

“ENNISKILLEN”

by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn (1550-1591)

Part 1: A beautiful poem in praise of Enniskillen Castle.

- 1 Alas for him who looks on Enniskillen, with its glistening bays and melodious falls; it is perilous for us, since one cannot forsake it, to look upon the fair castle, with its shining sword.
- 2 Long ere ever I came to the white-walled rampart amongst the blue hillocks it seemed to me if I could reach that house I should lack nothing.
- 3 I heard, alas for me that heard it, such repute of the fairy castle of surpassing treasure, and how my beguilement was in store, that it was impossible to turn me back from it.
- 7 I proceed on my way, I reach Enniskillen of the overhanging oaks; through the fair plain of bending, fruit-laden stems I was in no wise loth to approach it.
- 8 Ere I arrived beside the place I was startled at the tumult; the baying of their lively hounds and their hunting-dogs driving deer from the wood for them.
- 9 The strand beside the court, on the fairy-like bay of murmuring streams, was crowded with such groves of tapering ship-masts that they concealed the beach and its waves.
- 10 And hard by that enclosure I see a lovely plain of golden radiance, the moist-surfaced lawn of the bright-hued castle, the soil of Paradise, or else its very counterpart.

“INIS CEITHLEANN”

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- 1 Mairg féagas ar Inis Ceithleann
na gcuan n-éadrocht, na n-eas mbinn;
guais dúinn, ‘snách féadair a fágbháil,
féagain an mhúir fádbháin finn.
- 2 I bhfad riamh suil ráinig mise
múr taoibhgheal na dtulach ngorm,
dá roicheadh leam triall don teaghsoin –
dar leam ní bhiadh easbhaidh orm.
- 3 Do-chuala mé – mairg do-chualaidh –
do chlú ar síothbhruigh na séad mbuadh,
mo bhréagadh mar do bhí I gcinneadh,
ní as nár féadadh m’filleadh uadh.
- 7 Gluaisim romham, ránag ainnséin
Inis Ceithleann fa gclaon dair;
tre chlár bhfionn na bhreirfleasg dtaraidh
fa neimgleasg liom aghaidh air.
- 8 Suil tánag re taobh an bhaile
do bhiodhg mé le a méad do gháir:
nuall a gcon meardha ‘sa míolchon,
ag cor ealbha a díothrobh dháibh.
- 9 Do bhí an trácht re taobh na cúirte,
fa chuan síthe na sruth mbalbh –
gur fóiligh a trágh ‘sa tonna –
lán do dhoiribh corra carbh.
- 10 Do-chím láimh risin lios gcéadna
clár aoibhinn dob órtha lí,
faithche bharrthais an dúinn daithghil,
úir Pharthais nó a haithghin í.

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Part 2: A vivid description of life inside the Castle.

- 14 I found the nobles of the race of Colla in the thronged court distributing treasure, and those who exposed the recondities of the genealogy of the Grecian Gaels.
- 15 I found, moreover, throughout the fortress plenty of poets and minstrels, from one bright, white-surfaced wall to the other – happy the dwelling in which they find room!
- 16 In the other division I found plenty of slender-lipped, satin-clad maidens, weaving wondrous golden fringes in the sportive rampart with fair, sleek hounds.
- 17 All through the house is an abundance of soldiery, reclining by the side walls; their edged weapons hanging above the fighters, warriors of fruitful Druim Caoin.
- 19 A company of artificers binding vessels, a company of smiths preparing weapons; a company of wrights that were not from one land at work upon her – fair pearl of babbling streams.
- 20 Dyeing of textures, polishing of blades, fitting of javelins, exercising of steeds, captives in surety, drawing up of conditions, scholars surveying the list of kings.
- 21 Taking hostages, releasing hostages; healing of warriors, wounding of warriors, continual bringing in and giving out of treasure at the wondrous, smooth, comely, firm, castle.

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- 14 Fuaras maithe mhaicne Cholla
san chúirt daoinigh ag dáil séad,
lucht foilgheasa sgéal do sgaoileadh
fréamh gcoibhneasa Ghaoidheal nGréag.
- 15 Fuaras fós ar feadh an longphuirt
a lán d'éigsibh is d'aos fuinn,
ón tslios gheal fonnbhán go 'roile –
mo chean orlár toighe i dtuill.
- 16 Fuaras a lán san leith oile
d'ainnribh béaltana brat sróil,
i múr chonchair na gcon bhfionnbhláith
ag cor chorthair iongnáith óir.
- 17 A lán féinneadh feadh an tige,
tríd siar ar na sleasaibh taoibh,
airm chorra ag na hamhsaibh uaisdibh –
gasraidh Droma cnuaisdigh Caoin.
- 19 Buidhean cheard ag ceangal bhleidheadh,
buidhean ghaibhneadh ag gléas arm;
buidhean saor nách d'éanfonn uirre –
néamhonn chaomh na mbuinne mbalbh.
- 20 Bruit dá gcorcradh, cuilg dá ngormadh,
gaoi dá n-ionnsma, eich dá ngníomh;
bráighde i ngioll, comha dá gcuma,
sgola os cionn an rulla ríogh.
- 21 Géill dá ngabháil, géill dá léigean;
laoich dá leigheas, laoich dá nguinn;
seóid dá síorchur inn is uadha –
an síothbhruigh slim cuanna cuir.

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Part 3: Feasting at Enniskillen Castle.

- 22 Part of that day they spent in talking of exploits, in meditating on battle; and a while would be spent by the host of Ushnagh in feasting, in listening to music.
- 23 Thus till supper-time we spent the whole of the fair day in the bright, green-swarded, fertile enclosure; as one hour in length did that day seem to us.
- 24 All began to seat themselves by the smooth walls of the white rampart; hardly in any hostel is there a number to equal the party that was therein.
- 25 Cúchonnacht Óg, son of Cúchonnacht, supple form to which smoke clings, when all that were in his hostel have sat down he seats himself on his regal seat.
- 26 I sat on the right hand of the champion of Tara till the circling of goblets was over; though it had its due of nobles the king's elbow never disdained me.
- 27 After a while, when it was time for those in the castle to take their rest, beds of down were prepared for the noblest of the alert, instructed host.
- 39 Never have I heard of a household so noble as that in the castle – what excellence – under any that sprang from the Collas; that is the pronouncement of every poet regarding it.

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- 22 Do-bheireadh siad seal don lósoin
ar luadh n-éacht, ar iomrádh ngleóidh;
do-beirthe seal ag slógh Uisnigh
ar ól bhfleadh, ar chluinsin gceiól.
- 23 Rugsam as go haimsir gcaithmhe,
car an chaomhlaoi do chaith sinn
san mhúr gheal féaruaine fásaigh,
feadh éanuaire an lásoin linn.
- 24 Gabhaid cách 'ga gcur 'na suidhe
ar sleasaibh míne an mhúir ghil;
tearc i mbruidhin a séad samhla –
méad an mhuirir tarla astigh.
- 25 Cú Chonnacht Óg mhac Con Chonnacht,
cneas leabhar dá leanann dé –
ar suidhe dá mbíodh 'na bhruidhin
'na súidhe ríogh suidhidh sé.
- 26 Suidhimse ar deis dreagain Teamhrach,
go dtairnig dhúin dáil na gcorn;
gé tharla a díol uirre d'uaislibh
uille an ríogh níor uaisligh orm.
- 27 I gcionn aimsire an uair táinig
tráth luighe do lucht an dúin,
roighne an tslóigh mhóirfeithmhigh mhúinte-
cóirighthir dhóibh cúilte clúimh.
- 39 Ní chuala comhmaith an teaghlaigh
atá san dún – dia do bhail-
fa neach dár chin ó na Collaibh,
ag sin breath gach ollaimh air.