The O'Briens in Munster After Clontarf.*

By REV. JOHN RYAN, S.J., D.LITT.

DONNCHAD, SON OF BRIAN BORUMA, KING OF MUNSTER (1014-1064).

Brian's claim to the kingship of Ireland had rested solely on his political and military strength. It was obvious that if his successor in the leadership of Dál Cais was to maintain his father's position he would need to be eminent in the same fields. Even the High-Kings of the Uí Néill, with centuries of tradition behind them, were expected to command armies capable of exacting submission from any recalcitrant prince and were but little respected if they failed to do so. All the greater, then, would be the necessity under which Donnchad, son of Brian, lay to make a demonstration of strength.

Unhappily for his prestige, such a display was at the moment impossible. The battle itself had brought cruel losses to his forces. He was far from his home territory, and even there it would be no easy task to collect reinforcements, since the cream of Dál Cais's fighting men had stood on the field of carnage at Clontarf. A knotty problem also remained to be faced, that of the re-emergence to power, or of the continuation in subjection, of the Eoganachta in Munster. They had submitted at the sword's point to Brian, but only when he had shown overwhelming capacity as a general. Would they be ready to remain subordinate to Donnchad, a young man whose merits as a ruler and as a commander were as yet speculative? It very soon became evident that they would not.

Within the year 1014 the Eoganachta of Raithliu sought to restore the predominance of the Eoganachta in Munster. The effort, however, was shortlived for the two main branches of the Raithliu Eoganachta quarrelled, and Cian, son of Maelmuaid, with his two brothers, Cathal and Ragallach (ALC) were slain by Domnall, son of Dubdaboireann, in the battle of Mag Gulide. Thereupon Donnchad, son of Brian Boruma, marched southwards to the aid of his cousin, Mathgamain, son of Cian (LO, p. 101), and in an encounter which followed, Domnall's son, Cathal, was killed (ALC., LO.).

Meanwhile Donnchad and his half-brother, Tadg, were not at one in Thomond, and in an encounter between them, Ruadri, son of Donncean, king of Arada, was slain. (AClon., ALC.). All this took place in 1014.

Next year, 1015, Domnall, son of Dubdaboireann, led an army to Limerick, where the two O'Briens, Donnchad and Tadg, recognising a common foe, united to oppose him. The Thomond forces were victorious and Domnall was slain. In 1016 a Connacht army plundered Cill Dalua. Local trouble is indicated by the narrow escape of Donnchad in 1019, when the assailant was the son of Catharnach, son of Aed, of the Uí Chaisín sept. It is not clear whether the issue was personal, or whether the would-be assassin was acting for Tadg O Briain, or whether the grievance lay still deeper, in the resentment of other sections of the Dál Cais at the sudden rise of the Uí Toirridealbaig to a position of prominence in the state. At any rate, Donnchad was lucky to escape with the loss of his right hand.

*For the Battle of Clontarf see JRSAI, LXVIII, 1936, pp. 1-60.

1. In both of these sources the slaying of Cathal is attributed to Donnchad.

2. LO., CS., ALC. put victory to the credit of Donnchad alone.
In 1020 Donnchad had helped Maelsechlainn Mór to take the hostages of Connacht, whose king had raided Killaloe in 1015. A year after Maelsechlainn’s death Donnchad rid himself of his chief rival, his half-brother, Tadg, whom he caused to be slain treacherously by the Eile.

Two years later (1025) he marched to Cruachu and took the hostages of Connacht (LO). Next year Donnchad felt himself strong enough to claim the kingship of Ireland and took the hostages of Mide and Leinster (1026). Flaitbertach O Neill at once replied by asserting his authority over Mide. Donnchad had apparently overestimated his own power, for when he led an army into Ossory in 1027, a section of it (drem dia muintr) was defeated with heavy loss. (AI, CS, ATig. cf. dā mac Egertaig ri—A. Tig.—agus rigamhna tuaisceart Eoganachta, CS). The fullest account of this event is given in the Lebor Oirís (p. 104) which records that Donnchad himself, with the main body of his army, was successful, and took prisoners and spoils from Mac Gilla Pádraig. One portion of his troops, however, was pursued by Mac Raith O Donnchada (do bhí fa sgoil fa righ hu a Gilla Phádraig (LO) and by Mac Gilla Phádraig himself and roughly handled. Though the text is grammatically obscure the general sense seems to be that this Mac Raith O Donnchada, who was of the royal line of Caisel, (3) sided with Mac Gilla Pádraig and turned Donnchad’s victory into a fatal defeat. The exact relationship between the men of Osraige and the Eoganachta of Caisel at this moment cannot be determined. (4) Both were natural enemies of the O Briens. It is pretty clear, however, that the Eoganachta state of Uí Conaill Gabra was fighting on Donnchad’s side in this expedition (A. Tig.: rigamhna hua Conaill Gabra slain).

Mac Gilla Pádraig (5) was obviously not reduced to complete vassalage by Donnchad, son of Brian. In 1031 the Osraige king raided Munster, at least that part of it now in Tipperary which lay near himself. Here was a fortress called Dún na scoth in which Donnchad, son of Brian, had a reoctaire, who was probably a warden and general manager of O Brien affairs in that part of the kingdom. Mac Gilla Pádraig slew the reoctaire and plundered the fortress (AL). Donnchad, son of Brian, marched into Osraige to avenge this insult. He brought back cattle and other spoils, but apparently at a heavy cost in human life, for the record says that the men of Munster were slaughtered three times during the expedition (corolad ár fer Muman fó thrí and). Mac Gilla Pádraig thus held his own against all the efforts of Dál Chais to subdue him.

At this time, in fact, Osraige may be said to have reached the peak of its power as an Irish state. In 1033 Donnchad Mac Gilla Pádraig assumed the kingship of Leinster and as head of that ancient kingdom celebrated the Oenach Carman (A. Tig. ALC.). The chief men of Leinster, lay and clerical, were present (AFM). This apparently did not win the approval of Donnchad, son of Brian, for in the next year he plundered Osraige (AFM). Another person who objected violently must have been Donnchad, son of Dúnlaing, son of Tuathall, of the Uí Faelain line, for Mac Gilla Pádraig had him blinded in 1036. (5) The Uí Cenél Conaill seemed to have taken the usurpation more quietly. In 1037, their king, Diarmait Mac (Donnchada) Mael na mbó spoiled and burned Limerick (A.Clon.) in spite of Donnchad, son of Brian, and for the benefit of Mac Gilla Pádraig, if not with his support. The latter died in 1039, after a long illness (AFM.), apparently with prestige undiminished, for he is called king of Osory and Leinster (A.Clon.), àirdri Laigen agus Osraige (AU). A.Tig. add that he was curad Eireann “Champion of Ireland.” His last expedition had been to Mide, some time before his death, when he burnt as far as Cnogba and Droiched Atha in the Boyne valley (A.Tig., AFM., 1039).

3. Maelsechlainn gds. of Donnchad succeeded Cellachán Caisil as King of Munster. This Mac Craith was of the same family. Maelsechlainn was succeeded by Fergraíd, who was expelled by Mathgamain, brother of Brian.

4. Cf. ATig. 1042, AU. Mac Gilla Pádraig and Mac Raith O Donnchada together slew the kings of Uí Faelain and Uí Bálrighe in Leinster. Thus the two were co-operating. AL, 1040, records that Mac Craith O Donnchada was put in fetters.

5. Donnchad died 1039.

6. Cf. AU, AFM. and LL. 39, col. 3: he was dragged out of the church at Disert Diarmata, where he had taken refuge. Soon afterwards he died of pain and grief.
Between the Connachtmen and Donnchad, son of Brian, relations went from bad to worse. In 1035 we find the Munster king in western territory. According to the Annals of Innisfallen he, with a single ship-load of followers, overtook a Connacht force of fourteen galleys and defeated them with great slaughter on the Suck and on the Shannen. (Donnchad Mac Briania d’er-racttain lucht oenluinge agus slatsom lucht oethri serrardec déc ocus maidd forru ocus a n-ár do chor dësom imon Soice ocus imon Sinaind.)

Five years later (1040) Donnchad was active in quite another direction. The Annals of Innisfallen record that "Cáin and rechthe were made by the son of Brian, such as had not been made from the days of Patrick in Ireland, so that nobody dared to steal or to engage in warlike activity on a Sunday or to transport any burden (load) on a (horse’s) back on a Sunday. And moreover nobody dared to bring a head of cattle into a house (on a Sunday). (Cáin agus rechthe do dénam do mac Brian in na n-chnad á ré Pátríc in hÉirinn coná tháimthe gait do dénam na enggnam Domnaigh na h-imthecht nach aire ar muin in Domnuch. Ocus dano ná tháimthe mil innille do thabairt hi tech)" Thus Donnchad dealt in royal fashion with two particular problems, robbery (to be understood chiefly of robbery under arms, raids into neighbour’s territory) and the violation of the Sunday rest. It is to be feared that the success of his efforts was not unlimited, for ten years later (1050) another Cáin was sponsored by him in an assembly of clergy and laity held at Cill Dalua (AFM.). But the mere endeavour to enact and enforce such regulations is significant, for it shows Donnchad in a favourable light as a man of serious moral character. (8)

Not all his actions, unfortunately, were on this high plane. The pressure of circumstances compelled him to remain a fighting man. Though the Eoganachta of Caisel were weak in his day they were never so powerless that they could be treated as a spent force. In fact a struggle between themselves for mastery in their domestic territory can be obscuredly traced. Thus in 1043 (AU, ALC, A.Tig, AFM.) Mac Raithi Ó Donnchada with his allies, the men of Osraige and the Ó Donnagáin of Arada, raided as far as Dún na scath (a remarkable fort in the top of a round hill, between Tipperary and Golden) and took some spoils. Carthach, son of Sáerbrethach, who was grandson of Cellachán Caisel, king of the Eoganachta Caisel, overtook them at Maelcarmeigh (where the river Muteen enters the Suir at Golden, O.D.) and defeated them decisively. Ó Donnagáin, lord of Arada, was slain. This Carthach met his death two years later (1045) at the hands of a Dál Chaisel host (led by the grandson of Lonnargar, son of Donnccan, Brian’s eldest brother), when the house in which he and others had taken refuge was set on fire (AI, AFM, AU, A.Tig, ALC). He was the father of Donnchad and Muiredach and the grandfather of Cormac, the first Mac Carthy (for the original form of the name was Mac Meic Carthach). At Mac Raithi’s death in 1052 he is called king of the Eoganachta Caisel (AFM, ALC). Five years later (1057) the death of Donnchad urcha Donnchada, King of Caisel, is recorded (CS.). Thus the Mac Carthy and Ó Donnchada lines were comparatively important at this time in Tipperary. It is to be noted that those Ó Donoghues of Cashel are completely distinct from the Ó Donoghues of Cenél Laeghaire—Uí Echach Muman ancestry in Cork and later round Killarney in Kerry.

In the plunder of Clonmacnois by a Munster, or rather Thomond, army in 1044 Donnchad had personally no part. He disapproved of the outrage and made reparation generously, the terms being full freedom (chéasaíadh) of Clonmacnois to God and Ciarán forever, and a fine of forty cows to be paid on the nail, and his curse to anyone of the Munstermen who would cause any hurt to the community of St. Ciarán thereafter (AFM, A.Clon). In 1043 (A.Tig) or 1049 (AI) he led an army into Mide, Brega, Dublin, and Laigin (AI—Laigin and Osraige only) and everywhere secured hostages. (AFM. has corresponding entries under 1049, which is probably the correct year. A.Tig. 1049, mentions Mag nAirb in Osraige).

About this period, however, a change for the worse took place in Donnchad’s position. It coincides with the rise to power of Donnchad’s nephew, Töirrdebalch, son—

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7. For the terms used Cf. Irisches Recht 11, p. 78: “Cáin is a ‘law’ (Regelung) enacted by kings, the Church and, perhaps, other great personages, and by these alone, and enforced by suitable penalties. In the same way Reichthe is the law in force under a prince.”

8. The earlier series of events is recorded in AI. only.
of Tadg, whom Donnchad had caused to be slain by the Éile in 1023. From the son of a father so treated Donnchad could expect to receive no mercy. Connacht, too, was displaying a strength which caused Donnchad constant uneasiness. In 1051 he invaded that kingdom as far as Loch Cline (L.Haugh in Ul Britín Seola or Ceara, Co. Galway) but had to retire without hostages or aitiri (AI). His discomfiture was all the greater because Aed in gai bernaig Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, had raided Dál Chais territory earlier in the same year. During that expedition he had offended Daliescassian sentiment by feiling the sacred tree of the race (bile) at Mag Adair. It was apparently, too, during the course of these operations that Domnall Bán, son of Donnchad, was slain by the Connachtmen (A. Tig., C.S., AFM. say "sl. by the King of Connacht").

In 1052 what is described as a "great war" (cocad mór) raged between the men of Munster and the Connachtta, in other words, between Donnchad, son of Brian, and Aed Ó Conchobhair. To make matters really unpleasant for Donnchad his (half) nephew Toirrdealbach was now inevitably in league with all his enemies against him. On this occasion he was on Aed Ó Conchobhair's side, and in that interest beleaguered the northern portion of Dál Chais (corogaib Toirdelbach Ua Briain forbaisi for h-uaechtar Dál Chais AL). The fortunes of war swung now to one side, now to the other. Western Clare, Corca Baiscinn, seems to have been on Donnchad's side. Donnchad himself in that year (1052) was engaged with Conchobar Ó Maelsechlainn in raiding Fingall and Dublin. The position in the Norse town at this date was peculiar. Diarmaid, son of (Donnchad) Mael na mbó, King of Leinster, had entered the city in 1052 and driven its king, Echmarach, son of Ragnall, into flight over-seas. Diarmaid then assumed the sovereignty of the Norse. It was he, then, who suffered loss in this expedition. Hostages were taken by the Munster and Mide kings, and Mór, daughter of Congalach Ó Conchobhair and wife of Mac Gilla Pédraig of Osraige, was among the spoils. As soon as Diarmaid could put together a strong army he replied to all these insults with a heavy hand (A. Tig., AFM., 1053). But for the moment he had no opportunity of avenging himself on Munster.

Donnchad's three sons brought a great spoil of cows and booty (bu agus brat; cf. bó agus ban agus brat) from Circumruad in 1054 (AI. Cf., AFM., 1055). The sufferers, apparently, were in league with the men of Connacht, for the army of that kingdom was soon on the march. Aed Ó Conchobhair and his troops penetrated as far as Tradraige (Newmarket-on-Fergus area), Cluain idir dá láim, Clonderlaw, and Corca Baiscinn. If not accompanied by Toirdelbach Ó Briain, he was at least in alliance with that prince, who had committed depredations on Thomond at this time. It is not quite clear whether the chief Dál Chais defender, Aed, son of Cinnéide, muire agus ordam Dál Chais (CS. 1052, A. Tig. 1054, AFM. 1054, ALC. 1054, AU. 1054) was slain by the Connachtmen (11) or by Toirdelbach (AFM.), who add that Toirdelbach went on to plunder Tuaim Finndlocha, Tomfinlough in barony of Upper Bunratty, cf. 944, 1049), as it is not clear whether Toirdelbach was united with Aed Ó Conchobhair or whether there were two separate expeditions. Elsewhere, too, Munster suffered in this year, for Diarmaid, son of Mael na mbó, with his Leinstermen and foreigners, and Mac Gilla Pédraig, with the men of Osraige, raided as far as Emly and Dún trí liac (N.W. of Galbally) in East Limerick (AFM.). They had gone back safely before Donnchad could catch up with them, for on their arrival he was in the south of Ireland (A. Tig., AFM.). This may explain, too, how O Connor got back to Connacht without meeting Donnchad's army.

Next year, 1055, Donnchad's position in Thomond was further weakened. His son, Domnall Ruad, was slain by Ó Eidin, king of Ua Fiachrach Aidne. It would appear that this small state and its neighbour, Circumruad, were opposed to Donnchad. At any rate, Donnchad's son, Murchad an gseóth ghrí, swept over Circumruad and carried off great spoils. Here, however, he was followed by Toirdelbach and his rearguard engaged

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10. Forbas f. á stem, O.I. forfess, 'siege' from fo-ro-med (midir): Pedersen. But better from for-fess (form, a stem), fess being verbal noun of fo-saim 'spend the night,' K. Meyer. The sense is 'stay on many nights.' Cf. forbfaith, 'overlord' Ua., 773. Iríshe Wortkunde, IX., 380.

11. Cf. AU. ALC.: Aed Ua C. muire Clistine Toirdelbaig, slain by Connachtta; sl. by Aed Ua Conchobair, A.Clon., A.Tig. CS.
(cf. AFM., crech dib—one of the raiding parties that was returning with spoils). In the rather general action which followed Toirredelbach was victorious. Murchad is said to have lost 400 men and 14 (ALC.) or 15 (AU.) topsig, important leaders, including the two kings of Corca Baiscinn, Ua Baiiscinn and Mac Aseeda Maic Domnaill. The defeat was, therefore, of some magnitude.\(^{12}\)

Elsewhere, too, Donnchadh found himself faced by grave problems. In 1056 Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó plundered Munster as far as East Limerick (Dún Mic Ninguir, supposed to be the hill of Doon, over Loch Gur, O'Dr., Cenach Téite—not Nenagh, as O'Dr. held, but a place of assembly near Cnoc Aíne). It was probably in connection with this expedition that Inis Cathaig (Scattery) was despoiled by Mac Mail na mbó's foreigners, who, however, suffered badly in the process (AL. 1057: Inis Cathaig do chrob do Gaile Mhic Muel na mbó agus dé mór forruim). The slaying of Maelruanaid Ua Fógarta, ri descirt Eile, by Donnchadh (ALC., AFM. Not said by whom in A. Tíg.) in the next year (1057) points to trouble elsewhere in Munster. Nor must we forget that Dúngal, son of Mac Raith O Donnchada (to be distinguished from Dungal O Donnchada, A. Tíg., AFM. 1025, cf. ZCP., XIX., 195) and Dónchadh O Donnchada, both regarded as kings of Caisel, were slain in this year. But Donnchadh's most dangerous enemy at this moment was Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó, King of Leinster, who was actively allied with Donnchadh's nephew, Toirredelbach. At the latter's instigation (A.T., Toird. ua Brain do thabairt Maic M. na mbó, etc.) Diarmait led a force of Leinstermen, Osraige and Norse to attack Donnchadh. They burnt the plain of Munster far and wide on the way to Limerick. From the Annals of Inisfallen we learn that the defenders of the city set it on fire themselves "lest the other party should burn it." It would appear that Donnchadh meanwhile was collecting a strong army. When his enemies left for home he pursued them as far as Sliab gCloth (Glen of Aherlow) where an engagement was fought. Donnchadh was defeated; for, while the Leinster losses were light, the Munster losses were heavy (AI.). They included Caireabh Ua Ligidh (Lee), airchinnich of Imlech Iubair (Emly), Rigbárdaí Macc Conoir (Cuoirne so. Maenach so. Céibh a quo Ó Cébaill, O Carroll), king of Éile, and Ua Geibhneal, king of Déb Bece, i.e., in Déas Descir, which was still recognised as a political entity. This was an important victory for Diarmait, son of Mael na mbó,\(^{13}\) and a defeat of corresponding significance for Donnchadh.

The result was soon apparent. Donnchadh was no longer able to maintain his position as king of Munster. Next year, then, 1059, he travelled to the house of Aed O Conchobair, King of Connacht, where he stayed from Shrovetide to Easter, and made full submission to the western king (AL., CS., AFM. A.Tíg. put both events in the same year, 1059—co tucad a riarc do brisgaid do). The conclusion is that he had perforce to accept this humiliation as the one means of saving himself from succumbing to Toirredelbach and that prince's powerful patron, Diarmait, son of Mael na mbó.\(^{14}\) We may take it, however, that Donnchadh's situation improved as a result of this political measure. In the warm sun of comparatively better days he soon forgot his obligations to the King of Connacht. The latter was, of course, indignant. In 1061 he marched an army to Cennéraid, destroyed the fortress and the weir (A. Tíg., A. Clon.), filled the well with stones and rubbish (having taken and eaten two salmon that apparently were allowed to swim about unharmed in it), and burnt the whole settlement. But he had soon to busy himself about Loch Corrib in defence of the kingship of Connacht against the O Flahertys. As help from Connacht was now but a memory, Toirredelbach O Brain could again bestir himself with some promise of success. He appealed once more to Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó and the two laid waste the plain of Munster at the end of October. Some of Donnchadh's supporters were slain by them at Chárnchoill, or Cleghile, near Tipperary (A.L., AFM.). Houses and corn went up in flames (AFM.). Again in 1063 the two burnt Limerick. Diarmait's great army secured for him the submission of all the nobles in the plain of Munster (AFM.). Donnchadh, however, and his son, Murchad, remained unsubdued. When Diarmait had gone back to Leinster the King of

\(^{12}\) A. Tíg. duplicates the entry. All it adds is that Killfenora was burnt.

\(^{13}\) In the same year he received the sword of Caruis, etc., in compensation for the death of Gallbratt. Ua Macloscail, who was slain treacherously by Conchobar Ua Macloscail, Mair M. na mbó, who was a guarantor of Gallbratt's safety, had to be paid.

\(^{14}\) It is to be noted that Murchad, son of the Leinster king, was severely defeated by Mide in 1059. But he quickly recovered and in 1060 he sailed to Man, and took tribute from Echmarach son of Ragnall.
Munster and his son attacked Toirrdelbach O Briain at Slia Ardachaid in Eoganachta, whither they had led a large army southwards across the Shannon (A. Tig.). Toirrdelbach, however, carried off the victory at Eas Moingelán (A.Tig., AFM.). Diarmait then returned to Munster and took its hostages "ó usgi fodeas co Cnoc mBreannain," from the Shannon (?) south to Brandon Hill in Kerry. These hostages he handed over to Toirrdelbach, who was his foster son (AFM.). For practical purposes, therefore, Toirrdelbach was now King of Munster, a fact frankly recognised in the Annals of Innisfallen (T.Ua Briain do ghabáil rigo Muman).

Next year (1064) Donnchad accepted the inevitable. He laid down his kingship and went to Rome as a pilgrim, there to die in the monastery of St. Stephen "after victory of penance." It is likely that the Dál Chais assembly which deposed Donnchad gilded the pill for him by declaring Murchad his successor. This, however, could be of small avail. Toirrdelbach was able to take up residence at Cennóraid, or at any rate was able to live encamped there in 1065. Murchad made a determined attempt to oust him from the paternal territory and slew many of his people, but obviously without any decisive result. Next year, 1066, Toirrdelbach strengthened his hold upon the kingship when he and Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó entered into an alliance with Aed O Conchobair, King of Connacht. He was the party that had to be courted, for the alliance cost Toirrdelbach O Briain 30 ounces of gold. The treaty, however, was denounced within a year. In 1067 Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó, with Toirrdelbach O Briain, the Norse, and Mac Gilla Pádraig of Osraige attacked Aed O Conchobair. Soon afterwards Aed, son of Art Uallach Ua Ruaire, attacked Aed O Conchobair from the east. The men of Bréifne were entirely successful. Aed in gha bernaire fell in the encounter and Aed Ua Ruaire succeeded him as ruler of the western kingdom. The battle was fought at Turrach Aghna, near Oranmore (AI., A.Tig., AFM.). 15

Murchad still had a following, as we find him next year (1068) plundering in Tethba (AI., ALC., CS., AFM.). There he met his death. He had collected spoils and sent his men to convoy them to a place of safety. While thus poorly protected he was set upon in the longport (of which he had taken possession; possibly the present Longford) by superior numbers and overwhelmed. He battled heroically against impossible odds till he could fight no longer. With him were slain the king of Muscraige Tire (16) and many others. From that time forward there was no claimant of Donnchad's line to the kingship of Munster or the leadership of the O Briens.

Toirrdelbach O Briain was now undisputed king. He, too, made excellent cain agus reochtig as his predecessor Donnchad had done. With his foster-father and great patron, Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó, he remained on intimate terms. Toirrdelbach paid a visit to the old Leinster king in 1068, and came back laden with presents. Among these were a sword that belonged to his illustrious grandfather, Brian, and a standard that belonged to an English king (Edward the Confessor). In 1070 Diarmait's son, Murchad, died (on November 21st, A.Clion.). Toirrdelbach again visited Leinster but this time with an army. He took many hostages, including Diarmait (a son of Domnall Remar, son of Mael na mbó), and compelled Mac Gilla Pádraig to acknowledge his suzerainty (AI.). Next year again, 1071, he took hostages of Laigin and Mide. 17 All these were handed over to Diarmait, king of Leinster. The latter returned to Kincora with Toirrdelbach, and the two remained on the friendliest terms. At this time Toirrdelbach collected the men of Munster into a construction corps, and two bridges, at Clil Dalmu and Atch Caille, were thrown across the Shannon in a fortnight (AI.). In the following year, on Tuesday, February 7th, 1072 (AFM.), the king of Leinster, Diarmait Mac (Donnchada) Mail na mbó, fell in battle at Odba in Mide, thus bringing his warrior life to a becoming end. 18 As the new king of Ul Censelaig was the son of Domnall Remar, son of Domnall mac Mail na mbó, a man with whom Toirrdelbach had no particular reason to be friendly, the attitude of the Munster ruler towards Leinster in general suffered a complete change. Henceforth he treated the kingdom just as he treated the other Irish states, without special consideration of any kind.

15 AFM. put Murchad with Toirrdelbach in the invading army, but the Murchad in question is Murchad, son of Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó.
16 His name was Mac Conchaille Mac Cinnéidig.
17 For Cell suffered in this expedition. Its king, Mac Gilla Brídige, was slain.
18 LL. regards Diarmait as King of Ireland. 26 a : rapp a fheabh co fressbra Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó. But the conditions which, according to this account, had to be fulfilled before the title could be assumed were not in fact fulfilled in Diarmait's case. AI. wrongly put O Briain in O Maelsechlainn's company in this battle.
THE REIGN OF TOIRRDELBACH Ö BRIAIN, KING OF IRELAND (WITH OPPOSITION), 1072-1086.(20)

With the death of Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó in 1072 ToIRRDELBACH Ö BRIAIN was freed from the obligations which bound a foster-son to his foster-father, and proceeded to show his power even in Leinster. He led an army into Osraige and Ui Cend-selaig, and despoiled these states. Then by way of northern Leinster he reached Dublin, where he was acknowledged as king (AI) and Donncad, son of Domnall Remar, son of (Donncad) Mael na mbó, the new King of Leinster (20) who, like other members of his family, was exercising sovereignty over Dublin, was handed over to him (AI). From all sections of Leinster and from the Norse of Dublin ToIRRDELBACH received hostages (AI). Gofraid, son of Mac Ragnaill, King of Dublin, “came into his house,” as did Conchobar Ó Maelsechlainn, King of Mide (of Tenrach, AI) and Domnall Mac Gilla Pádraig, King of Osraige (AI). Indeed, according to the Annals of Innisfallen, all these acknowledged ToIRRDELBACH as High-King (cotuscat attitn agus ardrige do ToIRRDELBACH).

The following years saw ToIRRDELBACH imposing his authority (such as it was) on other parts of Ireland in the traditional manner. In 1073 occurred the death of the King of Mide, Concobhar Ó Maelsechlainn under peculiarly regrettable circumstances ("treacherously and filthily slain," A.Clion). A peace conference was apparently being held between him and his nephew, Murchad, son of Flann. Important clergy were present, for the Bachall Fosa, a venerated relic on which oaths were solemnly sworn, had been brought from Armagh. Murchad was actually holding the Bachall in his hand when he flung it suddenly from him and rushed upon his uncle, whom he wounded to death before anybody could interfere (AI: AU, ALC, AFM, A.Tig, give balder accounts. The last mentioned source has the name wrong, Muirchertach for Murchad). He was buried at Clonmacnois, and Mide was laid waste by civil war (A.Clion), Maelsechlainn, son of Conchobar, seeking to avenge his father’s death upon the assassin Murchad. ToIRRDELBACH took a hand in these proceedings. He entered Mide, and crossed to Gailenga and Brega (AI). Here he slew the king, Maolmórda Ó Cathasaig. (21) Never did such a spoil come to Munster of men and cattle as came on this occasion (AI). The hostages of Mide were sent to him to his house (in Killaloe). Later he led another expedition to Connacht and collected the hostages of O Connor in West Connacht and of O Ruairc in Bréifne (AI). It is not clear whether it was on the first or on the second occasion that ToIRRDELBACH had the head of Conchobar Ó Maelsechlainn removed from its resting-place at Clonmacnois and brought to Cennóraid. This ghoulish act is said to have taken place on Good Friday. ToIRRDELBACH appears to have repented immediately, for the head is said to have been sent back to Clonmacnois on Easter Sunday (A.Clion, with story of mouse and loss of hair. A.Tig, CS, AFM. Not in AU, ALC.).

Next year (1074) was comparatively peaceful, (22) but in 1075 ToIRRDELBACH was again in the field. The first state to which he devoted attention was that of the Norse of Dublin, whose native ruler at this time was Gofraid, son of Mac Ragnaill (cf. 1072). ToIRRDELBACH banished Gofraid over sea (AI). What happened then in the city is not clear. What I take to be most likely is that ToIRRDELBACH set up a Norse prince of his own choosing in Gofraid’s place and then retired. But the Mael na mbó kings of Leinster had an interest of long standing, too, in the town of the foreigners. It would appear, then, that Domnall, son of (Murchad), that son of Diarmait mac Mail na mbó who had died as king of Dublin in 1070, took possession of the city (23) and held it till his very sudden death, after an illness of three days (ALC, AFM, AU, 3 nights) within the same year (AI). Meanwhile the expelled Northman, Gofraid, was collecting a great fleet in the hope of regaining his patrimony; but while thus engaged he, too, died (AI: ALC, CS, A.Tig. AU.—Gofraid, so. of Amlaib, so. Ragnaill—say simply that he died). ToIRRDELBACH profited by the opportunity thus offered to make his own son, Muirchertach, King of Dublin (AI, A.Clion, CS, AFM. AFM. record that Muirchertach Ó Briain was made King of Dublin, but O’Donovan does not translate the sentence).

19. The A.Clion, state, 1070, that ToIRRDELBACH Ó Briain succeeded Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó and reigned full 25 years, that is to say, to 1097. This, obviously, is a mistake.
20. The LL. list, 36 b c d, gives Domnall, son of Murchad, son of Diarmait, one year immediately after Diarmait; but this is very doubtful.
21. Of the Slains, previously a very small subject people.
22. Incidentally this is the year in which letters were exchanged between Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the citizens of Dublin. Ussher Works. IV, pp. 488-91.
23. This is the prince who in the LL. list is given as king of Leinster for one year, 1072-3.
Perhaps this was in compensation for a defeat of some consequence which Muircertach had just suffered. To make good his claim to the kingship of Ireland Toirrdelbach would have to secure recognition from the northern rulers. This he attempted to do in the year 1075. He led a great army of the men of Munster, Leinster, Connacht, Osraige, Mide, and the Norse to Ardee, and demanded hostages of the Airgialla (all the Annals) and the Uaile (A. Tig., AFM.) but he returned discomfited (cen gialla, cen etire, iar marbad dremo dia muintir. A.Tig.). What really happened is conjectural. Perhaps the army divided and a part of it under Muircertach was sent to subdue the Airgialla. At any rate Muircertach met the Airgialla at Ard Monain (place not identified) and was defeated by them with heavy loss (agus rolad dergára a mhuinntire, AFM. Many were slain, AU, ALC. ALC. place this defeat before the death of Domnall Mac Murchada). After such a contrebemps the large army of the southern king had to return home with nothing to its credit. Even a minor principality, like Dublin, would do something to heal Muircertach's wounded feelings!

The next two years brought Toirrdelbach greater success. In 1076 he led an army into Connacht and received the formal submission of Ruadri O Connor (AU., ALC., AFM. He was put in fetters and kept thus till he submitted). A sad domestic event was the death of his wife, Gormlaith, daughter of Ua Fógarta of Southern Eile in that year (A. Tig., AFM., put her death in 1077). She died at Killaloe and was buried on Isis Celtra, or Holy Island, in Lough Derg (AL., AFM., A. Tig. add that she left an immense amount of goods—craid=cradh diaramne—to churches and the poor of the Lord for the good of her soul). In 1077 Toirrdelbach was in Uí Cendsealga, where he placed Domnchad, son of Domnall Remar, in fetters. As Donnchad was not deposed (he was killed 12 years later—1089—by Conchobar Ó Conchobhair Ó Eolga), it is to be concluded that the fetters were no more than a vigorous reminder of the overlordship of the Munster King, and that all was well again when obedience had been offered with due deference. (25)

The scene now shifts swiftly and mysteriously to the far North. In 1078, Conchobar Ó Briain, king of Telach Óc and rigdomna Brenn, was killed, with his wife, by the Cenél Binnig of the valley. Telach Óc is in the heart of Tyrone, and we ask with surprise what an Ó Briain prince and his consort were doing in that territory. Telach Óc is now a village called Tullyhogue, about midway between Cookstown and Stewartstown, and some six miles distant from Dungannon, which became the seat of Cenél Eogan power under Domnall Ó Neill (1295-1325). Originally it had belonged to the Uí Tuirtre sept of the Airgialla, but these had been ousted by the Cenél Eogan in the course of the 10th century (cf. James Hogan—Féilsgribhinn, E.Mhle Ó Neill, p. 421, Mac Neill, Archiv. Hib. II., 61, Poems by Flann Mainistreach). Meanwhile the Cenél Eogan had begun to divide into fairly well defined branches, the one seated in the ancient home of the dynasty in Inis Eogan (Cenél Eogan na h-Innisi) and the other moving out into Airgialla territory towards Armagh (Cenél Eogan Telcha Óc). The latter group descended from Domnall Ardachacha Ó Neill, who was buried (A.D. 980) in the primatial city. His son, Aed Crobh Tulaich Ó Neill seems to have been the last of his branch to rule at Ailech (Hogan, op. cit., p. 422). He was slain by the Norse in 1004. The main Uí Tuirtre dynasty was transferred from Airgialla to Dál nAraide about the date of Domnall's death, and it is likely that Telach Óc became the seat of at least one group of Ó Neill dynasts from that time forward. By 1056 and probably much earlier in that century the head of the Clann Fergusa of Cenél Eogan, Ó h-Ocain (O Hagan), held the office of rechtsaire in the Ó Neill interest at Telach Óc. Another Cenél Eogan sept that acquired territory in the neighbourhood of Telach Óc was the Cenél mBinnich, who had been settled in the mountainous region of South Derry from early times. Thus an offshoot of this Cenél Eogan stock (Cenél mBinnich Lochar Drochait) became known also as Cenél mBinnich Telcha Óc. They held no official position in connection with either the Ó Neills or the Mac Lochlainns and were not prepared to let old loyalties stand in the way of their advance.

At the death of Flaitbertach an Trostáin Ó Neill in 1036 the chief place within the Cenél Eogan sept passed to the Clann Domnail, descened from Domnall, son of Aed Findliath (died 879) and brother of Niall Glündub (died 919). In the 11th century the

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24. Conchobar O Connor celebrated the Aenach Carman in 1073.
25. Strange to relate, there is no record of this event in AI.
Clann Domnall is represented by the family of Mac Lochlainn. Lochlainn, son of Maelsechnaill (son of Maerlruanaid, son of Flann, son of Domnall, Ri Allig, 887-915, son of Aed Findliath), king of Inis Eogain and Mag Ithμ, was slain by his brother, Niall, in 1023. In a struggle for the kingship, Niall, son of Maelsechnaill, succeeded Fliathbertach an Trostain as king of Cenel Eogain, and his successor in 1061, was his son, Ardgal. He died as king of Cenel Eogain in 1064. His son again was Domnall Mac Meir Lochlainn (born in 1048), the first to bear the family name. He became king of Cenel Eogain about 1083 (cf. A.F.M. under that year). Between 1036 and 1061 the throne had been held by Niall, and between 1064 and 1083 it had been held by Niall's sons, Domnall, Aed and Donnchad. Ardgal, son of Lochlainn, had ousted the O Neills from Telach Oc, for he was ousted by them in turn in 1051. In 1064, when King of Aliech and the strongest prince in Ulster, he returned to Telach Oc, but died there that year, when his son, Domnall was but 12 years old. No doubt the O Neills returned, for Fliathbertach O Neill is called King of Telach Oc at his death in 1068. Instead of repeating the policy of expulsion and putting a prince of their own on the Telach Oc throne, the Mac Lochlainns now had recourse to a novel expedient. Toirrdelebach O Briain, King of Munster, growing daily in strength, was knocking at the gates of the north. As a move against him, and at the same time against the O Neills, the Mac Lochlainns invited Conchobar, son of Lorcμn, son of Donnchad O Briain (who had been deposed in 1064 and had died at Rome), representative of a rival O Briain branch, to assume the kingship of Telach Oc. He did so, obviously with the aid of the Mac Lochlainns and in opposition to Toirrdelebach. This intrusion of a southern dynasty was, however, displeasing to other sections of the Cenel Eogain besides the O Neills. Conchobar and his Queen were not long installed at Telach Oc when they were assassinated by the Cenel Binm na Glinne (AL). The death of the wife with the husband points to a private attack as distinct from an open campaign and destruction on the battlefield. (This is implied in the "treacherously" of AL). Thus the old view that Toirrdelebach had placed his cousin on a northern throne and that this doing so indicated a new Dál Chais policy of centralisation, under the influence of feudal models, must be absolutely rejected. Conchobar O Briain was not Toirrdelebach's nominee but his rival and enemy. Toirrdelebach did not set aside the traditional mode of succession and inflict a ruler of his own on the Cenel Eogain state. What was unusual in Conchobar's selection was due to the Mac Lochlainns. Nor did they abandon the idea when the first attempt to realise it proved unsuccessful. The asseilant of Conchobar was immediately slain (AL). Not only this, but the dead prince's brother, Cennμd (son of Lorcμn, son of Donnchad O Briain) was placed on the throne (AL). His hostility to Toirrdelebach is shown by the fact that he met his death fighting with the O Ruairces against him in 1084. Thus Cennμd appears to have ruled Telach Oc for six years. That he was on excellent terms with the Mac Lochlainns is clear from the circumstance that his daughter, Bēbinn, became Domnall Ua Lochaíin's Queen. Her death in that position of high dignity is recorded in 1110.

Though Ruadri na saige buidhe O Conchobar had been fettered and reduced to subjection in 1076 he had not continued to give satisfaction to his overlord. Toirrdelebach O Briain therefore led a great army into Connacht in 1078 and, having expelled Ruadri from his kingdom, plundered as far north as Croaghpatrick and the islands of Clew Bay (Insi Modh). There is no good reason for thinking that this deposition proved effective, for when the next O Connors are mentioned (1082) Ruadri seems to have been as strong as ever. Nor is it suggested in any source (cf. list in LL., 41a, b) that another ruler of Connacht was intruded at this date. The conclusion, therefore, is that Ruadri once again made his peace with Toirrdelebach.

Two unusual events in these years testify to the reputation of the Munster king. In 1078, when the Ulaid ruler, Donnsléibe Ua hEochadha, was deposed in favour of a

26. As Domnall was in fact a grandson of Lochlainn, he is referred to generally in the Annals as Donnall Ua Lochlainn. Domnall's sons and descendants were Mac Lochlainns. This terminology is adhered to in the following pages.
27. The incident was not quite understood by the Annalists. Thus A.Tig. calls Conchobar O Briain at his death ri Cenedi Eogain, falsely; Cnedidig, his successor, is called by A.F.M. king of Gallenga, the Mac Machtain principality in Mide.
28. To Professor James Hogan in Féilseabhair Roimh Mhic Neill belongs the merit of elucidating this obscure series of events in Irish history.
29. Perhaps the occasion was the slaying of Aed Ua Fliathbertaig, Ri Iarairch Chonnacht, by Ruadri. A.Tig.
kinsman—In Meranach Ua hEochada the unfortunate ex-king went at once to Toirrdelbach for redress (AI). Next year, 1079, he had visitors of a very different character. Five Jews crossed the sea to confer with him, no doubt in the hope that he would allow them to settle in his territory. Being wise men of the world they brought with them suitable presents (aisceda). But Toirrdelbach did not fancy the children of Israel as colonists, so he sent them back to England (AI). Toirrdelbach marched to Leinster (AI), Ath Cliath and Mide, and received the submission in solemn form of Maeilseclainn Bán (son of Conchubair O Maelseclainn), King of Mide. Apparently the Comarba Pátraic was present with the Bachall Iosa, and the clergy of Munster were also represented. Maeilseclainn Bán O Maelseclainn would take his oath to obey Toirrdelbach's behests on the Bachall Iosa. Nor did he come alone, for with him were a group of Ulaid aristocrats. This troop entered into Toirrdelbach's service (A.U. AFM., who, however, place this event in 1080). According to the Annals of Innisfallen, the Munster king brought O Maelseclainn with him to Limerick. If we may trust the same source, the ex-king of Ulaid above mentioned, Donnslébe Ua hEochada, was restored to his patrimony in 1080, no doubt with Toirrdelbach's help.

At this period the quarrels about succession in the Ulaid kingdom lead to changes so rapid that the effort to follow them must be abandoned. The main course of events is, I think, depicted in the Annals of Innisfallen. When Donnslébe was deposed in 1078, he came to Toirrdelbach (AI), who in due course (1080) enabled him to regain his throne. Meanwhile the position of king had been held by (Aed) in Meranach O hEochada, for this agrees with the Book of Leinster list, which gives the said Aed a reign of two years (LL., 41d.). In the same list a Lochlainn, son of Maelruan, is given as Aed's successor, though his reign is said to have terminated after a month. Perhaps he had ousted in Meranach before Donnslébe's return. As the latter slew another dynastic rival, Goll na Gorta O Mathgamana (AI) (A.L.C. calls him "King of Ulaid") at Downpatrick in 1081, it is obvious that his troubles were not yet over. But in that year he seems to have reached security and he showed his gratitude to Toirrdelbach O Briain by visiting him, probably at Killala, with a group of Ulaid nobles, and making submission to Toirrdelbach as overlord. This I take to be the meaning of a notice in the Annals which has not been quite grasped by the various editors. The Annals of Innisfallen relate that (Donnslébe) King of Ulaid came into the house of O Briain and took stipends from him (coruc in n-arraid uad. A.U. and AFM. read "ar eend tuarastail"). This was taken to mean that Donnslébe and his suite entered Toirrdelbach's service as military men, but the meaning rather is that the King of Ulaid took presents in formal acknowledgment of his dependence on Toirrdelbach. This would mean powerful and much-needed support, not only against rivals within the dynasty but also (what was far more important) against the claims of Ceinél Eogain, the hereditary enemies of the Ulaid state. Aed in Meranach, now an ex-king, was either brought to the south, or came there of his own accord, for his death by drowning at Limerick is chronicled under 1083 (CS. and A.Tig.). Donnslébe in the sequel held his throne undisturbed till 1097, when he was slain by Domnall Ua Lochlaim. As Cúlad Ua Fliathri, King of Ulaid, was deposed in 1071 by Lochlainn O Maelruanaid (AFM.), who was slain immediately afterwards by Donnslébe, it is clear that the LL. list confuses the order of succession. This Lochlainn is obviously the King of Ulaid who ruled for a month, and he proceeded Aed in Meranach rather than succeeded him. Again this Aed himself is but an intruder into the reign of Donnslébe, which began in 1071. As it lasted to 1091, save for two years during which the throne was filled by Aed, the reign lasted 15 years (or, if Aed be not reckoned, 20), so that the LL. list is excessively generous when it adds a further ten or twelve. Of course a good round number like 30 has its attractions!

How complicated life can be is illustrated by the death in 1080 of Dergborghail, wife of Diarmaid Maccail na mbó, and Queen of Leinster up to the death of that king in 1072. She was the daughter of Dommnad, son of Brian Boruma, king of Munster. Toirrdelbach was thus her first cousin (but his father, Tadg, was a half-brother, not a full brother of her father, Dommnad). Perhaps it was because of this relationship that Toirrdelbach was fostered in Ua Cendseiglaigh by Diarmaid. It was an irony of fate that

30. The sense of meránach is 'wild,' 'furiosus,' rather than 'crazy.'
31. LL. gives other members of Mathgamain's family.
32. That they were condottieri, in fact. MacCarthy. A.U., 1080, n. 4.
as time went on Toirrdeilbach should become her father’s bitterest enemy and be supported in that attack by her husband, Diarmait. Whether she stayed in Leinster under such circumstances is not clear. Possibly she did. Her death took place at Emly (AU) no doubt in religious retirement; but her withdrawal from Leinster took place probably after Diarmait’s death. Like many another daughter of a royal house, she must have experienced an abundant share of life’s disappointments and tribulations!

As has already been said, the Annals of Innisfallen and the Annals of Tigernach ascribe the expedition of Toirrdeilbach Ó Brain to Ath Cliath and Mide, when Maelseachlaimn Ó Maelseachlaimn submitted, to the year 1079, whereas the CS, and the AFM, ascribe the same event to the following year. It may have taken place at the close of the one and the opening of the next year. Thereafter there was not much of note to chronicle for a short spell. Dynastic strife, of course, continued. In 1082 Domnall, son of Conchober Ó Brian (who had perished at Telach Oe in 1073) was killed (AFM.), but the other sources (AU, ALC) say simply that he died, and it is to be hoped that this is true. A sensational event in dynastic circles was the slaying in 1082 of Domnall, son of Tadg Ó Connor, by his uncle, Cathal, son of Aed, that is to say his father’s brother. The heinous deed was done without any cause “save envy and jealousy.” (A.Cl., APM., CS. The event is also in AU. addition). Ruadri O’Connor, King of Connacht, marched against the assassin, whom he slew in battle.\footnote{33}

An event of importance in the North in 1083 was the succession of Domnall Ó Lochainn to the kingship of Cenél Eogain. He was born in 1045, and was thus in this year 35 years old, the age when princes of distinction were wont to assert themselves. Three years earlier (1080) he had made his first appearance as an independent commander when, with the men of Mag Itha, he defeated the Fir Manach at Ath Ergail near Clogher (AFM.). With the rise of Domnall Ó Lochainn the rival family of the Ó Maelseachlaimn of the North, who had recently given three kings to the Cenél Eogain, sank into obscurity. Domnall showed his capacity for high civil and military command in the traditional manner. He led an army (crech rig) into Mag Conaille and Airgilla and, having collected spoils, reduced the men of Fernmag to formal allegiance to himself.

As usual, however, in the North, all was not plain sailing for the King of Cenél Eogain. In the following year, 1084, the difficulty of achieving permanent results in the subjugation of Irish states was vividly illustrated. The Ulaid, so long sacrificed on the funeral pyre of Cenél Eogain ambition, rose phoenix-like from their ashes and began a policy of expansion on their own account. Donnsléibé, their king, marched an army to Droichet Atha, where he was met by Donnchad, son of (Art), in coilech Ó Ruairi, who accepted stipend from him. Why Ó Ruairi should have contemplated this alliance is not quite clear. It may be taken as certain that the move was directed fundamentally against the Ó Connors, whose predominance in Connacht the Ó Ruaires menaced seriously at this period.

Both Domnall Ó Lochainn and Toirrdeilbach Ó Brain reacted at once to this challenge to their superiority. The former invaded Ulaid and carried off booty while Donnsléibé was still absent at Drogheda. From his point of view it was intolerable that the King of Ulaid, a people long subordinate to Cenél Eogain, should be seeking to exercise authority over other states. Toirrdeilbach Ó Brain was equally displeased with the behaviour of Ó Ruairí. Over the king of Connacht, Ruadri Ó Connor, he had succeeded in imposing suzerainty. Was this minor king of an east Connacht state to withdraw himself from obedience to Munster and ally himself with a northern kingdom? The concept was to him absurd. Toirrdeilbach, therefore, led an army into Leth Cuind (AL) and marched through Mide (AFM.) towards Bréifne. With the southerners on this journey was Conchobhar Ó Cefada(\footnote{34}), a man apparently of great distinction, who died on his bed somewhere in the Midlands (AL). Toirrdeilbach sent his two sons, Tadg and Muirechertach, to devastate Ó Ruairí’s country (AL). Toirrdeilbach himself does not seem to have gone further north than Mide (AU). The Ó Ruaires made a spirited reply. Two sections of the family, that descended from Art the Cock and that descended from Art Uallach (AL), united and made a raid into Dál Cháis territory, where they destroyed duns and strong places (dingnada, AFM.) and carried off rich spoils (AFM.). The line of their march is indicated by the churches which they burned, Cell Dalua,

\footnote{33. AL, ALC. say nothing of the assassination of this Domnall.}
\footnote{34. Ordán agus cláraechus Muman eileide (AFM.)}
Tuaim Gréine and Mag Eo nOrbraige (Mayno, upper Tulla, on borders of Loch Derg). This suggests that they came down along the left bank of the Shannon and crossed into Clare at Killaloe, taking the land at a disadvantage since its fighting men were away.

Encouraged by this success, the O Ruaires led another expedition into Finegall (AL). The leader was still their king—Donnchad Cael, son of Art in Coilech. With him were his own men of Bréifne and the Caibre, Cailenga, and, very significantly, Cennédig Ó Briain, King of Telach Óc, with others of his house. No doubt the east Connacht army was proceeding leisurely, for news of its doings had ample time to reach Munster. A large force was gathered under the command of Muirchertach, son of Toirrdelbach, and sent to Leinster to put a stop to O Ruaire's progress. Muirchertach was joined in due course by the Osraige, the men of Leinster and the Norse of Dublin. He made contact with the Connacht army at Móin Cruinnéide (Monecrook, near Leixlip) and a battle was fought on October 19th, 1084, in which Muirchertach was entirely victorious. Donnchad O Ruairc, King of Breifne, fell, and with him Cennédig Ó Briain of Telach Óc, his son Tadg, and four other princes of the family. Another of the slain was Congalach, son of Murchad Ó Conchobair of Uí Fèilge, who presumably was on Muirchertach's side. In all, four thousand were said to have fallen in the battle. Ó Ruairc's head was cut off and carried as a trophy to Limerick. This was a grave, if not fatal, blow to O Ruairc's ambitions need not be emphasised. Hitherto, in the 11th century, they held a position of comparative equality with the OConnors, and had given kings to Connacht. They were no longer able to do this in the 12th century. It must be said, however, that in 1087 they suffered another serious defeat at Corann, in Sligo, when Ruadrí Ó Conchobair slew Aed Ó Ruairc, King of Connaicne (AU. A.Tig., call this Aed King of Connacht, wrongly. This source also gives a list of those slain with Ó Ruairc). Incidentally, the death of Cennédig Ó Briain and so many of his followers ended the rather remarkable experiment of placing a Munster prince on a northern throne.

Again in 1085 Toirrdelbach invaded Bréifne, and plundered its southern part (S. Leitrim), where the king of Muinter Eolais, Murladach, son of Dub, was taken prisoner. (The Mag Ragnail, Reynolds, family represents this people from about 1150 onwards). Before the year ended, however, the Munster king had fallen ill of a serious sickness, and all his hair had fallen off (A.Clon.).

Toirrdelbach's illness grew ever more grievous and on July 14th, 1086, he breathed his last at Connéoraid, "after long suffering and intense penance for his sins, after taking the Body of Christ and His Blood" (AU. AFM.). His age was 77, and he had ruled Munster in effect since 1063 (AL) and with full rights since 1064 (when Donnchad abdicated), so that his reign lasted 22 years (AFM.). Despite all his efforts, he had never succeeded in reducing the North, and his last years (from 1080 onwards) had seen the rise of the powerful Cenél Eigíne prince, Donnall Ua Lochlainn, so that his claim to the kingship of Ireland had never been made wholly good. He died, as he lived, King of Ireland, indeed, but always "with opposition."

Three able sons survived him, and the question of succession was obviously thorny. There was happily no interference from outside, but there was plenty of scope for doubts and disorders within. Appeals for a peaceful solution were, no doubt, made and the three competitors accepted for the nonce the easiest but most unsatisfactory of compromises. Munster was divided into three parts and the surviving sons, Tadg, Muirchertach and Diarmait, were given one each. This arrangement, surprisingly accepted, was yet more unexpectedly upset. Tadg Ó Briain died the following month, quietly in Cennóiraid, on his father's bed. The whole question of Munster sovereignty was perfecly raised anew. This time there was much less of sweet reasonableness than there had been at Toirrdelbach's death. Diarmait was banished from Munster and Muirchertach took up the reins of government in all the southern kingdom (AL).

35. AFM. Ordán suntie oireacchus Muman elside. Ua Ceifeda, a Dál Chaí family, was settled near Limerick. The name became Anglicised Katey (or Kadey), but in more recent times generally Keating. For further references to the family cf. A.Tig. 1068, AL. 1087.
36. Five Uí Briain casualties are mentioned in AL.
37. On October 10th of that year the Bishop of Dublin was drowned in the Irish Sea. His successor, Donnugas (Donatus) was sent to Lanfranc to be consecrated. "Petentibus atque eligentibus eum Terdignacum, Hibernum regum et episcopos Hiberniae regionis, atque clero et populo prefate civitatis" Toirrdelbach may have been in Dublin in the closing days of 1034, or the spring of 1035, when this choice was made.—Annals of St. Mary's Abbey, II, p. 250.
38. This event was projected backwards and the falling off of hair was given as consequence of his taking the head of Conchobar Ó Maelscolainn from Connemara to Conneoraid, 1073.

(To be continued).