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from

Annals of the Four Masters

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O'Neill afterwards pitched his camp at Cnoc Buidhbh, at Loch Monann, commonly called Cnoc an Bhogha, with all the forces before mentioned, except the western army, as we have said before. As to O'Donnell, after his son Manus had reached him with many spoils, as he had not caught O'Neill at Ballyshannon, and as he had not overtaken him after the plundering of Ceann-Maghair, he returned across Bearnas, and mustered all the forces he had, though they were few against many at that time, and they all came to one place to Druim-Lighean. They held council to consider what they should do in the strait difficulties they had to meet, for they knew that they would not be at all able to maintain a contest with O'Neill and his army, and with the Connacian army, which was then marching towards their country, should they succeed in joining each other *before the engagement*; so that the resolution they adopted was to attack O'Neill, as he was the nearest to them, choosing rather to be slain on the field than to become slaves to any one in the world. They agreed (as the army opposed to them were so very numerous) to attack O'Neill's by night. A notice and forewarning of this resolution reached O'Neill, so that he placed sentinels to guard every pass by which he thought the Kinel-Connell might come to attack him, while he himself, with *the main body of* his army, remained on the watch at the rere in his camp.

O'Donnell, having arrayed and marshalled, excited and earnestly exhorted his small army, commanded them to abandon their horses, for they had no desire to escape from the field of battle unless they should be the victors. They *his forces* then advanced until they came up to the sentinels *of O'Neill* without being perceived by them. However, the sentinels began to give notice to their people that their enemies were approaching. The Kinel-Connell now, fearing that the sentinels would reach O'Neill before them, rushed onwards with such violence and vehemence that they went out of array; and they *and the sentinels* reached the camp together. On thus coming into collision with one another they raised great shouts aloud, and their clamour was not feebly responded to by O'Neill's common soldiers, for they proceeded bravely and protectively to defend their chief and their camp. Both armies were *engaged* at striking and killing each other, and mighty men were subdued, and heroes hacked, on either side; men were hewn down, and death and evil destiny seized vigorous youths in that place. Scarcely did any one of them on either side know with whom he should engage in combat, for they could not discern one another's faces on account of the darkness of the night, and their close intermixing with each other. At last, however, O'Neill and his army were defeated, and the camp was left to O'Donnell. Great indeed was the slaughter made upon O'Neill *recte, O'Neill's forces* on that spot, for it was calculated by the people of the churches in which many of them were interred, and by those of the neighbours who were near them *and recognized the bodies*, that upwards of nine hundred of O'Neill's army fell in that engagement, so that the name and renown of that victory spread all over Ireland. The most distinguished men who fell in that engagement were *the following*: Donnell Oge Mac Donnell, with a countless

number of gallowglasses of the Clann-Donnell *Mac Donnell*; Turlough Mac Sheehy, with a great number of his people ; John Bissett, with the greater part of the Scots who had come with him; Hugh, the son of Owen, son of William Mac Mahon, with a party of his troops; and Rory Maguire, and some of his people along with him. There fell there also many of the Lagenians and of the men of Meath, for there came not a leader of a band or troop, small or great, in that muster of O'Neill, who did not complain of the number of his people that were left *dead* on that field; so that this battle of Cnoc Buidhbh was one of the most bloody engagements that had ever occurred between the Kinel-Connell and the Kinel-Owen. The Kinel-Connell seized upon horses, arms, armour, a store of provisions, strong liquors, and several beautiful and rich articles, both eiscras and goblets, of the forces whom they had defeated; and though O'Donnell's people were without horses on going into the engagement, they had many horses from the warriors whom they had cut off in that slaughter. Some of O'Donnell's forces went to their houses with their *share of the* spoils, without his permission, but he sent them a peremptory order to return to him at once; and after they had collected to one place at his summons, he marched, with all the speed that might be, westwards, through *the gap of* Bearnas Mor, over the *Rivers* Erne, Drowes, and Duff, and over the lower part of Carbury, and pitched his camp at Ceathramha-na-madadh, on the north side of Binn-Golban, because the Connacian army, of which we have *already* spoken, had advanced to Sligo, and were laying siege to that town, in which O'Donnell had placed warders; and nothing delayed their march to Tirconnell but the taking of the town. When the two Mac Williams, the two O'Conors, Mac Dermot, the O'Briens, O'Carroll, and the O'Kennedys, with their forces, heard of O'Donnell's having encamped in their vicinity, and of that victory which he had gained over O'Neill, they resolved to dispatch messengers to sue for peace from him; and they offered to him to leave all the covenants and matters in dispute between O'Donnell and Mac William to the arbitration of Manus O'Donnell and O'Carroll. Teige, the son of Turlough O'Brien, with other chiefs, were sent with these proposals. While the messengers were delivering their embassy to O'Donnell, the chiefs of the army, together with all their forces, came to the resolution of raising the siege and retreating privately; and they acted on this resolution, though it was strange and wonderful that such an army as was there—so numerous, so complete, with leaders so noble, and with enmity so intense against the persons opposed to them—should have retreated in this manner, *and should not have waited* until each party had expended its fury, and wreaked its vengeance on the other. These troops did not halt or wait for *the return of* their messengers, or the report of their embassy as to peace and tranquillity, until they reached the Curlieu mountains, where the lords and chieftains of the army separated from one another.