

236





JAMES NORMAN METHVEN



OSSIANA;

OR

FINGAL

ASCERTAINED AND TRACED

IN ULSTER ;

BY THE ANALOGY OF NAMES AND

PLACES MENTIONED IN OSSIAN'S POEMS.

BY HUGH Y. CAMPBELL, Esq. R.N. F.A.S.

AUTHOR OF "THE COUNTESS OF CARRICK."

" Though the plains of our battles are dark and silent, and our fame is in the four grey stones ; yet the voice of Ossian has been heard, and the harp was strung in Selma."——BERRATHON.

LONDON:

1819.

NOTE.

IN a work like this, purporting to be descriptive of only a small tract of country, frequently alluded to in various forms, by the poet, it is scarcely possible to avoid a sort of tautology while speaking of the different manners in which the scenes are noticed: at the same time to arrange the following citations and remarks under separate heads, would require more time than the author can well bestow on the subject: besides, he thinks that it would be no furtherance of his object, but on the contrary tend to divest them of a portion of their strength and argument. Were it possible to trace Fingal, and his son, with that precision that we can the hero of the *Æneid* from his setting out from Troy to his landing in Italy; then, indeed, we might insist upon order of time in the quotations; but every reader of Ossian's Poems is aware that their unison will by no means answer the purpose of such uniformity; for in one page the hero is bounding over the waves to Lochlin, and in the next, at the feast of shells in Morven, or in battles of the spear on Lena. The interim often unaccounted for.

It is now for me to add, that this work, trifling as it may seem, has cost me more exercise of intellect, than a work ten times larger has done, which is now before the *Public*.

London, May, 1819.

TO MY NOBLE FRIEND,
THE RIGHT HONORABLE JOHN CAMPBELL,
EARL OF BREADALBANE,
&c. &c. &c.

The following proofs of the existence of the Bard of our forefathers, which have so long been a desideratum in British literature, are respectfully inscribed by,

my Lord,
your Lordship's most obedient,
and very humble Servant,
HUGH Y. CAMPBELL.

London, May 26th, 1819.



OSSIANA,

ſc. ſc.

As the celebrated Lord Kames, and Doctors Blair and Whittaker, have employed their time in attempting to ascertain the existence and æra of Ossian, and have by no means succeeded; so, in a collateral walk, I beg leave to lay some brief observations and remarks before the public; which, after a considerable portion of investigation, I have been enabled to make on the Battle Fields of Fingal in Ireland.

Although in the remarks I am often led to offer my opinion from analogy of names of places, &c. yet I will be answerable for the correctness of any observations I have made on the face of the country, during my brief tour, and in the following enquiry. I have only to regret, that the many similitudes and allusions, which I have quoted to strengthen my conjectures, are unarranged in due order of time. To answer my purpose, I was led to cite many in a desultory manner, as I met them in my progress through the books of Fingal, Death of Cuchullin, Temora, &c. the only ones in which any mention is made of Ireland.

After a lapse of sixteen hundred years, it is an acknowledged difficult task to come to any correct determination on the identical places mentioned by Ossian, as frequented by rude warriors, wholly unacquainted with the arts and sciences—at least, by people who have left but few conspicuous monuments of their battles and victories after them, farther than a few rough stones, often in the way of the plough; and, consequently, liable to be removed at the will of the agriculturist.

Difficult, however, as the task may seem, I have several years considered it capable of being accomplished partly, if not wholly; but from boyhood I have been unremittingly employed in the service of my country; hence my wishes to attempt the discovery of

Fingal's Battle Fields have been hitherto thwarted, and the attempt consequently delayed.

In unison with my early established wish to know the fields of heroes, I lately proceeded to Ireland, and there commenced a laborious observation on the situation, and an enquiry into the names of the districts, of that part of Ulster, which lies opposite to the coast of Scotland; where I was so far fortunate as soon to discover what I considered a key to the wished for object; but this was not easily ascertained.

Every reader of history is acquainted with the actions of the protector, Cromwell, in Ulster, and his more than retaliation of the cruelties of the Papists on the Protestants. His laying Ulster waste, by killing, or driving the Catholics to the south and west of Ireland, and planting the north with colonies from England and Scotland, have almost effectually shut out from the enquirer after antiquities, a great portion of the traditional information which he might otherwise have obtained from the descendants of the Aborigines.

Now, as I found many of the best informed people in Ulster, wholly unacquainted with the original names of places in the neighbourhood of the then only imaginary scenes of Fingal's actions in that province; and, as history is almost¹ silent on the battles fought by the invincible king of Morven, in favor of his kinsman of the race of Connor; so we may conclude, that the analogy of the places mentioned by Ossian, and the similarity of a few names, aided by the locality and trifling remains of ancient magnificence and warfare, can only enable us to come to any reasonable conclusion on the identical fields of battles, fought by the kings of Erin, Lochlin and Morven.

I have farther to observe, that, as this work originated in mine own mind, and as in it I fearlessly oppose Rocks, Mountains, Rivers, Lakes, and Heaths to the vague and chimerical assertions brought forward by bigotted sticklers for and against the authenticity of Ossian; and as it has been matured by considerable trouble, expense and research, so I deny having received the slightest assistance from any author or from any work—the whole has emanated from mine own industry, and the elegant description of the first of British Bards, whom I shall here, feebly, perhaps attempt to authenticate!

Having thus premised, I now proceed to offer my observations to the public; and to crave that indulgence which such an apparent *outré* proceeding requires.

¹ The trifling analogy of some parts of the Poem, alone show us that the Emperor Caracalla lived about this period; but I know of no Roman writer who notices any of the exploits sung by Ossian.

Bating the fanciful assertions of the Irish historians, Keating and O'Flaherty, which have been long since rendered nugatory, we find that the frequent descents of Fingal on the coast of Ireland, were wholly occasioned by the distress and wants of his kinsman, the king of Ulster, or of Ireland, by the following descent.

Trenmor, the great-grandfather of Fingal, had two sons; Trathal, the grandfather of Fingal; and Connor, called by the bards, Connor the Great. He was elected king of all Ireland,¹ and was the ancestor of that Cormac who sat on the Irish throne, when Swaran, king of Norway, invaded Ireland.

The principal residence of this race of monarchs, we find, was at Te-mora in Ulster! This Te-mora, Ossian tells us, was at the foot of the hill of Mora, which rose near the borders of the heath of Moi-lena, near the mountain Cromla.

Before I can offer my observations on Te-mora, I find it necessary to go back to the coast of Ulster. We are often told by the royal bard, that he rushed into Carmona's bay,² and into Tura's bay; thence we see frequent allusions to Cromla, Lena, and the lake of reedy Lego; all, apparently, in the neighbourhood of these two places. This account of the poet makes the Carmona of the ancients, the Pisgah whence I have discovered the land promised to my exertions by hope.

There is no difficulty whatever in ascertaining the ancient Carmona to be the modern Carmony. It stands on the hill, a little from the shore, between Carrickfergus and Belfast—which Carrickfergus, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind, was the Tura of the ancients; but of Tura more hereafter. Here commences that range of hills, which in the poems I take to have been called *Lena* with Cromleach, (*i. e.* high hill in the centre) that extend in a south-west direction; and after running as the

¹ I would here observe, that the election of Connor to the supreme government of Ireland, (which makes such a conspicuous place in one of the notes to the poems of Ossian) appears to have never been acknowledged by the native hereditary princes of that country; and that it required all the assistance of his friends of Morven, united to the exertions of his adhering subjects, to retain for himself and race, the small portion of Ulster, which the map will show you bounded on the east and west by the rivers Legon and Bann, and on the north and south by Lochneagh, and the Irish Sea. If such an election took place, it is but natural to imagine that it was dictated by the wants of some puisne prince, whose power or right was doubted by his neighbouring chieftains; and, consequently, like the later case, that called Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, to Ireland; and ultimately vested the lordship of that excellent island in the hands of the English monarch.

² Carmona's Bay (*i. e.* Bay of dark brown hills) an arm of the Sea in the neighbourhood of Selma. This powerfully supports my opinion noted in the appendix, that the white house between Belfast and Carrickfergus and on the shore below Carmona, is the Selma of Ossian.

boundary of the extensive and fertile valley of Ulster, through which flows the river Legon, (reedy Lego,) the range terminates above Lochneagh, (lake of Roes,) at, or near, a place now called Cromlin, from the ancient Cromleach!

The part of the range, however, which the bard calls Misty Cromla, I take to be that high hill of lime-stone, which stands between Carmona and Belfast: that from three large and beautiful caves cut in the face of the rock or mountain, is now called Cave-hill; and, at different seasons of the year, a place much frequented by the inhabitants of Belfast. The address to the Druid occurred to my memory on visiting two of these celebrated and beautiful caves, (the third being unapproachable;) "Why, son of the cave of the rock," &c. I may here observe, that those caves were certainly places of shelter and worship to the early inhabitants of these countries.

In the first book of Fingal, we find Cuchullin¹ sitting by the wall of Tura, (a castle on the coast of Ulster,) his spear leaned against the mossy rock, while the other chiefs had gone on a hunting party to Cromla, a neighbouring hill. Now as the analogy of the scenes had almost clearly expressed the Cave-hill of the moderns, to have been the Cromla of the ancients; so it is only natural to imagine, that this castle of Tura, alluded to on the coast of Ulster, is the Carrick, or by some Craig-fergus castle of our times: of which, like Dundonald castle, in Ayrshire, there are no authentic records when it was built! From the celebrated hill of Cromla, Carrickfergus castle is only about four miles distant; and it is situated on a rock on the shore, in which is a spacious cave, and opposite to Scotland, consequently the most likely place to effect a landing from that country: being bounded on either side by a fine sandy beach, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Temora, the royal residence.

To know that Carrickfergus castle has no rival in antiquity on the coast of Ulster, or rather I should say, on the coast of Ireland, is an almost indubitable proof that the Tura of the ancients is the very spot now known by that name! To infer otherwise, I think from consistent analogy, would be a perversion of reason, and a mark of injustice to the manes of the royal bard.

Having thus briefly ascertained 'Tura, Cromla, Lena, &c. we read that the river Lubar ran between Cromla and the hill of

¹ By the noun Cromleuch, the ancients seem to have understood a place of Druidical worship, which was generally performed in the most solemn, grand and imposing places. Hence I think the magnitude of the Cave-hill, with its grand and solemn scenery and silent caves, go far to affirm that it was a place sacred to the devotion of our ancestors.

Mora ; at whose western foot was the royal residence, *Te-mora!* From many local allusions, I am disposed to think that there cannot be a doubt as to the hill of Tardree, and Cairn-ærie, having been the Mora of the ancients.

Indeed there is no other hill of any note in the neighbourhood ! Hence, on proceeding to the foot of Cairn-ærie, and Tardree, I discovered the mossy ruins of a time-worn castle of extensive dimensions, at the ancient city of Connor ; which, your map will show you, is nearly in the centre of the county of Antrim. Here the beautiful lines of the classical Irishmen, Messrs. Moore and Phillips, have their full sway over the imagination.—

“ Ah ! dark are the halls where your ancestors revell'd,

And mute is the harp that enliven'd the day :

The tow'rs that they dwelt in are awfully levell'd—

The signs of their greatness are sunk in decay !

Oh, Tara ! but 'twas fair to see
Thy court's assembled majesty !
All that man deems great or grand,
All that God made fair ;
The holy seers, the minstrel band,
Heroes bright, and ladies bland,
Around the monarchs of the land,
Were mingled there !

Art thou the festal hall of state,
Where once the lovely and the great,
The stars of peace, the swords of honour,
Cheer'd by the ever gracious eye
Of Erin's native majesty
Glitter'd a golden galaxy,
Around thee, great O'Connor !
And did these sacred ivy walls
Once glare with gorgeous tapestry ?
And did these mute and grass-grown halls
Once ring with regal minstrelsy ?
Chill is the court where the chief of the hills
Feasted the lord and the vassal,
And winter fills with its thousand rills
The pride of O'Connor's castle.²

¹ The house of the great King.

² Vide the “ Emerald Isle.”

The many remains of antiquity in this neighbourhood, such as ruins, caves, stones, &c. render Connor almost beyond a doubt, the Temorah, Teamrah, or Tara of the ancients. It is situate about twelve miles west of Carrickfergus, and nearly in the angle formed by Lochneagh and the river Bann to the east, and a short distance from Kellswater, a tributary of the Bann. There is a tradition extant, that this was the residence of a King Connor, who left it his name : hence, I am bold to assert, that the whole scenery agrees as perfectly in every point with the description of Ossian, as the scenery around Loch Catrine does to the elegant description of Mr. Scott.

Many are the allusions which the poet makes to Connor (Temora), to cite all of which would be loss of time ; but I shall here remark, from what I have discovered, that the poet and his father appear to have never penetrated into Ireland, and that their progress seems to have been no farther than the fields of battle ; which, during Fingal's life, were generally in the vicinity of Connor—in consequence of the enemy, whether of the Belgae, or of Lochlin, wishing, nay, attempting, to dethrone his young friend, the minor king, Cormac, whose wants required and occasioned the frequent descents of Fingal on Ireland ; and, I infer from the poems, that immediately after he had defeated the enemies of the young king, or restored peace by treaty, he found it necessary, from his wars with the Romans, Scandinavians, &c. to return to Morven.¹

I have farther to remark with respect to Connor, that when Edward Bruce assumed the sovereignty of Ireland, in 1316, he found it necessary to reduce that city, which is reported to have been very strong at the time of his invasion, and a place where he found as powerful, though not so fatal, a resistance as he did at Dundalk !—The castle of the kings was even then in ruins, a proof of their antiquity. I have often visited them, and the walls appear to be coeval with Carrickfergus castle, but only a few feet above the surface. Should any doubts be entertained as to the certainty of this castle having been the residence of some of the early potentates of this country, might we not also doubt the ruins shown at Dunscaith in the Isle of Sky, and the stone to which Cuchullin is said to have fastened his dog Luath, which few have ventured to deny ?—If one has the least foundation in truth, the other is more than equally founded. Connor was a place of such note in the days of St. Patrick, that the apostle ordered an abbey, (whose ruins are still standing) and several

¹ This goes far to annul the generally received opinion, in Ireland, that Fingal was a native of that country.

other religious houses to be erected there. It has ever since been a conspicuous place in the church history of Ireland; and is, I believe, both a Catholic and Protestant bishop's see: at least, it is reported to have been the former, in the reign of the eighth Henry; and is now joined to Down, as a Protestant see, though there is but one family of the church of England resident in the parish—For so effectual were the plans of Cromwell for exterminating the Catholics, that this parish, formerly the capital seat of Catholicism in the north of Ireland, contains only a few Catholic families, and they, I understand, returned to it at the restoration; the majority being Presbyterians of the established kirk of Scotland.

Having thus briefly noted Connor, and ascertained it to be the celebrated Te-mora, I venture to quote a few passages from the poems, that tend to elucidate and confirm the other places, which I have mentioned, the identical ones that I hold them out to be.

As we proceed in the first book of *Fingal*, we find many beautiful allusions made to Cromla, as being in the immediate neighbourhood of Lena, the scene of action of that poem. And from the striking appearance of its romantic scenery, and the frequency of mists on its summit, (mentioned by Ossian,) at particular seasons of the year, we may safely conjecture that it held a conspicuous place in the mind of the illustrious poet, which we find to have been fondly stored with all that is grand in nature, and sublime in thought.

To know that Cromla is on the range of hills called Lena, and make one part ascertain the other, we have only to look at the Poet's own description: "Unequal bursts the song of battle. Rocky Cromla echoes round. On Lena's dusky heath they stand like mist that shades the hills of autumn, when broken and dark it settles high and lifts its head to heaven." Here the most incredulous of my system will see that the warriors on Lena's dusky heath shouted so loud in battle, that Cromla echoed around; a proof at least of its vicinity to the heath of Lena.

Nathos, nephew of Cuchullin, tells his Darthula, "I remember thy words on Etha when my sails began to rise; when I spread them towards Ullin (Ulster;) towards the mossy wall of Tura, (Carrickfergus)." Again he says, "I came to Tura's bay; but the halls of Tura were silent!"

The many allusions made to Tura only tend to place beyond doubts, the natural conjecture that one is apt to conceive on looking at the corresponding positions of Morven and of Tura, and prove to us that it is the very spot known as Carrickfergus. Duchomar¹

¹ Black—well-made man.

came to Tura's cave, and spoke to the lovely Morna: "Morna,¹ fairest among women, lovely daughter of Cormac-Cairbar, why in the circle of stones? in the cave of the rock alone? The stream murmurs hoarsely: the old trees groan in the wind. The lake (Belfast loch) is troubled before thee; and dark are the clouds of the sky. But thou art like snow on the heath, and thy hair is like the mist of Cromla; thy breasts are like two smooth rocks seen from Branno of the streams! Thy arms like two white pillars in the hall of the mighty Fingal."

In the second book of Fingal we find Carril the Bard animating the troops of Cuchullin to courage, as follows, in the coming battle, in which the ghost of Crugal had foretold the defeat of the Irish army. "Where, said Carril, is the fallen Crugal? He lies forgot on earth; the hall of shells is silent. Sad is the spouse of Crugal! She is a stranger in the hall of her grief. But who is she that flies before the ranks of the foe? It is Degrena, (sunbeam) lovely fairy, the spouse of fallen Crugal! Her hair is on the wind behind. Her eye is red; her voice is shrill. Pale, empty is thy Crugal now. His form is in the cave of the hill." Here the poet most happily incites the army to revenge, by conjuring up the appearance of a lovely woman in distress—the unprotected widow of one of their chieftains, who had fallen in the preceding battle, on the heath of Lena—whose ghost, he told them in conclusion, was then in the cave of the hill—Cromla, no doubt—near which they were then engaged. I might farther strengthen my conjecture, and give it to the world in reality! While Fingal and his gallant sons were arranging the order of the coming battle with Swaran, "Cuchullin from the *cave of Cromla* heard the noise of the troubled war."—It is unnecessary to go farther: he must indeed be hard of belief who would require any more proofs of the Cave-hill being the Cromleach of Ossian. The landscape from the second cave is decidedly one of the finest in nature.

The Branno of the streams, I infer, was an allusion to the seat of the chieftain of that name on the banks of the Legon, whose daughter, Everallin, became wife of Ossian, and mother of Oscar. Could the poet here allude to the charms of his amiable consort, whom he bore from Branno of the streams? Her goodness, I infer from his songs, retained the most affectionate hold of his memory, long after she and her valiant son had mouldered into dust. The elegant compliment which the feeling poet puts in the mouth of the young aspiring warrior, Nathos, resembles one in the Canticles—but I am not criticising.

¹ A woman beloved by all.

The principal battles which Fingal fought with the Norwegians, native Irish, &c. were all in the neighbourhood of Connor! Between Lochneagh (Lake of Roes,) and ridgy Cromla, and all round the intermediate space, by Connor, Mora, and on to Carmona; it is almost impossible to walk twenty minutes without observing some rude marks of the warfare of those times. I have penetrated a large and beautiful cave in the neighbourhood of Connor, which is capable of holding two or three hundred persons. It is divided into two apartments, and covered over head with long flat stones of granite.

Innumerable are the four grey stones, (the graves of the illustrious dead) which one discovers while travelling among these hills. There are also several moats or forths around Connor: one of the former, is in as great a state of preservation as the one at Carnwath in Lanarkshire! These moats and forths I take to have been thrown up to answer the purpose of hills, for watch stations in a level country, and to kindle fires on, when the approach of an enemy renders such signals necessary. Some antiquaries, however; have observed, that they were seats of justice, where the chieftain exercised his judicial power; but, in Ireland, particularly the level parts of Ulster, there are more forths than there could have been chieftains, allowing at the rate of two or three forths for each extent of country equal to a modern sized estate. And I may farther observe, that I have traced a chain of these artificial eminences through a level part of country, and generally found them at signal distances from each other, and their termination at the foot of a commanding hill. A proof that their origin was in the want of natural signal stations for the early inhabitants of the country.

The *Moi-Lena* mentioned so frequently by Ossian, is the low-lying country or plain between Lena and Mora, and through it runs the Lubar, or Six Mile Water, into Lochneagh. This river rises in one of the hills attached to the chain of Mora, and may have been the one called by the bard Crommal. The little river Lavath, as in the days of Ossian, "rolls behind it in the still vale of Deer;" and near its banks the Marquis of Donegal has lately erected a beautiful villa called Fisherwic.

In one of the last battles fought by Fingal in Ireland he is poetically made to animate his sons to battle in the following noble, just, and energetic manner. "Lift up Gaul, the shield before him. Stretch, Dermid Lemora's spear. Be thy voice in his ear, O Carril, with the deeds of his fathers. Lead him to green *Moi-Lena*, to the dusky fields of ghosts: for there I fall forward in battle, in the folds of war. Before dun night descends, come to high Dunmora's top. Look from the grey skirts of mist on Lena of the streams. If

there my standard shall float on wind over Lubar's gleaming stream, then has not Fingal failed in the last of his fields." Here is a beautiful harmony of consistency, tending in the most convincing manner to bear out my conjectures of the relative scites of most of the prominent objects alluded to by Ossian.

Fingal is on the eve of an engagement on green *Moi-Lena*, and desires the band to go to the top of *Dunmora* (i. e. hill of *Mora*) the highest, excepting *Cromla* (Cave-hill) of all the ridge of *Lena*. Whence he is desired to look, before night comes down, on *Lena* of the streams, (the caves lay pent I presume) and see if he could observe the signal of Fingal's victory—the hero's standard floating on wind over Lubar's gleaming stream. *Dunmora* is about eight miles south-west of the *Cave-hill*, and overlooks *Loughneagh*, and consequently *Moi-Lena* and *Lubar*.

I have yet to add, that *Moi-Lena*, or the plain country, verging from the hill and heath of *Lena* towards *Loughneagh*, is known at this day by the same appellation, which the poet gave it sixteen hundred years ago. The descendants of the Aborigines who were under the chieftain of *Cromla* (the highest part of *Lena*) appear to have given the name of *Cromlin* to a neighbouring village, where they were settled so lately as the time of *Elizabeth*. It is about seven miles south from *Connor*; *Te-mora*.

"In other days," said *Carril* the bard, "came the sons of *Ocean* to *Erin*. A thousand ships bounded over the waves to *Ullin's* (*Ulster's*) lovely plains! The sons of *Inisfail* (*Ireland*), arose to meet the race of dark brown shields. On *Lubar's* grassy banks they fought, and *Grudar*, like a sun-beam fell by the hand of the fierce *Cairbar*. *Cairbar* came to the vale of the echoing *Tura* (*Carrickfergus*), where *Brassolis* (white breast,) fairest of his sisters, all alone raised the song of grief. She sung of the actions of *Grudar*, the youth of her secret soul. She mourned him in the field of blood, but still she hoped for his return.

"Her white bosom is seen from her robe, as the moon from the clouds of the night. Her voice was softer than the harp to raise the song of grief. Her soul was fixed on *Grudar*: the secret sigh of her soul was his. When shalt thou come in thine arms, thou mighty of the war? 'Take, *Brassolis*,' said *Cairbar*, 'this shield of blood. Fix it on high within my hall, the armour of my foe!' Her soft heart beat high against her side. Distracted, pale she flew; she found her youth in all his blood! She died on *Cromla's* heath!" Over this heath the unfortunate maiden had necessarily to pass on her way from (*Carrickfergus*) *Tura* to the *Lubar Six Mile Water* which bounds the heath to the west towards the foot of the range of *Mora* hills. The termination of

this melancholy episode, when compared with its commencement, "On Lubar's grassy banks they fought," &c. tells us that the Lubar alluded to, is no other than the Six Mile Water which rises in the northern end of ridgy Cromla, and after running through the beautiful vallies between Mora and Lena, and passing Templepatrick, (the elegant seat of Lord Templetown) falls into Lochneagh, near Antrim.

Brassolis could not have found her lover on any other grassy stream than the Six Mile Water, in the neighbourhood of Tura (Carrickfergus) and of Mora.

In the fourth book of *Fingal*, Ossian farther tells Malvina, "Now on Lena's heath the voice of music died away, the inconstant blast blew hard, and the high oak shook its leaves around me. Of Everallin were my thoughts, when she, in all the light of beauty, and her blue eyes streaming in tears, stood before my sight, and spoke with feeble voice, 'O, Ossian, rise, and save my son! Save Oscar, chief of men! Near the red oak of Lubar's stream, he fights with Lochlin's sons!' I called him like a distant stream, 'My son return, no longer pursue the foe over Lena!'"

When Starno ironically orders the beautiful Agandecca to be brought to her lovely king of Morven, "she came with the red eye of tears. She came with the loose raven locks. Her white breast heaved with sighs, like the foam of the streamy Lubar."

These descriptions clearly affirm the Six Mile Water to have been the Lubar of Ossian—while the coupling of Lena and Lubar portrays in the clearest manner the scite of both objects!

The advice which Connel gives Cuchullin after his affecting interview with the ghost of Crugal, brings forth a beautiful allusion to the Cave-hill (Cromla,) which is the highest all round Connor, Te-mora! After Cuchullin tells Connel to strike the shield of Caithbat, and assemble the warriors of Erin to battle, the poet sings: "High Cromla's head of clouds is grey. The morning trembles on the half enlightened ocean. The blue grey mist swims slowly by, and hides the sons of Inisfail (Ireland.)" Here Ossian almost distinctly tells us, that the camp of Cuchullin was at, or near, the scite of Carmona—Hence the poet's assertion—"We rushed into Carmona's Bay" (to embark for Scotland) equally applicable, I think, to disembark from that country; as the rushing of men and the rushing of ships or boats into a bay, though not strictly correct, has some affinity, being the nearest sea-port to the camp on Lena, and the capital Connor, another proof of my former assertion, that Cromla is on the ridge of Lena! and here I cannot avoid expressing surprise at the astonishing regularity and consistency throughout the poems, and the additional credit due to their authenticity

from every lover of literature when he reflects on the justness and elegance, the uniformity and sublimity they possess after passing through the memories of uncultivated men for the space of sixteen hundred years!—But of Carmona—

From this position the poet, on hearing the *reveillé* of the army, at the dawn of day, naturally cast his eyes towards the sea, in hopes of observing the enemy advancing. Thence turning from the half enlightened ocean to the right, his eyes were instantly cheered with the head of his favorite Cromla, covered with the grey clouds of the morning. I have risen at the dawn several mornings in the month of June, and have invariably observed the head of Cromla covered with a grey mist a considerable time after all the other hills were clear of the remains of night, so truly and elegantly described by Ossian. Again, “morning is grey on Cromla; the sons of the sea ascend.” Their fleet might have been anchored on any part of the shore of Belfast Loch, or Carmona's bay, and yet the army would have to ascend Cromla's ridge, to approach the capital Connor, or its defenders, the Irish army under the gallant Cuchullin. It appears here beyond a doubt that the general and his forces were encamped on the hill of Lena in the neighbourhood of Carmona, for the purpose of protecting the capital Connor, where was the minor king, whose right in Ireland appears to have been productive of hereditary quarrels and dissensions, alike with Norwegians and native Irish princes. It may not be unworthy of remark that Connor lies beyond a second ridge of hills from the bay of Carrickfergus: between the former, and the one on which Cuchullin was encamped, runs the river Lubar. This goes far to establish the preceding conjectures.

After the battle is over, in which the Irish tribes under Cuchullin were defeated by Swaran, who with the defeated warriors beheld the fleet of Fingal entering the bay, Carrickfergus, no doubt, the conquered hero drags his long spear behind him, mourns his fallen friends, and bending sad and slow sinks into Cromla's wood; for he feared the face of Fingal, which was wont to meet him with smiles from the fields of renown.

Again, when Fingal landed in Tura's bay, his noble son makes him exclaim: “The battle is over! Sad is the *heath of Lena*, and mournful the *oaks on Cromla!*” A most convincing proof that my conjectures founded on analogy are strictly correct; for the proximity of Cromla and Lena to Tura at once enabled Fingal to judge of the fate of his defeated friends. Indeed in all the poems in which the royal bard speaks of Ireland, we observe that Cromla, Lena, Lego, and Lubar, supply similes, shelter, battle fields and hunting to Fingal, and a haven for his shipping! This is partly

accounted for, by the extent of the ridge of hills, Cromla and Lena lying between Carrickfergus Bay and the capital Connor. On the coast of that arm of the sea, friends and foes from Lochlin and Morven, invariably made good their landing. And, as the part of Lena, towards Carrickfergus, was a commanding martial situation, so it was but natural for the allies of the house of Connor, to seize hold of it, to better keep the royal residence inviolate. Hence, if I might be allowed to offer my humble opinion of martial positions, it was for that purpose one of the most judicious situations that could have been chosen in the neighbourhood of the capital, then threatened by such a powerful and dangerous enemy, as the Scandinavians had repeatedly proved themselves to our early islanders.

After the battle in which Fingal conquered and bound Swaran, king of Lochlin, Gaul and Ossian were left in charge of the royal prisoner, and sat with him on the soft green banks of Lubar. Ossian touched the harp to please the king; but gloomy was his brow. He rolled his red eye towards Lena. The hero mourned his host. Ossian raised his eyes to Cromla's brow. He saw the son of generous Semo; sad and slow he retired from his hill towards the lonely cave of Tura.

From this description we gather sufficiently descriptive and explanatory evidence to convince a world of opposition, and realise and place beyond doubt what I was once disposed to consider as only probable.

The passage to me, thus explains itself:—Swaran on the banks of the Six Mile Water, in all the distress of mind natural to a person defeated, rolled his red eye towards Lena; to that part of the range, no doubt, between Carmona and Carrickfergus: and it occurs to me that he looked in that direction, from the following causes: First, he was there defeated. His home and friends lay beyond it, as did his fleet now possessed by Fingal. These, with his captivity, were sufficient to excite those melancholy ideas which Ossian has introduced in the happiest manner; for the description appears to me to be wound up to a climax of harmony and poetical beauty; while the delicacy on the part of the bard is so conspicuously feeling, that I cannot avoid observing, that to better enable Swaran to shed the tear unobserved, from his red eye, he turned towards Cromla (that was sideways from the king) and while looking upon that favorite object, his active mind experienced a rapid transition by the delicacy and generous feelings for the defeated Swaran, to an amiable regret and sympathy for his unfortunate friend Cuchullin, who he saw retiring sad and slow from his hill! Such conduct was every way compatible with the first of British bards.

To assist my conjecture of the strength of Lena as a judicious

position, we read that, when the King of the Belgæ meditated an attack on Connor, for the purpose of dethroning the young prince, he found it necessary to approach that city by the valley of Ulster, through which flows the Legon (reedy Lego); for had he attempted to go to it by the western side of Lochneagh, he would have found it impossible for his army to have crossed the river Bann, (the outlet of Lochneagh) a beautiful, rapid and navigable river, larger and deeper than the Thames at London; and I believe at no place fordable from the lake of Roes (Lochneagh), to the Leap of Coleraine. This conjecture is fully confirmed by the march of Torlath (a chieftain of Connaught) to dethrone the young king. The attack on the young kinsman of Fingal may be seen in the poem, "The Death of Cuchullin." That hero, commanding the forces of the young Cormac, gallantly marched against the invading, ambitious prince, and came up with him at the lake of Legon, which I take to be that part of the Legon river that spread out a little above where Belfast now stands—a place which, there can be no doubt, was covered with water at no very remote period. This gallant advance of Cuchullin from the neighbourhood of Connor, and the young king, his ward, was judiciously turning the battle to a distance from the royal residence, and putting the king out of the power of being annoyed, or dethroned in consequence of any casual advantage the enemy might acquire over his general, Cuchullin, in the absence of Fingal—who, we are to understand, was then hourly expected to his assistance. And, in my opinion, this manœuvre proved Cuchullin to be not only a brave man, but an excellent commander, and well deserving of the friendship of the renowned Fingal.

"As a hundred winds on Morven, as the streams of an hundred hills, as clouds fly successive over heaven, or as the dark ocean assaults the shore of the desert; so roaring, so vast, so terrible the armies mix on Lena's echoing heath!" After the battle is over, and Ossian in a father's pride relates the caressing interview of Fingal, and his promising grandson Oscar, the youthful warrior is told "that often did the *hills* of Cromla reply to the sighs of love for the unhappy Fainassolis." In my grounded opinion, this is another proof of the range of hills before alluded to being the Lena of Ossian; else why did the poet use the plural number?

On my way to the southward, along the banks of the Legon, I had several reasons to believe that the hospitable Branno, the father of Everallin, wife of Ossian, and mother of Oscar, lived at, or near where now stands the town of Lisburn. An almost unquestionable proof of that we find in the description which Ossian gives Malvina of his courtship with Everallin.

“ I went in suit of the maid,” says the elegant poet, “ to Lego’s sable surge : twelve of my people were there, the sons of the streamy Morven. We came to Branno, friend of strangers, Branno of the sounding mail,” &c. On this part of the description I can say without fear of contradiction, that the Legon has no sable surge, until we arrive on its banks in the neighbourhood of Lisburn ; there this beautiful river has several little falls, but between that and Belfast it runs smooth and placid as a lake.

The antiquity of several parts of ancient scenery and warfare around Lisburn, is reported to have been done away or defaced, to make room for modern improvements during the rebellion of 1640, when Lisburn was made head-quarters for the royal troops—Belfast being then an inconsiderable fishing village ! But notwithstanding the improvements of the moderns, or the implacable cruelty of the conquerors of past times, there are sufficient proofs of Lisburn having been a place of the first note in the early ages ; and such a place as one of the early chiefs would have fixed on for a residence—a fertile country abounding in game, woods, and rivers. Here I have no doubt was the hall of the generous Branno.—Thus have I cited several parts of the poem to affirm my supposition as to the much noted-hill of Lena and the river Lubar ; and to let the world see the ground on which my conjectures are established. I may yet proceed with one of the most realising proofs of the almost indisputable veracity of my system : “ As the winds of night pour their dark ocean over the white sands of Mora, so dark advance the sons of Lochlin over Lena’s rustling heath.” On the north-west end of the small chain of hills above Te-mora (Connor), is the hill of Mora, before noticed, in whose immediate neighbourhood, on the road from Belfast to Connor, is a hill now called the Sandy *Braes* : an appellation evidently given to it by the Scottish settlers in that neighbourhood about the middle of the seventeenth century. The *white sands* on its summit render it a singular hill : there being no one like it, in that respect, in the north of Ireland. This last citation is sufficient to prove the correctness of Ossian’s description of all the scenes in the neighbourhood of Connor, and to convince the most incredulous that he was particularly well acquainted with every conspicuous object around it, had there been no other proofs, of which every hour’s walk furnishes abundance.

Fingal had started from his dream, and leaned on Trenmor’s shield, the dark brown shield of his fathers, which they had often lifted of old, in the battles of their race. The hero had seen in his rest the mournful form of Agandecca (his first love) ; she came from the way of the ocean, and slowly, lonely moved over

Lena; her face was pale, like the mist of Cromla, &c. she departed on the winds of *Lena*. We may here rationally suppose *Fingal* to have been asleep at the before-mentioned encampment near *Carmona*, on the hill of *Lena*; hence the Poet derived his beautiful simile of the fair spirit's appearance, from the mist that overtopped the summit of *Cromla*, which was only about three miles from the camp, and full in sight. The sound of *Oscar's* steps approached; the king saw the grey shield on his side, for the first beam of the morning came over the waters of *Ullin*, *Ulster*. This is a most elegant and poetical description, and as natural as explanatory; for the waters of *Ullin*, in other words *Belfast Loch*, lay to the Eastward of the encampment, consequently the first beam of the morning light appears from that position, as coming over the waters of *Ulster*.—Another proof: “Fly over *Lena's* heath, O *Oscar*! and awake my friends to battle. The king stood by the *stone of Lubar*, and thrice raised his terrible voice; the deer started from the fountains of *Cromla*, and all the rocks shook on their hills!” How convincing is this analogy!

In *Colna*, *Dona*, we find, that it was customary in those days to perpetuate the memory of victories, by placing large stones on the fields of fame!

On my little tour through the country around *Connor*, I had the satisfaction of seeing two of these remarkable stones. One stands about a mile from the village of *Doagh*, and nearly equidistant from the *Lubar*, *Six Mile Water*! This stone is said to be about twenty feet in circumference, and about seven or eight above the surface: its depth in the earth is unknown. What renders it remarkable, is a large hole through it, capable of receiving an object as large as a man's head. The other is on the road from *Belfast* to *Connor*, about five miles west of this stone, but its dimensions are less than the former. I am informed that there are two others in the neighbourhood of *Connor*, which I did not visit; but if I might be allowed to note my opinion of their origin and use, I would say, that they were certainly placed there by some of the early inhabitants or visitors of *Ireland*, to perpetuate great achievements; and, surely it is not beyond the pale of probability, that the above remarkable holed stone on *Lubar's* banks, was the same on which *Fingal* leaned.—Musing, perhaps, on the deeds of valour performed in its neighbourhood; which, among rude warriors, was not uncommon, when they visited the fields of former battles. We know that it is natural even for a modern to experience an awful delight on visiting scenes famous for hard contested victory. Witness the feelings that rise in the mind on visiting *Thermopylæ*, *Pharsalia*, *Agincourt*, *Londonderry*, *Trafalgar*, or *Waterloo*!

As the spirit of *Atha's* king said to *Ossian*, “Future warriors

shall mark the place and think of other years; they shall mark it like the haunt of ghosts, pleasant, and dreadful to the soul. Do we not behold with joy the place where our fathers feasted? But our eyes are full of tears on the fields of their wars! This stone shall rise, with all its grass, and speak to other years! Here Cathmor and Ossian met in peace! When thou, O stone, shalt fail, and Lubar's stream (Six Mile Water) roll quite away, then shall the traveller come here, and bend perhaps in rest!" Might not this prophetic description allude to the remarkable stone before-mentioned?

Mr. Phillips's poetry excels his prose account of these places.

When tired at eve the pilgrim leans
 Upon some rocky pile,
 Of days long gone the rude remains
 Sav'd by their rudeness from the Vandal reigns,
 Which red and ruthless swept the plains
 Of this ill-fated Isle.
 He little thinks the mossy stones
 Beneath his feet
 Afford some hero's hallow'd bones
 Their cold retreat;
 Once saw the pomp of morning pride,
 And heard the virgin's sigh
 Swelling the sweet and solemn tide
 Of ancient minstrelsy.
 Perhaps e'en there on Fingal's arm
 A thousand heroes hung
 While Ossian, music of the storm,
 The battle anthem sung.
 Or there *Æmania's* palace rose
 In more than regal pride;
 Ollam inhal'd a nation's woes,
 Conn's fiery sceptre crushed her foes,
 Or noble Oscar dièd.

I passed, unknown to me at the time, near one of the other stones on the side of the hill of Mora, on my way to visit the site, or rather the foundations, of five or six hundred little human habitations, each of which appeared to be about twelve feet square. Of the origin of these cabins it is scarcely possible to form a reasonable conjecture. They are not modern; and tradition, such as it is, makes them coeval with the ruins of the old palace at Connor, *'Te-mora*; and that they composed at one time the camp of the Caledonian king's army. On this tradition and their antique appearance, a conjecture might be founded—the hill on which they stand has a very commanding prospect over a large extent of

country; and it may be worth adding, that, on an elevated mossy heath, like that on which they have been erected, quite out of the way of the plough, there seems to be nothing more improbable in the tradition of their antiquity, than in the oral testimonies of the natives of the isle of Sky, who cannot avoid feeling and showing themselves angry at a traveller who does not seem to place implicit confidence in the report of the stone they point out, and actually believe to be the same to which Cuchullin fastened his dog Luath.

I have now only to cite a few more allusions to some parts of the scenery around Connor, and to place it beyond a doubt by the consistency of the analogy, that it is the ancient *Te-mora* where was the house of the great king.

“Now Fingal arose in his might, and thrice he reared his terrible voice; Cromla answered around, and the sons of the desert stood still.” The battle having been fought on Lena, the poet thence deduces his similitudes, and from the neighbourhood his allusions; for the purpose, I presume, of giving greater celebrity to the scene of action; which we find to have been invariably the case with Ossian.—Wherever the battle was fought, from its neighbourhood he always deduces his similes, with that happiness peculiar only to first-rate poets. It were, perhaps, unnecessary to cite any more allusions to Cromla, Lena, &c. but one, I think, is yet necessary to elucidate the beautiful story of Lamderg, mentioned in the fifth book of Fingal. There is a pleasing hamlet called Lambeg, a short distance from Lisburn, which tradition makes the scene of a lamentable story, similar to the one told by Ossian on the authority and description of the bard Ullin. The hamlet stands near the before-mentioned falls of the Legon, and at the foot of the south-east end of the ridgy Cromla. When Fingal is informed by his bard Ullin, that his son Ryno sleeps with the awful forms of his fathers, the hero desires the mouth of song to relate whose tomb is on the heath of Lena: “that his son might not fly through clouds unknown, but be buried valiant.” “The mouth of the song,” informs him, “that the first of heroes lies there. Silent is Lamderg in his tomb; and Ullin king of swords. And who, soft smiling from her cloud, shows me her face of love? Why, daughter, why so pale art thou, first of the maids of Cromla? Dost thou sleep with the foes in battle, Gelchossa, white bosomed daughter of Tuathal? Thou hast been the love of thousands: but Lamderg was thy love! He came to Selma’s mossy towers, and striking his dark buckler, spoke, ‘where is Gelchossa, my love? the daughter of the noble Tuathal? I left her in the hall of Selma, when I fought with the gloomy Ulfad-da,’ &c.”

I must here digress a short time to notice the word Selma—or

Selamath, which means a dwelling, beautiful to behold; and we find several places merited and acquired that appellation from the royal bard. Fingal had a Selma in Morven, and is thence denominated the king of Selma; and we read of another near Tura, Carrickfergus; but the Selma here alluded to, is evidently meant for the dwelling of Lamderg, and if it was at the place now called Lambeg, be the house of what construction soever it might, the situation and the scenery around it, were well deserving the character of beautiful to behold.

I proceed with the fatal episode. Allad, the druid, replied to enquiries respecting the chiefs:—"I saw Ullin the son of Cairbar. He came like a cloud from Cromla, and he hummed a surly song like a blast in a leafless wood. He entered the hall of Selma. 'Lamderg,' he said, 'most dreadful of men, fight, or yield to Ullin!' 'Lamderg,' replied Gelchossa, 'the son of battle is not here!—he fights Ulfadda, mighty chief! He is not here, thou first of men; but Lamderg never yielded. He will fight the son of Cairbar.' 'Lovely art thou,' said terrible Ullin 'daughter of the generous Tuathal, I convey thee to Cairbar's halls: the valiant shall have Gelchossa. Three days I remain on Cromla, to wait that son of battle, Lamderg; on the fourth, Gelchossa is mine, if the mighty Lamderg flies!'

"'Allad,' said the chief of Cromla: 'peace to thy dreams in the cave! Ferchious, sound the horn of Lamderg, that Ullin may hear on Cromla!' Lamderg, like a roaring storm, ascended the hill from Selma."

The whole description goes far to affirm that Lamderg, the chief of Cromla, had his residence of Selma near the spot to which tradition gives the name of Lambeg, at the foot of the hill or mountain of Cromla, which, he says, Ossian ascended like a roaring storm to avenge himself on the ravisher of his affectionate wife. This is but a natural conjecture when we recollect that the chiefs of those times generally had their dwellings in the low lying countries, near rivers.

"Gelchossa saw the silent chief as a wreath of mist ascending the hill. 'Cairbar,' said the maid of the tender hand, 'I must bend the bow on Cromla; for I see the dark-brown hinds.' She hasted up the hill. In vain! The gloomy heroes fought. Fierce Ullin fell. Young Lamderg came all pale to the daughter of generous Tuathal. 'What blood, my love,' said the soft-haired woman, 'flows down my warrior's side?' 'It is Ullin's blood! thou fairer than the snow on Cromla; let me rest here a little while.' The mighty Lamderg died. 'And sleepest thou so soon on earth, O chief of shady Cromla?' Three days she mourned beside her-love. The hunters found her dead; they raised the tomb above the three! Thy son, O king of Morven, may rest here

with heroes. 'And here my son shall rest,' said the king of the streamy Morven."

The above beautiful episode, which I consider one of the finest in the poems, is given by Ossian as the work of the native Irish bard Ullin, Ulster, who we find accompanied Fingal in all his expeditions to Ireland; for the purpose, I presume, of giving the warrior the necessary information respecting that country, in which he appears to have been a stranger, and for recounting the tales of other years.—The history of past times, which we know to have been in the province of the bards; who, unlike those of our times, were on all occasions honored with the most unlimited confidence by the warriors, whose adherents they were, and to the strictest attention, intimacy, and I might say, brotherly friendship.

In the sixth book of Fingal, we find the scene of the poem, laid on the heath of Lena (Moileny). On the mountain Cromla, "Finnan and Fergus," said Fingal, "blow my horn, that the joys of the chase may arise, that the deer of Cromla may hear and start at the lake of Roes." The lake of Roes is evidently the Lochneagh of our times. The northern end of this beautiful lake is bounded on the east by the range of hills known to the ancients as Cromleach, or Lena. Lena, I apprehend, was the name of the whole ridge, and Cromleach, the highest part, was applicable to that portion of the ridge, that lies to the westward of Belfast. There is a small district on the west side of the mountain called Cromlin, from the Erse, Cronleach, I presume, which terminates near the town of Antrim. The southern end of the range of Lena terminates on the estate of the Marquis of Hertford; and the highest part is called Dumora—as in the days of Ossian. On the borders of this district, and along the banks of Lochneagh, the deer are yet very plenty, and thrive there better than in any of the deer parks in the north of Ireland.

I shall again digress a little from the subject of places, and remark that the red oaks, so frequently mentioned by Ossian, are here very plenty; and many of them appear to be of great age. One, named the royal oak, from its extraordinary dimensions, was blown down on the windy Saturday of 1748. It grew in Lord Conway's (now Marquis of Hertford's) deer park; its dimensions are reported to have been very large for a native oak; the diameter being eighteen feet, and height from the root to the lower branch twenty-six; I have heard it remarked by judges, who calculated by the time which oaks generally take in growing to maturity, that the above oak must have been of considerable size in the time of Ossian, allowing the elapsed time to be sixteen hundred years. "And hereafter shalt thou be victorious," said Fingal, "the fame of Cuchullin shall grow like the *branchy tree* of Cromla."

After Fingal had cheered the defeated hero, while they sung and feasted, the soul of Cuchullin arose, and his face was brightened with gladness, and the strength of his arm returned. They passed the night in joy, and brought back the morning with song. Fingal arose on the heath, and shook his glittering spear. He moved first towards the heath of Lena, and we followed like a ridge of fire. "Spread the sails," said Fingal, "and catch the winds that pour from Lena!"

This gives me another proof, that my opinions of the scenes of Fingal's exploits, are through analogy deeply grounded in truth. The winds that pour from Lena, were the winds necessary to fill their sails in any part of Carmona's bay, (Belfast Loch,) and to waft them to Morven. For that part of the ridge of Lena, above Dun-mora, has a large opening to the south-west about six miles from Belfast.

In the third book of Fingal, we read that Carril represents that hero as strong as the waters of Lora. There is a chain of hills called Lora in the north of Ireland, near the seat of Lady Antrim, which now has the addition of *Don* (a hill,) to it. It lies nearly opposite to Scotland, and the whole chain of mountain is remarkable for white dashing cascades that tumble precipitantly down its sides, picturesque and truly grand in their descent. It is but natural to suppose that this mountain, with its cascades, caught the eyes of the elegant Ossian in some of his voyages to and from Erin.

Ossian tells us in the poem of Te-mora—"Between the hills of *Mora* and *Lora* lay the plain of *Moi-Lena*, through which ran the river *Lubar*!" Almost the whole field of Fingal's exploits might be brought before my readers, if they will imagine a tract of country nearly resembling a crescent. The space round the curve, between the cusps or points, I would portray as the hill or heath of Lena, bounding the Legon river and Belfast Lough to the west; Dunmora, a high hill, must terminate the curve and form the south-east cusp; and Dunlora, a high hill, the north-east point. A part of the chain of Lora nearly joining Mora, and that nearly joining Lena to the south-east, must be held as the inner curve of the crescent, along, and between whose lines, of course, lie the heath of Lena, the hill of Cromla; and nearly in the centre of the space so bounded, the Lubar must wind along through green *Moi-Lena* till it finds an opening between a branch of Lena and Mora, near which it enters Loughneagh. Such appears to me to be the most explanatory mode I can adopt, while unassisted by a map of the country.

"Why art thou so dark, Slimora, with all thy silent woods? No green star trembles on thy top—no moon-beam on thy side."

The Erse for great hill is *Slieu-mor*! In a note to the first book of *Fingal*, we find that *Cuchullin* was killed somewhere in *Connaught*. If that was the case, a part of my system is overturned; but I hope I shall make it appear, that the annotator is in this instance blameable for a little inconsistency or error. In the poem, "The Death of *Cuchullin*," after the advice which the hero received the preceding night from the ghost of *Calmar*, we read that "the faint beam of the morning rose, and the sound of *Caithbat's* buckler spread. *Green Ullin's* warriors convened like the roar of many streams. The horn of war is heard over *Lego*, (*Legon*) The mighty *Torlath* came! 'Why dost thou come with thy thousands, *Cuchullin*?' said the chief on *Lego*! 'I know the strength of thine arm, and thy soul is an unextinguished fire! Why fight we not on the *plain*, and let our hosts behold our deeds?' 'Thou risest like the sun on my soul,' said the son of *Semo*! 'Thine arm is mighty, O *Torlath*, and worthy of my wrath!—Retire, ye men of *Ullin*, to *Slimor's* shady side! Behold *Cuchullin* in the day of his fame!' To elucidate this meeting, it is necessary to observe, that during the administration of *Cuchullin* in *Ulster*, *Torlath*, one of the chiefs of the *Belgæ*, who were in possession of the south of *Ireland*, rebelled in *Connaught*, and advanced towards *Te-mora*, for the purpose of dethroning the young king *Cormac*, who, excepting *Ferdath*, afterward king of *Ireland*, was the only one of the Scottish race of kings, (from *Connor the Great*) existing in that country. *Cuchullin* marched against the rebel prince, from the neighbourhood of the capital, *Connor*, and came up with him at the *lake of Lego*, where he totally defeated his forces, and killed *Torlath*: this victory, however, like that at *Quebec* and at *Trafalgar*, was dearly bought to the country, for in the proudest moment, the magnanimous and prudent *Cuchullin* was mortally wounded by an arrow.

I have now only to observe, that it is the noun *Slimor* (great hill) from whose mention the little inconsistency has arisen; for, on taking a nearer view of the subject, there may have been, and are, many *Slimoras* or great hills; but that which induces me to challenge the error or mis-statement, is, that there is a hill about five miles from *Connor*, that retains the name of *Slieu-mors*! It is one of the most remarkable hills in *Ireland*. A proof that it was once covered with wood, is from a moss on its summit whence large oak and fir trees are frequently dug; hence I think the poet used the appellation *Slimora's* shady side! Now is it not probable that the oral reporter to the translator of the poems, may have occasioned this little error?—if it is an error or inconsistency! The reporter, perhaps, unacquainted with the geography

of Ulster, taking it for granted that Cuchullin was killed in Connaught, because Torlath his opposer was a native and chieftain of that country, affirmed it to be the fatal place; forgetting, or passing over, the axiom, that the battle was fought on the banks of the Legon (Belfast Loch). As we read on, we observe that his friends who came from Scotland to his assistance, "by the darkly rolling waves of the Lego, raised the hero's tomb—Luath at a distance lies—the companion of Cuchullin at the chase." This is sufficient to prove that the battle was fought on the banks of the Legon; for it is a well-known fact, that our forefathers of the remote ages, who had the honor of falling in the service of their country, were always rewarded with a grave on the field of their glory, as a place the most apposite and glorious that could be chosen.

About a mile distant from Belfast, there is an ancient burying-ground on the banks of the Legon. Tradition reports it to have been a place used for that purpose from the most remote period, down to the days of St. Patrick, by whom it was consecrated. The moderns call it Friar's Bush; and I have little doubt but that it had its origin, as a place of sepulchre, from one of the battles of those days. For even in the most rude and barbarous nations, particularly in Africa, America, and part of Asia, I have witnessed the most reverential and careful attention paid to the dust once blest in the human form; and farther, a particular desire of succeeding generations to be mingled with their forefathers in the narrow house. Hence, I think it within the bounds of probability, that Friar's Bush is the grave of Cuchullin. Ossian tells us, "We came to Lego's mournful banks—we found his *rising* tomb. His companions in arms were there, and bards of many songs!" Here I will venture to assert that consistent analogy bestows me a most convincing proof of my conjecture being founded in reality.

In the poem, *Darthula*, we find mention made of Cairbar, sitting at a feast in the silent plain of Lona! And again, "Lathmor is before us;" he that fled from Fingal at Lona! The English of Lona is, a gradual rising ground from a marshy plain. About a mile above Belfast, and close to Friar's Bush, commences a level plain, or what should be called a holm, formed by the course of the river Legon. It is now covered with gentlemen's seats, whose business and concerns are in Belfast. The difference between the Gaelic and Erse dialects may have altered the name, by adding the "Ma," to "Lona," in the course of succeeding ages; for it is the only place that I can discover near the scenes of action, that has any resemblance to the original. Hence, I am disposed to think that the analogy of the preceding scenes, with

the one under consideration, would affirm this to be the same Lona twice alluded to by Ossian, as being in the neighbourhood of the capital Connor, or at least of the scene of action—it is now called *Moi-alone*.

After the defeat and death of Cuchullin, we read that Cairbar, taking advantage of the victory, advanced along Lego's lake, (Belfast loch, at the confluence of the Legon) to the sea-coast, where he expected Fingal, who meditated an attack, or rather prepared an expedition, to establish his kinsman on the throne of Ireland. Between the wings of Cairbar's army was the castle of Tura (Carrickfergus), where the landing from Scotland was generally effected. And into it the sons of Usnoth, and nephews of Cuchullin, were driven by a storm, without the possibility of escaping from their enemy Cairbar. "Distinct is the voice of Cairbar," said Nathos, "and loud as Cromla's falling stream."

Could this allude to the river Clady, that rises in the heath of Lena, and gurgles down the side of the mountain, past Cromlin, till it loses itself in the Lake of Roes (Lochneagh)? "Cairbar had seen the dark ship on the sea before the dusky night came down. His people watch on Lena's plain, (the north-west end of the hill, lying along the road from Belfast to Carrickfergus) and lift ten thousand spears!" "And let them lift ten thousand spears, said Nathos with a smile; the sons of Car-borne Usnoth will never tremble in danger! Why dost thou roar with all thy foam, thou roaring sea of Ullin (Ulster)? Why do ye rustle on your dark wings, ye whistling tempests of the sky?" These, however, forced the gallant brothers into Carrickfergus bay among the ten thousand spears of Cairbar, which prevented them raising the song of joy in Connor.

In the poem of Croma, we find Croma a country in lovely Inisfail (Ireland); but I can observe no allusion in the poem, by which I can trace any conspicuous object, or the province it is in; although it is highly probable it was in some part of Ulster:—this I would infer from its proximity to Morven. There is a small district in the county of Down, commencing on the banks of the Legon, a short distance from Belfast, and nearly opposite to Friar's Bush: it is called Cromac; which, after intersecting the beautiful villages of Newton-breda and Castlereagh, terminates to the north-east, at Strangford Lough. I was told by some of the old Catholic descendants, or rather Aborigines, that the district is traditionally reported to have embraced all the Peninsula of Down county to the north, formed by Belfast and Strangford Loughs. This traditional account to me bears a great degree of probability, and almost convinces me of the reality of my conjecture on discovering the place, called to this day Cromac, near Belfast; but the

poet, in the description of his actions to Malvina, ingeniously evades any allusion or similitudes by which we might trace his position, or rather the fields of his exploits in favor of Crothar, the chieftain of that district.

As Te-mora furnishes me with grounds for the few brief remarks I have made, at the commencement of this enquiry, so I am also indebted to it for grounds whereon to challenge another little error of the annotator. Inishuana is noted as a part of South Britain, an island, &c. This mistake of the annotator, if it is one, must have arisen from his recollection of Fingal having in the preceding poems, twice sailed from Carmona's bay, for that destination: hence, perhaps, the annotator thought that had Inishuana been in Ireland, the warrior might have gone thither by land. This Inishuana, or by some Inishona, is in the north-west part of Ireland, opposite to Scotland, and noted, wherever Irishmen travel, for its excellent whiskey. I have yet to observe, that if this was the same place to which the poet alluded, the warriors of Morven, no doubt, found it necessary to go to it by sea: probably in consequence of the unfordable river Bann running across their way; or, perhaps, from a wish to have their shipping at hand in case of being obliged to retreat; or, perhaps, rather than leave their ships behind them in Carmona's bay, to be exposed to an enemy in their absence, who might have destroyed them, and consequently cut off their communication with Morven, they preferred the journey by water to Inishuana.

To give a greater and more rational degree of coloring to my cause of difference with the translator, I have yet to observe that the Poems discover in the clearest manner, that the expedition to Inishuna took place only a short time before Fingal passed over to Ireland to dethrone Cairbar, the son of Borbar-Duthal. Cathmor, brother of Cairbar (the usurper of the crown and country of Fingal's young friend, of the race of Connor) was aiding Connor, King of Inishuna, in his wars, at the time that Duth Carmor was defeated by Ossian in the valley of Rathcol (in the county of Derry, and only a few miles from the coast opposite to Morven). The policy of Cathmor aiding Connor, was natural enough, for it was strengthening his brother's power—Inishuna being the next district or kingdom to Connor, which Cairbar had usurped!

This must certainly press hard on the annotator, who, of course, I hold unblameable—he having noted the error from the oral reporters, with whom the confusion of geographical descriptions was more likely to arise than with Mr. Macpherson. To bear out my former opinion on the subject, I might add, that Sullalla lamenting Cathmor her lover, to Ossian, observes—

“ High from their misty hills look forth the blue eyes of Erin, for he is away young dweller of their souls ! nor harmless, white hands of Erin, is Cathmor in the skirts of war : he rolls ten thousand before him in his distant field.” Of the propriety of differing with the translator, my readers will now judge for themselves. And if I am wrong, in the confused story originated my error : but it has occurred to me once or twice, that the error may have arisen in the orthography or pronunciation of the nouns ; and, that Inishuna is confusingly placed for an island of Orkney or Scandinavia, called Inisthona ! for the story of the latter seems to me to be connected with that of Sulmalla of Acmon !

“ The setting sun was yellow on Dora ; grey evening began to descend. Te-mora’s woods shook with the blasts of the inconstant wind.” This is one of the strongest proofs the whole collection of poems afford of the just and more than analogical grounds of my opinions on the celebrated scenes. Here Ossian distinctly tells us, that the poem was composed at Connor : for Connor and its neighbourhood supply the beautiful similitudes he so ingeniously displays, and are thence immortalised by his matchless muse. It is here evident that he was at Connor with his royal kinsman ; else how could he see its woods shake in the blasts of the inconstant wind ? or observe the rays of the setting sun on Dora ?—Which hill is about four miles from Connor ; and, need I add, that the description of the setting sun on Dora is truly natural and picturesque !

After such convincing proofs of my system, it is almost unnecessary to cite any more passages however conclusive. I now consider it necessary to conclude my observations with a very few short extracts and remarks that tend more immediately to ratify the consistency of the analogy from which I have deduced my discoveries.

“ Who comes from Lubar’s vale, from the folds of the morning mist ? The drops of Heaven are on his head. His steps are in the paths of the sad. It is Carril of other times ! He comes from Tura’s silent cave !” Than the above passage, there is scarcely a sentence in the whole collection of poems that tends more to confirm my opinion of the places I have ascertained. Ossian, we read in the same page, was on the hill of Mora (Tardree) above Connor, and saw Carril the bard in Lubar’s vale, (the vale through which runs the Six Mile Water) approaching him from Carrickfergus,—charged, no doubt, with despatches—for it was usual in those days for those who held the office of bard, to include in it that of ambassador, historian, messenger, herald, &c. The situ-

ations of the two bards are so clearly described, that a person the least acquainted with the country, could have no difficulty in pointing them out, and the other places discovered by the certainty of these.

It will be recollected that there are two chains of hills which run nearly parallel with Belfast Loch, and between its western shore and Connor. The one is Cromla, the other Mora. The intermediate space is that vale, I imagine, that the poet names the Vale of Lubar, through which the Six Mile Water winds in the most beautiful serpentine wanderings.

In the battle of Oscar and Cairbar, in which the latter fell, he lay like a shattered rock which Cromla shakes from his craggy side! On the north-east end of Cromla (Cave-hill) near Belfast, the rocks seem jutting out as if ready to fall; and many are the fragments it has shaken from its craggy side—to be seen at the foot of the hill. It is also worthy of remark, that the Cave-hill is the highest in that neighbourhood; and the only one that has such a picturesque craggy side!

Thus having found each part strictly analogous, and consistent with all, and indeed more generally uniform throughout the whole of the preceding enquiry, than is usually found in poetical descriptions, so I feel the greatest confidence in submitting the result to an enlightened public, as a part of my leisure hours' pastime; conscious that, though such communications are not of the most valuable sort, yet, I presume this will be acknowledged a gratifying one:—hence, it remains only for me to conclude, by repeating my opinion, that Fingal's progress in Ireland appears to have not exceeded twenty miles from the coast of Ulster; and that, never to the southward of Moileny, nor to the westward of Connor (Te-mora); and Lochneagh (the Lake of Roes). A most convincing proof, that the allegations of the historians Keating and O'Flaherty, with regard to Fingal having been an Irishman, are wholly inconsistent with reason.—For we may safely assert, that, had he been a native of Ireland, he would have chosen a more extended field for his exploits, than that portion of lovely Inisfail, confined within the above limits. But, instead of taking advantage of his numerous conquests, and the respect or terror which his redoubted name created in the minds of all the warriors wherever he went, we find him represented to have been only the virtuous and prudent warrior, and the active friend of distress. Peaceably inclined, he was anxious only to preserve the land of his young kinsman, and careless of extending his conquests, even when his frequent victories, if we may credit his son, could have given him an easy supremacy over them, as now, distracted

Ireland. No; after his victories and treaties, we find him invariably return to Morven, adored by his friends, and esteemed by his late enemies: more pleased within himself at the idea of having performed his part faithfully as a friend, and gallantly as a warrior, than if he had ambitiously laid countries desolate, and deprived millions of their natural rights and inheritance.

To conclude,—if Fingal was an Irishman, his son Ossian and his translator, have more than ingeniously evaded giving any hint by which he might be correctly ascertained to have been born in Ireland.—And, on the contrary, have given the most convincing proofs that he was a Caledonian, and that his frequent descents upon Ireland were solely occasioned by the wants of his kinsmen of the race of Connor! Now, as there is every reason to believe that Mr. Macpherson never was in Ireland, nor any of those from whom he had the oral originals of the elegant poems of Ossian; and, as the geographers of that excellent island are wholly silent on many of the places, which I have here attempted to bring to light, as sacred to the heroic actions of Fingal, and the never languid, never dying strains of his noble-minded son; so, I presume, it may be safely asserted, that the poems of Ossian are the genuine effusions of that father of Scottish and of sublime poetry; who, from a state of rude, though polished barbarism, (if I may use the expression,) poured forth a stream of sensibility, dazzling by the brightness of bravery and enthusiasm of patriotism, that, had it come down to us by an explorer of Herculaneum, as the work of a Greek or Roman, instead of through the long-doubted hands of the inconsistent Macpherson—it would have invaded our partial and too fastidious hearts with the irresistible force of lightning, and with the electric ardor of every idea that conspires to animate, exalt, and at the same time, to astonish and chain the intellectual empire, as by magic, to all that is truly feeling, noble, and sublime.—Without the passport from the classic vine-covered hills of Italy, I know those on whom the poems of Ossian have had the above ennobling effect, though they came from the rugged mountains of Caledonia.

London, May 26th, 1819.

APPENDIX.

THERE are five ancient castles in the county of Antrim, of which there are no records when they were built; but their appearance renders it beyond a doubt, that they are of the first stone and lime buildings erected in Ireland. They are the ruins of Connor Palace (the ancient Te-mora); Carrickfergus castle (Tura); Shanes Castle on the banks of Lochneagh (Lake of Roes); the seat of the O'Neils, for many centuries chieftains in Ulster; and the old building in Carmona bay, called the White House—which tradition would make the first house in Ireland, and may have been the Selma, mentioned near Tura, from its beautiful situation.—The old round tower near the town of Antrim, is evidently of a more modern date—perhaps of the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Carrickfergus Castle is traditionally reported to have been built by Fergus, the first king of Scotland, who, according to Fordun and others, went from Ireland to govern the Scots who had emigrated from Ireland to Scotland about the time of Alexander the Great, or three hundred years before Christ. But that must be a misrepresentation, for we have the authority of several of the Roman writers to counteract that tradition, who all agree in their account of the barbarous mode in which our forefathers lived. The Romans found no stone and lime buildings in these countries; consequently, they were the first who introduced them. And there is every reason to imagine that the before-mentioned castles have been built between the first landing of the Romans and the time of Fingal—say 300 years! This will exactly correspond with the time Connor is supposed to have been called to govern Ireland, and will bear out the Irish historian, who says Connor's castle was the first stone and lime building in Ireland. The Romans had been in possession of South Britain and the South of Scotland nearly 150 years before Connor the grand-uncle of Fingal was elected King of Ireland; consequently there was sufficient time for the Aborigines to learn the art of building from the indefatigable Romans; hence is it not probable that Connor, on finding his election and right to the Crown of Ireland doubted, had recourse to the building discovered at Connor, whose walls appear more like those of a fortification than of a common dwelling? add to this its central situation in the county, and vicinity to the coast.

The antiquary, on having read the foregoing pages, will agree with me, I presume, in the remark which naturally arises from a review of the whole—namely, that that tract of Antrim county, to which my observations have been directed, is apparently the same which the learned Archbishop Usher designated the Route of Dalriada!—whence report would colonise the neighbouring island of Scotland. Be that as it may, however, there is no part of Ireland, over which I have travelled, that contains so many rude vestiges of antiquity; nor one whose local situation is more likely to have received inhabitants from, or given them to, the sister Island.—*Ne plus ultra!*

It is rather a matter of regret that the Irish history should be so fabulous even at a comparatively modern date. A development of proofs, however, of the Irish being in some measure a flourishing country in possession of the arts and sciences, and the repository of learned men before Scotland and England, is annually taking place. Indeed I am fully disposed to side with Sir James Ware, Lord Lyttleton, and Dr. Whitaker, occasionally in opposition to Archbishop Usher, on the veracity of their statements.

Irish history, or rather printed tradition, describes a celebrated king—by the style of Malachi of the gold collar. As his name is a scripture one, I infer that he must have lived since the days of St. Patrick—and that he wore a collar of gold I am not willing to doubt. A few Sundays ago I had the pleasure of handling several of those rich ornaments of the early Irish, at the house of that venerable and excellent man Sir Joseph Banks. It is scarcely necessary to add that they were dug out of Irish bogs, where they were no doubt deposited during the troubles of that hapless country, and forwarded to the President of the Royal Society by different noblemen who had purchased them from the peasantry who found them. Their massy construction proved that gold was no rarity in Ireland in the early ages, and they are in size fitted to the neck and body of the largest man. The workmanship is by no means of the rudest cast; though certainly wanting the finish of the artists of our day.

All these circumstances go far to partly affirm the unrecorded part of Irish history—and to give to what without them would, like the poems of Ossian, be “airy nothing”—“a local habitation and a name!”



