidh.

"To ask for the hound you have," said Easal. "It was a bad thought you had coming with them to ask it," said the king, "for the gods have not given that much luck to any three champions in the world, that they would get my hound by force or by good-will."

"It would be better for you to let them have the hound," said Easal, "since they have put down so many of the kings of the world."

But all he could say was only idleness to the king. So he went then to where the sons of Turenn were,

and gave them the whole account. And when they heard the king's answer, they made no delay, but put quick hands on their arms, and offered to give battle to the army of Ioruaidh.

And when they went, there was a brave battle fought on both sides. And as for the sons of Turenn, they began to kill and to strike at the men of Ioruaidh till they parted from one another in the fight, so that Iuchar and Iucharba chanced to be on one side, and Brian by himself on the other side. It was a gap of danger and a breaking of ranks was before Brian in every path he took, till he came to the King of Ioruaidh in the battle pen where he was. And then the two brave champions began a fierce fight together, and they did not spare one another in it. And at the last Brian overcame the king, and bound him, and brought him through the middle of the army, till he came to the place where Easal was, and it is what he said: "There is your son-in-law for you, and I swear by my hand of valour, I would think it easier to kill him three times than to bring him to you once like this."

So then the whelp was given to the sons of Turenn, and the king was unbound, and peace was made between them. And when they had brought all this to an end, they bade farewell to Easal and to all the rest.

Now as to Lugh of the Long Hand, it was showed to him that the sons of Turenn had got all the things that were wanting to him against the battle with the Fomor; and on that he sent a Druid spell after them to put forgetfulness on them of the rest of the fine that they had not got. And he put a great desire and longing on them to go back to Ireland; so they forgot that a part of the fine was wanting to them, and they turned back again toward home.

And it is the place where Lugh was at the time, at a gathering of the people for a fair on the green outside Teamhair, and the King of Ireland along with him. And it was made known to Lugh that the sons of Turenn were landed at Brugh na Boinne. And he went into the city of Teamhair, and shut the gate after him, and he put on Manannan's smooth armour, and the cloak of the daughters of Flidais, and he took his own arms in his hand.

And the sons of Turenn came where the king was, and they were made welcome by him and by the Tuatha de Danaan. And the king asked them did they get the fine. "We did get it," said they; "and where is Lugh till we give it to him?" "He was here a while ago," said the king. And the whole fair was searched for him, but he was not found.

"I know the place where he is," said Brian; "for it has been made known to him that we are come to Ireland, and these deadly arms with us, and he is gone into Teamhair to avoid us."

Messengers were sent to him then, and it is the answer he gave them that he would not come, but that the fine should be given to the king. So the sons of Turenn did that, and when the king had taken the fine they all went to the palace in Teamhair; and Lugh came out on the lawn and the fine was given to him, and it is what he said:

"There is a good payment here for any one that ever was killed or that ever will be killed. But there is something wanting to it yet that it is not lawful to leave out. And where is the cooking-spit?" he said; "and where are the three shouts on the hill that you did not give yet?"

And when the sons of Turenn heard that there came clouds of weakness on them. And they left the place and went to their fathers house that night, and they told him all they had done, and the way Lugh had treated them.

There was grief and darkness on Turenn then, and they spent the night together. And on the morrow they went to their ship, and Ethne, their sister, with them, and she was crying and lamenting, and it is what she said:

"It is a pity, Brian of my life, it is not to Teamhair your going is, after all the troubles you have had before this, even if I could not follow you.

"O Salmon of the dumb Boinne, O Salmon of the Lifé River, since I cannot keep you here I am loath to part from you.

"O Rider of the Wave of Tuaidh, the man that stands best in the fight, if you come back again, I think it will not be pleasing to your enemy.

"Is there pity with you for the sons of Turenn leaning now on their green shields? Their going is a cause for pity, my mind is filled up with it.

"You to be to-night at Beinn Edair till, the heavy coming of the morning, you who have taken forfeits from brave men, it is you have increased our grief.

"It is a pity your journey is from Teamhair, and from the pleasant plains, and from great Uisnech of Míde; there is nothing so pitiful as this."

After that complaint they went out on the rough waves of the green sea; and they were a quarter of a year on the sea without getting any news of the island.

Then Brian put on his water dress and he made a leap, and he was a long time walking in the sea looking for the island of the Fair-Haired Women, and he found it in the end. And he went looking for the court, and when he came to it, all he found was a troop of women doing needlework and embroidering borders. And among all the other things they had with them, there was the cooking-spit.

And when Brian saw it, he took it up in his hand and he was going to bring it with him to the door. And all the women began laughing when they saw him doing that, and it is what they said:

"It is a brave deed you put your hand to; for even if your brothers were along with you, the least of the three times fifty women of us would not let the spit go with you or with them. But for all that," they said, "take a spit of the spit with you, since you had the daring to try and take it in spite of us."

Brian bade them farewell then, and went to look for the boat. And his brothers thought it was too long he was away from them, and just as they were going to leave the place they were, they saw him coming

towards them, and that raised their courage greatly.

And he went into the boat, and they went on to look for the Hill of Miochaoín. And when they came there, Miochaoín, that was the guardian of the hill, came towards them; and when Brian saw him he attacked him, and the fight of those two champions was like the fight of two lions, till Miochaoín fell at the last.

And after Miochaoín had fallen, his three sons came out to fight with the three sons of Turenn. And if anyone ever came from the east of the world to look at any fight, it is to see the fight of these champions he had a right to come, for the greatness of their blows and the courage of their minds.

The names of the sons of Miochaoín were Corc and Conn and Aedh, and they drove their three spears through the bodies of the sons of Turenn, and that did not discourage them at all and they put their own three spears through the bodies of the sons of Miochaoín, so that they fell into the clouds and the faintness of death.

And then Brian said: "What way are you now, my dear brothers?" "We are near our death," said they. "Let us rise up," he said, "and give three shouts upon the hill, for I see the signs of death coming on us." "We are not able to do that," said they. Then Brian rose up and raised each of them with one hand, and he shedding blood heavily all the time, until they gave the three shouts.

After that Brian brought them with him to the boat, and they were travelling the sea for a long time, but at last Brian said: "I see Beinn Edair and our father's dun, and Teamhair of the Kings." "We would have our fill of health if we could see that," said the others; "and for the love of your good name, brother," they said, "raise up our heads on your breast till we see Ireland again, and life or death will be the same to us after that. And O Brian," they said, "Flame of Valour without treachery, we would sooner death to bring ourselves away, than to see you with wounds upon your body, and with no physician to heal you."

Then they came to Beinn Edair, and from that they went on to their father's house, and Brian said to Turenn: "Go, dear father, to Teamhair, and give this spit to Lugh, and bring the skin that has healing in it for our relief. Ask it from him for the sake of friendship," he said, "for we are of the one blood, and let him not give hardness for hardness. And O dear father," he said, "do not be long on your journey, or you will not find us alive before you."

Then Turenn went to Teamhair, and he found Lugh of the Long Hand before him, and he gave him the spit, and he asked the skin of him to heal his children, and Lugh said he would not give it. And Turenn came back to them and told them he had not got the skin. And Brian said: "Bring me with you to Lugh, to see would I get it from him."

So they went to Lugh, and Brian asked the skin of him. And Lugh said he would not give it, and that if they would give him the breadth of the earth in gold for it, he would not take it from them, unless he was sure their death would come on them in satisfaction for the deed they had done.

When Brian heard that, he went to the place his two brothers were, and he lay down between them, and

his life went out from him, and out from the other two at the same time.

And their father cried and lamented over his three beautiful sons, that had the making of a king of Ireland in each of them, and his strength left him and he died; and they were buried in the one grave.

SOURCE:

Ancient Irish Tales. ed. and trans. by Tom P. Cross & Clark Harris Slover. NY: Henry Holt & Co., 1936