

# **THE OMING OF CUCULAIN**

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The coming of Cuculain by Standish O'Grady

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**STANDISH O'GRADY**

**THE OMING  
OF CUCULAIN**



**THE COMING OF CUCULAIN**

By the same Author.

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- I.—THE COMING OF CÚCULAIN.
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LOST ON DE-CORRIG, or 'Twixt Earth and Ocean.



"If the boy comes now, ere I can chain the dog,  
verily he will be torn into small pieces."

# THE COMING OF CUCULAIN

BY

STANDISH O'GRADY

*Author of*

"THE TRIUMPH AND PASSING OF CUCULAIN"

"IN THE GATES OF THE NORTH"

"THE FLIGHT OF THE EAGLE"

ETC.



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## P R E F A C E

THERE are three great cycles of Gaelic literature. The first treats of the gods ; the second of the Red Branch Knights of Ulster and their contemporaries ; the third is the so-called Ossianic. Of the Ossianic, Finn is the chief character ; of the Red Branch cycle, Cuculain, the hero of our tale.

Cuculain and his friends are historical characters, seen as it were through mists of love and wonder, whom men could not forget, but for centuries continued to celebrate in countless songs and stories. They were not literary phantoms, but actual existences ; imaginary and fictitious characters, mere creatures of idle fancy, do not live and flourish so in the world's memory. And as to the gigantic stature and superhuman prowess and achievements of those antique heroes, it must not be forgotten that all art magnifies, as if in obedience to some strong law ; and so, even in our own times, Grattan, where he stands in artistic bronze, is twice as great as the real Grattan thundering in the Senate. I will therefore ask the reader, remembering the large manner of the antique

literature from which our tale is drawn, to forget for a while that there is such a thing as scientific history, to give his imagination a holiday, and follow with kindly interest the singular story of the boyhood of Cuculain, "battle-prop of the valour and torch of the chivalry of the Ultonians."

I have endeavoured so to tell the story as to give a general idea of the cycle, and of primitive heroic Irish life as reflected in that literature, laying the cycle, so far as accessible, under contribution to furnish forth the tale. Within a short compass I would bring before swift modern readers the more striking aspects of a literature so vast and archaic as to repel all but students.