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Culhwch and Olwen

Cilydd son of Cyleddon Wledig wished for a wife as wellborn as himself. The wife that he took was Goleuddydd daughter of Anlawdd Wledig. After his stay with her the country went to prayers whether they might have offspring, and they got a son through the prayers of the country. But from the time she grew with child, she went mad, without coming near a dwelling. When her time came upon her, her right sense came back to her; it came in a place where a swineherd was keeping a herd of swine, and through terror of the swine the queen was delivered. And the swineherd took the boy until he came to the court. And the boy was baptized, and the name Culhwch given to him because he was found in a pig-run.¹ Nonetheless the boy was of gentle lineage: he was first cousin to Arthur. And the boy was put out to nurse.

And after that the boy's mother, Goleuddydd daughter of Anlawdd Wledig, grew sick. She called her husband to her, and quoth she to him, 'I am going to die of this sickness, and thou wilt wish for another wife. And these days wives are the dispensers of gifts, but it is wrong for thee to despoil thy son. I ask of thee that thou take no wife till thou see a two-headed briar on my grave.' That he promised her. She summoned her preceptor to her and bade him strip the grave each year, so that nothing might grow on it. The queen died. The king would send an attendant every morning to see whether anything was growing on the grave. At the end of seven years the preceptor neglected that which he had promised the queen. One day when the king was hunting, he drew near the graveyard; he wanted to see the grave whereby he was to take a wife. He saw the briar. And when he saw it the king took counsel where he might get a wife. Quoth one of the counsellors, 'I could tell of a

¹ Culhwch: pig-run. A fanciful explanation, from hwch: pig. Compare the note on Pryderi, p. 19.

woman would suit thee well. She is the wife of king Doged.' They decided to seek her out. And they slew the king, and his wife they brought home with them, and an only daughter she had along with her; and they took possession of the king's lands.

Upon a day as the good lady went walking abroad, she came to the house of an old crone who was in the town, without a tooth in her head. Quoth the queen: 'Crone, wilt thou for God's sake tell me what I ask of thee? Where are the children of the man who has carried me off by force?' Quoth the crone: 'He has no children.' Quoth the queen: 'Woe is me that I should have come to a childless man!' Said the crone: 'Thou needst not say that. It is prophesied that he shall have offspring. 'Tis by thee he shall have it, since he has not had it by another. Besides, be not unhappy, he has one son.'

The good lady returned home joyfully, and quoth she to her husband, 'What reason hast thou to hide thy child from me?' Quoth the king, 'I will hide him no longer.' Messengers were sent after the boy, and he came to the court. His stepmother said to him, 'It were well for thee to take a wife, son, and I have a daughter meet for any nobleman in the world.' Quoth the boy, 'I am not yet of an age to take a wife.' Said she in reply: 'I will swear a destiny upon thee, that thy side shall never strike against woman till thou win Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Chief Giant.' The boy coloured, and love of the maiden entered into every limb of him, although he had never seen her. Quoth his father to him, 'How, son, why dost thou colour? What ails thee?' 'My stepmother has sworn on me that I shall never win a wife until I win Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Chief Giant.' 'It is easy for thee to achieve that, son,' said his father to him. 'Arthur is thy first cousin. Go then to Arthur to trim thy hair, and ask that of him as his gift to thee.'

Off went the boy on a steed with light-grey head, four winters old, with well-knit fork, shell-hoofed, and a gold tubular bridle-bit in its mouth. And under him a precious gold saddle, and in his hand two whetted spears of silver. A battle-axe in his hand, the forearm's length of a full grown man from ridge to edge. It would draw blood from the wind; it would be swifter than the swiftest dewdrop from the stalk to the ground, when the dew would be heaviest in the month of June. A gold-hilted sword on his thigh, and the blade of it gold, and a gold-chased buckler

upon him, with the hue of heaven's lightning therein, and an ivory boss therein. And two greyhounds, whitebreasted, brindled, in front of him, with a collar of red gold about the neck of either, from shoulder-swell to ear. The one that was on the left side would be on the right, and the one that was on the right side would be on the left, like two sea-swallows sporting around him. Four clods the four hoofs of his steed would cut, like four swallows in the air over his head, now before him, now behind him. A four-cornered mantle of purple upon him, and an apple of red gold in each of its corners; a hundred kine was the worth of each apple. The worth of three hundred kine in precious gold was there in his foot gear and his stirrups, from the top of his thigh to the tip of his toe. Never a hair-tip stirred upon him, so exceeding light his steed's canter under him on his way to the gate of Arthur's court.

Quoth the youth, 'Is there a porter?' 'There is. And thou, may thy head not be thine, that thou dost ask! I am porter to Arthur each first day of January, but my deputies for the year save then, none other than Huandaw and Gogigwr and Llaesgymyn, and Penpingion who goes upon his head to spare his feet, neither heavenwards nor earthwards, but like a rolling stone on a court floor.' 'Open the gate.' 'I will not.' 'Why wilt thou not open it?' 'Knife has gone into meat, and drink into horn, and a thronging in Arthur's hall. Save the son of a king of a rightful dominion, or a craftsman who brings his craft, none may enter. Meat for thy dogs and corn for thy horse, and hot peppered chops for thyself, and wine brimming over, and delectable songs before thee. Food for fifty men shall come to thee in the hospice; there men from afar take their meat, and the scions of other countries who do not proffer a craft in Arthur's court. It will be no worse for thee there than for Arthur in the court: a woman to sleep with thee, and delectable songs before thee. To-morrow at tierce, when the gate is opened for the host that came here to-day, for thee shall the gate be opened first, and thou shalt sit wherever thou wilt in Arthur's hall, from its upper end to its lower.' The youth said, 'I will do nothing of that. If thou open the gate, it is well. If thou open it not, I will bring dishonour upon thy lord and ill report upon thee. And I will raise three shouts at the entrance of this gate, so that it shall not be less audible on the top of Pengwaedd in Cornwall and in the depths of Dinsel in the North, and in Esgeir Oerfel in Ireland. And

every woman with child that is in this court shall miscarry, and such of them as are not with child their wombs shall turn to a burden within them, so that they may never bear child from this day forth.' Quoth Glewlwyd Mighty-grasp, 'Shout as much as thou wilt about the laws of Arthur's court, thou shalt not be let in till first I go and have a word with Arthur.'

And Glewlwyd came into the hall. Quoth Arthur to him, 'Thou hast news from the gate?' 'I have. Two-thirds of my life are past, and two-thirds of thine own. I was of old in Caer Se and Asse, in Sach and Salach, in Lotor and Ffotor. I was of old in India the Great and India the Lesser. I was of old in the contest between the two Ynyrs, when the twelve hostages were brought from Llychlyn. And of old I was in Egrop, and in Africa was I, and in the islands of Corsica, and in Caer Brythwch and Brythach, and Nerthach. I was there of old when thou didst slay the war-band of Gleis son of Merin, when thou didst slay Mil the Black, son of Dugum; I was there of old when thou didst conquer Greece unto the east. I was of old in Caer Oeth and Anoeth, and in Caer Nefenhyr Nine-teeth. Fair kingly men saw we there, but never saw I a man so comely as this who is even now at the entrance to the gate.' Quoth Arthur, 'If thou didst enter walking go thou out running. And he that looks upon the light, and opens his eye and shuts it, an injunction upon him. And let some serve with golden drinking horns, and others with hot peppered chops, so that there be ample meat and drink for him. A shameful thing it is to leave in wind and rain a man such as thou tellest of.' Quoth Cei: 'By the hand of my friend, if my counsel were acted upon, the laws of court would not be broken for his sake.' 'Not so, fair Cei. We are noble men so long as we are resorted to. The greater the bounty we show, all the greater will be our nobility and our fame and our glory.'

And Glewlwyd came to the gate and opened the gate to him. And what every man did, to dismount at the gate on the horse-block, he did not do; but on his steed he came inside. Quoth Culhwch, 'Hail, sovereign prince of this Island! Be it no worse unto the lower half of the house than unto the upper. Be this greeting equally to thy nobles, and thy retinue, and thy leaders of hosts. May there be none without his share of it. Even as I gave thee full greeting, may thy grace and thy faith and thy glory be in this Island.' 'God's truth, so be it, chieftain! Greeting to thee too. Sit thou between two of the warriors, and delectable

song before thee, and the privilege of an atheling for thee, an heir to a throne, for as long as thou shalt be here. And when I dispense my gifts to guests and men from afar, it shall be at thy hand that I so begin in this court.' Quoth the youth: 'I have not come here to wheedle meat and drink. But if I obtain my boon, I will repay it, and I will praise it. If I obtain it not, I will bear hence thine honour as far as thy renown was farthest in the four corners of the world.' Quoth Arthur, 'Though thou bide not here, chieftain, thou shalt obtain the boon thy head and thy tongue shall name, as far as wind dries, as far as rain wets, as far as sun runs, as far as sea stretches, as far as earth extends, save only my ship and my mantle, and Caledfwlch my sword, and Rhongomyniad my spear, and Wynebgrwthucher my shield, and Carnwennan my dagger, and Gwenhwyfar my wife.' 'God's truth thereon?' 'Thou shalt have it gladly. Name what thou wilt.' 'I will. I would have my hair trimmed.' 'That thou shalt have.' Arthur took a golden comb and shears with loops of silver, and he combed his head.

And he asked who he was. Quoth Arthur: 'My heart grows tender towards thee: I know thou art sprung from my blood. Declare who thou art.' 'I will: Culhwch son of Cilydd son of Cyleddon Wledig, by Goleuddydd daughter of Anlawdd Wledig, my mother.' Quoth Arthur: 'True it is. Thou art then my first cousin. Name what thou wilt, and thou shalt have it, whatever thy mouth and thy tongue shall name.' 'God's truth thereon to me, and the truth of thy kingdom?' 'Thou shalt have it gladly.' 'My claim on thee is that thou get me Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Chief Giant. And I invoke her in the name of thy warriors.'

He invoked his boon in the name of Cei and Bedwyr, and Greidawl Gallddofydd, and Gwythyr son of Greidawl, and Greid son of Eri, and Cynddylig the Guide, and Tathal Frank-deceit, and Maelwys son of Baeddan, and Cnychwr son of Nes, and Cubert son of Daere, and Fercos son of Roch, and Lluber Beuthach, and Corfil Berfach, and Gwyn son of Esni, and Gwyn son of Nwyfre, and Gwyn son of Nudd, and Edern son of Nudd, and Cadwy son of Gereint, and Fflewddwr Fflam Wledig, and Rhuawn Bebyr son of Dorath, and Bradwen son of Moren Mynawg, and Moren Mynawg himself, and Dalldaf son of Cimin Cof, and the son of Alun Dyfed, and the son of Saidi, and the son of Gwryon, and Uchdryd Host-sustainer, and Cynwas

Cwryfagyl, and Gwrhwr Fat-kine, and Isbery Cat-claw, and Gallgoid the Hewer, and Duach, and Brathach, and Nerthach, sons of Gwawrddur Bow-back (from the uplands of hell these men were sprung), and Cilydd Hundred-holds, and Canhastyr¹ Hundred-hands, and Cors Hundred-claws, and Esgeir Gulhwch Gofyncawn,² and Drwst Iron-fist, and Glewlwyd Mighty-grasp, and Llwhch Windy-hand, and Anwas the Winged, and Sinnoch son of Seithfed, and Wadu son of Seithfed, and Naw son of Seithfed, and Gwenwynwyn son of Naw son of Seithfed, and Bedyw son of Seithfed, and Gobrwy son of Echel Big-hip, and Echel Big-hip himself, and Mael son of Roycol, and Dadweir Blind-head, and Garwyl son of Gwythawg Gwyr, and Gwythawg Gwyr himself, and Gormant son of Rica, and Menw son of Teirgwaedd, and Digon son of Alar,³ and Selyf son of Sinoid, and Gusg son of Achen, and Nerth son of Cadarn,⁴ and Drudwas son of Tryffin, and Twrch son of Perif, and Twrch son of Anwas, and Iona king of France, and Sel son of Selgi, and Teregud son of Iaen, and Sulien son of Iaen, and Bradwen son of Iaen, and Moren son of Iaen, and Siawn son of Iaen, and Cradawg son of Iaen (men of Caer Dathal were they, kindred to Arthur on his father's side); Dirmyg son of Caw, and lustig son of Caw, and Edmyg son of Caw, and Angawdd son of Caw, and Gofan son of Caw, and Celyn son of Caw, and Conyn son of Caw, and Mabsant son of Caw, and Gwyngad son of Caw, and Llwybyr son of Caw, and Coch son of Caw, and Meilyg son of Caw, and Cynwal son of Caw, and Ardwyad son of Caw, and Ergyriad son of Caw, and Neb son of Caw,⁵ and Gildas son of Caw, and Calcas son of Caw, and Hueil son of Caw (he never submitted to a lord's hand); and Samson Dry-lip, and Teliesin Chief of Bards, and Manawydan son of Llŷr, and Llary son of Casnar Wledig, and Sberin son of Fflergant king of Llydaw, and Saranhon son of Glythfyr, and Llaur son of Erw, and Anynnawg son of Menw son of Teirgwaedd, and Gwyn son of Nwyfre, and Fflam son of Nwyfre,⁶ and Gereint son of Erbin, and Ermid son of Erbin, and Dywel son of Erbin, and Gwyn son of Ermid, and Cyndrwyn son of Ermid,

¹ Canhastyr: Hundred-holds.

² Gofyncawn: Reed-cutter (?).

³ Enough son of Surfeit.

⁴ Might son of Strong.

⁵ Dirmyg: Scorn. Edmyg: Fame. Conyn: Stalk. Ardwyad: Sustainer. Ergyriad: Striker. Neb: Someone.

⁶ Flame son of Firmament.

and Hyfeidd One-cloak, and Eiddon the Magnanimous, and Rheiddwn Arwy, and Gormant son of Rica (brother to Arthur on his mother's side, his father the chief elder of Cornwall), and Llawfrodedd the Bearded, and Nodawl Cut-beard, and Berth son of Cado, and Rheiddwn son of Beli, and Isgofan the Generous, and Isgawyn son of Banon, and Morfran son of Tegid (no man placed his weapon in him at Camlan, so exceedingly ugly was he; all thought he was a devil helping. There was hair on him like the hair of a stag), and Sandde Angel-face (no one placed his spear in him at Camlan, so exceeding fair was he; all thought he was an angel helping), and Cynwyl the Saint (one of the three men that escaped from Camlan. He was the last to part from Arthur, on Hengroen¹ his horse), and Uchdryd son of Erim, and Eus son of Erim, and Henwas² the Winged son of Erim, and Henbeddestyr³ son of Erim, and Sgilti Lightfoot son of Erim (three peculiarities had these men: Henbeddestyr never found man who might keep up with him, whether on horseback or on foot; Henwas the Winged, never a four-footed creature could run abreast of him the length of one acre, much less what would be farther than that; Sgilti Lightfoot, when the whim to run his lord's errand was in him, he never sought a road so long as he knew whither he was bound; but so long as there were trees along the tops of the trees he would go, and so long as there was a mountain on the tips of the reeds would he go, and throughout his life never a reed bent beneath his feet, much less did one break, so exceedingly light of foot was he); Teithi the Old son of Gwynnan, whose dominions the sea overran, and with difficulty he himself escaped and came to Arthur (and a peculiarity was on his knife: from the time he came here never a haft stayed on it, and for that reason sickness grew within him, and languor as long as he lived; and of that he died). And Carnedyr son of Gofynion the Old, and Gwenwynwyn son of Naf, Arthur's first fighter, and Llygadrud Emys,⁴ and Gwrfoddw the Old (uncles of Arthur were they, his mother's brothers), Culfanawyd son of Gwryon, and Llenlleawg the Irishman from the headland of Gamon, and Dyfnwal the Bald, and Dunarth king of the North, Teyrnnon Twryf Liant, and

¹ Hengroen: Old-skin.

² Henwas: Old Servant.

³ Henbeddestyr: Old Walker.

⁴ Llygadrud: red eye. Emys: stallion.

Tegfan the Lame, and Tegyr Talgellawg, Gwrddywal son of Efrei, and Morgant the Generous, Gwystyl son of Nwython, and Rhun son of Nwython, and Llwydeu son of Nwython, and Gwydre son of Llwydeu by Gwenabwy daughter of Caw, his mother (Hueil his uncle stabbed him, and thereby there was feud between Hueil and Arthur because of the wound); Drem son of Dremidydd,¹ who saw from Celli Wig in Cornwall as far as Pen Blathaon in Prydein,² when a fly would rise in the morning with the sun; and Eidoel son of Nêr, and Gwlyddyn the Craftsman, who built Ehangwen,³ Arthur's hall; Cynyr Fairbeard (Cei was said to be his son. He said to his wife: 'If there be anything of me in thy son, maiden, cold will be his heart ever, and there will be no warmth in his hands. Another peculiarity will be on him: if he is my son, headstrong will he be. Another peculiarity will be on him: when he carries a burden, be it great or small, it will never be seen, neither from in front nor from behind. Another peculiarity will be on him: none will endure water and fire so well as he. Another peculiarity will be on him: there will be no servant or officer like to him); Henwas and Hen Wyneb, and Hen Gedymddeith,⁴ Gallgoig another (whatever township he came to, though there were three hundred homesteads therein, were he in need of aught, he would never leave sleep on man's eye whilst he was there); Berwyn son of Cyrenyr, and Paris king of France (and thereby the city of Paris gets its name); Osla Big-knife (who bore Bronllafn Shortbroad. When Arthur and his hosts came to a torrent's edge, a narrow place on the water would be sought, and his knife in its sheath laid across the torrent. That would be bridge enough for the hosts of the Island of Britain and its three adjacent islands with their spoil); Gwyddawg son of Menestyr, who slew Cei (and Arthur then slew him and his brothers to avenge Cei); Garanwyn son of Cei, and Amren son of Bedwyr, and Eli and Myr, and Rheu Rhwydd Dyrys, and Rhun Rhuddwern, and Eli and Trachmyr, Arthur's head huntsmen, and Llwydeu son of Cel Coed, and Huabwy son of Gwryon, and Gwyn Godyfron, and Gweir Dathar the Servitor, and Gweir son of Cadellin Silver-brow, and Gweir False-valour, and Gweir White-shaft

¹ Sight son of Seer.

² Prydein here means Pictland.

³ Fair and roomy.

⁴ Henwas: Old Servant; Hen Wyneb: Old Face; Hen Gedymddeith: Old Comrade.

(uncles of Arthur, his mother's brothers); the sons of Llwh Windy-hand from beyond the Tyrrhene sea, Llenlleawg the Irisiman and the exalted one of Britain, Cas son of Saidi, Gwrfan Wild-hair, Gwilenhin king of France, Gwitart son of Aedd king of Ireland, Garselit the Irishman, Panawr Head of the Host, Atlendor son of Naf, Gwyn the Irascible, overseer of Cornwall and Devon (one of the nine who plotted the battle of Camlan), Celli and Cuel, and Gilla Stag-shank (three hundred acres he would clear at a single leap, the chief leaper of Ireland), Sol and Gwaddyn Osol, and Gwaddyn Oddeith¹ (Sol could stand all day on one foot. Gwaddyn Osol, if he stood on top of the highest mountain in the world, it would become a level plain under his foot. Gwaddyn Oddeith, even as the hot metal when it would be drawn from the forge was the bright fire from his foot-soles when a hard thing came against him. He cleared the way for Arthur on the march); Long Erwm and Long Atrwm (the day they came to a feast, three cantrefs would they seize for their needs; feasting till noon and drinking till night. When they went to sleep they would devour the heads of insects through hunger, as though they had never set tooth in food. When they went to a feast they left neither fat nor lean, neither hot nor cold, neither sour nor sweet, neither fresh nor salt, neither cooked nor raw); Huarwar son of Halwn (who asked his fill of Arthur as a boon. He was one of the three mighty plagues of Cornwall and Devon until his fill was found him. No glimmer of a smile was ever to be seen on him save when he was sated); Gwarae Golden-hair, the two whelps of the bitch Rhyrhi, Gwyddrud and Gwydden the Abstruse, Sugyn son of Sugnydd² (who would suck up the sea on which were three hundred ships till there remained naught but a dry strand. There was a red-hot breast fever in him); Cacamwri, Arthur's servant (show him a barn, were there a course for thirty ploughs there in, he would beat it with an iron flail till it was no better for the boards, the cross-pieces and the sidebeams than for the small oats in the mow at the bottom of the barn); Llwn and Dygyflwn, and Anoeth the Bold, and Long Eiddyl and Long Amren (two servants of Arthur were they), and Gwefyl son of Gwastad (on the day he was sad, one of his lips he would let

¹ Gwaddyn: Sole; Gwaddyn Oddeith: Sole-blaze.

² Suck son of Sucker.

down to his navel, and the other would be as a cowl on his head); Uchdryd Cross-beard (who would throw the bristling red beard he had on him across fifty rafters which were in Arthur's hall); Elidyr the Guide, Ysgyrdaf and Ysgudydd (two servants of Gwenhwyfar were they; as swift were their feet at their errand as their thoughts); Brys son of Brysethach from the top of the Black Fernbrake in Prydein, and Gruddlwyn the Dwarf; Bwlch and Cyfwlch and Syfwlch, sons of Cleddyf Cyfwlch, grandsons of Cleddyf Difwlch (three gleaming glitterers their three shields; three pointed piercers their three spears; three keen carvers their three swords; Glas, Glesig, Gleisad, their three dogs; Call, Cuall, Cafall, their three horses; Hwyrddyddwg and Drwgddyddwg and Llwyrdyddwg, their three wives; Och and Garym and Diasbad, their three grandchildren; Lluched and Neued and Eisywed, their three daughters; Drwg and Gwaeth and Gwaethaf Oll, their three maid-servants;¹ Ehebryd son of Cyfwlch, Gorasgwrn son of Nerth,² Gwaeddán son of Cynfelyn Half-wit; Dwn the Valorous Chieftain, Eiladar son of Pen Llarcan, Cynedyr the Wild son of Hetwn Silver-brow, Sawyl High-head, Gwalchmei son of Gwyar, Gwalhafed son of Gwyar, Gwrhyr Interpreter of Tongues (he knew all tongues), and Cethrwm the priest; Clust son of Clustfeinad³ (were he to be buried seven fathom in the earth, he would hear an ant fifty miles off when it stirred from its couch of a morning); Medyr son of Medredydd⁴ (who from Celli Wig would hit a wren on Esgeir Oerfel in Ireland, exactly through its two legs), Gwiawn Cat-eye (who could cut a haw from a gnat's eye without harming the eye), Ol son of Olwydd⁵ (whose father's swine were carried off seven years before he was born, and when he grew to man he tracked the swine, and came home with them in seven herds); Bidwini the bishop, who blessed meat and drink. The gentle gold-torqued maidens of this Island: in addition to Gwenhwyfar, the first lady of this Island, and Gwenhwyach her sister, and Rathtyen the only daughter of

¹ Late-bearer and Ill-bearer and Full-bearer, their three wives; Och and Scream and Shriek, their three grandchildren; Plague and Want and Penury, their three daughters; Bad and Worse and Worst of All, their three maidservants.

² Big-bone son of Might.

³ Ear son of Hearer.

⁴ Aim son of Aimer.

⁵ Track son of Tracker (?).

Clememyl – Celemon daughter of Cei, and Tangwen daughter of Gweir Dathar the Servitor, Gwen Alarch¹ daughter of Cynwal Hundred-hogs, Eurneid daughter of Clydno Eidin, Eneuawg daughter of Bedwyr, Enrhydeg daughter of Tuduathar, Gwenwledyr daughter of Gwardur Bow-back, Erdudfyl daughter of Tryffin, Eurolwyn daughter of Gwdolwyn the Dwarf, Teleri daughter of Peul, Indeg daughter of Garwy the Tall, Morfudd daughter of Urien Rheged, fair Gwenlliant the magnanimous maiden, Creiddylad daughter of of Lludd Silver-hand (the maiden of most majesty that was ever in the Island of Britain and its three adjacent islands. And for her Gwythyr son of Greidawl and Gwyn son of Nudd fight for ever each May-calends till the day of doom), Ellylw daughter of Neol Hang-cock (and she lived three generations), Esvllt Whiteneck and Esvllt Slenderneck – in the name of all these did Culwch son of Cilydd invoke his boon.

Arthur said, 'Ah, chieftain, I have never heard tell of the maiden thou tellest of, nor of her parents. I will gladly send messengers to seek her.' From that night till the same night at the end of a year the messengers were a-wandering. At the end of the year, when Arthur's messengers had found nothing, said the chieftain, 'Every one has obtained his boon, yet am I still lacking. I will away and take thine honour with me.' Said Cei, 'Ah, chieftain, overmuch dost thou asperse Arthur. Come thou with us. Till thou shalt say she exists not in the world, or till we find her, we will not be parted from thee.'

Then Cei arose. Cei had this peculiarity, nine nights and nine days his breath lasted under water, nine nights and nine days would he be without sleep. A wound from Cei's sword no physician might heal. A wondrous gift had Cei: when it pleased him he would be as tall as the tallest tree in the forest. Another peculiarity had he: when the rain was heaviest, a handbreadth before his hand and another behind his hand what would be in his hand would be dry, by reason of the greatness of his heat; and when the cold was hardest on his comrades, that would be to them kindling to light a fire.

Arthur called on Bedwyr, who never shrank from an enterprise upon which Cei was bound. It was thus with Bedwyr, that none was so handsome as he in this Island, save Arthur and Drych son of Cibddar, and this too, that though he was one-

¹ White Swan.

handed no three warriors drew blood in the same field faster than he. Another strange quality was his; one thrust would there be of his spear, and nine counter-thrusts.

Arthur called on Cynddylig the Guide. 'Go thou for me upon this enterprise along with the chieftain.' He was no worse a guide in the land he had never seen than in his own land.

He called Gwrhyr Interpreter of Tongues: he knew all tongues.

He called Gwalchmei son of Gwyar, because he never came home without the quest he had gone to seek. He was the best of walkers and the best of riders. He was Arthur's nephew, his sister's son, and his first cousin.

Arthur called on Menw son of Teirgwaedd, for should they come to a heathen land he might cast a spell over them, so that none might see them and they see every one.

Away they went till they came to a wide open plain and saw a fort, the greatest of forts in the world. That day they journeyed. When they thought they were near to the fort they were no nearer than at first. And the second and the third day they journeyed, and with difficulty did they get thereto. However, as they were coming to the same plain as it, they could see a great flock of sheep without limit or end to it, and a shepherd tending the sheep on top of a mound, and a jerkin of skins upon him, and at his side a shaggy mastiff which was bigger than a nine year old stallion. It was the way of him that never a lamb had he lost, much less a grown beast. No company had ever fared past him that he did not do it harm or deadly hurt; every dead tree and bush that was on the plain, his breath would burn them to the very ground.

Quoth Cei: 'Gwrhyr Interpreter of Tongues, go and have word with yonder man.' 'Cei, I made no promise to go save as far as thou thyself wouldst go.' 'Then let us go there together.' Quoth Menw son of Teirgwaedd: 'Have no qualms to go thither. I will cast a spell over the dog, so that he shall do harm to none.'

They came to where the shepherd was. Quoth they, 'Things are well with thee, shepherd.' 'May things never be better with you than with me.' 'Yea, by God, for thou art chief.' 'There is no affliction to do me harm save my wife.' 'Whose are the sheep thou tendest, or whose is the fort?' 'Fools of men that you are! Throughout the world it is known that this is the fort of

Ysbaddaden Chief Giant.' 'And thou, who art thou?' 'Custennin son of Mynwyedig am I, and because of my wife Ysbaddaden Chief Giant has wrought my ruin. You too, who are you?' 'Messengers of Arthur are here, to seek Olwen.' 'Whew, men! God protect you! For all the world, do not that. Never a one has come to make that request that went away with his life.'

The shepherd arose. As he arose Culhwch gave him a ring of gold. He sought to put on the ring, but it would not go on him, and he placed it on the finger of his glove and went home and gave the glove to his wife. And she took the ring from the glove. 'Whence came this ring to thee, husband?' 'Twas not often that thou hast had treasure-trove.' 'I went to the sea, to find sea-food. Lo! I saw a body coming in on the tide. Never saw I body so beautiful as that, and on its finger I found this ring.' 'Alas, husband, since sea does not tolerate a dead man's jewels therein, show me that body.' 'Wife, the one whose body that is, thou shalt see him here presently.' 'Who is that?' the woman asked. 'Culhwch son of Cilydd son of Cyleddon Wledig, by Goleuddydd daughter of Anlawdd Wledig, his mother, who is come to seek Olwen.' Two feelings possessed her: she was glad that her nephew, her sister's son, was coming to see her; and she was sad because she had never seen any depart with his life that had come to make that request.

They came forward to the gate of the shepherd Custennin's court. She heard the noise of their coming. She ran with joy to meet them. Cei snatched a log out of the wood-pile, and she came to meet them, to try and throw her arms about their necks. Cei thrust a stake between her two hands. She squeezed the stake so that it became a twisted withe. Quoth Cei, 'Woman, had it been I thou didst squeeze in this wise, there were no need for another to love me ever. An ill love, that!'

They came into the house and their needs were supplied. After a while, when all were letting themselves be busied, the woman opened a coffer alongside the hearth, and out of it arose a lad with curly yellow hair. Quoth Gwrhyr, 'Twere pity to hide a lad like this. I know that it is no fault of his own that is visited upon him.' Quoth the woman, 'He is all that is left. Three-and-twenty sons of mine has Ysbaddaden Chief Giant slain, and I have no more hope of this one than of the others.' Quoth Cei, 'Let him keep company with me, and we shall not be slain save together.'

'They ate. Quoth the woman, 'On what errand are you come hither?' 'We are come to seek Olwen.' 'For God's sake, since none from the fort has yet seen you, get you back!' 'God knows we will not get us back till we have seen the maiden. Will she come to where she may be seen?' 'She comes hither every Saturday to wash her head; and in the bowl where she washes she leaves all her rings. Neither she nor her messenger ever comes for them.' 'Will she come hither if she is sent for?' 'God knows I will not slay my soul. I will not betray the one who trusts in me. But if you pledge your word you will do her no harm, I will send for her.' 'We pledge it,' said they.

She was sent for. And she came, with a robe of flame-red silk about her, and around the maiden's neck a torque of red gold, and precious pearls thereon and rubies. Yellower was her head than the flower of the broom, whiter was her flesh than the foam of the wave; whiter were her palms and her fingers than the shoots of the marsh trefoil from amidst the fine gravel of a welling spring. Neither the eye of the mewed hawk, nor the eye of the thrice-mewed falcon, not an eye was there fairer than hers. Whiter were her breasts than the breast of the white swan, redder were her cheeks than the reddest foxgloves. Whoso beheld her would be filled with love of her. Four white trefoils sprang up behind her wherever she went; and for that reason was she called Olwen.¹

She entered the house and sat between Culhwch and the high seat, and even as he saw her he knew her. Said Culhwch to her, 'Ah maiden, 'tis thou I have loved. And come thou with me.' 'Lest sin be charged to thee and me, that I may not do at all. My father has sought a pledge of me that I go not without his counsel, for he shall live only until I go with a husband. There is, however, counsel I will give thee, if thou wilt take it. Go ask me of my father. And however much he demand of thee, do thou promise to get it, and me too shalt thou get. But if he have cause to doubt at all, get me thou shalt not, and 'tis well for thee if thou escape with thy life.' 'I promise all that, and will obtain it,' said he.

She went to her chamber. They then arose to go after her to the fort, and slew nine gatemens who were at nine gates without

¹ Olwen: White-track (to the author, but it probably means 'Fair' or 'Beautiful')

a man crying out, and nine mastiffs without one squealing. And they went forward to the hall.

Quoth they, 'In the name of God and man, greeting unto thee, Ysbaddaden Chief Giant.' 'And you, where are you going?' 'We are going to seek Olwen thy daughter for Culhwch son of Cilydd.' 'Where are those rascal servants and those ruffians of mine?' said he. 'Raise up the forks under my two eyelids that I may see my future son-in-law.' That was done. 'Come hither tomorrow. I will give you some answer.'

They rose, and Ysbaddaden Chief Giant snatched at one of the three poisoned stone-spears which were by his hand and hurled it after them. And Bedwyr caught it and hurled it back at him, and pierced Ysbaddaden Chief Giant right through the ball of his knee. Quoth he, 'Thou cursed savage son-in-law! I shall walk the worse up a slope. Like the sting of a gadfly the poisoned iron has pained me. Cursed be the smith who fashioned it, and the anvil on which it was wrought, so painful it is!'

That night they lodged in the house of Custennin. And on the morrow with pomp and with brave combs set in their hair they came into the hall. They said, 'Ysbaddaden Chief Giant, give us thy daughter in return for her portion and her maiden fee to thee and her two kinswomen. And unless thou give her, thou shalt meet thy death because of her.' 'She and her four great-grandmothers and her four great-grandfathers are yet alive. I must needs take counsel with them.' 'So be it with thee,' said they. 'Let us go to our meat.' As they arose he took hold of the second stone-spear which was by his hand and hurled it after them. And Menw son of Teirgwaedd caught it and hurled it back at him, and pierced him in the middle of his breast, so that it came out in the small of his back. 'Thou cursed savage son-in-law! Like the bite of a big-headed leech the hard iron has pained me. Cursed be the forge wherein it was heated. When I go uphill, I shall have tightness of chest, and belly-ache, and a frequent loathing of meat.' They went to their meat.

And the third day they came to court. Quoth they, 'Ysbaddaden Chief Giant, shoot at us no more. Seek not thy harm and deadly hurt and death.' 'Where are my servants? Raise up the forks — my eyelids have fallen over the balls of my eyes — so that I may take a look at my future son-in-law.' They arose, and as they arose he took the third poisoned stone-spear and hurled it

after them. And Culhwch caught it and hurled it back, even as he wished, and pierced him through the ball of the eye, so that it came out through the nape of the neck. 'Thou cursed savage son-in-law! So long as I am left alive, the sight of my eyes will be the worse. When I go against the wind they will water, a headache I shall have, and a giddiness each new moon. Cursed be the forge wherein it was heated. Like the bite of a mad dog to me the way the poisoned iron has pierced me.' They went to their meat.

On the morrow they came to court. Quoth they, 'Shoot not at us. Seek not the harm and deadly hurt and martyrdom that are upon thee, or what may be worse, if such be thy wish. Give us thy daughter.' 'Where is he who is told to seek my daughter?' 'Tis I who seek her, Culhwch son of Cilydd.' 'Come hither where I may see thee.' A chair was placed under him, face to face with him.

Said Ysbaddaden Chief Giant, 'Is it thou that seekest my daughter?' 'Tis I who seek her.' 'Thy pledge would I have that thou wilt not do worse by me than is just.' 'Thou shalt have it.' 'When I have myself gotten that which I shall name to thee, then thou shalt get my daughter.' 'Name what thou wouldst name.'

'I will,' said he. 'Dost see the great thicket yonder?' 'I see.' 'I must have it uprooted out of the earth and burnt on the face of the ground so that the cinders and ashes thereof be its manure; and that it be ploughed and sown so that it be ripe in the morning against the drying of the dew, in order that it may be made into meat and drink for thy wedding guests and my daughter's. And all that I must have done in one day.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. A husbandman to till and prepare that land, other than Amaethon son of Dôn. He will not come with thee of his own free will, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Gofannon son of Dôn to come to the headland to set the irons. He will not do work of his own free will, save for a king in his own right, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The two oxen of Gwlwydd Wineu, both yoked together to plough well

the rough ground yonder. He will not give them of his own free will, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The Melyn Gwanwyn and the Ych Brych,¹ both yoked together, must I have.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The two horned oxen, one of which is beyond Mynydd Bannawg,² and the other this side — and to fetch them together in the one plough. Nyniaw and Peibiaw are they, whom God transformed into oxen for their sins.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Dost see the hoed tilth yonder?' 'I see.' 'When I first met the mother of that maiden, nine hestors of flax seed were sown therein; neither black nor white has come out of it yet, and I have that measure still. I must have that in the new-broken ground yonder, so that it may be a white head-dress for my daughter's head on the day of thy wedding-feast.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Honey that will be nine times sweeter than the honey of a virgin swarm, without drones and without bees, to make bragget for the feast.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The cup of Llwyrr son of Llwyrrion, in which is the best of all drink; for there is no vessel in the world which can hold that strong drink, save it. Thou shalt not have it of his own free will, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The hamper of Gwyddneu Long-shank: if the whole world should come around it, thrice nine men at a time, the meat that every one wished for he would find therein, to his liking. I must eat therefrom the night my daughter sleeps with thee. He will give it to no one of his own free will, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

¹ Yellow-Palewhite and the Speckled Ox.

² A mountain in Scotland, possibly the Grampians.

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The horn of Gwlgawd Gododdin to pour out for us that night. He will not give it of his own free will, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The harp of Teirtu to entertain me that night. When a man pleases, it will play of itself; when one would have it so, it will be silent. He will not give it of his own free will, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The birds of Rhiannon, they that wake the dead and lull the living to sleep, must I have to entertain me that night.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The cauldron of Diwrnach the Irishman, the overseer of Odgar son of Aedd king of Ireland, to boil meat for thy wedding guests.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. I must needs wash my head and shave my beard. The tusk of Ysgithyrwyn Chief Boar I must have, wherewith to shave myself. I shall be none the better for that unless it be plucked from his head while alive.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. There is no one in the world can pluck it from his head save Odgar son of Aedd king of Ireland.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. I will not entrust the keeping of the tusk to any save Cadw of Prydein.¹ The threescore cantrefs of Prydein are under him. He will not come out of his kingdom of his own free will, nor can he be compelled.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'

'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. I must needs dress my beard for me to be shaved. It will never settle unless the blood of the Black Witch be obtained, daughter of the White Witch, from the head of the Valley of Grief in the uplands of Hell.'

¹ Cadw of Prydein: Cadw of Pictland. Cadw: to keep.

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The blood will be of no use unless it be obtained while warm. There is no vessel in the world will keep heat in the liquid that is put therein save the bottles of Gwyddolwyn the Dwarf, which keep their heat from the time when the liquid is put into them in the east till one reaches the west. He will not give them of his own free will, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Some will wish for milk, but there will be no way to get milk for every one until the bottles of Rhyannon Stiff-beard are obtained. In them no liquid ever turns sour. He will not give them of his own free will, nor can he be compelled.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. There is no comb and shears in the world wherewith my hair may be dressed, so exceeding stiff it is, save the comb and shears that are between the two ears of Twrch Trwyth son of Taredd Wledig. He will not give them of his own free will, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Twrch Trwyth will not be hunted till Drudwyn be obtained, the whelp of Greid son of Eri.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. There is no leash in the world may hold on him, save the leash of Cors Hundred-claws.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. There is no collar in the world can hold the leash, save the collar of Canhastyr Hundred-hands.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The chain of Cilydd Hundred-holds to hold the collar along with the leash.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. There is no huntsman in the world can act as houndsman to that hound, save Mabon son of Modron, who was taken away when three

nights old from his mother. Where he is is unknown, or what his state is, whether alive or dead.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Gwyn Dun-mane, the steed of Gweddw (as swift as the wave is he!), under Mabon to hunt Twrch Trwyth. He will not give him of his own free will, nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Mabon will never be obtained, where he is is unknown, till his kinsman Eidoel son of Aer be first obtained; for he will be untiring in quest of him. He is his first cousin.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Garselit the Irishman, chief huntsman of Ireland is he. Twrch Trwyth will never be hunted without him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. A leash from the beard of Dillus the Bearded, for save that there is nothing will hold those two whelps. And no use can be made of it unless it be twitched out of his beard while he is alive, and he be plucked with wooden tweezers. He will not allow any one to do that to him while he lives, but it will be useless if dead, for it will be brittle.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. There is no huntsman in the world will hold those two whelps, save Cynedyr the Wild son of Hetwn the Leper. Nine times wilder is he than the wildest wild beast on the mountain. Him wilt thou never get, nor wilt thou get my daughter.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Thou wilt not hunt Twrch Trwyth until Gwyn son of Nudd be obtained, in whom God has set the spirit of the demons of Annwn, lest this world be destroyed. He will not be spared thence.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
 'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. There is no horse in the world that will avail Gwyn to hunt Twrch Trwyth, save Du¹ the horse of Moro Oerfeddawg.'

¹ Du: black.

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Until Gwilenhin king of France come, Twrch Trwyth will never be hunted without him. It is improper for him to leave his kingdom, and he will never come hither.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Twrch Trwyth will never be hunted without the son of Alun Dyfed be obtained. A good unleasher is he.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Twrch Trwyth will never be hunted until Aned and Aethlem be obtained. Swift as a gust of wind would they be; never were they unleashed on a beast they did not kill.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Arthur and his huntsmen to hunt Twrch Trwyth. A man of might is he, and he will not come with thee — the reason is that he is a man of mine.'

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'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Twrch Trwyth can never be hunted until Bwlch and Cyfwlch and Syfwlch be obtained, sons of Cilydd Cyfwlch, grandsons of Cleddyf Difwlch. Three gleaming glitterers their three shields; three pointed piercers their three spears; three keen carvers their three swords; Glas, Glesig, Gleisad, their three dogs; Call, Cuall, Cafall, their three horses; Hwyrddyddwg and Drwgddyddwg and Llwyrdyddwg, their three wives; Och and Garym and Diasbad, their three witches; Lluched and Neued and Eisywed, their three daughters; Drwg and Gwaeth and Gwaethaf Oll, their three maid-servants. The three men shall wind their horns, and all the others will come to make outcry, till none would care though the sky should fall to earth.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. The sword of Wrnach the Giant; never can he be slain save with that. He will not give it to any one, neither for price nor for favour nor canst thou compel him.'

'It is easy for me to get that, though thou think it is not easy.'
'Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get. Wakefulness without sleep at night shalt thou have in seeking

those things. And thou wilt not get them, nor wilt thou get my daughter.'

'Horses shall I have and horsemen, and my lord and kinsman Arthur will get me all those things. And I shall win thy daughter, and thou shalt lose thy life.'

'Set forward now. Thou shalt not be answerable for food or raiment for my daughter. Seek those things. And when those things are won, my daughter too thou shalt win.'

That day they journeyed till evening, until there was seen a great fort of mortared stone, the greatest of forts in the world. Lo, they saw coming from the fort a black man, bigger than three men of this world. Quoth they to him: 'Whence comest thou, fellow?' 'From the fort you see yonder.' 'Whose is the fort?' 'Fools of men that you are! There is none in the world does not know whose fort this is. It belongs to Wrnach the Giant.' 'What usage is there for a guest and far-comer alighting at this fort?' 'Ah, chieftain, God protect you! No guest has ever come thence with his life. None is permitted therein save him who brings his craft.'

They made their way to the gate. Quoth Gwrhwr Interpreter of Tongues, 'Is there a porter?' 'There is. And thou, may thy head not be thine, that thou dost ask!' 'Open the gate.' 'I will not.' 'Why wilt thou not open it?' 'Knife has gone into meat, and drink into horn, and a thronging in Wrnach's hall. Save for a craftsman who brings his craft, it will not be opened again this night.' Quoth Cei, 'Porter, I have a craft.' 'What craft hast thou?' 'I am the best furbisher of swords in the world.' 'I will go and tell that to Wrnach the Giant and will bring thee an answer.'

The porter came inside. Said Wrnach the Giant, 'Thou hast news from the gate?' 'I have. There is a company at the entrance to the gate who would like to come in.' 'Didst thou ask if they had a craft with them?' 'I did, and one of them declared he knew how to furbish swords.' 'I had need of him. For some time I have been seeking one who should polish my sword, but I found him not. Let that man in, since he had a craft.'

The porter came and opened the gate, and Cei came inside all alone. And he greeted Wrnach the Giant. A chair was placed under him. Said Wrnach, 'Why, man, is this true which is reported of thee, that thou knowest how to furbish swords?' 'I do that,' said Cei. The sword was brought to him. Cei took a

striped whetstone from under his arm. 'Which dost thou prefer upon it, white-haft or dark-haft?' 'Do with it what pleases thee, as though it were thine own.' He cleaned half of one side of the blade for him and put it in his hand. 'Does that content thee?' 'I would rather than all that is in my dominions that the whole of it were like this. It is a shame a man as good as thou should be without a fellow.' 'Oia, good sir, I have a fellow, though he does not practise this craft.' 'Who is he?' 'Let the porter go forth, and I will tell his tokens: the head of his spear will leave its shaft, and it will draw blood from the wind, and settle upon the shaft again.' The gate was opened and Bedwyr entered in. Said Cei, 'A wondrous gift has Bedwyr, though he does not practise this craft.'

And there was great debate betwixt those men outside. Cei and Bedwyr came inside. And a young lad came inside with them, the shepherd Custennin's only son. He and his comrades, who stayed close to him, crossed the three baileys as though this were a thing less than naught to them, until they came inside the fort. Quoth his comrades of Custennin's son, 'Best of men is he.' From then on he was called Goreu son of Custennin.¹ They dispersed to their lodgings that they might slay those who lodged them, without the Giant knowing.

The furbishing the sword was done, and Cei gave it into the hand of Wrnach the Giant, as though to see whether the work was to his satisfaction. Said the giant, 'The work is good, and I am content with it.' Quoth Cei, 'It is thy scabbard has damaged thy sword. Give it to me to take out the wooden side-pieces, and let me make new ones for it.' And he took the scabbard, and the sword in the other hand. He came and stood over the giant, as if he would put the sword into the scabbard. He sank it into the giant's head and took off his head at a blow. They laid waste the fort and took away what treasures they would. To the very day at the end of a year they came to Arthur's court, and the sword of Wrnach the Giant with them.

They told Arthur how it had gone with them. Arthur said, 'Which of those marvels will it be best to seek first?' 'It will be best,' said they, 'to seek Mabon son of Modron, and there is no getting him until his kinsman Eidoel son of Aer is got first.' Arthur

¹ Goreu: best

rose up, and the warriors of the Island of Britain with him, to seek for Eidoel; and they came to Glini's outer wall, to where Eidoel was in prison. Glini stood on the rampart of the fort, and he said, 'Arthur, what wouldst thou have of me, since thou wilt not leave me alone on this crag? I have no good herein and no pleasure, neither wheat nor oats have I, without thee too seeking to do me harm.' Arthur said, 'Not to thy hurt have I come hither, but to seek out the prisoner that is with thee.' 'I will give thee the prisoner, though I had not bargained to give him up to any one. And besides this, my aid and my backing thou shalt have.'

The men said to Arthur, 'Lord, get thee home. Thou canst not proceed with thy host to seek things so petty as these.' Arthur said, 'Gwrhryr Interpreter of Tongues, it is right for thee to go on this quest. All tongues hast thou, and thou canst speak with some of the birds and the beasts. Eidoel, it is right for thee to go along with my men to seek him - he is thy first cousin. Cei and Bedwyr, I have hope that whatever you go to seek will be obtained. Go then for me on this quest.'

They went on their way as far as the Ouzel of Cilgwri. 'For God's sake,' Gwrhryr asked her, 'knowest thou aught of Mabon son of Modron, who was taken when three nights old from betwixt his mother and the wall?' The Ouzel said, 'When first I came hither, there was a smith's anvil here, and as for me I was a young bird. No work has been done upon it save whilst my beak was thereon every evening. To-day there is not so much of it as a nut not worn away. God's vengeance on me if I have heard aught of the man you are asking after. Nevertheless, that which it is right and proper for me to do for Arthur's messengers, I will do. There is a kind of creature God made before me; I will go along as your guide thither.'

They came to the place where the Stag of Rhedynfre was. 'Stag of Rhedynfre, here we have come to thee, Arthur's messengers, since we know of no animal older than thou. Say, knowest thou aught of Mabon son of Modron, who was taken away from his mother when three nights old?' The Stag said, 'When first I came hither, there was but one tine on either side of my head, and there were no trees here save a single oak-sapling, and that grew into an oak with a hundred branches, and the oak thereafter fell, and to-day there is naught of it save a red stump; from that day to this I have been here. I have heard naught of him you are asking after. Nevertheless I will be

your guide, since you are Arthur's messengers, to the place where there is an animal God made before me.'

They came to the place where the Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd was. 'Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd, here are Arthur's messengers. Knowest thou aught of Mabon son of Modron, who was taken away from his mother when three nights old?' 'If I knew it, I would tell it. When first I came hither, the great valley you see was a wooded glen, and a race of men came thereto and it was laid waste. And the second wood grew up therein, and this wood is the third. And as for me, why! the roots of my wings are mere stumps. From that day to this I have heard naught of the man you are asking after. Nevertheless I will be a guide to Arthur's messengers until you come to the place where is the oldest creature that is in this world, and he that has fared furthest afield, the Eagle of Gwernabwy.'

Gwrhwr said, 'Eagle of Gwernabwy, we have come to thee, Arthur's messengers, to ask whether thou knowest aught of Mabon son of Modron who was taken away from his mother when three nights old?' The Eagle said, 'I came here a long time ago, and when first I came hither I had a stone, and from its top I pecked at the stars each evening; now it is not a hand-breadth in height. From that day to this I have been here, but have heard naught of him you are asking after. Save that at one faring I went to seek my meat as far as Llyn Llyw, and when I came there I sank my claws into a salmon, thinking he would be meat for me many a long day, and he drew me down into the depths, so that it was with difficulty I got away from him. And my whole kindred and I went after him, to seek to destroy him. But he sent messengers to make peace with me, and came to me in person to have fifty tridents taken out of his back. Unless he knows something of what you seek, I know none who may. Nevertheless, I will be your guide to the place where he is.'

They came to the place where he was. The Eagle said, 'Salmon of Llyn Llyw, I have come to thee with Arthur's messengers to ask whether thou knowest aught of Mabon son of Modron who was taken away from his mother when three nights old?' 'As much as I know, I will tell. With every tide I go up along the river until I come to the bend of the wall of Caer Loyw; and there I found such distress that I never found its equal in all my life; and, that you may believe, let one of you come here on my two shoulders.' And Cei and Gwrhwr Interpreter of Tongues went upon the

salmon's two shoulders, and they journeyed until they came to the far side of the wall from the prisoner, and they could hear wailing and lamentation on the far side of the wall from them. Gwrhwr said, 'What man laments in this house of stone?' 'Alas, man, there is cause for him who is here to lament. Mabon son of Modron is here in prison; and none was ever so cruelly imprisoned in a prison house as I; neither the imprisonment of Lludd Silver-hand nor the imprisonment of Greid son of Eri.' 'Hast thou hope of getting thy release for gold or for silver or for worldly wealth, or by battle and fighting?' 'What is got of me, will be got by fighting.' They returned thence and came to where Arthur was. They told where Mabon son of Modron was in prison. Arthur summoned the warriors of this Island and went to Caer Loyw where Mabon was in prison. Cei and Bedwyr went upon the two shoulders of the fish. Whilst Arthur's warriors assaulted the fort, Cei broke through the wall and took the prisoner on his back; and still he fought with the men. Arthur came home and Mabon with him, a free man.

Arthur said, 'Which of the marvels is it now best to seek first?' 'It is best to seek for the two whelps of the bitch Rhymhi.' 'Is it known where she is?' asked Arthur. 'She is,' said one, 'at Aber Deu Gleddyf.' Arthur came to the house of Tringad in Aber Cleddyf and asked him, 'Hast thou heard of her in these parts? In what shape is she?' 'In the shape of she-wolf,' answered he, 'and she goes about with her two whelps. Often has she slain my stock, and she is down in Aber Cleddyf in a cave.'

Arthur went to sea in his ship Prydwen, and others by land to hunt the bitch, and in this wise they surrounded her and her two whelps, and God changed them back into their own semblances for Arthur. Arthur's host dispersed, one by one, two by two.

And as Gwythyr son of Greidawl was one day journeying over a mountain, he heard a wailing and a grievous lamentation, and these were a horrid noise to hear. He sprang forward in that direction, and when he came there he drew his sword and smote off the anthill level with the ground, and so saved them from the fire. And they said to him, 'Take thou God's blessing and ours, and that which no man can ever recover, we will come and recover it for thee.' It was they thereafter who came with the nine hestors of flax seed which Ysbaddaden Chief Giant had named

to Culhwch, in full measure, with none of it wanting save for a single flax seed. And the lame ant brought that in before night.

As Cei and Bedwyr were sitting on top of Pumlumon on Carn Gwylathyr, in the highest wind in the world, they looked about them and they could see a great smoke towards the south, far off from them, and not blowing across with the wind. And then Cei said, 'By the hand of my friend, see yonder the fire of a warrior.' They hastened towards the smoke and approached thither, watching from afar as Dillus the Bearded was singeing a wild boar. Now, he was the mightiest warrior that ever fled from Arthur. Then Bedwyr said to Cei, 'Dost know him?' 'I know him,' said Cei; 'that is Dillus the Bearded. There is no leash in the world may hold Drudwyn the whelp of Greid son of Eri, save a leash from the beard of him thou seest yonder. And that too will be of no use unless it be plucked alive with wooden tweezers from his beard; for it will be brittle, dead.' 'What is our counsel concerning that?' asked Bedwyr. 'Let us suffer him,' said Cei, 'to eat his fill of meat and after that he will fall asleep.' Whilst he was about this, they busied themselves making tweezers. When Cei knew for certain that he was asleep, he dug a pit under his feet, the biggest in the world, and he struck him a blow mighty past telling, and pressed him down in the pit until they had entirely twitched out his beard with the tweezers; and after that they slew him outright.

And then the two of them went to Celli Wig in Cornwall, and a leash from Dillus the Bearded's beard with them. And Cei gave it into Arthur's hand, and thereupon Arthur sang this englyn:

Cei made a leash
From Dillus' beard, son of Eurei.
Were he alive, thy death he'd be.

And because of this Cei grew angry, so that it was with difficulty the warriors of this Island made peace between Cei and Arthur. But nevertheless, neither for Arthur's lack of help, nor for the slaying of his men, did Cei have aught to do with him in his hour of need from that time forward.

And then Arthur said, 'Which of the marvels will it now be best to seek?' 'It will be best to seek Drudwyn the whelp of Greid son of Eri.'

A short while before this Creiddylad daughter of Lludd Silverhand went with Gwythyr son of Greidawl; and before he had slept with her there came Gwyn son of Nudd and carried her off by force. Gwythyr son of Greidawl gathered a host, and he came to fight with Gwyn son of Nudd. And Gwyn prevailed, and he took prisoner Greid son of Eri, Glinneu son of Taran, and Gwrgwst the Half-naked and Dyfnarth his son. And he took prisoner Pen son of Nethawg, and Nwython, and Cyledyr the Wild his son, and slew Nwython and took out his heart, and compelled Cyledyr to eat his father's heart; and because of this Cyledyr went mad. Arthur heard tell of this, and he came into the North and summoned to him Gwyn son of Nudd and set free his noblemen from his prison, and peace was made between Gwyn son of Nudd and Gwythyr son of Greidawl. This is the peace that was made: the maiden should remain in her father's house, unmolested by either side, and there should be battle between Gwyn and Gwythyr each May-calends for ever and ever, from that day till doomsday; and the one of them that should be victor on doomsday, let him have the maiden.

And when those lords had been thus reconciled, Arthur obtained Dun-mane the steed of Gwedd, and the leash of Cors Hundred-claws.

After that Arthur made his way to Llydaw, and with him Mabon son of Mellet and Gware Golden-hair, to seek the two dogs of Glythfyr Ledewig. And when he had obtained them, Arthur went to the west of Ireland to seek out Gwrgi Seferi, and Odgar son of Aedd king of Ireland along with him. And after that Arthur went into the North and caught Cyledyr the Wild; and he went after Ysgithyrwyn Chief Boar. And Mabon son of Mellet went, and the two dogs of Glythfyr Ledewig in his hand, and Drudwyn the whelp of Greid son of Eri. And Arthur himself took his place in the hunt, and Cafall, Arthur's dog, in his hand. And Cadw of Prydein mounted Llamrei, Arthur's mare, and he was the first to bring the boar to bay. And then Cadw of Prydein armed him with a hatchet, and boldly and gallantly set upon the boar and split his head in two. And Cadw took the tusk. It was not the dogs which Ysbaddaden had named to Culhwch which killed the boar, but Cafall, Arthur's own dog.

And after Ysgithyrwyn Chief Boar was slain, Arthur and his host went to Celli Wig in Cornwall; and thence he sent Menw son of Teirgwaedd to see whether the treasures were between the two ears of Twrch Trwyth – so mean a thing would it be to go to fight with him, had he not those treasures. However, it was certain that he was there; he had already laid waste the third part of Ireland. Menw went to seek them out. He saw them in Esgeir Oerfel in Ireland. And Menw transformed himself into the likeness of a bird and alighted over his lair and sought to snatch one of the treasures away from him. But for all that he got nothing save one of his bristles. The other arose in his might and shook himself so that some of his poison caught him. And after that Menw was never without scathe.

(591) After that Arthur sent a messenger to Odgar son of Aedd king of Ireland, to ask for the cauldron of Diwrnach the Irishman, his overseer. Odgar besought him to give it. Said Diwrnach, 'God knows, though he should be the better for getting one glimpse of it, he should not have it.' And Arthur's messenger came back from Ireland with a nay. Arthur set out and a light force with him, and went in Prydwen his ship, and came to Ireland, and they made for the house of Diwrnach the Irishman. The hosts of Odgar took note of their strength; and after they had eaten and drunk their fill Arthur demanded the cauldron. He made answer that were he to give it to any one, he would have given it at the word of Odgar king of Ireland. When he had spoken them nay, Bedwyr arose and laid hold of the cauldron and put it on the back of Hygwydd, Arthur's servant; he was brother by the same mother to Cacamwri, Arthur's servant. His office was always to carry Arthur's cauldron and to kindle fire under it. Llenlleawg the Irishman seized Caledfwlch and swung it in a round and he slew Diwrnach the Irishman and all his host. The hosts of Ireland came and fought with them. And when the hosts were utterly routed Arthur and his men went on board ship before their very eyes, and with them the cauldron full of the treasures of Ireland. And they disembarked at the house of Llwydeu son of Cel Coed, at Porth Cerddin in Dyfed. And Mesur-y-Peir is there.¹

¹ Mesur-y-Peir. The place-name has apparently not survived. Its elements mean 'Measure of the Cauldron', but the explanation is onomastic.

And then Arthur gathered together what warriors there were in the Island of Britain and its three adjacent islands, and what there were in France and Brittany and Normandy and the Summer Country, and what there were of picked dogs and horses of renown. And with all those hosts he went to Ireland, and at his coming there was great fear and trembling in Ireland. And when Arthur had come to land, there came to him the saints of Ireland to ask his protection. And he granted them protection, and they gave him their blessing. The men of Ireland came to Arthur and gave him a tribute of victuals. Arthur came to Esgeir Oerfel in Ireland, to the place where Twrch Trwyth was, and his seven young pigs with him. Dogs were let loose at him from all sides. That day until evening the Irish fought with him; nevertheless he laid waste one of the five provinces of Ireland. And on the morrow Arthur's war-band fought with him: save for what evil they got from him, they got nothing good. The third day Arthur himself fought with him, nine nights and nine days: he slew of his pigs but one pigling. His men asked Arthur what was the history of that swine, and he told them: 'He was a king, and for his wickedness God transformed him into a swine.'

Arthur sent Gwyrhwr Interpreter of Tongues to seek to have word with him. Gwyrhwr went in the form of a bird and alighted above the lair of him and his seven young pigs. And Gwyrhwr Interpreter of Tongues asked him, 'For His sake who made thee in this shape, if you can speak, I beseech one of you to come and talk with Arthur.' Grugyn Silver-bristle made answer. Like wings of silver were all his bristles; what way he went through wood and meadow one could discern from how his bristles glittered. This was the answer Grugyn gave: 'By Him who made us in this shape, we will neither do nor say aught for Arthur. Harm enough hath God wrought us, to have made us in this shape, without you too coming to fight with us.' 'I tell you, Arthur will fight for the comb, the razor and the shears which are between the two ears of Twrch Trwyth.' Said Grugyn, 'Until first his life be taken, those treasures will not be taken. And tomorrow in the morning we will set out hence and go into Arthur's country, and there we will do all the mischief we can.'

They set out by sea towards Wales; and Arthur and his hosts, his horses and his dogs, went aboard Prydwen, and in the twinkling of an eye they saw them. Twrch Trwyth came to land

at Porth Cleis in Dyfed. That night Arthur came as far as Mynyw. On the morrow Arthur was told they had gone by, and he overtook him killing the cattle of Cynwas Cwryfagyl, after slaying what men and beasts were in Deu Gleddyf before the coming of Arthur.

From the time of Arthur's coming, Twrch Trwyth made off thence to Preseleu. Arthur and the hosts of the world came thither. Arthur sent his men to the hunt, Eli and Trachmyr, and Drudwyn the whelp of Greid son of Eri in his own hand; and Gwartheyydd son of Caw in another quarter, with the two dogs of Glythfyr Ledewig in his hand; and Bedwyr with Arthur's dog Cafall in his hand. And he ranged all the warriors on either side of the Nyfer. There came the three sons of Cleddyf Difwlch, men who had won great fame at the slaying of Ysgithyrwyn Chief Boar. And then he set out from Glyn Nyfer and came to Cwm Cerwyn, and there he stood at bay. And he then slew four of Arthur's champions, Gwartheyydd son of Caw, Tarawg of Allt Clwyd, Rheiddwn son of Eli Adfer, and Isgofan the Generous. And after he had slain those men, again he stood at bay against them there, and slew Gwydre son of Arthur, Garselit the Irishman, Glew son of Ysgawd, and Isgawyn son of Banon. And then he himself was wounded.

And the morrow's morn at point of day some of the men caught up with him. And then he slew Huandaw and Gogigwr and Penpingon, the three servants of Glewlwyd Mighty-grasp, so that God knows he had never a servant left to him in the world, save only Llaesgymyn,¹ a man for whom none was the better. And over and above those he slew many a man of the country, and Gwlyddyn the Craftsman, Arthur's chief builder. And then Arthur caught up with him at Peluniawg, and he then slew Madawg son of Teithion, and Gwyn son of Tringad son of Neued, and Eiriawn Penlloran. And thence he went to Aber Tywi. And there he stood at bay against them, and he then slew Cynlas son of Cyman and Gwilenhin king of France. Thereafter he went to Glyn Ystun, and then the men and dogs lost him.

Arthur summoned to him Gwyn son of Nudd and asked him whether he knew aught of Twrch Trwyth. He said he did not. Thereupon all the huntsmen went to hunt the pigs as far as Dyffryn Llychwr. And Grugyn Silver-bristle and Llwydawg the

¹ Llaesgymyn: Slack-hewer.

Hewer dashed into them and slew the huntsmen so that not a soul of them escaped alive, save one man only. So Arthur and his hosts came to the place where Grugyn and Llwydawg were. And then he let loose upon them all the dogs that had been named to this end. And at the clamour that was then raised, and the barking, Twrch Trwyth came up and defended them. And ever since they had crossed the Irish Sea, he had not set eyes on them till now. Then was he beset by men and dogs. With might and with main he went to Mynydd Amanw, and then a pigling was slain of his pigs. And then they joined with him life for life, and it was then Twrch Llawin was slain. And then another of his pigs was slain, Gwys was his name. And he then went to Dyffryn Amanw, and there Banw and Benwig were slain. Not one of his pigs went with him alive from that place, save Grugyn Silver-bristle and Llwydawg the Hewer.

From that place they went on to Llwhch Ewin, and Arthur caught up with him there. Then he stood at bay. And then he slew Echel Big-hip, and Arwyli son of Gwyddawg Gwyr, and many a man and dog besides. And after that they went on to Llwhch Tawy. Grugyn Silver-bristle then parted from them, and Grugyn thereafter made for Din Tywi. And he proceeded then into Ceredigiawn, and Eli and Trachmyr with him, and a multitude along with them besides. And he came as far as Garth Grugyn. And there Grugyn was slain in their midst, and he slew Rhuddfyw Rhys and many a man with him. And then Llwydawg went on to Ystrad Yw. And there the men of Llydaw met with him, and he then slew Hir Peisawg king of Llydaw, and Llygadrudd Emys and Gwrfoddw, Arthur's uncles, his mother's brothers. And there he himself was slain.

Twrch Trwyth went then between Tawy and Ewyas. Arthur summoned Cornwall and Devon to meet him at the mouth of the Severn. And Arthur said to the warriors of this Island: 'Twrch Trwyth has slain many of my men. By the valour of men, not while I am alive shall he go into Cornwall. I will pursue him no further, but I will join with him life for life. You, do what you will.' And by his counsel a body of horsemen was sent, and the dogs of the Island with them, as far as Ewyas, and they beat back thence to the Severn, and they waylaid him there with what tried warriors there were in this Island, and drove him by sheer force into Severn. And Mabon son of Modron went with him into Severn, on Gwyn Dun-mane the steed of

Gweddw, and Goreu son of Custennin and Menw son of Teirgwaedd, between Llyn Lliwan and Aber Gwy. And Arthur fell upon him, and the champions of Britain along with him. Osla Big-knife drew near, and Manawydan son of Llŷr, and Cacamwri, Arthur's servant, and Gwyngelli, and closed in on him. And first they laid hold of his feet, and soused him in Severn till it was flooding over him. On the one side Mabon son of Modron spurred his horse and took the razor from him, and on the other Cyledyr the Wild, on another horse, plunged into Severn with him and took from him the shears. But or ever the comb could be taken he found land with his feet; and from the moment he found land neither dog nor man nor horse could keep up with him until he went into Cornwall. Whatever mischief was come by in seeking those treasures from him, worse was come by in seeking to save the two men from drowning. Cacamwri, as he was dragged forth, two quernstones dragged him into the depths. As Osla Big-knife was running after the boar, his knife fell out of its sheath and he lost it; and his sheath thereafter being full of water, as he was dragged forth, it dragged him back into the depths.

Then Arthur went with his hosts until he caught up with him in Cornwall. Whatever mischief was come by before that was play to what was come by then in seeking the comb. But from mischief to mischief the comb was won from him. And then he was forced out of Cornwall and driven straight forward into the sea. From that time forth never a one has known where he went, and Aned and Aethlem with him. And Arthur went thence to Celli Wig in Cornwall, to bathe himself and rid him of his weariness.

Said Arthur, 'Is there any of the marvels still unobtained?' Said one of the men, 'There is: the blood of the Black Witch, daughter of the White Witch, from the head of the Valley of Grief in the uplands of Hell.' Arthur set out for the North and came to where the hag's cave was. And it was the counsel of Gwyn son of Nudd and Gwythyr son of Greidawl that Cacamwri and Hygwydd his brother be sent to fight with the hag. And as they came inside the cave the hag grabbed at them, and caught Hygwydd by the hair of his head and flung him to the floor beneath her. And Cacamwri seized her by the hair of her head, and dragged her to the ground off Hygwydd, but she then

turned on Cacamwri and dressed them down both and disarmed them, and drove them out squealing and squalling. And Arthur was angered to see his two servants well nigh slain, and he sought to seize the cave. And then Gwyn and Gwythyr told him, 'It is neither seemly nor pleasant for us to see thee scuffling with a hag. Send Long Amren and Long Eiddil into the cave.' And they went. But if ill was the plight of the first two, the plight of those two was worse, so that God knows not one of the whole four could have stirred from the place, but for the way they were all four loaded on Llamrei, Arthur's mare. And then Arthur seized the entrance to the cave, and from the entrance he took aim at the hag with Carnwennan his knife, and struck her across the middle until she was as two tubs. And Cadw of Prydein took the witch's blood and kept it with him.

And then Culhwch set forth, and Goreu son of Custennin with him, and every one that wished ill to Ysbaddaden Chief Giant, and those marvels with them to his court. And Cadw of Prydein came to shave his beard, flesh and skin to the bone, and his two ears outright. And Culhwch said, 'Hast thou had thy shave, man?' 'I have,' said he. 'And is thy daughter mine now?' 'Thine,' said he. 'And thou needst not thank me for that, but thank Arthur who has secured her for thee. Of my own free will thou shouldst never have had her. And it is high time to take away my life.' And then Goreu son of Custennin caught him by the hair of his head and dragged him behind him to the mound, and cut off his head, and set it on the bailey-stake. And he took possession of his fort and his dominions.

And that night Culhwch slept with Olwen, and she was his only wife so long as he lived. And the hosts of Arthur dispersed, every one to his country.

And in this wise did Culhwch win Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Chief Giant.