

the Vikings in their own element.¹ In 913 a "new fleet," manned by Ulstermen, attacked the Norsemen off the coast of Man but was defeated.² Another Ulster fleet commanded by Muirchertach mac Neill, King of Aileach, sailed to the Hebrides in 939 and carried off much spoil and booty.³ Moreover, the Irish seem to have imitated the Scandinavian practice of "drawing" or carrying their light vessels over land to the lakes and rivers in the interior of the island. Mention is made of Domhnall, son of Muirchertach, who "took the boats from the river Bann on to Lough Neagh, and over the river Blackwater upon Lough Erne, and afterwards upon Lough Uachtair."⁴

The men of Munster also had their navy, which they organised according to Norse methods⁵ by compelling each district in the different counties to contribute ten ships to it. Thus by the middle of the tenth century they were able to put a formidable fleet to sea. When Cellachan of Cashel (d. 954) was captured by the Vikings and brought to Dublin,

¹ It is interesting to recall that a new development in shipbuilding, probably due to the same causes, was taking place in England about the same time. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* first mentions a naval encounter with Vikings under the year 875, and some twenty years later describes the long ships, "shaped neither like the Frisian nor the Danish," which Alfred had commanded to be built to oppose the *oescs*, or Danish ships.

² *Annals of Ulster*, A.D. 912.

³ *Annals of the Four Masters*, A.D. 939.

⁴ *Annals of the Four Masters*, A.D. 953 (= 955). *Annals of Ulster*, A.D. 963.

To this entry the annalist adds the following note: "Quod non factum est ab antiquis temporibus."

Cf. *Three Fragments of Annals* (A.D. 873): "Bairith (O.N. Barthr), drew many ships from the sea westwards to Lough Ree. . . ."

⁵ Ancient Norway was divided by Haakon into districts (*Skipreithur*) each of which had in wartime to equip and man a warship: the number of these districts was fixed by law. *Gulathingslög*, 10. Cf. *The Victorious Career of Cellachan of Cashel*, p. 151, n; etc. Cf. *The Saga of Haakon the Good* (*Heimskr.*), ch. 21.