

First Evening

Chapter A

Advent in the establishment of an old innkeeper.

In the name of Thor and Worden, bless the inventor of letters and writing!

Alphabet¹ of great deeds of the valiant Prince Oribeau.

Betimes the history of famous men is enveloped in fables that a severe critic might discount, but the people are not upset by that; they love things that appear extraordinary to them and which nourish their insatiable curiosity.

Clearly, as we shall see.

Duo: two inhabitants of Waterford, capital of the kingdom of Mommonia in the land of Evin² were once drinking beer in a tavern. One was named Younghall, the other Kilmactomas.

The old innkeeper Ennisleague, who had served them, was spinning at the door when she saw the young King of the land pass by, followed by his entire Court. "There goes our beloved Prince Oribeau," she said to the drinkers, "may Thor and Friga bless him. Do you know the story of his sixth ancestor, the valiant Oribeau the Wise and that of his wife, the excellent Princess Oribelle? It's marvelous."

"What is it?" said one of the drinkers.

Immediately, the innkeeper, who loved to talk, replied: "If I were sure of your discretion, I'd tell you some very strange things."

The two drinkers assured her of their constraint, asked for a new tankard and settled down to listen to the marvelous story.

Ennisleague had hardly opened her mouth when a nobleman came in, a great hunter. He asked for service.

One of the plebeian drinkers said to his comrade: "These noblemen spoil everything; there's our pleasure lost."

"Why is that?" asked the hunter.

"Because we wanted to hear the story of the sixth ancestor of our young king, which the innkeeper was about to tell us."

"I can do it better than that old woman, who will only tell you fables, whereas I'll tell you fables and the truth. I'm a gentleman, it's true, but popular, and your friend."

"In that case, speak," said the two drinkers. "We're listening."

The hunter therefore commenced his story in these terms:

"**Fabulous** or true, the story of the Princes of a country is always interesting for the people they govern, but how much more so ought to be a story stripped of fables, without nevertheless silencing them,³ which tends to make virtue loved by showing us a young Prince, scion of the august House that

¹ In the original the alphabetization of chapters A-F dictates the separation of the paragraphs, but in some instances this produces very long paragraphs extending over several pages, often containing entire dialogues. In the interests of contriving a more comfortable layout of the text, I have broken up those long paragraphs into a form that is nowadays more conventional, and have highlighted the alphabetization by putting the key words in boldface. After making a token attempt to continue the pattern in chapter G the author gives up, except with regard to the first letter of each chapter.

² Author's note: "A beautiful name, for Evinland signifies productive land)." In fact, Evin is presumably a corruption of Erin, whose etymology is uncertain but probably means "west," Ireland lying west of Great Britain.

³ Author's note: "The Irish narrator will, in fact, report everything, but he will have the art of not confusing folklore with history. He has absolutely cast as folktales the episodes of a marvelous genre. Let us give here the full title of the *Tale of Oribeau* such as it is in the original: *The deeds of the valiant Prince Auribeau, King of fifty villages in the country of Hirland, and the authentic adventures of the excellent Princess Auribelle; Abridged from the ancient annals of Airland, or Hirland.*" In the endnotes attached to the final volume the author expands further on this point, saying: "The singular names and certain bizarre features in the story will surprise some readers...but we have been

has governed us for so many centuries, brought up by a Sage; a great Minister calumniated, who does good solely for the love of the good; and finally, a young King, father to his people, all of whose needs he wants to know! I shall get to it.

Chapter B
Birth of Prince Oribeau after adventures in a Palace and a Cavern.

Behold a good son, King and husband: nothing was lacking in good King Oribeau, nicknamed O’Facfac,⁴ except to be a father. He had reigned for twenty years over the flourishing kingdom of Mommonia in the famous country of Evinland in Karrimkagriffin, his favorite castle in Waterford, his capital, but the beautiful Princess Dadameh, his wife, had not yet given him an heir.

Chasing foxes one day with the Queen—for the Prince was a great hunter—they each went astray. The Queen was carried away by her horse, which had been frightened by a loud clap of thunder. The charger stumbled in a pothole. Fortunately, Dadameh, young and vivacious, leapt lightly to the ground and drew away.

As for O’Facfac, surprised by night and the storm, and harassed by fatigue, after three hours he perceived a pale light; he spurred his horse and reached the gate of a castle that he did not recognize. While he has the gate opened to him, however, so that he can recover his exhausted strength by means of a delicate supper, let us return to the Queen.

Dadameh, after having walked for some time through a dense wood, did not find a palace but a frightful lair, which the storm constrained her to enter, tremulously.

Scarcely was she there than she saw approaching, it is said, a man clad in a long black robe with a bonnet made from the skin of a large bat, whose attached wings formed its brim.

The Magician—for he was one of the most powerful of those—approached the Princess courteously. “Milady,” he said, “are you not Queen Dadameh?”

The trembling Princess replied to him: “Milord, if you’re the Devil, don’t do me any harm!”

“No, I’m only a sorcerer.”

“Mercy!” cried the Princess. “Oh, sir, don’t put a spell on me.”

“Far from it; I intend to remove the cruel spell by which you are obsessed.”

But the poor Queen could no longer hear him; she had fainted.

Dondanuck—that was the necromancer’s name—employed the secrets of his art to recall her to life. Afterwards, he said to the Princess: “Madame, by means of what carriage would it please you to rejoin the King, your worthy spouse? Would you like a chariot drawn by owls or by dragons? Would you like me to carry you myself, or would you be content with a mule that I nourish in this lair?”

The Queen accepted the mule—which was none other than the fay Wrwcwcv,⁵ the protectress of the House of Connacy, from which Dadameh descended—the Magician put her on it and assured her that he had just read in his grimoire that before the year was out, she would bring a Prince into the world.

Enjoined to enter as if under compulsion, King O’Facfac allowed himself to be led into the castle. He was served by domestics, without seeing the master or mistress.

As soon as he had supped, he was urged to go to bed, but scarcely had his weary limbs touched the eiderdown, than he felt a soft plump hand pass over his face.

obliged to conserve these features, which are the foundation of the Irish story, as well as names that are the inventions of the original author.” He labors the point in other occasional notes, which I have not reproduced.

⁴ There is more than one way that this strange name might have been derived, but it is probably adapted from Latin, and appears in more than one eighteenth-century French text in a quotation allegedly taken from St Augustine: *Fac fac vel timore poenae, si nondum potes amore justitia* [Act, act for fear of punishment, if you cannot yet do so out of love of justice].

⁵ The call of a trogon is sometimes rendered as *couroucourou*, but Restif is unlikely to have known that, and his term is almost certainly an onomatopoeic version of the call of an owl (or, strictly speaking, two owls), usually rendered in English as “too-wit-too-woo.”

The Prince was no coward, although he believed in ghosts, and he had the courage to exclaim: “Who’s there? What do you want?”

A soft and silvery voice, which resembled that of Queen Dadameh, replied: “O King Facfac, I am a fay, and unfortunate, in spite of my power, for having always resisted amour. I refused to marry the genius Perforimoth the Black, and in order to avenge himself he made a talisman that forces me to fall in love with a mere mortal; fortunately, it’s you! My name is Pucellomaneh,⁶ protective fay of the House of Langenia, and perhaps you’ve heard of mention of me, although I’m presently almost forgotten by men and entirely unknown to women. Judge my difficulty—the cruel genius, who surpasses me in power, against all the laws of Faerie, has condemned me to take the first step and offer you myself what once I would only have suffered to be asked of me. Have pity on my fate, and render me my first virtue, in making me lack it...”

That speech was followed by a kiss, which the fay imprinted on O’Facfac’s lips.

“One moment, my love,” said the Prince, who sensed Pucellomaneh becoming pressing, “Let’s see first whether you’re pretty.”

“Can you doubt it?” replied the fay. “Do you remember how beautiful Dadameh was at sixteen?”

“As if I could still see her.”

“Well, I resemble her feature for feature, and tomorrow you’ll have the proof of it. Remember that everything you do with me will operate on the Queen, and that if you do as I wish, within a year you will have a son.”

That promise made a marvelous impression on the great O’Facfac; he surpassed himself, and broke the talisman that submitted the fay to the harsh law of Perforimoth the Black. So, as soon as the Prince was asleep, the fay, who had recovered the right to modesty, climbed back into her chariot and disappeared.

Fatigued and tremulous on the Mage’s mule, the Queen was carried by her mount to the fay’s castle. She was received there with all the respect that she merited, and was taken to the room of her husband the King. What passed between them was not revealed, but the following day, having awakened at the same time, they were very surprised to find themselves in the same bed.

“Milady,” said the Prince, “I’ve just had a beautiful dream.”

“And I, Milord, have just had a frightful one.”

And they told one another what I have just told you.

They had only just finished when they saw the lords that usually accompanied them on the hunt arriving.

“Tell me,” O’Facfac said to them, “whether we were hunting yesterday and where we are at present, for this apartment resembles exactly the one in my palace at Karrickmacgriffin?”

The lords assured Their Majesties that they had not been hunting, that they had gone to bed together after having supped on roe-deer pâté and a brawn of wild boar.

“But that was the day before yesterday!” cried the Queen.

Her Majesty was assured that she was mistaken.

Great effect of the conjurations of Dondamuck! The day that the King and Queen had lost was forgotten by humans, and the King and Queen, who were the only ones who remembered it, took it for a dream! But what proves that it was a reality is that a few months later, Dadameh found that she was pregnant, and before the year was out, she gave birth to a son, as handsome as the day, who was named Prince Oribeau.

The fay Wrwcw, the wisest of his ancestors, endowed him with beauty, a fine stature, graces, intelligence and a desire for education.

⁶ *Pucelle* in French means virgin, often applied to Jeanne d’Arc; *maneh*, which Restif attaches as a suffix to the names of many of his fays would have been familiar to him as a Biblical term for the coin or unit of weight known in both French and English as a talent.

The entire nation was drunk with joy. Couriers were sent to notify his maternal grandfather, Performoth the Severe, the King of Connacy, of the birth of the Prince, as well as old O'Empthor, King of Lagenia, the wise Dunnaghall, King of Ultonia and the feeble Baisitiding, King of Meath.⁷

“**Ha!**” interrupted the old innkeeper. “You’d like to make is believe that the magician’s cavern and the fay’s palace were dreams—but they were real!”

“**If** you wish, my dear,” said the gentleman, “but everyone has his fashion of telling tales, and that’s mine.

“**Speak! Speak!**” said the two drinkers. “For you speak well, and if ever you stand for Parliament, we promise you our votes, as well as those of our friends. And you, good woman, listen.”

Joy as keen as King O’Facfac felt on that happy occasion was previously unknown to him. He had been generous and good before, but he became even better. To everything that the Queen and his Ministers asked of him, he only responded with his favorite phrase: “So be it.”

But he did not enjoy the happiness of being a father for long.

Kerry—that was the hunter’s name—finished his tankard at that moment; he asked for another, which pleased old Ennisleague. Then he resumed speaking.

Chapter C

Conchèse: The marvelous conception and birth of Oribelle.

Consequently, five years went by after Oribeau saw the light of day; he was learning to ride a horse and hold a sword when the beautiful Conchèse, Queen of Lagenia, became pregnant in a most extraordinary manner.

Delicate, adored by the people, who trembled that they might lose that last offspring of Kings, the only daughter of the great O’Empthor had just succeeded him.

The young Princess, who was only sixteen, was dear to the fay Pucellomaneh; she fled from all men and only saw in a familiar fashion the daughter of Baron Kilkenny, the late King’s Minister. Maidman, alias Knoctoser, slept with the Queen, and loved her as much as she was loved. She often said to her:

“**Excellent** Princess, if only I were of a sex different from yours!”

“I desire that as much as you do,” replied Conchèse, “but it’s an insensate wish.”

“Not as much as that, Milady.”

For it is necessary to say here that Maidman, in coming into the world, had had all the appearances of the female sex, but as she had grown older, the prerogatives of the other sex had become gradually manifest. At fourteen, Maidman was a little more male than female; people were already inverting her name and calling her Manmaid. Soon she was a perfect man, without anyone suspecting it except for her father, who had his reasons for not saying anything. It was in that fortunate epoch that Manmaid lay with Conchèse and formed the wish to be a different sex.

“**Great** is my desire,” Manmaid said one evening to her sovereign, “that the gods grant my wish.

“I would like that too,” said Conchèse, sighing, and sadly went to bed.

Manmaid, who shared it, as usual, emboldened by the Queen’s response and favored by the fay Pucellomaneh, tried out her new faculties and brought the adventure to a conclusion without Conchèse imagining that it was anything but the caresses of a girl. In consequence, she mistook the inconveniences of pregnancy for the symptoms of a dangerous illness.

⁷ The author inserts notes here to identify Connacy with Connaught; Lagenia with Leinster, the location of Dublin, formerly Balaclay, and the region of Kilkenny, famous for the beauty of its daughters; Ultonia with Ulster; and to identify Meath as a humble “dismembered” principality of Lagenia. He adds: “It is necessary to observe that the names of these Kings are the same as those of genii, because all peoples, in their tales, from the Greeks to the Irish, take pleasure in making their ancient Kings marvelous beings, gods, genii, fays or heroes.”

However, imagine her astonishment one day when, having found herself very indisposed, a violent colic concluded with her bringing a beautiful Princess into the world.

Conchèse could not believe three of her senses, which assured her of it, and nearly concluded that she was only imagining what they wanted to impose upon her. Finally, however, it was necessary to yield when she saw all the Orders of State coming to congratulate her on her fortunate fecundity, and begging her to name the fortunate mortal who had been able to please Her Royal Majesty.

Innocent as she was beautiful, Conchèse told the delegates that she knew nothing about it, and that no man had approached her. It was thought at first that Her Majesty was blushing at her choice and dared not admit it, but, the Queen's ingenuous responses having convinced the chiefs that she was telling the truth, it was published throughout the realm that the Sovereign had given birth to a Princess whose father was a genius. In order that that should be more credible he was named; the genius Baisitiding had the honor of that glorious paternity.

By order of the Queen, the young Princess was named Oribelle; she was given the prettiest woman in Kilkenny as a nurse, and all the public documents were issued in the name of Conchèse and the genius Baisitiding, her invisible spouse.

Kilkenny, Manmaid's father, who had governed the State for a long time, notified the barons of the realm and all the neighboring Courts that the Queen of Lagenia had given birth.

There was great rejoining in the Court of Meath, because the Sovereigns of Lagenia and Meath were originally from the same family, which meant that the Princes of the two countries always took their spouses from one another, those of Meath from the House of Lagenia, and the Princes of the latter country from the House of Meath, from which Conchèse emerged.

In the Court of Mommonia, however, there was surprise at the notification. For three of four centuries the Mommonians and the Lagenians had been sworn enemies. That is why they could not imagine why it had been decided in Balaclay—as Dublin as then named—to give the Princess a name similar to that of the young Prince of Mommonia. Some took it as an evil omen, others as a good one, but everyone talked about it as something that would have extraordinary consequences.

Learn that the secret reasons that had determined Conchèse to have the young Princess given a foreign name came from a dream that she had had two days before giving birth. She thought she had seen the fay Pucellomaneh, the protectress of her House, who pronounced the following words distinctly

“**My** daughter,
“**Name** your daughter,
“**Oribelle.**”

Chapter D

Dondanuck becomes Minister, and what he wants to do.

Dadameh, meanwhile, had become regent of Mommonia, for it is necessary to know, since I have not yet said it, that the good O'Facfac had fallen into infancy a week after the birth of his son, and Queen Dadameh, remembering the necromancer who had announced the birth of Oribeau to her, summoned him to be governor of the State.

As soon as Dondanuck had the reins of government in his hands, he was seen to dedicate himself to making the people happy. He wanted to publish a Law to which the inhabitants of Mommonia would owe all their felicity, but he was opposed. I shall report it as is it conserved in the Archives of the city of Waterford.

“**Exegesis** of the King and Milady the Regent

“**Fitz-Oribeau**, by the grace of Thor, King of the fifty villages of Mommonia, Counties of Clare, Limerick, Kerry, Cork, Tipperary and Waterford, Lord of Karrikmakgriffin, etc., and the very illustrious Princess Dadameh Knockfergus, heir presumptive to the Kingdom of Connacy, Counties of Sligo, Thomond and Roscommon, to all our faithful subjects, salutations.

“Grieving at the absence of our worthy spouse, the great O’Facfac, and forced by the unanimous cry of our people to take responsibility for the government of the Estates of the King, our dear son, during his minority, we have resolved to render the memory of our regency immortal forever by working for public felicity. Of all the means that have presented themselves to our mind and our excellent Council, we have not found any more efficacious and shorter means than to hinder a certain number of men who are avid to take possession of everything and reduce their fellow citizens to poverty. Moved by these causes and others, and our certain knowledge, omnipotence and royal power, we have decided, instituted by statute and ordered the following, that we:

Article A

“Adjudicates is that three months hence, all the particular customs of the different counties that compose our Kingdom of Mommonia will be extinguished and superannuated, and there will no longer be any but a single, simple and uniform law composed of all that is best in the aforementioned customs and abrogated laws, which we are presently drafting, for publication at the end of the aforesaid three months;

Article B

“Banished are all differences in weights and measures of all the said Counties, Lands and Lordships;

Article C

“Commanded from the day of publication of the present ordinance is that all the real estate of our subjects shall be equally shared between them and all debts cancelled, but in such a manner that if a debtor comes to be richer than the creditor one day, the said debtor will be constrained to restore equality with the said creditor, and until then the debtor will be subject to that obligation, but during the present century only, because at the beginning of each century, equality will be reestablished;

Article D

“Declared is that all furniture, money, livestock and other commodities will be similarly divided in proportion to the needs of the age, strength and number of persons, in order that all should be compensated in such a manner that all our subjects enjoy an equal wellbeing;

Article E

“Established is that all the contestations in which our said subjects might be involved, whether civil or criminal, will be judged gratis; the culpable individual will be punished personally, and none of that penalty will fall directly or indirectly upon their families; and with regard to civil amends imposed on litigants in bad faith, care will be taken that they do not prejudice their children in any way;

Article F

“Forbidden is any subject, who has merited distinction by his services to enjoy them other than personally, it not being just that the State should take responsibility for the onerous illustration of any bad lots that might emerge from a valiant man;

Article G

“Guaranteed is that in future, judges will be selected from the wisest old men of any town or village; they will number eighty in big cities, twelve in the smallest and six in boroughs and village; they will serve for a year; every court will judge in the last resort but the following year’s court will review the judgment on the complaint of one party and in that event the case will be rejudged by two different and distant jurisdictions at the same time and on the same day, which will only be known to one another subsequently, and in the event of a difference of decision a third will pronounce definitively without having seen the decisions of the other two; all without expense, the honor of being a judge taking the place of spices;

Article H

“**Hasten** our Minister and our great officers to have the aforesaid Exegesis or clear Exposition of our will executed in the fifty villages of the Kingdom of Mommonia.

“**Inscribed** in our annals in the first year of our reign.

“**Judged** appropriate and just, Oribeau, King; Dadameh, Queen Regent; and (lower down) On the King’s behalf, Dondanuck.

“**Karrimakgriffin**, our abode.”

Legally, the Minister would have had all of that executed in spite of the obstacles raised by the rich, for he was convinced that the disproportion of fortunes is the most dangerous reef of mores. Although his necromancy put him above cabals, and he consented to be charged with the execration of the blinded public, provided that the young King and the Queen Regent were blessed by the people, he believed that he had the right to render men happy in spite of themselves.

Moderation did not, however, preserve him from the hatred of the foremost in the State, who, having perceived that the Minister was amassing a great deal of money, resolved to make use of that opportunity to doom him by accusing him of embezzlement and violating his own laws.

One day, therefore, they came in a body to find the Regent and ask her to order Dondanuck’s arrest and a search of his house. The Princess, surprised and troubled, did not know what to reply, when the Minister arrived. He said that the Mommonians’ demand was just and he handed over all his keys; he even wanted his accusers carry out the search.

The astonishment of the latter was great, however, when nothing was found in Dondanuck’s house but a few old clothes, books and instruments of chemistry, with the most frugal provisions of food. They searched everywhere. The Minister encouraged them, laughing.

Afterwards, taking pity on them he told them to follow him to the guard of the Royal Treasury. There, he showed them all the sums that he had amassed, divided into various labeled bags; he invited them to read, and they saw on the first of the bags:

Notwithstanding the law of equality, as the Mommonian lords reduced to equality by the law that we have proposed, are not accustomed to labor, they might fall into need, and below the very equality that we wanted to establish, which would not be just. In consequence, we have asked the Queen Regent to amass considerable sums, reserving it to ourselves to advise her on their distribution to the grandees of her realm incapable of maintaining themselves after the execution of the law, in proportion to their needs. I estimate that it will be necessary to commence with the proudest, because they will only complain in the last extremity; they are O’Furh, O’Droungth. etc., (the principal lords were named, who were precisely those who had accused him) and hope that Her Majesty will continue to cast a paternal eye over their needs in future.

One can easily imagine the confusion of Dondanuck’s accusers; they withdrew, after having begged the Queen’s pardon for their temerity.

Preserving himself from such inconveniences in future, Dondanuck postponed the execution of his law and occupied himself with the education of the young Prince Oribeau. I shall briefly summarize the manner in which he thought a good King should be formed.

“**Question!**” said one of the drinkers. “That law was not enacted?”

“**Reckless!**” said the other. “Nothing more dangerous; the idle and the indigent would find themselves as advanced as honest men, which would not be just.”

“Would you care to refer that to this gentleman,” replied the first, “Who has more interest than us in the non-existence of that law?”

“**So be it!**” said the second drinker. “What do you think, honest gentleman?”

“**Thus far**, all my expressions have proved that I lean toward the law. It’s not that I don’t sense its inconveniences, the most dangerous of all being that it might remove the most powerful fiber of the State, each individual no longer having the expectation of raising himself above others by his labor and his

industry, of transmitting to his posterity the flattering elevation and distinction that have honored him; that one might see savage apathy taking possession of society and the most flourishing nations falling back in a few years into barbarity, or falling prey to active and vigilant enemies who had not adopted the same regime.

“You sense that one can envisage the matter from another angle and respond that those fears are commercial, that happy and free people would cherish their constitution, that they would be full of activity because, by means of equality they would enjoy all their labor, that pleasures, amusements and enjoyments of every species would always succeed occupation; that there are a thousand means of exciting and maintaining competition and activity; that in handing over power to the old, its execution to the mature, putting youth in subordination by labor in the time of strength and the necessity of learning in childhood, there would never be murmurs, because every moment would be carrying a man toward power and honor; that the example of republics, inferior to monarchies in vigor, is of no relevance here because those republic are imperfect regimes, etc. There are fors and againsts. Let us consult the decision of our aged hostess.”

The innkeeper, flattered by that arbitrage, replied: “Equality would be excellent if the world were only composed of good people.”

“**Vouchsafe** the sequel to the story,” said Younghall.

The gentleman continued.

Chapter E

Embarrassment in which Queen Conchèse finds herself.

Evidently, in Lagenia, Queen Conchèse did not have the same good fortune as the Regent of Mommonia. The virility of Manmaid became more manifest with every passing day. A bushy beard came to shadow her chin and she was obliged to quit the clothing of the sex she no longer had.

People laughed at first at that metamorphosis of the Queen’s friend; afterwards, they reflected that it was less natural to attribute the fecundity of Conchèse to Baisitiding than to Maidman, as she was still called. Hence, it was concluded that it was necessary for the young lord to marry the Queen.

Conchèse would have liked nothing better and everything would soon have been concluded if Kilkenny’s enemies had not conspired together to prevent the marriage of his son with the Sovereign. They claimed that it was debasing royal Majesty to clothe a dubious individual like a hermaphrodite therewith; that a Queen required a definite man; that Princess Oribelle really was the daughter of the genius Baisitiding—and the proof they brought was that MacChoukas, the priest of Thor, had thus decided.

Contradicting themselves thereafter, as often happens when one is blinded by hatred, they accused Kilkenny of the crime of *lèse-majesté*, saying that he knew that Maidman was a man, since he had initially given her the name of Knoctoser, but that ambition had determined his conduct and had suggested that infamy to him, knowing that there was then no Prince to marry in the House of Meath. They proposed the son of the Pontiff to marry the Queen, who refused him.

The rebels then chose MacChoukas and his son for their leaders, and the people, accustomed to respect the ministers of their religion, rallied to their side. Manmaid and his father were captured in battle and handed over to MacDonoght, the son of MacChoukas, who was himself a priest of Worden, the god of war.

Favored by strength of arms, as soon as MacDonoght had his enemies in his power, he took measures to doom them more surely. In order to succeed, he had an oracle rendered by Worden that demanded the sacrifice of the two most illustrious prisoners of war. Kilkenny and Knoctoser, or Manmaid, were taken to the altar crowned with laurel.

Guided by ambition and jealousy, MacDonoght had already raised his arm, ready to plunge a large knife into Knoctoser’s breast, when a brilliant machine was perceived in the air borne, suspended by golden and azure chains, by four rocs and four condors and directed by a goddess.

The novelty of the spectacle astonished the priest and all the people. Meanwhile, the rocs and the condors lowered the chariot over the altar, and they saw, on a throne enriched by diamonds, a woman of superhuman beauty. It was Pucellomaneh.

“Feeble Lagenians,” she said, “I have taken under my protection Queen Conchèse, her daughter Princes Oribelle, Knoctoser and Kilkenny. As for MacChoukas and MacDonoght, this is their fate...”

At the same time, she touched them with her wand, and instead of two men, nothing could any longer be seen but two moles, which immediately started digging in the earth and disappeared.

“**Happy** inhabitants of Lagenia,” the fay continued, “your young Princess will one day be a phenomenon of nature. She will be a prudent, beautiful and modest woman, tender and reserved, affable and proud, facile and the most severe of daughters.”

“**It’s** impossible to combine all those qualities!” cried Kilkenny.

“**Judiciously**, I shall build an inaccessible fort on the point of those two rocks,” Pucellomaneh replied. “I shall enclose the Princess therein; it’s the only means of giving a beauty all the qualities that I’ve just expressed. She will see no one except her governess and nurse Clomaneh; she will never be flattered, and all the natural penchants of women will be devoid of effect, unless a young Prince succeeds, by dint of virtue and good deeds, in destroying the talisman with which I will seal the doors.”

The fay immediately removed the little Oribelle, aged three years three months and three days, from her mother’s arms; but she softened Conchèse’s dolor by giving her a talisman to enter her daughter’s dwelling. Pucellomaneh sealed her in the castle of Makredin, situated between the county of Wicklow and the kingdom of Meath; it was there that Oribelle was brought up by Clomaneh, her nurse and governess.

Knoctoser found himself without a competitor; he asked for Conchèse in marriage, humbly, from the assembled Estates, who consented to raise him to the level of their Sovereign if the Queen agreed.

Left to her own devices, Conchèse, who had not yet known a more amiable man than her dear Knoctoser, gave her royal consent. Oribelle’s father married the Queen and took the name of O’Brisombaüm.

Misfortunately, the marriage was not happy. O’Connor the Handsome, the castellan of Ratchlin in the county of Longford, appeared at Court; the Queen, charmed by his good looks, made him her Minister and rendered him omnipotent. O’Brisombaüm sulked and then complained bitterly; the Queen had bad moods and they quarreled.

Conchèse then had a second perfectly beautiful daughter, but the fay Pucellomaneh, irritated by the disharmony between the two spouses, endowed that younger daughter with as much stupidity and malevolence as Oribelle had intelligence and mildness.

The Queen heard the fatal gift that the fay had just made and was greatly afflicted by it. To increase her distress, Pucellomaneh told her that Mijoreh the Beautiful, Queen of Meath, Her Majesty’s cousin, had just brought into the world a hunchbacked, lame one-eyed and bandy-legged son, who had been named Beaudâme and nicknamed Cahincaha, endowed with as much intelligence as he had ugliness; that the young Prince could not be embellished, nor the little Princess become more intelligent and good, but that the former might succeed, in spite of his ugliness, in making Dinameh love him—that was the name the fay had given to the second Princess of Lagenia—provided that no one revealed to them the secret on which their fates depended.

No less afflicted, the Queen of Meath deplored the deformity of her son Beaudâme, nicknamed Cahincaha. The fay, who was similarly present at her childbirth, assured her that there was a remedy for it, and that if the Prince was loved one day by little Dinameh, his cousin, in spite of his ugliness, he would become as handsome as he was intelligent.

“Never—he’s too ugly!” said one of the Queen’s ladies-in-waiting.

“Intelligence embellishes ugliness,” retorted the fay.

On which the little Prince was given for a nurse a woman of Ballnalu named Nursimaneh; she was sent to Mullengar, between Lake Hoy and Lake Ennel, in west Meath, with orders not to return to court until Cahincaha was embellished.