



Om. 75.









Wm. Traquair.



Yingal

1849



POEMS  
OF  
OSSIAN,  
THE  
*Son of Fingal.*

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TRANSLATED BY MACPHERSON.

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We may boldly assign Ossian a place among those  
whose works are to last for ages.----Blair.

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VOL. I.

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OF -  
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THE POEMS of OSSIAN, as translated by Macpherson, first made their appearance in 1761-2. There is no literary question that has been more keenly controverted, than whether these poems are to be considered as authentic ancient poetry, or as wholly, if not in a great measure, fabricated by Macpherson. The most rigid critics allowed them to possess every mark of an exalted genius in the author or translator; whilst many did not hesitate to prefer them to all other poetical compositions, whether ancient or modern. We shall not pretend to decide upon a subject so generally understood. It is sufficient to observe, that the poems were translated, in the course of the first year after their publication, into almost all the languages of Europe. And, with a view of still more firmly establishing their authenticity, they are now printing, (May, 1806,) under the auspices of the Highland Society of London, in the ORIGINAL GAELIC, with a literal Latin version. It is observed by Sir John Sinclair, one of the committees appointed to superintend the work, that "it would be necessary to publish a new translation of Ossian, in order to give to the public a just idea of the nervous simplicity, and genuine beauties, of that celebrated poet, to neither of which Macpherson has done sufficient justice. Nor is it any longer to be wondered at, that an excellent Gaelic scholar, who knew him well, who could appreciate the talents he possessed, and who assisted him in transcribing the poems, (Captain Morison), should declare, "that Macpherson

could as well compose the Prophecies of *Isaiak*, or create the *Island of Skye*, as compose a poem like one of *Ossian's*."

Our limits not permitting us to give even a sketch of the voluminous dissertations upon these poems, we will present the reader with a few preliminary observations by the late *Dr. Blair* of *Edinburgh*, chiefly relating to *Celtic* poetry and bards in general.

"Among the monuments remaining of the ancient state of nations," says that eminent writer, "few are more valuable than their poems or songs. History, when it treats of remote and dark ages, is seldom very instructive. The beginnings of society, in every country, are involved in fabulous confusion; and though they were not, they would furnish few events worth recording. But, in every period of society, human manners are a curious spectacle; and the most natural pictures of ancient manners are exhibited in the ancient poems of nations. These present to us what is much more valuable than the history of such transactions as a rude age can afford: The history of human imagination and passion. They make us acquainted with the notions and feelings of our fellow-creatures in the most artless ages: discovering what objects they admired, and what pleasures they pursued, before those refinements of society had taken place, which enlarge indeed, and diversify the transactions, but disguise the manners of mankind.

"Besides this merit, which ancient poems have with philosophical observers of human nature, they have another with persons of taste. They promise some of the highest beauties of poetical writing. Irregular and unpolished we may expect the productions of uncultivated ages to be; but abounding, at the same time, with that enthusiasm, that vehemence and fire, which are

the soul of poetry. - For many circumstances of those times which we call barbarous, are favourable to the poetical spirit. That state, in which human nature shoots wild and free, though unfit for other improvements, certainly encourages the high exertions of fancy and passion.

“In the infancy of societies, men live scattered and dispersed, in the midst of solitary rural scenes, where the beauties of nature are their chief entertainment. They meet with many objects, to them new and strange; their wonder and surprise are frequently excited; and by the sudden changes of fortune occurring in their unsettled state of life, their passions are raised to the utmost. Their passions have nothing to restrain them: their imagination has nothing to check it. They display themselves to one another without disguise; and converse and act in the uncovered simplicity of nature. As their feelings are strong, so their language, of itself, assumes a poetical turn. Prone to exaggerate, they describe every thing in the strongest colours; which of course renders their speech picturesque and figurative. Figurative language owes its rise chiefly to two causes; to the want of proper names for objects, and to the influence of imagination and passion over the form of expression. Both these causes concur in the infancy of society. Figures are commonly considered as artificial modes of speech, devised by orators and poets, after the world had advanced to a refined state. The contrary of this is the truth. Men never have used so many figures of style, as in those rude ages, when, besides the power of a warm imagination to suggest lively images, the want of proper and precise terms for the ideas they would express, obliged them to have recourse to circumlocution, metaphor, comparison, and all those substituted forms of expression, which give a poetical air to

language. An American chief, at this day, harangues, at the head of his tribe, in a more bold metaphorical style, than a modern European would adventure to use in an epic poem.

“In the progress of society, the genius and manners of men undergo a change more favourable to accuracy than to sprightliness and sublimity. As the world advances, the understanding gains ground upon the imagination; the understanding is more exercised; the imagination less. Fewer objects occur that are new or surprising. Men apply themselves to trace the causes of things; they correct and refine one another; they subdue or disguise their passions; they form their exterior manners upon one uniform standard of politeness and civility. Human nature is pruned according to method and rule. Language advances from sterility to copiousness, and at the same time, from fervour and enthusiasm, to correctness and precision. Style becomes more chaste; but less animated. The progress of the world in this respect, resembles the progress of age in man. The powers of imagination are most vigorous and predominant in youth; those of the understanding ripen more slowly, and often attain not their maturity, till the imagination begins to flag. Hence, poetry, which is the child of imagination, is frequently most glowing and animated in the first stages of society. As the ideas of our youth are remembered with a peculiar pleasure on account of their liveliness and vivacity; so the most ancient poems have often proved the greatest favourites of nations.

“Poetry has been said to be more ancient than prose, and however paradoxical such an assertion may seem, yet, in a qualified sense, it is true. Men certainly never conversed with one another in regular numbers; but even their ordinary language would, in ancient times, for the reasons



before assigned, approach to a poetical style; and the first compositions transmitted to posterity, beyond doubt, were, in a literal sense, poems; that is, compositions in which imagination had the chief hand, formed into some kind of numbers, and pronounced with a musical modulation or tone. Music or song has been found coeval with society among the most barbarous nations. The only subjects which could prompt men, in their first rude state, to utter their thoughts in compositions of any length, were such as naturally assumed the tone of poetry; praises of their gods, or of their ancestors: commemorations of their own warlike exploits; or lamentations over their misfortunes. And before writing was invented, no other compositions, except songs or poems, could take such hold of the imagination and memory, as to be preserved by oral tradition and handed down from one race to another\*.

“Hence we may expect to find poems among the antiquities of all nations. It is probable, too, that an extensive search would discover a certain degree of resemblance among all the most

\* Mr. Wood, in his *Essay on the original writings and genius of Homer*, very ably remarks, that we cannot, in this age of dictionaries, and other technical aids to memory, judge what her use and powers were, at a time, when all a man could know, was all he could remember, and when the memory was loaded with nothing either useless or unintelligible — The Arabs who are in the habit of amusing their leisure by telling and listening to tales, will remember them though very long, and rehearse them with great fidelity after one hearing. *Acerbi's Remarks on Lapland*,

ancient poetical productions, from whatever country they have proceeded. In a similar state of manners, similar objects and passions operating upon the imaginations of men, will stamp their productions with the same general character. Some diversity will, no doubt, be occasioned by climate and genius. But mankind never bear such resembling features, as they do in the beginnings of society. Its subsequent revolutions give rise to the principal distinctions among nations; and divert into channels widely separated, that current of human genius and manners, which descends originally from one spring. What we have been long accustomed to call the oriental vein of poetry, because some of the earliest poetical productions have come to us from the East, is probably no more oriental than occidental; it is the characteristic of an age rather than a country, and belongs, in some measure, to all nations at a certain period. Of this the works of Ossian seem to furnish a remarkable proof.

“Though the Goths, under which name we usually comprehend all the Scandinavian tribes, were a people altogether fierce and martial, and noted, to a proverb, for their ignorance of the liberal arts, yet they too, from the earliest times, had their poets and their songs. Their poets were distinguished by the title of scalders, and their songs were termed *vyses*. Saxo Grammaticus, a Danish historian of considerable note, who flourished in the thirteenth century, informs us that very many of these songs, containing the ancient traditionary stories of the country, were found engraven upon rocks in the old Runic character; several of which he has translated into Latin, and inserted into his history.

“A more curious monument of the true Gothic

poetry is preserved by Olaus Wormius in his book *de Literatura Runica*. It is an *Epicidium*, or funeral song, composed by Regner Lodbrog; and translated by Olaus, word for word, from the original. This Lodbrog was a king of Denmark, who lived in the eighth century, famous for his wars and victories; and at the same time an eminent scald or poet. It was his misfortune to fall at last into the hands of one of his enemies, by whom he was thrown into prison, and condemned to be destroyed by serpents. In this situation he solaced himself with rehearsing all the exploits of his life. The poem is divided into twenty-nine stanzas, of ten lines each; and every stanza begins with these words, *Pugnanimus Ensibus*, "We have fought with our swords." It breathes a most ferocious spirit. It is wild, harsh and irregular; but at the same time animated and strong; the style, in the original, full of inversions, and, as we learn from some of Olaus's notes, highly metaphorical and figured.

"But when we open the works of Ossian, a very different scene presents itself. There we find the fire and the enthusiasm of the most early times, combined with an amazing degree of regularity and art. We find tenderness, and even delicacy of sentiment, greatly predominant over fierceness and barbarity. Our hearts are melted with the softest feelings, and at the same time elevated with the highest ideas of magnanimity, generosity, and true heroism. When we turn from the poetry of Lodbrog to that of Ossian, it is like passing from a savage desert, into a fertile and cultivated country. How is this to be accounted for? Or by what means to be reconciled with the remote antiquity attributed to these poems? This is a curious point; and requires to be illustrated.

"That the ancient Scots were of Celtic original,

is past all doubt. Their conformity with the Celtic nations in language, manners, and religion proves it to a full demonstration. The Celtæ, a great and mighty people, altogether distinct from the Goths and Teutones, once extended their dominion over all the west of Europe; but seem to have had their most full and complete establishment in Gaul. Wherever the Celtæ or Gauls are mentioned by ancient writers, we seldom fail to hear of their druids and their bards; the institution of which two orders, was the capital distinction of their manners and policy. The druids were their philosophers and priests; the bards, their poets and recorders of heroic actions: And both these orders of men seem to have subsisted among them, as chief members of the state, from time immemorial. We must not therefore imagine the Celtæ to have been altogether a gross and rude nation. They possessed from very remote ages a formed system of discipline and manners, which appears to have had a deep and lasting influence. Ammianus Marcellinus gives them this express testimony, that there flourished among them the study of the most laudable arts; introduced by the bards, whose office it was to sing in heroic verse, the gallant actions of illustrious men; and by the druids, who lived together in colleges or societies, after the Pythagorean manner, and philosophizing upon the highest subjects, asserted the immortality of the human soul. Though Julius Caesar, in his account of Gaul, does not expressly mention the bards, yet it is plain that under the title of druids, he comprehends that whole college or order; of which the bards, who, it is probable, were the disciples of the druids, undoubtedly made a part. It deserves remark, that according to his account, the druidical institution first took rise in Britain and passed from thence into Gaul; so that they

who aspired to be thorough masters of that learning were wont to resort to Britain. He adds, that such as were to be initiated among the druids, were obliged to commit to their memory a great number of verses, insomuch that some employed twenty years in this course of education; and that they did not think it lawful to record these poems in writing, but sacredly handed them down by tradition from race to race.

“ So strong was the attachment of the Celtic nations to their poetry and their bards, that amidst all the changes of their government and manners, even long after the order of the druids was extinct, and the national religion altered, the bards continued to flourish; not as a set of strolling songsters, like the Greek rhapsodists, in Homer’s time, but as an order of men highly respected in the state, and supported by a public establishment. We find them, according to the testimonies of Strabo and Diodorus, before the age of Augustus Cæsar; and we find them remaining under the same name, and exercising the same functions as of old, in Ireland, and in the north of Scotland, almost down to our own times. It is well known that in both these countries, every regulus or chief had his own bard, who was considered as an officer of rank in his court; and had lands assigned him, which descended to his family. Of the honour in which the bards were held, many instances occur in Ossian’s poems.

“ From all this, the Celtic tribes clearly appear to have been addicted in so high a degree to poetry, and to have made it so much their study from the earliest times, as may remove our wonder at meeting with a vein of higher poetical refinement among them, than was at first sight to have been expected among nations, whom we are accustomed to call barbarous. Barbarity, I

must observe, is a very equivocal term; it admits of many different forms and degrees; and though, in all of them, it excludes polished manners, it is, however, not inconsistent with generous sentiments and tender affections†. What degrees of friendship, love, and heroism, may possibly be found to prevail in a rude state of society, no one can say. Astonishing instances of them we know, from history, have sometimes appeared: and a few characters distinguished by those high qualities, might lay a foundation for a set of manners being introduced into the songs of the bards, more refined, it is probable, and exalted, according to the usual poetical licence, than the real manners of the country. In particular, with respect to heroism; the great employment of the Celtic bards, was to delineate the characters and sing the praises of heroes.

Now when we consider a college or order of men, who, cultivating poetry throughout a long series of ages, had their imaginations continually employed on the ideas of heroism; who had all the poems and panegyrics, which were composed by their predecessors, handed down to them with care; who rivalled and endeavoured to outstrip those who had gone before them, each in the celebration of his particular hero: is it not na-

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† Surely among the wild Laplanders, if any where, barbarity is in its most perfect state. Yet their love songs, which Scheffer has given us in his *Lapponia*, are a proof that natural tenderness of sentiment may be found in a country, into which the least glimmering of science has never penetrated. To most English readers these songs are well known by the elegant translations of them in the *Spectator*, No. 366 and 406.

tural to think, that at length the character of a hero would appear in their songs with the highest lustre, and be adorned with qualities truly noble? Some of the qualities indeed which distinguish a Fingal, moderation, humanity, and clemency, would not probably be the first ideas of heroism occurring to a barbarous people: But no sooner had such ideas begun to dawn on the minds of poets, than, as the human mind easily opens to the native representations of human perfection, they would be seized and embraced; they would enter into panegyrics; they would afford materials for succeeding bards to work upon, and improve; they would contribute not a little to exalt the public manners. For such songs as these, familiar to the Celtic warriors from their childhood, and throughout their whole life, both in war and in peace, their principal entertainment, must have had a very considerable influence in propagating among them real manners nearly approaching to the poetical; and in forming even such a hero as Fingal. Especially when we consider that among their limited objects of ambition, among the few advantages which, in a savage state, man could obtain over man, the chief was Fame, and that immortality which they expected to receive from their virtues and exploits, in the songs of bards †.

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† When Edward I. conquered Wales, he put to death all the Welch bards. This cruel policy plainly shews, how great an influence he imagined the songs of these bards to have over the minds of the people; and of what nature he judged that influence to be. The Welch bards were of the same Celtic race with the Scottish and Irish.

“The manners of Ossian’s age, so far as we can gather them from his writings, were abundantly favourable to a poetical genius. The two dispiriting vices, to which Longinus imputes the decline of poetry, covetousness and effeminacy, were as yet unknown. The cares of men were few. They lived a roving indolent life; hunting and war their principal employments; and their chief amusements, the music of bards and “the feast of shells.” The great object pursued by heroic spirits, was “to receive their fame,” that is, to become worthy of being celebrated in the songs of bards; and “to have their name on “the four grey stones.” To die unlamented by a bard, was deemed so great a misfortune, as even to disturb their ghosts in another state. “They “wander in thick mists beside the reedy lake; “but never shall they rise, without the song, to “the dwelling of winds.” After death, they expected to follow employments of the same nature with those which had amused them on earth; to fly with their friends on clouds, to pursue airy deer, and to listen to their praise in the mouth of bards. In such times as these, in a country where poetry had been so long cultivated, and so highly honoured, is it any wonder that among the race and succession of bards, one Homer should arise? a man who, endowed with a natural and happy genius, favoured by peculiar advantages of birth and condition, and meeting in the course of his life, with a variety of incidents proper to fire his imagination, and to touch his heart, should attain a degree of eminence in poetry, worthy to draw the admiration of more refined ages?”

Indeed that such poems were formerly to be found, both in the Highlands and in the Islands of Scotland, independantly of Macpherson’s col-



lections, can be proved by the most undoubted authority. The celebrated Buchanan observes, that the bards were held in great honour, both among the Gauls and Britons, and that their function and name doth yet remain amongst all those nations which use the old British tongue. He adds, "They compose poems, and those not  
 "inelegant, which the rhapsodists recite, either  
 "to the better sort, or to the vulgar, who are  
 "very desirous to hear them; and sometimes  
 "they sing them to musical instruments."

This circumstance is still more strongly stated in the description, given by the same distinguished author, of the Hebrides or Western Islands. He there mentions, that the inhabitants of those Islands "sing poems not inelegant, containing  
 "commonly the eulogies of valiant men; and  
 "their bards usually treat of no other subject."

Is it possible to suppose, that such a judge of literary merit as Buchanan, should have bestowed such praises on the works of these ancient Scottish bards, if they had not been justly entitled to his applause? and if such poems actually existed in his time, and were recited by the bards from memory, where is the impossibility of their having been handed down for one hundred, and fifty, or two hundred years longer?

Another Proof of the existence of Gaelic poetry previous to the publications of Macpherson in 1760, 1761, &c. is in a work written by Alexander Macdonald schoolmaster at Ardnamerchan, which is printed at Edinburgh, anno 1751\*. The poems which this volume contain are in Gaelic, but there is an English preface, in which

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\* This work is entitled, *Ais-Eiridh Na Sean Chanoin Albannaich*, printed at Duncidiunn, (Edinburgh) 12mo, 1751.

he states two reasons for publishing it: 1. That it may raise a desire to learn something of the Gaelic language, which he states, may be found to contain in its bosom, the charms of poetry and rhetoric; and 2. To bespeak the favour of the public to a great collection of poems, in all kinds of poetry that have been in use among the most cultivated nations, (which surely includes epic poetry), with a translation into English verse, and critical observations on the nature of such writings, to render the work useful to those who do not understand the Gaelic language.

A native of England, who, in the year 1754 printed an account of the Highlands of Scotland, describes his having heard a bard repeating an Earse poem, in the course of which, the chief at whose house he was, and who prided himself upon his classical knowledge, at some particular passage exclaimed, "There is nothing like that in Virgil or Homer!" evidently implying, that it was a part of some epic poem, and most probably a part of Ossian; and it must have been distinguished by peculiar beauties, to entitle it in any great degree, to so high a compliment\*.

The only other author whom it is necessary to mention, as doing justice to Gaelic poetry, previous to Macpherson's publications, is Jerom Stone, who died in June 1756. He was a native of the county of Fife, where the Gaelic was perfectly unknown, but being appointed rector of the school of Dunkeld, a town at the entrance into the Highlands, and being a person of much industry, and strong natural parts, he resolved

\* A second edition of this work was printed Anno 1759. It was written by one Burt, who was a contractor under General Wade.

to learn the language principally spoken by those among whom he was settled; and after having acquired the Gaelic, he was surprised to find, that a variety of literary works were preserved by oral tradition, in that language, which seemed to him to be possessed of great merit. He proceeded to collect some of them; but a premature death (in the 30th year of his age) put an end to those attempts, after he had made some progress. His account of them is highly favourable to Gaelic literature. He describes them as performances "which, for sublimity of language, nervousness of expression, and high spirited metaphors, are hardly to be equalled among the chief productions of the most cultivated nations; whilst others of them, breathe such tenderness and simplicity, as must be greatly affecting to every mind in the least tinctured with the softer passions of pity and humanity."

It appears, too, from various accounts, as well as from a recent report of the Highland Society of London, that all over the Highlands, the names of Ossian, Fingal, Cumbal, Trenmor, and their heroes, are still familiar, and held in the greatest respect. Straths, (or valleys), mountains, rocks, and rivers, are named after them. There are a hundred places in the Highlands and Isles, which derive their names from the Feinne, and from circumstances connected with their history. Every district retains traces of the generous hero, or of the mournful bard, and can boast of places where some of the feats of arms, or instances of strength or agility of some of the heroes of the race of Fingal were exhibited. In the district of Morven, where Fingal is said frequently to have resided, there are a number of places called after him, as Finary, "Fingal's shieling;" Dunien, "Fingal's fort or hill," Kem-Fein, "Fingal's

steps or stairs." Glenlyon in Perthshire, was one of the principal abodes of the Fingalians, and in that country there are many glens, lochs, islands, &c. denominated after them, and the remains of many great works of rude and ancient art, are attributed to them. The largest cairns or heaps of stones which abound in that neighbourhood, are said to be their sepulchral monuments; and, in the parish of Monnivairst in Glenalmond, there was a stone seven feet high, and five broad, which was known by the name of Clach Ossian, or, in English, "Ossian's stone" or "tomb." This stone, unfortunately standing in the way of the military roads constructed under the direction of General Wade, was overturned by machinery. The great stone however, still remains, with four smaller grey stones, surrounded by an inclosure, called Carn Ossian, and sometimes known by the name of the Clach or Carn na Huseoig, or "the stone or heap of the lark," a happy allusion to the soaring powers of a celebrated poet.

"The two great characteristics of Ossian's poetry, (says the learned Blair,) are tenderness and sublimity. It breathes nothing of the gay and cheerful kind; an air of solemnity and seriousness is diffused over the whole. Ossian is, perhaps the only poet who never relaxes, or lets himself down into the light and amusing strain; which I readily admit to be no small disadvantage to him, with the bulk of readers. He moves perpetually in the high region of the grand and the pathetic. One key note is struck at the beginning, and supported to the end; nor is any ornament introduced but what is perfectly concordant with the general tone or melody. The events recorded, are all serious and grave; the scenery throughout, wild and romantic. The

extended heath by the sea shore; the mountain shaded with mist; the torrent rushing through a solitary valley; the scattered oaks, and the tombs of warriors overgrown with moss; all produce a solemn attention in the mind, and prepare it for great and extraordinary events.

“It is necessary here to observe, that the beauties of Ossian’s writings cannot be felt by those who have given them only a single or a hasty perusal. His manner is so different from that of the poets to whom we are most accustomed; his style is so concise, and so much crowded with imagery; the mind is kept at such a stretch in accompanying the author; that an ordinary reader is at first apt to be dazzled and fatigued, rather than pleased. His poems require to be taken up at intervals, and to be frequently reviewed; and then it is impossible but his beauties must open to every reader who is capable of sensibility. Those who have the highest degree of it, will relish them the most.

“The scene of most of Ossian’s poems is laid in Scotland, or in the coast of Ireland opposite to the territories of Fingal. When the scene is in Ireland, we perceive no change of manners from those of Ossian’s native country. For as Ireland was undoubtedly peopled with Celtic tribes, the language, customs, and religion of both nations were the same. They had been separated from one another by migration, only a few generations, as it should seem, before our poet’s age; and they still maintained a close and frequent intercourse. But when the poet relates the expeditions of any of his heroes to the Scandinavian coast, or to the islands of Orkney, which were then part of the Scandinavian territory, as he does in Carric-thura, Sul-malla of Lumon, and Cath-loda, the case is quite altered. Those countries were inhabited by nations of the Teutonic descent, who in their

manners and religious rites differed widely from the Celtæ; and it is curious and remarkable, to find this difference clearly pointed out in the poems of Ossian.

“Ossian is always concise in his descriptions, which adds much to their beauty and force. For it is a great mistake to imagine, that a crowd of particulars, or a very full and extended style, is of advantage to description. On the contrary, such a diffuse manner for the most part weakens it. Any one redundant circumstance is a nuisance. It encumbers and loads the fancy, and renders the main image indistinct. To be concise in description, is one thing; and to be, general, is another. No description that rests in generals can possibly be good; it can convey no lively idea; for it is of particulars only that we have a distinct conception. But at the same time, no strong imagination dwells long upon any one particular; or heaps together a mass of trivial ones. By the happy choice of some one, or of a few that are the most striking, it presents the image more complete, shows us more at one glance, than a feeble imagination is able to do, by turning its object round and round into a variety of lights. Tacitus is of all prose writers the most concise. He has even a degree of abruptness resembling our author: Yet no writer is more eminent for lively description.

“The conciseness of Ossian’s descriptions is the more proper on account of his subjects. Descriptions of gay and smiling scenes may, without any disadvantage, be amplified and prolonged. Force is not the predominant quality expected in these. The description may be weakened by being diffuse, yet notwithstanding, may be beautiful still. Whereas, with respect to grand, solemn, and pathetic subjects, which are Ossian’s chief field, the case is very different.

In these, energy is above all things required. The imagination must be seized at once, or not at all; and is far more deeply impressed by one strong and ardent image, than by the anxious minuteness of laboured illustration.

“The simplicity of Ossian’s manner adds great beauty to his descriptions, and indeed to his whole poetry. We meet with no affected ornaments; no forced refinement, no marks either of style or thought of a studied endeavour to shine and sparkle. Ossian appears every where to be prompted by his feelings; and to speak from the abundance of his heart.

“It only remains to make some observations on his sentiments. No sentiments can be beautiful without being proper; that is, suited to the character and situation of those who utter them. In this respect, Ossian is as correct as most writers. But it is not enough that sentiments be natural and proper. In order to acquire any high degree of poetical merit, they must also be sublime and pathetic. The sublime is not confined to sentiment alone. It belongs to description also, and whether in description or in sentiment, imports such ideas presented to the mind, as raise it to an uncommon degree of elevation, and fill it with admiration and astonishment. This is the highest effect either of eloquence or poetry: And to produce this effect, requires a genius glowing with the strongest and warmest conception of some object awful, great, or magnificent. If the engagement of Fingal with the spirit of Loda, in Carricthura; if the encounters of the armies of Fingal; if the address to the sun, in Carthon; if the similes founded upon ghosts and spirits of the night, be not admitted as examples, and illustrious ones too, of the true poetical sublime, I confess myself intirely ignorant of this quality in writing.

“Simplicity and conciseness, are never failing characteristics of the style of a sublime writer. He rests on the majesty of his sentiments, not on the pomp of his expressions. The main secret of being sublime, is to say great things in few and in plain words: For every superfluous decoration degrades a sublime idea. The mind rises and swells when a lofty description or sentiment is presented to it, in its native form. But no sooner does the poet attempt to spread out this sentiment or description, and to deck it round and round with glittering ornaments, than the mind begins to fall from its high elevation; the transport is over; the beautiful may remain, but the sublime is gone. Hence the concise and simple style of Ossian, gives great advantage to his sublime conceptions; and assists them in seizing the imagination with full power.

“The general character of his poetry, is the heroic, mixed with the elegiac strain; admiration tempered with pity. Ever fond of giving, as he expresses it, “the joy of grief,” it is visible, that on all moving subjects, he delights to exert his genius; and accordingly, never were there finer pathetic situations than what his works present. His great art in managing them lies in giving vent to the simple and natural emotions of the heart. We meet with no exaggerated declamation; no subtile refinements on sorrow; no substitution of description in place of passion. Ossian felt strongly himself; and the heart when uttering its native language never fails, by powerful sympathy, to affect the heart. A great variety of examples might be produced. We need only open the book to find them every where.”

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# *Fingal:*

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM

IN SIX BOOKS.



## THE ARGUMENT.

Cuehillin (general of the Irish tribes, in the minority of Cormac, king of Ireland) sitting alone beneath a tree, at the gate of Tura, a castle of Ulster (the other chiefs having gone on a hunting party to Cromla, a neighbouring hill,) is informed of the landing of Swaran, king of Lochlin, by Moran, the son of Fithil, one of his scouts. He convenes the chiefs; a council is held, and disputes run high about giving battle to the enemy. Connal, the petty king of Tongorma, and an intimate friend of Cuchullin, was for retreating, till Fingal, king of those Caledonians who inhabited the north-west coast of Scotland, whose aid had been previously solicited, should arrive; but Calmar, the son of Matha, lord of Lara, a country in Connaught, was for engaging the enemy immediately. Cuchullin, of himself willing to fight, went into the opinion of Calmar. Marching towards the enemy, he missed three of his bravest heroes, Fergus, Duchoimar, and

Caithbat. Fergus arriving, tells Cuchullin of the death of the two other chiefs; which introduces the affecting episode of Morna, the daughter of Cormac. The army of Cuchullin is descried at a distance by Swaran, who sent the son of Arno to observe the motions of the enemy, while he himself ranged his forces in order of battle. The son of Arno returning to Swaran, describes to him Cuchullin's chariot, and the terrible appearance of that hero. The armies engage, but night coming on, leaves the victory undecided. Cuchullin, according to the hospitality of the times, sends to Swaran a formal invitation to a feast, by his bard Carril, the son of Kinfena. Swaran refuses to come. Carril relates to Cuchullin the story of Grudar and Brassolis. A party, by Connal's advice, is sent to observe the enemy; which closes the action of the first day.

## BOOK I.

**C**UCHULLIN† sat by Tara's wall; by the tree of the rustling leaf. His spear leaned against the mossy rock. His shield lay by him on the

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† Cuchullin, or rather Cuth-Ullin, the 'voice of Ullin,' a poetical name given the son of Semo, grandson to Caithbat, a druid celebrated by the bards for his wisdom and valour, from his commanding the forces of the province of Ulster against the Firbolg or Belgæ, who were in possession of Connaught. Cuchullin, when very young, married Bragela, the daughter of Morglan and passing over into Ireland, lived for some time with Connal, grandson by a daughter to Congal, the petty king of Ulster. His wisdom

grass. As he thought of mighty Cairbar †, a hero whom he slew in war; the scout ‡ of the ocean came, Moran § the son of Fithil!

“Rise,” said the youth, “Cuchullin, rise! I see the ships of Swaran. - Cuchullin, many are the foe; many the heroes of the dark-rolling sea.”

“Moran!” replied the blue-eyed chief, “thou ever tremblest, son of Fithil: Thy fears have

and valour in a short time gained him such reputation, that in the minority of Cormac, the supreme king of Ireland, he was chosen guardian to the young king, and sole manager of the war against Swaran king of Lochlin. After a series of great actions, he was killed in battle somewhere in Connaught, in the twenty-seventh year of his age. He was so remarkable for his strength, that to describe a strong man it has passed into a proverb, ‘He has the strength of Cuchullin.’ They shew the remains of his palace at Dunscaich in the isle of Sky; and a stone, to which he bound his dog Luath, goes still by his name.

† Cairbar or Cairbre, signifies a strong man.

‡ We may conclude from Cuchullin’s applying for foreign aid, that the Irish were not then so numerous as they have since been; which is a great presumption against the high antiquities of that people. We have the testimony of Tacitus, that one legion only was thought sufficient, in the time of Agricola, to reduce the whole island under the Roman yoke; which would not probably have been the case had the island been inhabited for any number of centuries before.

§ Moran signifies ‘many;’ and Fithil, or rather Fithil, ‘an inferior bard.’

much increased the foe. Perhaps it is 'the king of the lonely hills coming to aid me on green Ullin's plains.'

"I saw their chief," says Moran, "tall as a rock of ice. His spear is like that blasted fir. His shield like the rising moon. He sat on a rock on the shore; his dark host rolled, like clouds, around him. Many, chief of men! I said, many are but hands of war. Well art thou named the Mighty Man; but many mighty men are seen from Tara's windy walls."

"He answered, like a wave on a rock, 'who in this land appears like me? Heroes stand not in my presence; they fall to earth beneath my hand. None can meet Swaran in the fight but Fingal, king of stormy hills. Once we wrestled on the heath of Malmar\*, and our heels overturned the wood. Rocks fell from their place; and rivulets, changing their course, fled murmuring from our strife. Three days we renewed our strife, and heroes stood at a distance and trembled. On the fourth, Fingal says, that the

‡ Fingal the son of Comhal and Morna the daughter of Thaddu. His grandfather was Trathal, and great-grandfather Trenmor, both of whom are often mentioned in the poem. Trenmore, according to tradition, had two sons; Trathal, who succeeded him in the kingdom of Mervin, and Connar, called by the bards Connar the Great, who was elected king of all Ireland, and was the ancestor of that Coemac who sat on the Irish throne when the invasion of Swaran happened. It may not be improper here to observe, that the accent ought always to be placed on the last syllable of Fingal.

\* Mal-mar, 'a great hill.'

king of the ocean fell ; but Swaran says he stood. Let dark Cuchullin yield to him that is strong as the storms of Malmor."

"No!" replied the blue-eyed chief, "I will never yield to man! Dark Cuchullin shall be great or dead! Go, Fithil's son, and take my spear. Strike the sounding shield of Cabait†. It hangs at Tura's rustling gate; the sound of peace is not its voice. My heroes shall hear on the hill."

He went and struck the bossy shield. The hills and their rocks replied. The sound spread along the wood; deer start by the lake of roes. Curach‡ leapt from the sounding rock; and Cruithnal of the bloody spear. Cruithal's§ breast of snow beats high. The son of Favi leaves the dark-brown hind. It is the shield of war, said Roonar! The spear of Cuchullin, said Lagar! Son of the sea put on thy arms! Calmar lift thy sounding steel! Funo! dreadful hero, rise! Cairbar from thy red tree of Cromla! Bend thy white knee, O Eth! and descend from the streams of Lena. Caolt stretch thy white side as thou movest along the whistling heath of Mora: thy side that is white as the foam of the troubled sea, when the dark winds pour it on the murmuring rocks of Cuthon\*.

† Cabait, or rather Cathbait, grandfather to the hero, was so remarkable for his valour, that his shield was made use of to alarm his posterity to the battles of the family. We find Fingal making the same use of his own shield in the 4th book. A horn was the most common instrument to call the army together, before the invention of bagpipes.

‡ Cu-raoth signifies 'the madness of battle.'

§ Cruith-geal 'fair complexioned.'

\* Cuthon, 'the mournful sound of waves.'

Now I behold the chiefs, in the pride of their former deeds! Their souls are kindled at the battles of old; and the actions of other times. Their eyes are like flames of fire. And roll in search of the foes of the land. Their mighty hands are on their swords. And lightning pours from their sides of steel. They come like streams from the mountains; each rushes roaring from his hill. Bright are the chiefs of battle, in the armour of their fathers. Gloom and dark their heroes follow, like the gathering of the rainy clouds behind the red meteors of heaven. The sounds of crashing arms ascend. The grey dogs howl between. Unequally bursts the song of battle. And racking Cromla<sup>§</sup> echoes round. On Lena's dusky heath they stand, like mist<sup>¶</sup> that shades the hills of autumn: when broken and dark it settles high and lifts its head to heaven! — "Hail," said Cuchullin, "sons of the narrow vales! hail, ye hunters of the deer! Another sport is drawing near: It is like the dark rolling of that wave on the coast! Shall we fight, ye sons of war! or yield green Innis-fail<sup>†</sup> to Lochlin! O Connal<sup>‡</sup>, speak, thou first of men!

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<sup>§</sup> Cromleach signified a place of worship among the druids. It is here the proper name of a hill on the coast of Ullin or Ulster.

<sup>¶</sup> So when th' embattled clouds in dark array,  
 Along the skies their gloomy lines display,  
 The low-hung vapours, motionless and still,  
 Rest on the summit of the shaded hill. POPE.

<sup>†</sup> Ireland, so called from a colony that settled there called Falans. Innis-fail, i. e. the island of the Fa-il or Falans.

<sup>‡</sup> Connal, the friend of Cuchullin, was the son of Caithbat, prince of Tongornia, or the island of

thou breaker of the shields! thou hast often fought with Lochlin; wilt thou lift thy father's spear?"

"Cuchullin!" calm the chief replied, "the spear of Connal is keen. It delights to shine in battle, and to mix with the blood of thousands. But tho' my hand is bent on war, my heart is for the peace of Erin\*. Behold, thou first in Cormac's war, the sable fleet of Swaran. His masts are as numerous on our coast as reeds in the lake of Lego. His ships are like forests clothed with mist, when the trees yield by torns to the squally wind. Many are his chiefs in battle. Connal is for peace! Fingal would add on his arm, the first of mortal men! Fingal scatters the mighty, as stormy winds the hills; when the streams roar through echoing Gona, and night settles with all her clouds on the hill!"

"Fly, thou chief of peace," said Calmar†, the son of Matha; "fly, Connal, to thy silent

blue waves, probably one of the Hébrides. His mother was Fioncoma the daughter of Congal. He had a son by Foba of Conachar-nessar, who was afterwards king of Ulster. For his services in the war against Swaran, he had lands conferred on him, which, from his name, were called Tirchonnul or Tirconnel, i. e. the land of Connal.

\* Erin, a name of Ireland; from 'ear or iar' west, and 'in' an island. This name was not always confined to Ireland, for there is the highest probability that the Ierne of the ancients was Britain to the north of the Forth. For Ierne is said to be the North of Britain, which could not be meant of Ireland.

Strabo, lib. 2. et 4. Casaub. lib. 1.

† Calm-cr 'a strong man.'

hills, where the spear of battle never shone ! Pursue the dark-brown deer of Cromla : and stop with thine arrows the bounding roes of Lena. But, blue-eyed son of Semo, Cuchullin, ruler of the war, scatter thou the sons of Lochlin|| and roar through the ranks of their pride. Let no vessel of the kingdom of Snow bound on the dark rolling waves of Inistore†. O ye dark winds of Erin, rise ! roar ye whirlwinds of the heath ! Amidst the tempest let me die, torn in a cloud by angry ghoſts of men ; amidst the tempest let Calmar die, if ever chase was ſport to him, ſo much as the battle of ſhields !”

“ Calmar !” ſlow replied the chief, “ I never fled, O ſon of Matha ! I was ſwift with my friends in battle ; but ſmall is the fame of Connal ! The battle was won in my preſence ; and the valiant overcame ! But, ſon of Semo, hear my voice, regard the ancient throne of Cormac. Give wealth and half the land for peace, till Fin-gal come with battle. Or, if war be thy choice, I lift the ſword and ſpear. My joy ſhall be in the miſt of thouſands ; and my ſoul brighten in the gloom of the fight !”

“ To me,” Cuchullin replies, “ pleaſant is the noiſe of arms ! pleaſant as the thunder of heaven before the ſhower of ſpring ! But gather all the ſhining tribes, that I may view the ſons of war ! Let them move along the heath, bright as the ſun-ſhine before a ſtorm, when the weſt wind collects the clouds, and the oaks of Morven echo along the ſhore.”

|| The Gallic name of Scandinavia in general ; in a more confined ſenſe, that of the peninsula of Jutland.

† Inistore, ‘ the iſland of whales,’ the ancient name of the Orkney iſlands.



“But where are my friends in battle? The companions of my arm in danger? Where art thou, white bosom'd Cathbat? Where is that cloud in war, Duchomar? And hast thou left me, O Fergus\*! in the day of the storm? Fergus, first in our joy at the feast! son of Rossa! arm of death! comest thou like a roe† from Malnor? Like a hart from the echoing hills? Hail, thou son of Rossa! What shades the soul of war?”

“Four stones‡” replied the chief, “rise on the grave of Cathbat. These hands have laid in earth Duchomar, that cloud in war! Cathbat, the son of Torman; thou wert a son-beam on the hill. And thou, O valiant Duchomar, like the mist of marshy Lanu; when it sails over the plains of autumn and brings death to the people. Morna, fairest of maids! calm is thy sleep in the cave of the rock. Thou hast fallen

† Duchomar, ‘a black well-shaped man.’

\* Fear-guth, ‘the man of the word;’ or a commander of an army.

‡ Beth-u like a roe or young hart on the mountains of Bether. Solomon’s Song.

† This passage alludes to the manner of burial among the ancient Scots. They opened a grave six or eight feet deep: the bottom was lined with fine clay; and on this they laid the body of the deceased, and, if a warrior, his sword, and the heads of twelve arrows, by his side. Above they laid another stratum of clay, in which they placed the horn of a deer, the symbol of hunting. The whole was covered with a fine mould, and four stones placed on end to mark the extent of the grave. These are the four stones alluded to here.

in darkness like a star, that shoots across the desert, when the traveler is alone, and mourns the transient beam."

"Say," said Semo's blue-eyed son, "say how fell the chiefs of Erin? Fell they by the sons of Lochlin, striving in the battle of heroes? Or what confines the chiefs of Cromla to the dark and narrow house?"

"Cathbat," replied the hero, "fell by the sword of Duchomar at the oak of the noisy streams. Duchomar came to Tara's cave; and spoke to the lovely Morna."

"Morna¶, 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 is troubled before thee, and dark are the clouds of the sky. But thou art like snow on the heath; and thy hair like the mist of Cromla, when it curls on the rocks, and shines to the beam of the west. Thy breasts are like two smooth rocks seen from Brano of the streams; thy arms like two white pillars in the halls of the mighty Fingal."

"From whence," the white-armed maid replied, "from whence, Duchomar, the most gloomy of men? Dark are thy brows and terrible. Red are thy rolling eyes. Does Swaran appear on the sea? What of the foe, Duchomar?"

"From the hill I return, O Morna, from the hill of the dark-brown hinds. Three have I slain with my bended yew. Three with my long bounding dogs of the chase. Lovely daugh-

¶ The grave. The house appointed for all living. JOB.

¶ Muintne, or Morna, 'a woman beloved by all.

Yer of Cormac, I love thee as my cat. I have slain one stately deer for thee. High was his branchy head, and fleet his feet of wind."

"Duchomar!" calm the maid replied, "I love thee not, thou gloomy man, hard is thy heart of rock, and dark thy terrible brow. But Cathbat, son of Torman†, thou art the love of Morna. Thou art like a sun-beam on the hill in the day of the gloomy storm. Sowest thou the son of Torman, lovely on the hill of his hinds? Here the daughter of Cormac waits the coming of Cathbat."

"And long shall Morna wait," Duchomar said, "his blood is on my sword. Long, shall Morna wait for him. He fell at Branco's stream. High on Cromla I will raise his tomb, daughter of Cormac-cairbar; but fix thy love on Duchomar, his arm is strong as a storm."

"And is the son of Torman fallen!" said the maid of the tearful eye. "Is he fallen on his echoing heath; the youth with the breast of snow? he that was first in the chase of the hill? the foe of the strangers of the ocean? Duchomar, thou art dark; indeed, and cruel is thy arm to Morna. But give me that sword, my foe! I love the blood of Cathbat."

He gave the sword to her tears. But she pierced his manly breast! He fell, like the bank of a mountain-stream; and stretching out his arm he said—

"Daughter of Cormac-cairbar, thou hast slain Duchomar. The sword is cold in my breast! Morna, I feel it cold. Give me to Moins‡, the

† Torman, 'thunder.' This is the true origin of the Jupiter Taramis of the ancients.

‡ She alludes to his name, the dark man.

§ Moins, 'soft in temper and person.'

maid; Duchomar was the dream of her night. She will raise my tomb; and the hunter shall see it and praise me. But draw the sword from my breast, Morna, the steel is cold."

She came, in all her tears, she came, and drew it from his breast. He pierced her white side with steel; and spread her fair locks on the ground. Her bursting blood sounds from her side: And her white arm is stained with red. Rolling in death she lay, and Tura's cave answered to her groans.

"Peace," said Cuchullin, "to the souls of the heroes; their deeds were great in danger. Let them ride around† me on clouds; and shew their features of war; that my soul may be strong in danger: my arm like the thunder of heaven — But be thou on a moon-beam, O Morna, near the window of my rest; when my thoughts are of peace; and the din of arms is over.—Gather the strength of the tribes, and move to the wars of Erin.—Attend the car of my battles; rejoice in the noise of my course. Place three spears by my side; follow the bounding of my steeds; that my soul may be strong in my friends, when the battle darkens round the beams of my steel."

As rushes a stream‡ of foam from the dark

† It was the opinion then, as indeed it is to this day, of some of the Highlanders, that the souls of the deceased hovered round their living friends, and sometimes appeared to them when they were about to enter on any great undertaking.

‡ As torrents roll, increas'd by numerous rills,  
With rage impetuous down the echoing hills,  
Rush to the vales, and pour'd along the plain,  
Loar thro' a thousand channels to the main.

POPE.

shady steep of Cromla; when the thunder is rolling above, and dark-brown night rests on half the hill. So fierce, so vast, so terrible rushed on the sons of Erin. The chief like a whale of ocean, whom all his billows follow, poured valour forth as a stream, rolling his might along the shore.

The sons of L. chlin heard the noise as the sound of a winter-stream. Swaran struck his bossy shield, and called the son of Arno. "What murmur rolls along the hill like the gathered flies of evening? The sons of Innis-fail descend, or rustling winds roar in the distant wood. Such is the noise of Gormal before the white tops of ozy waves arise. O son of Arno, ascend the hill and view the dark face of the heath."

He went, and trembling, swift returned. His eyes rolled wildly round. His heart beat high against his side. His words were faltering, broken, slow.

"Rise, son of ocean, rise chief o' the dark-brown shields! I see the dark, the mountain-stream of the battle: The deep-moving strength of the sons of Erin—The car, the car of battle comes, like the flame of death; the rapid car of Cuchullin, the noble son of Semo. It bends behind like a wave near a rock; like the golden mist of the heath. Its sides are embossed with stones, and sparkle like the sea round the beat of night. Of polished yew is its beam, and its seat of the smoothest bone. The sides are replenished with spears; and the bottom is the footstool of heroes. Before the right side of the car is seen the snorting horse. The high-maned, broad-breasted, proud, high-leaping, strong steed of the hill. Loud and resounding is his hoof; the spreading of his mane above is like that stream of smoke on the heath. Bright are the eyes of the steed, and his name is Suln-ditáda,

“ Before the left side of the car is seen the snorting horse. The dark-maned, high-headed, strong-hoofed, fleet, bounding son of the hill: his name is Dusronnal among the stormy sons of the sword. A thousand thongs bind the car on high. Hard polished bits shine in a wreath of foam. Thin thongs, bright-studded with gems, bend on the stately necks of the steeds; the steeds that like wreaths of mist fly over the streamy vales. The wildness of deer is in their course, the strength of the eagle descending on her prey. Their noise is like the blast of winter on the sides of the snow headed Gorma †.

“ Within the car is seen the chief, the strong stormy son of the sword; the hero's name is Cuchullin, son of Semo, king of shells. His red cheek is like my polished yew. The look of his blue-rolling eye is wide beneath the dark arch of his brow. His hair flies from his head like a flame, as bending forward he wields the spear. Fly, king of ocean, fly! he comes, like a storm along the streamy vale.”

“ When did I fly,” replied the king, “ from the battle of many spears? When did I fly, son of Arno, chief of the little soul? I met the storm of Gorma! when the foam of my waves was high; I met the storm of the clouds, and shall I fly from a hero? Were it Fingal himself, my soul should not darken before him.—Rise to the battle, my thousands; pour round me like the echoing main. Gather round the bright steel of your king; strong as the rocks of my land; that meet the storm with joy, and stretch their dark woods to the wind.”

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† A hill of Lochlin.

As Autumn's † dark storms pour from two  
 echoing hills, towards each other approached the  
 heroes.—As two dark streams from high rocks  
 meet, and mix and roar on the plain; loud,  
 rough and dark in battie meet Lochlin and Inn-  
 sail. Chief, mixes his strokes with chief, and  
 man with man, steel, clanging, sounded on  
 steel, helmets are cleft on high. Blood bursts  
 and smokes around—Strings twang on the po-  
 lished yews. Darts rush along the sky. Spears  
 fall like the circles of light that gild the stormy  
 face of night.

As the troubled noise of the ocean when roll  
 the waves on high— as the last peal of the thun-  
 der of heaven, such is the noise of battle. Tho'  
 Cormac's hundred harps were there to give the  
 war to song; feeble were the voices of a hundred  
 harps to send the death to future times. For  
 many were the falls of the heroes; and wide  
 poured the blood of the valiant.

† The reader may compare this passage with a  
 similar one in Homer. *Iliad* A. v. 445:—

Now shield with shield, with helmet helmet  
 clos'd,

To armour armour, lance to lance oppos'd

Host against host, with shadowy squadrons  
 drew,

The sounding darts in iron tempests flew,

With streaming blood the slipp'ry fields are  
 dy'd,

And slaughter'd heroes swell the dreadful tide.

POPE.

Arms to armour crashing, bray'd

Horrible discord, and the madd'ning wheels

Of brazen chariots rag'd, &c. MILTON.

Mourn, ye sons of song, the death of the noble Sithallin†. Let the sighs of Fiona rise on the dark heaths of her lovely Ardan. They fell, like two hinds of the desert, by the hands of the mighty Swaran; when, in the midst of headlands he raved; like the shrill spirit of a storm, that sits dim, on the clouds of Go-mal, and enjoys the death of the mariner.

Nor slept thy hand by thy side, chief of the isle of mist‖; many were the deaths of thine arm, Cuchullin, thou son of Seno. His sword was like the beam of heaven when it pierces the sons of the vale; when the people are blasted and fall, and all the hills are burning around. Dusronnal¶ snorted over the bodies of heroes; and Sifadla\* bathed his hoof in blood. The battel lay behind them as groves overturned on the desert of Cromla, when the blast has passed the heath laden with the spirits of night.

Weep on the rocks of roaring winds, O maid of Inistore‡! bend thy fair head over the waves,

† Sithallin signifies a handsome man: Fiona, ‘a fair maid;’ and Ardan, ‘pride.’

‖ The Isle of Sky; not improperly called the Isle of Mist, as it's high hills, which catch the clouds from the western ocean, occasion almost continual rains.

¶ One of Cuchullin's horses. Dabstron-gheal.

\* Sith-tadla, i. e. a long stride.

‡ The maid of Inistore was the daughter of Goro king of Inistore or Orkney Islands. Tienar was brother to the king of Iniscou, supposed to be one of the islands of Shetland. The Orkneys and Shetland were at that time subject to the king of Lochlin. We find that the dogs of Tienar are sensible at home of the death of their



thou fairer than the spirit of the hills; when it moves in a sun-beam at noon over the silence of Morven. He is fallen! thy youth is low; pale beneath the sword of Cuthullin. No more shall valour raise the youth to match the blood of kings. Trenar, lovely Trenar died, thou maid of Iaistore. His gray dogs are howling at home, and see his passing ghost. His bow is in the hall unstrung. No sound is in the heath of his hinds.

As roll a thousand waves on a rock, so Swaran's host came on; as meets a rock a thousand waves, so Ionis-fail met Swaran. Death raises all his voices around, and mixes with the sound of their shields. Each hero is a pillar of darkness, and the sword a beam of fire in his hand. The field echoes from wing to wing, as a hundred hammers that rise by turns on the red son of the furnace.

Who are these on Lena's heath that are so gloomy and dark? Who are these like two clouds†, and their swords like lightning above them? The little hills are troubled around, and the rocks tremble with all their moss. Who is it but ocean's son and the car-borne chief of Erin? Man, are the anxious eyes of their friends, as they see them dim on the heath. Now night

master, the very instant he is killed. It was the opinion of the times, that the souls of heroes went immediately after death to the hills of their country, and the scenes they frequented the most happy time of their life. It was thought too that dogs and horses saw the ghosts of the deceased.

† As when two black clouds [on  
With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling  
Over the Caspian. MILTON.

conceals the chief in her clouds, and ends the terrible fight.

It was on Cromla's shaggy side that Dorglas placed the deer; the early fortune of the chase, before the heroes left the hill. A hundred youths collect the heath; ten heroes blow the fire; three hundred choose the polish'd stones. The feast is smoking wide.

Cuchullin, chief of Erin's war, resum'd his mighty soul. He stood upon his beamy spear, and spoke to the son of songs; to Carril of other times, the gray-haired son of Kensena<sup>¶</sup>. "Is this feast spread for me alone; and the king of Lochlin on Ullin's shore, far from the deer of his hills, and sounding halls of his feasts? Rise, Carril of other times, and carry my words to Swaran; tell him that came from the roaring of waters, that Cuchullin gives his feast. Here let him listen to the sound of my groves amidst the clouds of night. For cold and bleak the blustering winds rush over the foam of his seas. Here let him praise the trembling harp, and hear the songs of heroes."

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|| The ancient manner of preparing feasts after hunting, is handed down by tradition. A pit lined with smooth stones was made; and near it stood a heap of smooth flat stones of the flint kind. The stones, as well as the pit, were properly heated with heath. Then they laid some venison in the bottom, and a stratum of the stones above it; and thus they did alternately till the pit was full. The whole was covered over with heath to confine the steam. Whether this is probable I cannot say; but some pits are shewn, which the vulgar say were used in that manner.

¶ Ceah-feana, i. e. the head of the people.

Old Carril went, with softest voice, and called  
 the king of dark brown shields. "Rise from the  
 skins of thy chase, rise, Swaran king of groves,  
 Cuchullin gives the joy of shells; partake the  
 feast of Erin's blue-eyed chief." He answered  
 like the sullen sound of Cromla before a storm.  
 "Though all thy daughters, Innis-fail! should  
 extend their arms of snow; rise high the heav-  
 ings of their breasts, and softly roll their eyes of  
 love; yet, fixed as Lochlin's thousand rocks,  
 here Swaran shall remain; t'ill morn, with the  
 young beams of the east, shall light me to the  
 death of Cuchullin. Pleasant to my ear is Loch-  
 lin's wind. It rushes over my seas. It speaks  
 aloft in all my shrouds, and brings my green  
 forests to my mind; the green forests of Gormal  
 that often echoed to my winds, when my spear  
 was red in the chase of the boar. Let dark  
 Cuchullin yield to me the ancient throne of  
 Curmac; or Erin's torrents shall shew from  
 their hills the red foam of the blood of his pride."

"Sad is the sound of Swaran's voice," said  
 Carril of other times: "Sad to himself alone,"  
 said the blue-eyed son of Semo. "But, Carril,  
 raise thy voice on high, tell the deeds of other  
 times. Send thou the night away in song; and  
 give the joy of grief. For many heroes and  
 maids of love have moved on Innis-fail. And  
 lovely are the songs of woe that are heard on  
 Albion's rocks; when the noise of the chase is  
 over, and the streams of Cona answer to the  
 voice of Ossian †."

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† Ossian the son of Fingal and author of the  
 Poem. One cannot but admire the address of the  
 poet in putting his own praise so naturally into  
 the mouth of Cuchullin. The Cona here men-  
 tioned is perhaps that small river that runs  
 through Glenco in Argyleshire. One of the hills

“In other days||,” Carril replies, “came the sons of ocean to Erin. A thousand vessels bounded over the waves to Ullin’s lovely plains. The sons of Innis-fail arose to meet the race of dark brown shields. Cairbar, first of men was there, and Grudar stately youth. Long had they strove for the spotted bull, that lowed on Golhun’s† echoing heath. Each claimed him as his own; and death was often at the point of their steel. Side by side the heroes fought, and the strangers of ocean fled. Whose name was fairer on the hill than the name of Cairbar and Grudar? But ah! why ever lowed the bull on Golhun’s echoing heath? They saw him leaping like the snow. The wrath of the chiefs returned.”

“On Lubar’s‡ grassy banks they fought, and Grudar, like a sun-beam, fell. Fierce Cairbar came to the vale of the echoing Tara, where Brassolis†, fairest of his sisters, all alone, raised

which environ that romantic valley is still called *Sorna-sena*, or the hill of Fingal’s people.

|| This episode is introduced with propriety. Calmar and Conna’, two of the Irish heroes, had disputed warmly before the battle about engaging the enemy. Carril endeavours to reconcile them with the story of Cairbar and Grudar; who though enemies before, fought side by side in the war. The poet obtained his aim, for we find Calmar and Connal perfectly reconciled in the third book.

† Colb-bean, as well as Cromlech, signifies a crooked hill. It is here the name of a mountain in the county of Sligo.

‡ Lubar a river in Ulster. Labhar, ‘loud, noisy.’

† Brassolis signifies a woman with a white breast.

the song of grief. She sung of the actions of Gudar, 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 night. Her voice was softer than the harp to rise the song of grief. Her soul was fixed on Grugar; the secret look of her eye was his. When shalt thou come in thine arms, thou mighty in the war?"

"Take, Brassolis," Cairbar came and said, "take, Brassolis, this shield of blood. Fix it on high within my hall, the armour of my foe." Her soft heart beat against her side. Distracted, pale, she flew. She found her youth in all his blood! she died on Cromla's heath. Here rest's their dust, Cuchullin; and these two lonely yews, sprung from their tombs, wish to meet on high. Fair was Brassolis on the plain, and Grugar on the hill. The bard shall preserve their names, and repeat them to future times."

"Pleasant is thy voice, O Carril," said the blue-eyed chief of Erin. "Lovely are the words of other times. They are like the calm shower of spring, when the sun looks on the field, and the light cloud flies over the hills. O strike the harp in praise of my love, the lonely sun-beam of Dunscaith. Strike the harp in the praise of Bragela, of her that I left in the Isle of Mist, the spouse of Semo's son. Dost thou raise thy fair face from the rock to find the sails of Cuchullin? The sea is rolling far distant, and its white foam shall deceive thee for my sails. Re-

‡ But when he speaks, what elocution flows!  
Like the soft fleeces of descending snows.

POPE.

|| Bragela was the daughter of Sorglan, and the wife of Cuchullin. Cuchullin, upon the

fire, for it is night, my love, and the dark winds sigh in thy hair. Retire to the halls of my feasts, and think of the times that are past: for I will not return till the storm of war is ceased. O Connal, speak of wars and arms, and send her from my mind; for lovely with her raven-hair is the white-bosomed daughter of Sorglan."

Conna!, slow to speak, replied, "Guard against the race of ocean. Send thy troop of night abroad, and watch the strength of Swaran. Cuchullin! I am for peace till the race of the desert come; till Fingal come, the first of men, and beam, like the sun, on our fields."

The hero struck the shield of his alarms; the warriors of the night moved on. The rest lay in the heath of the deer, and slept amidst the dusky wind. The ghosts¶ of the lately dead were near, and swam on gloomy clouds. And far distant, in the dark silence of Lena, the feeble voices were heard.

death of Artho, supreme king of Ireland, passed over into Ireland, probably by Fingal's order, to take upon him the administration of affairs in that kingdom during the minority of Cormac the son of Artho. He left his wife Bragela in Dunscaich, the seat of the family, in the isle of Sky.

¶ It was long the opinion of the ancient Scots, that a ghost was heard shrieking near the place where a death was to happen soon after. The accounts given to this day, among the vulgar, of this extraordinary matter, are very poetical. The ghost comes mounted on a meteor, and surrounds twice or thrice the piece destined for the person to die; and then goes along the road through which the funeral is to pass, shrieking at intervals; at last, the meteor and ghost disappear above the burial place.

# Fingal:

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

The ghost of Crugal, one of the Irish heroes who was killed in battle, appearing to Connal, foretels the defeat of Cuchullin in the next battle; and earnestly advises him to make peace with Swaran. Connal communicates the vision; but Cuchullin is inflexible; from a principle of honour he would not be the first to sue for peace, and he resolved to continue the war. Morning comes: Swaran proposes dishonourable terms to Cuchullin, which are rejected. The battle begins, and is obstinately fought for some time, until, upon the flight of Grumal, the whole Irish army give way. Cuchullin and Connal cover their retreat: Carril leads them to a neighbouring hill: whither they are soon followed by Cuchullin himself, who descries the fleet of Fingal making towards the coast: But night coming on, he lost sight of it again. Cuchullin, dejected after his defeat, attributes his ill success to the death of Ferda his friend, whom he had killed some time before. Carril, to show that ill success did not always attend those who innocently killed their friends, introduces the episode of Comal and Galgna.

## BOOK II.

CONNAL† lay by the sound of the mountain-stream, beneath the aged tree. A stone, with its moss, supported his head. Shrill through the heath of Lena, he heard the voice

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† The scene of Connal's repose is familiar to those who have been in the Highlands of Scotland. The poet removes him to a distance from the army, to add more horror to the description of Crugal's ghost by the loneliness of the place. It perhaps will not be disagreeable to the reader, to see how two other ancient poets handled a similar subject.

When lo! the shade, before his closing eyes,  
Of sad Patroclus rose or seem'd to rise,  
In the same robe he living wore, he came  
In stature, voice, and pleasing look the same,  
The form familiar hover'd o'er his head,  
And sleeps Achilles thus? the phantom said.

POPE.

When Hector's ghost before my sight appears:  
A bloody shroud he seem'd, and bath'd in tears.  
Such as he was, when, by Pelides slain,  
Thessalian coursers dragg'd him o'er the plain.  
Swol'n were his feet, as when the thongs were  
thrust  
Through the bor'd holes, his body black with  
dust.

Unlike that Hee'or, who return'd from toils  
Of war triumphant, in Æacian spoils:  
Or him, who made the fainting Greeks retire,  
And launch'd against their navy Phrygian fire.  
His hair and beard stood stiffen'd with his gore;  
And all the wounds he for his country bore.

DRYDEN.



of night. At distance from the heroes he lay, for the son of the sword feared no foe.

My hero saw in his rest a dark-<sup>red</sup> stream of fire coming down from the hill. Crugal sat upon the beam; a chief that lately fell. He fell by the hand of Swaran, striving in the battle of heroes. His face is like the beam of the setting moon; his robes are of the clouds of the hill; his eyes are like two decaying flames. Dark is the wound of his breast.

“Crugal,” said the mighty Connal, “son of Dedgal, famed on the hill of the deer, why so pale and sad, thou breaker of the shields? Thou hast never been pale for fear. What disturbs the son of the hill?”

Dim, and in tears, he stood, and stretched his pale hand over the hero. Faintly he raised his feeble voice, like the gale of the reedy Lego.

“My ghost, O Connal, is on my native hills; but my corse is on the sands of Ullin. Thou shalt never talk with Crugal, or find his lone steps in the heath. I am light as the blast of Cronla, and I move like the shadow of mist. Conne!, son of Colgar †, I see the dark cloud of death: it hovers over the plains of Lena. The sons of green Erin shall fall. Remove from the field of ghosts.” Like the darkened moon † he retired, in the midst of the whistling blast.

“Stay,” said the mighty Connal, “stay my

† Connal the son of Caithbat, the friend of Cuchullin, is sometimes, as here, called the son of Colgar; from one of that name who was the founder of his family.

‡ Like a thin smoke he sees the spirit fly;  
And hears a feeble, lamentable cry. POPE.

dark-red friend. Lay by that beam of heaven, son of the windy Cromla. What cave of the hill is thy lonely house? What green-headed hill is the place of thy rest? Shall we not hear thee in the storm? in the noise of the mountain-stream? when the feeble sons of the wind come forth, and ride on the blast of the desert?"

The soft-voiced Connal rose in the midst of his sounding arms. He struck his shield above Cuchul'in. The son of battle waked.

"Why," said the ruler of the car, "comes Connal through the night? My spear might turn against the sound; and Cuchullin mourn the death of his friend. Speak, Connal, son of Colgar, speak, thy counsel is like the sun of heaven."

"Son of Semo," replied the chief, "the ghost of Crugal came from the cave of his hill. The stars dim-twinkled through his form; and his voice was like the sound of a distant stream. He is a messenger of death. He speaks of the dark and narrow house. Sue for peace, O chief of Dunscaich; or fly over the heath of Lena."

"He spoke to Connal" replied the hero, "though stars dim-twinkled through his form. Son of Colgar, it was the wind that murmured in the caves of Lena. Or if it was the form of Crugal, why didst thou not force him to my sight? Hast thou enquired where is his cave? The house of the son of the wind? My sword might

|| The poet teaches us the opinions that prevailed in his time concerning the state of separate souls. From Connal's expression, "That the stars dim-twinkled through the form of Crugal," and Cuchullin's reply, we may gather that they both thought the soul was material,

find that voice, and force his knowledge from him. And small is his knowledge, Connal, for he was here to-day. He could not have gone beyond our hills; and who can tell him there of our death?"

"Ghosts fly on clouds, and ride on winds," said Connal's voice of wisdom. "They rest together in their caves, and talk of mortal men."

"Then let them talk of mortal men; of every man but Erin's chief. Let me be forgot in their cave; for I will not fly from Swaran. If I must fall, my tomb shall rise amidst the fame of future times. The hunter shall shed a tear on my stone; and sorrow dwell round the high bosomed Brageia. I fear not death, but I fear to fly; for Fingal saw me often victorious. Thou dim phantom of the hill, shew thyself to me! come on thy beam of heaven, and shew me my death in thine hand; yet will I not fly, thou feeble son of the wind. Go, son of Colgar, strike the shield of Caithbat, it hangs between the spears. Let my heroes rise to the sound in the midst of the battles of Erin. Though Fingal delays his coming, with the race of the stormy hills; we shall fight, O Colgar's son, and die in the battle of heroes."

The sound spreads wide; the heroes rise, like the breaking of a blue-rolling wave. They stood on the heath, like oaks with all their branches round them; when they echo to the stream of frost, and their withered leaves rustle to the wind.

† As when heav'n's fire

Hath scath'd the forest oaks, or mountain pines  
With singed tops, their stately growth tho' bare  
Stand on the blasted heath. MILTON.

High Cromla's head of clouds is gray ; the morning trembles on the half enlightened ocean. The blue, gray mist swims slowly by, and hides the sons of Innis-fail.

" Rise ye," said the king of the dark-brown shields, " ye that came from Lochlin's waves. The sons of Erin have fled from our arms—pursue them over the plains of Lena. And Morla, go to Cormac's hall, and bid them yield to Swaran; before the people shall fall into the tomb, and the hills of Ulin be silent." They rose like a flock of sea fowl when the waves expel them from the shore. Their sound was like a thousand streams that meet in Cona's vale, when after a stormy night they turn their dark eddies beneath the pale light of the morning.

As the dark shades of autumn fly over the hills of grass ; so gloomy, dark, successive came the chiefs of Lochlin's echoing woods. Tall as the stag of Morven moved on the king of groves. His shining shield is on his side like a flame on the heath at night, when the world is silent and dark, and the traveller sees some ghost sporting in the beam.

A blast from the troubled ocean removed the settled mist. The sons of Innis-fail appear like a ridge of rocks on the shore.

" Go, Morla, go," said Lochlin's king, " and offer peace to these. Offer the terms we give to kings when nations bow before us. When the valiant are dead in war, and the virgins weeping on the field."

Great Morla came, the son of Swarth, and stately strode the king of shields. He spoke to Erin's blue-eyed son, among the lesser heroes.

" Take Swaran's peace," the warrior spoke, " the peace he gives to kings, when the nations bow before him. Leave Ulin's lovely plains to us, and give thy spouse and dog. Thy spouse

High-bosom'd heaving fair. Thy dog that overtakes the wind. Give these to prove the weakness of thine arm, and live beneath our power."

"Tell Swaran, all that heart of pride, that Cuchullin never yields. I give him the dark blue rolling of ocean, or I give his people graves in Erin! Never shall a stranger have the lovely sun-beam of Dunscath; nor ever deer fly on Lochlin's hills before the nimble-footed Leath."

"Vain ruler of the car," said Morla, "wilt thou fight the king; that king whose ships of many groves could carry off thine isle? So little is thy green-hilled Ulin to the king of stormy waves."

"In words I yield to many, Morla, but this sword shall yield to none. Erin shall own the sway of Cormac, while Connal and Cuchullin live. O Connal, first of mighty men, thou hast heard the words of Morla; shall thy thoughts then be of peace, thou breaker of the shields! Spirit of fallen Crugal! why didst thou threaten us with death! The narrow house shall receive me in the midst of the light of renown. Exalt, ye sons of Innis-fail, exalt the spear and bend the bow; rush on the foe in darkness, as the spirits of stormy nights."

Then dismal, roaring, fierce, and deep the gloom of battle rolled along; as mist that is poured on the valley, when storms invade the silent sun-shine of heaven. The chief moves before in arms, like an angry ghost before a cloud; when meteors enclose him with fire; and

¶ As evening mist

Ris'n from a river o'er the marsh glides  
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel  
Homeward returning. — MILTON.

the dark winds are in his hand. Carril, far on the heath, bids the horn of battle sound. He raises the voice of the song, and pours his soul into the minds of heroes.

“Where,” said the mouth of the song, “where is the fallen Crugal! He lies forgot on earth, and the hall of shells† is silent. Sad is the spouse of Crugal, for she is a stranger‡ in the hall of her sorrow. But who is she, that, like a sun-beam, flies before the ranks of the foe? It is Degrena¶, lovely fair, the spouse of fallen Crugal. Her hair is on the wind behind. Her eye is red; her voice is shrill. Green, empty is thy Crugal now, his form is in the cave of the hill. He comes to the ear of rest, and raises his feeble voice; like the humming of the mounting-bee, or collected flies of evening. But Degrena falls like a cloud of the morn; the sword of Lochlin is in her side. Cairbar, she is fallen, the rising thought of thy youth. She is fallen, O Cairbar, the thought of thy youthful hours.”

Fierce Cairbar heard the mournful sound, and rushed on like ocean's whale; he saw the death of his daughter; and roared in the midst of thousands\*. His spear met a son of Lochlin, and battle spread from wing to wing. As a hundred

† The ancient Scots, as well as the present Highlanders, drank in shells; hence it is that we so often meet, in their old poetry, with the chief of shells, and the halls of shells.

‡ Crugal had married Degrena but a little time before the battle, consequently she may with propriety be called a stranger in the hall of her sorrow.

¶ Deo-grena signifies a sun-beam.

\* *Medisique in milibus ardet.* VIRG.

winds in Lochlin's groves, as fire in the firs of a hundred hills; so loud, so ruinous and vast the ranks of men are hewn down. Cuchullin cut off heroes like thistles, and Swaran wasted Erin: Curach fell by his hand, and Cairbar of the bossy-shield. Morglan lies in lasting rest; and Caolt quivers as he dies. His white breast is stained with his blood; and his yellow hair stretched in the dust of his native land. He often had sared the feast where he fell; and often raised the voice of the harp; when his dogs leapt around for joy; and the youths of the chase prepared the bow.

Still Swaran advanced, as a stream that bursts from the desert. The little hills are rolled in its course; and the rocks half-sunk by its side. But Cuchullin stood before him like a hill†, that catches the clouds of heaven. The winds contend on its head of pines, and the hail rattles on its rocks. But, firm in its strength, it stands and shades the silent vale of Cona.

So Cuchullin shaded the sons of Erin, and stood in the midst of thousands. Blood rises like the fount of a rock, from panting heroes around

† Virgil and Milton have made use of a comparison similar to this; I shall lay both before the reader, and let him judge for himself which of these two great poets have best succeeded.

Like Eryx or like Athes great he shows,  
O' father Appenine when white with snows:  
His head divine obscure in clouds he hides,  
And shakes the sounding forest on his sides.

DRYDEN.

On th' other side Satan alarm'd,  
Collecting all his night dilated stood  
Like Teneriff or Atlas unremov'd:  
His stature reach'd the sky.

MILTON.

him. But Erin falls on either wing like snow in the day of the sun.

“O sons of Inai-fail,” said Gruma’, “Lochlin conquers on the field. Why strive we as reeds against the wind? Fly to the hill of dark-brown hinds.” He fled like the stag of Morven, and his spear is a trembling beam of light behind him. Few fled with Grumal, the chief of the little soul: they fell in the battle of heroes on Lena’s echoing heath.

High on his car, of many gems, the chief of Erin stood; he slew a mighty son of Lochlin, and spoke, in haste, to Connal. “O Connal, first of mortal men, thou hast taught this arm of death! Though Erin’s sons have fled, shall we not fight the foe? O Carril, son of other times, carry my living friends to that bushy hill. Here, Connal, let us stand like rocks, and save our flyin’ friends.”

Connal mounts the car of light. They stretch their shields like the darkened moon, the daughter of the starry skies, when she moves, a dun circle, through heaven. Sithfadda parted up the hill, and Dusronnal haughty steed. Like waves behind a whale, behind them rushed the foe.

Now on the rising side of Cromla stood Erin’s few sad sons; like a grove through which the flame had rushed, hurried on by the winds of the stormy night. Cuchullin stood beside an oak. He rolled his red eye in silence, and heard the wind in his bushy hair; when the scout of ocean came, Moran the son of Fithil. “The ships,” he cried, “the ships of the lonely isle! There Fingal comes, the first of men, the breaker of the shields. The waves foam before his black prows. His masts with sails are like groves in clouds.”

“Blow,” said Cuchullin, “all ye winds that rush over my isle of lovely mist. Come to the



death of thousands, O chief of the hills of hinds ! Thy sails, my friend, are to me like the clouds of the morning; and thy ships like the light of heaven; and thou thyself like a pillar of fire that giveth light in the night. O Connel, first of men, how pleasant are our friends ! But the night is gathering around; where now are the ships of Fingal ? Here let us pass the hours of darkness, and wish for the moon of heaven."

The winds came down on the woods. The torrents rushed from the rocks. Rain gathered round the head of Cromla; and the red stars trembled between the flying clouds. Sad, by the side of a stream whose sound was echoed by a tree, sad by the side of a stream the chief of Erin sat. Connal son of Colgar was there, and Carril of other times.

"Unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin," said the son of Semo, "unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin, since he slew his friend. Ferda, thou son of Damman, I loved thee as myself !"

"How, Cuchullin, son of Semo, fell the breaker of the shields? Wel! I remember," said Connal, "the noble son of Damman. Tall and fair he was like the rain-bow of the hill."

"Ferda from Albion came, the chief of a hundred hills. In Muri's † hall he learned the sword,

† Muri, say the Irish bards, was an academy in Ulster for teaching the use of arms. The signification of the word is a cluster of people; which renders the opinion probable. Cuchullin is said to have been the first who introduced into Ireland complete armour of steel. He is famous, among the senachies, for teaching horsemanship to the Irish, and for being the first who used a chariot in that kingdom; which last circum-

and won the friendship of Cuchullin. We moved to the chase together; and one was our bed in the heath.

Deugala was the spouse of Cairbar, chief of the plains of Ulhin. She was covered with the light of beauty, but her heart was the house of pride. She loved that sun-beam of youth, the noble son of Damman." "Cairbar," said the white-armed woman, "give me half of the herd. No more I will remain in your halls. Divide the herd, dark Cairbar."

"Let Cuchullin," said Cairbar, "divide my herd on the hill. His breast is the seat of justice. Depart thou light of beauty." I went and divided the herd. One snow-white bull remained. I gave that bull to Cairbar. The wrath of Deugala rose.

"Son of Damman," began the fair, "Cuchullin pains my soul. I must hear of his death, or Lubar's stream shall roll over me. My pale ghost shall wander near thee, and mourn the wound of my pride. Pour out the blood of Cuchullin, or pierce this heaving breast."

"Deugala," said the fair-haired youth, "how shall I slay the son of Semo? He is the friend of my secret thoughts, and shall I lift the sword? She wept three days before him, on the fourth he consented to fight.

"I will fight my friend, Deugala! but may I fail by his sword! Could I wander on the hill and behold the grave of Cuchullin?" We fought on the hills of Muri. Our swords avoid a wound. They slide on the helmets of steel; and sound on the slippery shields. Deugala was near with

stance was the occasion of Ossian's being so circumstantial in his description of Cuchullin's car, in the first book.

a smile, and said to the son of Damman : "Thine arm is feeble, thou sun-beam of youth. Thy years are not strong for steel. Yield to the son of Semo. He is like the rock of Malmor."

The tear is in the eye of the youth. He, faltering, said to me : "Cuchullin, raise thy bossy shield. Defend thee from the hand of thy friend. My soul is laden with grief : for I must slay the chief of men."

I sighed as the wind in the chink of a rock. I lifted high the edge of my steel. The sun-beam of the battle fell ; the first of Cuchullin's friends. —Unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin since the hero fell.

"Mournful is thy tale, son of the car," said Carril of other times. "It sends my soul back to the ages of old, and to the days of other years. Often have I heard of Comal who slew the friend he loved ; yet victory attended his steel ; and the battle was consumed in his presence.

"Comal was a son of Albion ; the chief of an hundred hills. His deer drunk of a thousand streams. A thousand rocks replied to the voice of his dogs. His face was the mildness of youth. His hand the death of heroes. One was his love, and fair was she ! the daughter of mighty Conloch. She appeared like a sun-beam among women. And her hair was like the wing of the raven. Her dogs were taught to the chase. Her bow-string sounded on the winds of the forest. Her soul was fixed on Comal. Often met their eyes of love. Their course in the chase was one, and happy were their words in secret. But Gormal loved the maid, the dark chief of the gloomy Arden. He watched her lone steps in the heath ; the foe of unhappy Comal.

"One day, tired of the chase, when the mist had concealed their friends, Comal and the daugh-

ter of Conloch met in the cave of Ronan ¶. It was the wonted haunt of Comal. Its sides were hung with his arms. A hundred shields of thongs were there; a hundred helms of sounding steel."

"Rest here," he said, "my love, Galvina; thou light of the cave of Ronan. A deer appears on Mera's brow. I go; but I will soon return." "I fear," she said, "dark Grumal my foe, he haunts the cave of Ronan. I will rest among the arms; but soon return, my love."

"He went to the deer of Mera. The daughter of Conloch would try his love. She clothed her white sides with his armour, and stole from the cave of Ronan. He thought it was his foe. His heart beat high. His colour changed, and darkness dimmed his eyes. He drew the bow. The arrow flew. Galvina fell in blood. He ran with wildness in his steps and called the daughter of Conloch. No answer in the lonely rock." "Where art thou, O my love!" He saw at length, her heaving heart beating around the feathered dart. "O Conloch's daughter, is it thou!"—He sunk upon her breast.

¶ The unfortunate death of this Ronan is the subject of the ninth fragment of Ancient Poetry, published in 1764: it is not the work of Ossian, though it is writ in his manner, and bears the genuine marks of antiquity. The concise expressions of Ossian are imitated, but the thoughts are too jejune and confined to be the production of that poet. Many poems go under his name that have been evidently composed since his time; they are very numerous in Ireland, and some have come to the translator's hand. They are trivial and dull to the last degree; swelling into ridiculous bombast, or sinking into the lowest kind of poetic style.

"The hunters found the hapless pair; he afterwards walked the hill. But many and silent were his steps round the dark dwelling of his love. The feet of the ocean came. He fought; the strangers fled. He searched for his death over the field. But who could kill the mighty Comal! He threw away his dark-brown shield. An arrow found his manly breast. He sleeps with his loved Galvina at the noise of the sounding surge. Their green tombs are seen by the mariner, when he bounds on the waves of the north."

# Fingal:

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

Cuchullin, pleased with the story of Carril, insists with that bard for more of his songs. He relates the actions of Fingal in Lochlin, and death of Agandecca the beautiful sister of Swaran. He had scarce finished, when Calmar the son of Matha, who had advised the first battle, came wounded from the field, and told them of Swaran's design to surprise the remains of the Irish army. He himself proposes to withstand singly the whole force of the enemy, in a narrow pass, till the Irish should make good their retreat. Cuchullin, touched with the gallant proposal of Calmar, resolves to accompany him, and orders Carril to carry off the few that remained of the Irish. Morning comes, Calmar dies of his wounds; and, the ships of the Caledonians appearing, Swaran gives over the pursuit of the Irish, and returns to oppose Fingal's landing. Cuchullin ashamed, after his defeat, to appear before Fingal, retires to the cave of Tura. Fingal engages the enemy, puts them to flight; but the coming on of night makes the victory not decisive. The king, who had observed the gallant behaviour

of his grandson Oscar, gives him advices concerning his conduct in peace and war. — He recommends to him to place the example of his fathers before his eyes, as the best model for his conduct; which introduces the episode concerning Fainasullis the daughter of the king of Craca, whom Fingal had taken under his protection, in his youth. Fillan and Oscar are dispatched to observe the motions of the enemy by night; Gaul the son of Morni desires the command of the army in the next battle; which Fingal promises to give him. Some general reflections of the poet close the third day.

### BOOK III†.

“PLEASANT are the words of the song,” said Cuchulín, “and lovely are the tales of other times. They are like the calm-dew of the morning on the hill of roes when the sun is faint on its side, and the lake is settled and blue in the vale. O Carril, raise again thy voice, and let me hear the song of Tura: which was sung in my halls of joy, when Fingal king of sh’elds was there, and glowed at the deeds of his fathers.”

“Fingal! thou man of battle,” said Carril, “early were thy deeds in arms. Lochlin was

† The second night, since the opening of the poem, continues, and Cuchulín, Connal, and Carril, still sit in the place described in the preceding book. The story of Agandacca is introduced here with propriety, as great use is made of it in the course of the poem, and as it, in some measure, brings about the catastrophe.

consumed in thy wrath, when thy youth strove with the beauty of maids. They smiled at the fair-blooming face of the hero; but death was in his hands. He was strong as the waters of Lora. His followers were like the roar of a thousand streams. They took the king of Lochlin in battle, but restored him to his ships. His big heart swelled with pride; and the death of the youth was dark in his soul. For none ever, but Fingal, overcame the strength of the mighty Star-no†.

“He sat in the halls of shells in Lochlin’s woody land. He called the gray-haired Snivan, that often sung round the circle‡ of Loda: when the stone of power heard his cry, and the battle turned in the field of the valiant.

“Go, gray-haired Snivan,” Starno said, “go to Ardrven’s sea-surrounded rocks. Tell to Fingal king of the desert; he that is the fairest among his thousands; tell him I give him my daughter, the loveliest maid that ever heaved a breast of snow. Her arms are white as the foam of my waves. Her soul is generous and mild. Let him come with his bravest heroes to the daughter of the secret hall.”

Snivan came to Albion’s windy hills: and fair-haired Fingal went. His kindled soul flew before him as he bounded on the waves of the north.

† Starno was the father of Swaran as well as Agandeca. His fierce and cruel character is well marked in other poems concerning the times.

‡ This passage most certainly alludes to the religion of Lochlin, and ‘the stone of power’ here mentioned is the image of one of the deities of Scandinavia.



“Welcome,” said the dark-brown Starno,  
 “welcome, king of rocky Morven; and ye his  
 heroes of might; sons of the lonely Isle! Three  
 days within my halls shall ye feast; and three  
 days pursue my boars, that your fame may reach  
 the maid that dwells in the secret hall.”

¶ The king of snow † designed their death, and  
 gave the feast of shells. Fingal, who doubted  
 the foe, kept on his arms of steel. The sons of  
 death were afraid, and fled from the eyes of the  
 the hero. The voice of sprightly mirth arose.  
 The trembling harps of joy are strung. Bards  
 sing the battle of heroes; or the heaving breast  
 of love. Ullin, Fingal's hand, was there; the  
 sweet voice of the hill of Cona. He praised the  
 daughter of snow; and Morven's ‡ high-descend-  
 ed chief. The daughter of snow overheard, and  
 left the hall of her secret sigh. She came in all  
 her beauty, like the moon from the cloud of the  
 east. Loveliness was around her as light. Her  
 steps were like the music of songs. She saw the  
 youth and loved him. He was the stolen sigh of  
 her soul! Her blue eyes roiled on him in secret;  
 and she blest the chief of Morven.

“The third day with all its beams, shone bright  
 on the wood of boars. Forth moved the dark-  
 browed Starno; and Fingal king of shields. Half  
 the day they spent in the chase; and the spear  
 of Fingal was red in the blood of Gormal.”

¶ Starno is here poetically called the king of  
 snow, from the great quantities of snow that fall  
 in his dominions.

† All the north-west coast of Scotland prob-  
 ably went of old under the name of Morven,  
 which signifies a ridge of very high hills.

‡ Gormal is the name of a hill in Lochlin, in  
 the neighbourhood of Starno's palace.

“It was then the daughter of Starno, with blue eyes rolling in tears, came with her voice of love and spoke to the king of Morven.

“Fingal, high-descended chief, trust not Starno’s heart of pride. Within that wood he has placed his chiefs; beware of the wood of death. But remember, son of the hill, remember Agandecca; save me from the wrath of my father king of the windy Morven!”

“The youth, with unconcern, went on; his heroes by his side. The sons of death fell by his hand; and Gormal echoed around.

“Before the halls of Starno the sons of the chase convened. The king’s dark brows were like clouds. His eyes like meteors of night. “Bring hither,” he cries, “Agandecca to her lovely king of Morven. His hand is stained with the blood of my people; and her words have not been in vain.”

“She came with the red eye of tears. She came with her loose raven locks. Her white breast heaved with sighs, like the foam of the streamy Lubar. Starno pierced her side with steel. She fell like a wreath of snow that slides from the rocks of Ronan; when the woods are still, and the echo deepens in the vale.

“Then Fingal eyed his valiant chiefs; his valiant chiefs took arms. The gloom of the battle roared, and Lochlin fled or died. Pale, in his bounding ship he closed the maid of the raven hair. Her tomb ascends on Ardvén, and the sea roars round the dark dwelling of Agandecca.”

“Blessed be her soul,” said Cuchallin, “and blessed be the mouth of the song. Strong was the youth of Fingal, and strong is his arm of age. Lochlin shall fall again before the king of echoing Morven. Shew thy face from a cloud; O moon; light his white sails on the wave of the

light. And if any strong spirit† of heaven sits  
on that low-hung cloud; turn his dark ships  
from the rock, thou rider of the storm!"

Such were the words of Cuchullin at the  
sound of the mountain-stream; when Cormar  
ascended the hill, the wounded son of Matha.  
From the field he came in his blood. He leaned  
on his bendingspear. Feeble is the arm of battle!  
but strong the soul of the hero!

"Welcome! O son of Matha," said Connal,  
"welcome art thou to thy friends! Why bursts  
that broken sigh from the breast of him that ne-  
ver feared before?"

"And never, Connal, will he fear, chief of  
the pointed steel. My soul brightens in danger,  
and exults in the noise of battle. I am of the  
race of steel; my fathers never feared.

"Cormar was the first of my race. He sported  
thro' the storms of the waves. His black skiff  
bounded on ocean; and travelled on the wings of  
the blast. A spirit once embroiled the night.  
Seaswell and rocks resound. Winds drive a-  
long the clouds. The lightning flies on wings  
of fire. He feared, and came to land; then blushed  
that he feared at all. He rushed again among the  
waves to find the son of the wind. Three youths  
guide the bounding bark; he stood with the

† This is the only passage in the poem that has  
the appearance of religion. But Cuchullin's ap-  
proach to this spirit is accompanied with a  
doubt, so that it is not easy to determine whether  
the hero meant a superior being, or the ghosts  
of deceased warriors, who were supposed in  
those times to rule the storms, and to transport  
themselves in a gust of wind from one country  
to another.

sword unsheathed. When the low-hung vapour passed, he took it by the curling head, and searched its dark womb with his steel. The son of the wind forsook the air. The moon and stars returned.

“Such was the boldness of my race; and Calmar is like his fathers. Danger flies from the uplifted sword. They best succeed who dare.”

“But now, ye sons of green-valley’d Erin, retire from Lena’s bloody heath. Collect the remnant of our friends, and join the sword of Fingal. I heard the sound of Lochlin’s advancing arms—but Calmar will remain and fight. My voice shall be such, my friends, as if thousands were behind me. But, son of Semo, remember me. Remember Calmar’s lifeless curse. After Fingal has wasted the field, place me by some stone of remembrance, that future time may hear my fame; and the mother† of Calmar rejoice over the stone of my renown.”

“No: son of Matha,” said Cuchullin, “I will never leave thee. My joy is in the unequal field: my soul increases in danger. Conna!, and Carril of other times, carry off the sad sops of Erin; and when the battle is over, search for our pale corpses in this narrow way. For near this oak we shall stand in the stream of the battle of thousands. O Fithil’s son, with feet of wind, fly over the heath of Lena. Tell to Fingal that Erin is enthralled, and bid the king of Morven hasten. O let him come like the sun in a storm, when he shines on the hills of grass.”

† Alcietha, her lamentation over her son is introduced in the poem concerning the death of Cuchullin, printed in this collection.

Morning is gray on Cromla; the sons of the  
 sea ascend. Calmar stood forth to meet them in  
 the pride of his kindling soul. But pale was the  
 face of the warrior; he leaned on his father's  
 spear. That spear which he brought from Lara's  
 hall, when the soul of his mother was sad. But  
 lowly now the hero falls, like a tree on the  
 plains of Cona. Dark Cuchullin stands alone  
 like a rock in a sandy vale. The sea comes  
 with its waves, and roars on its hardened sides.  
 Its head is covered with foam, and the hills are  
 echoing around. Now from the gray mist of the  
 ocean, the white-sailed ships of Fingal appear.  
 High is the grove of their masts as they nod, by  
 turns, on the rolling wave.

Swaran saw them from the hill, and returned  
 from the sons of Erin. As ebbs the resounding  
 sea, through the hundred isles of Inistore; so  
 loud, so vast, so immense returned the sons of  
 Lochlin against the king of the desert hill. But  
 ending, weeping, sad, and slow, and dragging  
 his long spear behind, Cuchullin sunk in Cromla's  
 wood, and mourned his fallen friends. He fear-  
 ed the face of Fingal, who was wont to greet him  
 from the fields of renown.

"How many lie there of my heroes! the chiefs  
 of Inuis-fail! they that were cheerful in the hall,  
 when the sound of the shells arose. No more  
 shall I find their steps in the heath, or hear their  
 voice in the chase of the hinds. Pale, silent, low  
 on bloody beds are they who were my friends!  
 O spirits of the lately dead, meet Cuchullin on

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So some tall rock o'erhangs the heary main.  
 By winds assail'd, by billows beat in vain,  
 Unmov'd it bears, above, the tempests blow,  
 And sees the wat'ry mountains break below.

POPE.

his heath. Converse with him on the wif  
when the rustling tree of Tura's cave resoun  
There, far remote, I shall lie unknown.  
bard shall hear of me. No gray stone shall r  
to my renown. Mourn me with the dead,  
Bragela! departed is my lane."

Such were the words of Cochullin, when  
sunk in the woods of Cromth.

Fingal, tall in his ship, stretched his brig  
lance before him. Terrible was the gleam of t  
steel: it was like the green meteor of deat  
setting in the heath of Malmar, when the ti  
veiler is alone, and the broad moon is darken  
in heaven.

"The battle is over," said the king, "ah  
behold the blood of my friends. Sad is the hea  
of Lena! and mournful the oaks of Cromia! T  
hunters have fallen there in their strength! a  
the son of Semo is no more. Ryno and Filla  
my sons, sound the horn of Fingal's war. Asce  
that hill on the shore, and call the children of t  
foe. Call them from the grave of Landarg, t  
chief of other times. Be your voice like that  
your father, when he enters the battles of  
strength. I wait for the dark mighty man  
wait on Lena's shore for Swaran. And let h  
come with all his race; for strong in battle;  
the friends of the dead."

Fair R; no flew like lightning: dark Filla  
the shade of autumn. On Lena's heath th  
voice is heard; the sons of ocean heard the he  
of Fingal's war. As the roaring eddy of oce  
returning from the kingdom of snows; so stro  
so dark, so sudden came down the sons of L  
lin. The king in their front appears in the d  
mal price of his arms. Wrath burns in his da  
brown face: and his eyes roll in the fire of;  
valour.

Fingal beheld the son of Starno; and he reme

hered Agandecca. For Swaran with the tears of youth had mourned his white-bosomed sister. He sent Ullin of the songs to bid him to the feast of shells. For pleasant on Fingal's soul returned the remembrance of the fist of his loves.

Ullin came with aged steps, and spoke to Starno's son. "O thou that dwellest afar, surrounded, like a rock, with thy waves, come to the feast of the king, and pass the day in rest. To-morrow let us fight, O Swaran, and break the echoing shields."

"To-day" said Starno's wrathful son, "we break the echoing shields; to-morrow my feasts will be spread; and Fingal lie on earth."

"And to-morrow, let his feast be spread," said Fingal with a smile; "for, to-day, O my sons, we shall break the echoing shields. Ossian, stand thou near my arm. Gaul, lift thy terrible word. Fergus, bend thy crooked yew. Throw, Fillan, thy lance through heaven.—Lift your shields like the darkened moon. Be your spears the meteors of death. Follow me in the path of my fame; and equal my deeds in battle."

As a hundred winds on Morven; as the streams of a 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 mixed on Lena's echoing heath. The roan of the people spread over the hills; it was like the thunder of night, when the cloud bursts on Cona; and a thousand ghosts shriek at once in the hollow wind.

Fingal rushed on in his strength, terrible as the spirit of Trenmor; when, in a whirlwind, he comes to Morven to see the children of his pride. The oaks resound on their hills, and the rocks fall down before him. Bloody was the land of my father when he whirled the light-

ning of his sword. He remembers the battles of his youth, and the field is wasted in his course.

Ryno went on like a pillar of fire. Dark is the brow of Gaul. Fergus rushed forward with force of wind; and Fillan like the mist of the hills. Myself, like a rock came down, I exulted in the strength of the king. Many were the deaths of my arm; and dismal was the gleam of my sword. My locks were not then so gray; nor trembled my hands of age. My eyes were not closed in darkness; nor failed my feet in the race.

Who can relate the deaths of the people; the deeds of mighty heroes; when Fingal, burning in his wrath, consumed the sons of Lochlin. Groans swelled on groans, from hill to hill, the night had covered all. Pale, staring like a herd of deer, the sons of Lochlin couvene on Lena.

We sat and heard the sprightly harp at Lubar's gentle stream. Fingal himself was next to the foe; and listened to the tales of bards. His golden locks were in the song, the chiefs of other times. Attentive, leaning on his shield, the king of Morven sat. The wind whistled through his aged locks, and his thoughts are of the days of other years. Near him, on his bending spear, my young, my lovely Oscar stood. He admired the king of Morven: and his actions were swelling in his soul.

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† Here the poet celebrates his own actions, but he does it in such a manner that we are not displeased. The mention of the great actions of his youth immediately suggests to him the helpless situation of his age. We do not despise him for selfish praise, but feel his misfortunes,



"Son of my son," began the king, "O Oscar, pride of youth, I saw the shining of thy sword and gloried in my race. Pursue the glory of our fathers, and be what they have been; when Trenmor lived, the first of men, and Trathal the father of heroes. They fought the battle in their youth, and are the song of bards. O Oscar! bend the strong in arms: but spare the feeble hand. Be thou a stream of many tides against the foes of thy people; but like the gale that moves the grass to those who ask thine aid. So Trenmor lived; such Trathal was; and such has Finga been. My arm was the support of the injured; and the weak rested behind the lightning of my steel.

"Oscar! I was young like thee, when lovely Fainasollis came: that sun-beam! that mild light of love! the daughter of Craca's † king! I then returned from Cona's heath, and few were in my train. A white-sailed boat appeared far off; we saw it like a mist that rode on ocean's breast. It soon approached; we saw the fair. Her white breast heaved with sighs. The wind was in her loose dark hair; her rosy cheek had tears. "Daughter of beauty," calm I said, "what sigh is in that breast? Can I, young as I am, defend thee, daughter of the sea? My sword is not unmatched in war, but dauntless is my heart."

"To thee I fly," with sighs she replied, "O chief of mighty men! To thee I fly, chief of shells, supporter of the feeble hand! The king

† What the Craca here mentioned was, is not, at this distance of time, easy to determine. The most probable opinion is, that it was one of the Shetland Isles. There is a story concerning a daughter of the king of Craca in the sixth book.

of Craca's echoing isle owned me the sun-bear of his race. And often did the hills of Cromlech reply to the sighs of love for the unhappy Fainias. Sora's chief beheld me fair; and love the daughter of Craca. His sword is like a beam of light upon the warrior's side. But dark is his brow; and tempests are in his soul. I shun him on the rolling sea; but Sora's chief pursues."

"Rest thou," I said "behind my shield rest in peace, thou beam of light! The gloom chief of Sora will fly, if Fingal's arm is like his soul. In some lone cave I might conceal thee daughter of the sea! But Fingal never flies; for where the danger threatens, I rejoice in the storm of spears." I saw the tears upon her cheek. I pitied Craca's fair.

Now, like a dreadful wave afar, appeared the ship of stormy Borbar. His masts high-bend over the sea behind their sheets of snow. White roll the waters on either side. The strength of ocean sounds. "Come thou," I said, "from the roar of ocean, thou rider of the storm. Partake the feast within my hall. It is the house of strangers." "The maid stood trembling by my side; he drew the bow: she fell. "Uncertaining is thy hand," I said, "but feeble was thy foe." We fought, nor weak was the strife or death: He sunk beneath my sword. We laid them in two tombs of stones; the unhappy children of youth.

Such have I been in my youth, O Oscar; but thou like the age of Fingal. Never seek the battle, nor shun it when it comes. Fillan and Oscar of the dark brown hair; ye children of thy race; fly over the heath of roaring winds; and view the sons of Lochlin. Far off I hear the noise of their fear, like the storms of echoing Cona. Go; that they may not fly my sword along the waves of the north. For many chiefs

of Erin's race lie here on the dark bed of death. The children of the storm are low; the sons of echoing Cromla."

The heroes flew like two dark clouds; two dark clouds that are the chariots of ghosts; when air's dark children come to frighten hapless men.

It was then that Gaul†, the son of Morni, stood like a rock in the night. His spear is glittering to the stars; his voice like many streams. "Son of battle," cried the chief, "O Fingal, king of shells! let the bards of many songs soothe Erin's friends to rest. And, Fingal, sheath thy sword of death; and let thy people fight. We wither away without our fame; for our king is the only breaker of shields. When morning rises on our hills, behold at a distance our deeds. Let Lochlin feel the sword of Morni's son, that bards may sing of me. Such was the custom heretofore of Fingal's noble race. Such was thine own, thou king of swords, in battles of the spear."

"O son of Morni," Fingal replied, "I glory in thy fame. Fight; but my spear shall be near to aid thee in the midst of danger. Raise, raise the voice, sons of the song, and lull me into rest. Here will Fingal lie amidst the wind of night.

† Gaul, the son of Morni, was chief of a tribe that disputed long the pre-eminence with Fingal himself. They were reduced at last to obedience, and Gaul, from an enemy, turned Fingal's best friend and greatest hero. His character is something like that of Ajax in the *Iliad*; a hero of more strength than conduct in battle. He was very fond of military fame, and here he demands the next battle to himself. The poet, by an artifice, removes Fingal, that his return may be the more magnificent.

And if thou, Agandecca, art near, among the children of thy land ; if thou sittest on a blast wind among the high-sbrowed masts of Lochlin ; come to my dreams, my fair one, and shew thy bright face to my soul !”

Many a voice and many a harp in tune sounds arose. Of Fingal's noble deeds they sung and of the noble race of the hero. And sometimes on the lovely sound was heard the name of the now mournful Ossian.

Often have I fought, and often won in battle of the spear. But blind, and tearful, and forlorn I now walk with little men. O Fingal, where thy race of battle I now behold thee not ! The wild roes feed upon the green tomb of the mighty king of Morven ! Blest be thy soul, thou king of swords, thou most renowned on the hills of Cora !

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¶ The poet prepares us for the dream of Fingal in the next book.

# Fingal:

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

The action of the poem being suspended by night, Ossian takes that opportunity to relate his own actions at the lake of Lego, and his courtship of Everallin who was the mother of Oscar, and who died some time before the expedition of Fingal into Ireland. Her ghost appears to him, and tells him that Oscar, who had been absent, the beginning of the night, to observe the enemy, was engaged with an advanced party and almost overpowered. Ossian receives his son; and an alarm is given to Fingal of the approach of Swaran. The king rises, calls his army together, and, as he had promised the preceding night, devolves the command on Gaul the son of Morni, while he himself, after charging his sons to behave gallantly and defend his people, retires to a hill, from whence he could have a view of the battle. The battle joins; the poet relates Oscar's great actions. But when Oscar, in conjunction with his father, conquered in the wing, Gaul, who was attacked by Swaran in person, was on the point of retreating in another. Fingal sends Ullin his bard to

encourage him with a war song, but notwithstanding, Swaran prevails; and Gaul and his army are obliged to give way. Fingal descending from the hill, rallies them again. Swaran desists from the pursuit, possesses himself of a rising ground, restores the rank and waits the approach of Fingal. The king having encouraged his men, gives the necessary orders, and renews the battle. Cuchullin, who, with his friend Connal, and Carril his bard, had retired to the cave of Tur hearing the noise, came to the brow of the hill, which overlooked the field of battle where he saw Fingal engaged with the enemy. He, being hindered by Connal from joining Fingal, who was himself upon the point of obtaining a complete victory, sends Carril to congratulate that hero of his success.

#### BOOK IV†.

**W**HO comes with her songs from the mountain, like the bow of the showery Leto. It is the maid of the voice of love. The whi

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† Fingal being asleep and the action suspended by night, the poet introduces the story of courtship of Everallin the daughter of Bran. The episode is necessary to clear up several passages that follow in the poem; at the same time that it naturally brings on the action of the book which may be supposed to begin about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem. This book, as many of Ossian's other compositions, is addressed to the beautiful Nivina the daughter of Toscar. She appears to have been in love with Oscar, and to have attended the company of the father after the death of the son.

armed daughter of Toscar. Often hast thou heard my song, often given the tear of beauty. Dost thou come to the battles of thy people; and to hear the actions of Oscar? When shall I cease to mourn, by the streams of the echoing Cona? My years have passed away in battle, and my age is darkened with sorrow.

Daughter of the hand of snow! I was not so mournful and blind! I was not so dark and forlorn, when Everallin loved me! Everallin with the dark-brown hair, the white-bosomed love of Cormac. A thousand heroes sought the maid, she denied her love to a thousand; the sons of the sword were despised: for graceful in her eyes was Ossian.

I went, in suit of the maid, 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. "From whence," he said, "are the arms of steel? Not easy to win is the maid, that has denied the blue eyed sons of Erin. But blest be thou, O son of Fingal. Happy is the maid that waits thee. Though twelve daughters of beauty were mine, thine were the choice, thou son of fame!" Then he opened the hall of the maid, the dark-haired Everallin. Joy kindled in our breasts of steel and blest the maid of Branno.

Above us on the hill appeared the people of slately Cormac. Eight were the heroes of the chief; and the heath flamed with their arms. There Colla, Durra of the wounds, there mighty Toscar, and Tago, there Frestal, the victorious stood; Dairo of the happy deeds, and Dala the battle's bulwark in the narrow way. The sword flamed in the hand of Cormac, and graceful was the look of the hero.

Eight were the heroes of Ossian; Ullin stormy

son of war; Mullo of the generous deeds; the noble, the graceful Scelacha; Oglan, and Cerdal the wrathful, and Dumarican's brows of death. And why should Ogar be the last; so wide renowned on the hills of Ardven?

Ogar met Dala the strong, face to face, on the field of heroes. The battle of the chiefs was like the wind on ocean's foamy waves. The dagger is remembered by Ogar; the weapon which he loved; nine times he drowned it in Dala's side. The stormy battle turned. Three times I pierced Cormac's shield; three times he broke his spear. But, unhappy youth of love! I cut his head away. Five times I shook it by the lock. The friends of Cormac fled.

Whoever would have told me, lovely maid†, when then I strove in battle; that blind, forsaken, and forlorn I now should pass the night; firm ought his mail to have been, and unmatched his arm in battle.

Now|| on Lena's gloomy heath the voice of music died away. The unconstant 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 rolling in tears, stood on a cloud before my sight and spoke with feeble voice.

† The poet addresses himself to Malvina the daughter of Fuscar.

|| The poet returns to this subject. If one could fix the time of the year in which the action of the poem happened, from the scene described here, I should be tempted to place it in autumn: The trees shed their leaves, and the winds are variable, both which circumstances agree with that season of the year.



“O Ossian, rise and save my son; save Oscar, chief of men. Near the red oak of Lubar’s stream, he fights with Loch’in’s sons.” She sunk into her cloud again. I clothed me with my steel. My spear supported my steps, and my rattling armour rung. I hummed, as I was wont in danger, the songs of heroes of old. Like distant thunder, † Lochlin heard; they fled; my son pursued.

I called him like a distant stream. “My son return over Lena. No further pursue the foe,” I said, “though Ossian is behind thee.” He came, and lovely in my ear was Oscar’s sounding steel. “Why didst thou stop my hand,” he said, “till death had covered all? For dark and dreadful by the stream they met thy son and Fillan. They watched the terrors of the night. Our swords have conquered some. But as the winds of night pour the ocean over the white sands of Mora, so dark advance the sons of Lochlin over Lena’s rustling heath. The ghosts of night shriek afar; and I have seen the meteors of death. Let me awake the king of Morven, he that smiles in danger; for he is like the sun of heaven that rises in a storm.”

Fingal had started from a dream, and leaned on Tremmor’s shield; the dark-brown shield of

† Ossian gives the reader a high idea of himself. His very song frightens the enemy. This passage resembles one in the eighteenth *Iliad*, where the voice of Achilles frightens the Trojans from the body of Patroclus.

[crowd

Forth march’d the chief, and distant from the high on the rampart rais’d his voice aloud.

So high his brazen voice the hero rear’d,  
Hosts drop their arms and tremble as they fear’d.

his fathers; which they had lifted of old in the battles of their race. The hero had seen in his rest the mournful form of Agandecca; she came from the way of the ocean, and slowly, lonely, moved over Lena. Her face was pale like the mist of Cromla; and dark were the tears of her cheek. She often raised her dim hand from her robe; her robe which was of the clouds of the desert; she raised her dim hand over Fingal, and turned away her silent eyes.

"Why weeps the daughter of Starno," said Fingal, with a sigh? "Why is thy face so pale, thou daughter of the clouds?" She departed on the wind of Lena; and left him in the midst of the night. She mourned the sons of her people that were to fall by Fingal's hand.

The hero started from rest, and still beheld her in his soul. The sound of Oscar's steps approached. The king saw the gray shield on his side. For the faint beam of the morning came over the waters of Ulin.

"What do the foes in their fear!" said the rising king of Morven. "Or fly they through ocean's foam, or wait they the battle of steel! But why should Fingal ask? I hear their voice on the early wind. Fly over Lena's heath, O Oscar, and awake our 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. Like the noise of a hundred mountain-streams, that burst and roar, and foam; like the clouds that gather to a tempest on the blue face of the sky; so met the sons of the desert, round the terrible voice of Fingal. For pleasant was the voice of the king of Morven to the warriors of his land: often had he led them to battle, and returned with the spoils of the foe.

"Come to battle," said the king, "ye children of the storm. Come to the death of thousands. Comhal's son will see the fight. My sword shall wave on that hill, and be the shield of my people. But never may you need it, warriors, while the son of Morni fights, the chief of mighty men. He shall lead my battle; that his fame may rise in the song. O ye ghosts of heroes dead! ye riders of the storm of Cromla! receive my falling people with joy, and bring them to your hills. And may the blast of Lena carry them over my seas, that they may come to my silent dreams, and delight my soul in rest.

"Fillan and Oscar, of the dark-brown hair, fair Ryno, with the pointed steel! advance with valour to the fight; and behold the son of Morni. Let your swords be like his in the strife: and behold the deeds of his hands. Protect the friends of your father! and remember the chiefs of old. My children, I shall see you yet though here ye should fall in Erin. Soon shall our cold, pale ghosts meet in a cloud, and fly over the hills of Cona."

Now like a dark and stormy cloud, edged round with the red lightning of heaven, and flying westward from the morning's beam, the king of hills removed. Terrible is the light of his armour, and two spears are in his hand. His gray hair falls on the wind. He often looks back on the war. Three bards attend the son of fame, to carry his words to the heroes. High on Cromla's side he sat, waving the lightning of his sword, and as he waved we moved.

Joy rose in Oscar's face. His cheek is red. His eye sheds tears. The sword is a beam of fire in his hand. He came, and smiling, spoke to Ossian. "O ruler of the fight of steel! my father, hear thy son. Retire with Morven's

mighty chief; and give me Ossian's fame. And if here I fall; my king, remember that breast of snow, that lonely sun-beam of my love, the white handed daughter of Toscar. For, with red cheek from the rock, and bending over the stream, her soft hair flies about her bosom, as she pours the sigh for Oscar. Tell her I am on my hills a lightly bounding son of the wind; that hereafter, in a cloud, I may meet the lovely maid of Toscar."

"Raise, Oscar, rather raise my tomb. I will not yield the fight to thee. For first and bloodiest in the war my arm shall teach thee how to fight. But, remember, my son, to place this sword, this bow, and the horn of my deer, within that dark and narrow house, whose mark is one gray stone. Oscar, I have no love to leave to the care of my son; for graceful Everallin is no more, the lovely daughter of Branno."

Such were our words, when Gaul's loud voice came growing on the wind. He waved on high the sword of his father, and rushed to death and wounds.

As waves white-bubbling over the deep come swelling, roaring on; as rocks of ooze meet roaring waves: so toes attacked and fought. Man met with man, and steel with steel. Shields sound; men fall. As a hundred hammers on the son of the furnace, so rose, so rung their swords.

Gaul rushed on like a whirlwind in Arden. The destruction of heroes is on his sword. Swarzen was like the fire of the desert in the echoing heath of Gormal. How can I give to the song the death of many spears? My sword rose high, and flamed in the strife of blood. And, Oscar, terrible wert thou, my best, my greatest son! I rejoiced in my secret soul, when his sword

flamed over the slain. They fled again through Lena's heath: and we pursued and slew. As stones that bound from rock to rock; as axes in echoing woods; as thunder rolls from hill to hill in dismal broken peals; so blow succeeded to blow, and death to death, from the hand of Oscar† and mine.

But Swaran closed round Morni's son, as the strength of the tide of Inistore. The king half rose from his hill at the sight, and half assumed the spear. "Go, Ullin, go, my aged bard," begun the king of Morven. "Remind the mighty Gaul of battle; remind him of his fathers. Support the yielding fight with song; for song enlivens war." Tall Ullin went, with steps of age, and spoke to the king of swords.

"Son of the chief of generous steeds! high-bounding king of spears. Strong arm in every perilous toil. Hard heart that never yields. Chief

† Ossian never fails to give a fine character to his beloved son. His speech to his father is that of a hero; it contains the submission due to a parent, and the warmth that becomes a young warrior. There is a propriety in dwelling here on the actions of Oscar, as the beautiful Malvina, to whom the book is addressed, was in love with that hero.

‡ The war-song of Ullin varies from the rest of the poem in the versification. It runs down like a torrent; and consists almost entirely of epithets. The custom of encouraging men in battle with extempore rhymes, has been carried down almost to our own times. Several of these war-songs are extant, but the most of them are only a groupe of epithets, without beauty or harmony, utterly destitute of poetical merit.

of the pointed arms of death. Cut down the foe ; let no white sail bound round dark Inistore. Be thine arm like thunder, thine eyes like fire, thy heart of solid rock. Whirl round thy sword as a meteor at night, and lift thy shield like the flame of death. Son of the chief of generous steels, cut down the foe. Destroy." The hero's heart beat high. But Swaran came with battle. He cleft the shield of Gaul in twain ; and the sons of the desert fled.

Now Fingal arose in his might, and thrice he reared his voice. Cromla answered around, and the sons of the desert stood still. They bent their red faces to earth, ashamed at the presence of Fingal. He came like a cloud of rain in the days of the sun, when slow it rolls on the hill, and fields expect the shower. Swaran beheld the terrible king of Merven, and stopped in the midst of his course. Dark he leaned on his spear, rolling his red eyes around. Silent and tall he seemed as an oak on the banks of Lubar, which had its branches blasted of oló by the lightning of heaven. It bends over the stream, and the gray moss whistles in the wind : so stood the king. Then slowly he retired to the rising heath of Lena. His thousands pour around the hero, and the darkness of battle gathers on the hill.

Fingal, like a beam from heaven, shone in the midst of his people. His heroes gather around him, and he sends forth the voice of his power. " Raise my standard † on high. Spread them on Lena's wind, like the flames of an hundred hills. Let them sound on the winds of Erin, and remind us of the fight. Ye sons of the roaring

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† Th' imperial ensign, which fell high advanc'd,  
Flows like a meteor streaming to the wind.

streams, that pour from a thousand hills, be near the king of Morven: attend to the words of his power. Gaul, strongest arm of death! O Oscar, of the future fights! Connal, son of the blue steel of Sora! Dermid of the dark-brown hair! and Ossian king of many songs, be near your father's arm!"

We reared the sun-beam<sup>||</sup> of battle; the standard of the king. Each hero's soul exulted with joy, as, waving it flew on the wind. It was studded with gold above, as the blue wide shell of the nightly sky. Each hero had his standard too; and each his gloomy men.

"Behold," said the king of generous shells, "how Lechlin divides on Lena. They stand like broken clouds on the hill, or an half consumed grove of oaks; when we see the sky through its branches, and the meteor passing behind. Let every chief among the friends of Fingal take a dark troop of those that frown so high; nor let a son of the echoing groves bound on the waves of Inistore."

"Mine," said Gaul, "be the seven chiefs that came from Lano's lake." "Let Inistore's dark king," said Oscar, "come to the sword of Ossian's son." "To mine the king of Iniscon," said Connal, "heart of steel!" "Or Modan's chief or I," said brown-haired Dermid, "shall sleep on clay-cold earth." My choice, though now so weak and dark, was Terman's battling king: I promised with my hand to win the hero's dark-brown shield. "Elest and victo-

|| Fingal's standard was distinguished by the name of sun-beam; probably on account of its bright-colour, and its being studded with gold. To begin a battle is expressed, in old composition, by lifting of the sun-beam.

rious be my chiefs," said Fingal of the mildest look ; " Swaran king of roaring waves, thou art the choice of Fingal."

Now, like an hundred different winds that pour thro' many vales ; divided, dark, the sons of the hill advanced, and Cromla echoed around.

How can I relate the deaths when we closed in the strife of our steel ! O daughter of Toscar ! bloody were our hands ! The gloomy ranks of Lochlin fell like the banks of the roaring Cona. Our arms were victorious on Lena ; each chieft fulfilled his promise. Beside the murmur of Eran-no thou didst often sit, O maid ! when thy white bosom rose frequent, like the down of the swan when slow she sails the lake, and sidelong winds are blowing. Thou hast seen the sun † retired and slow behind his cloud ; night gathering round on the mountain, while the unfrequent blast ‡ roared in narrow vales. At length the rain beats hard ; and thunder rolls in peals. Lightening glances on the rocks. Spirits ride on beams of fire. And the strength of the mountain-streams ¶

† Above the rest the sun, who never lies,  
Foretels the change of weather in the skies.  
For if he rise, unwilling to his race,  
Clouds on his brow, and spots upon his face,  
Or if thro' mists he shoot his sullen beams,  
Frugal of light, in loose and straggling streams,  
Suspect a drizzling day. DRYDEN.

‡ For ere the rising winds begin to roar,  
The working seas advance to wash the shore ;  
Soft whispers run along the leafy wood,  
And mountains whistle to the murm'ring flood.  
DRYDEN.

¶ The rapid rains, descending from the hills,  
To rolling torrents swell the creeping rills.  
DRYDEN.



come roaring down the hills. Such was the noise of battle, ma'd of the arms of snow. Why daughter of the hill, that tear? the maids of Lochlin have cause to weep. The people of their country fell, for bloody was the blue steel of the race of my heroes. But I am sad, forlorn, and blind; and no more the companion of heroes. Give, lovely maid, to me thy tears, for I have seen the tombs of all my friends.

It was then by Fingal's hand a hero fell, to his grief. Gray-haired he rolled in the dust, and lifted his faint eyes to the king. "And is it by me thou hast fallen," said the son of Conhal, "thou friend of Agandecca! I saw thy tears for the maid of my love in the halls of the bloody Starvo. Thou hast been the foe of the foes of my love, and hast thou fallen by my hand? Raise, Ulin, raise the grave of the son of Mathon, and give his name to the song of Agandecca; for dear to my soul hast thou been, thou darkly dwelling maid of Ardven.

Cuchullin, from the cave of Cromla, heard the noise of the troubled war. He called to Connal chief of swords, and Carril of other times. The gray-haired heroes heard his voice, and took their aspen spears. They came, and saw the tide of battle, like the crowded waves of the ocean; when the dark wind blows from the deep, and rolls the billows through the sandy vale.

Cuchullin kindled at the sight, and darkness gathered on his brow. His hand is on the sword of his fathers: his red rolling eyes on the foe. He thrice attempted to rush to battle, and thrice did Connal stop him. "Chief of the isle of mist," he said, "Fingal subdues the foe. Seek not a part of the name of the king; himself is like a storm."

"Then, Carril, go," replied the chief, "and greet the king of Morven. When Lochlin falls

away like a stream after rain, and the noise of battle is over, then be thy voice sweet in his ear to praise the king of swords. Give him the sword of Caithbat; for Cuchullin is worthy no more to lift the arms of his fathers.

“But, O ye ghosts of the lonely Cromla! ye souls of the chiefs that are no more! be ye the companions of Cuchullin, and talk to him in the cave of his sorrow. For never more shall I be renowned among the mighty in the land. I am like a beam that has shone; like a mist that fled away, when the blast of the morning came, and brightened the shaggy side of the hill. Connal, talk of arms no more: departed is my fame. My sighs shall be on Cromla’s wind, till my footsteps cease to be seen. And thou, white-bosom’d Bragela, mourn over the fall of my fame; for, vanquished, I will never return to thee, thou con-beam of Dunscaich.”

# Fingal:

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

Cuchullin and Connal still remain on the hill. Fingal and Swaran meet; the combat is described. Swaran is overcome, bound and delivered over as a prisoner to the care of Ossian, and Gaul the son of Morni; Fingal, his younger sons, and Oscar, still pursue the enemy. The episode of Orla, a chief of Lochlin, who was mortally wounded in the battle, is introduced. Fingal, touched with the death of Orla, orders the pursuit to be discontinued; and calling his sons together, he is informed that Ryno, the youngest of them, was killed. He laments his death, hears the story of Lamderg and Gelchossa, and returns towards the place where he had left Swaran. Carril who had been sent by Cuchullin to congratulate Fingal on his victory, comes in the mean time to Ossian. The conversation of the two poets closes the action of the fourth day.

## BOOK V †.

**N**OW Connal on Cromla's windy side, spoke  
to the chief of the noble car. Why that  
gluoni, son of Semo? Our friends are the mighty

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† The fourth day still continues. The poet by putting the narration in the mouth of Connal,

in battle. And renowned art thou, O warrior ! many were the deaths of thy steel. Often has Bragela met with blue-rolling eyes of joy, often has she met her hero, returning in the midst of the valiant ; when his sword was red with slaughter, and his foes silent in the fields of the tomb. Pleasant to her ears were thy bards, when thine actions rose in the song.

“ But behold the king of Morven ! He moves below like a pillar of fire. His strength is like the stream of Lubar, or the wind of the echoing Cromla ; when the branchy forests of night are overturned.

“ Happy are thy people, O Fingal, thine arm shall fight their battles ! thou art the first in their dangers ; the wisest in the days of their peace. Thou speakest and thy thousands obey ; and armies tremble at the sound of thy steel. Happy are thy people, Fingal, chief of the lonely hills.

“ Who is that so dark and terrible, coming in the thunder of his course ? who is it but Starvo's son to meet the king of Morven ? Behold

who still remained with Cuchullin on the side of Cromla, gives propriety to the praises of Fingal. The beginning of this book, in the original, is one of the most beautiful parts of the poem. The versification is regular and full, and agrees very well with the sedate character of Connal. No poet has adapted the cadence of his verse more to the temper of the speaker, than Ossian has done. It is more than probable that the whole poem was originally designed to be sung to the harp, as the versification is so various, and so much suited to the different passions of the human mind.

the battle of the chiefs: it is like the storm of the ocean, when two spirits meet far distant, and contend for the rolling of the wave. The hunter hears the noise on his hill; and sees the high billows advancing to Ardrven's shore."

Such were the words of Connal, when the heroes met in the midst of their falling people. There was the clang of arms! there every blow, like the hundred hammers of the furnace! Terrible is the battle of the kings, and horrid the look of their eyes. Their dark-brown shields are cleft in twain; and their steel flies, broken, from their helmets. They fling their weapons down. Each rushes to the grasp of his foe. Their sinewy arms bend round each other: they turn from side to side, and strain and stretch their large spreading limbs below. But when the pride of their strength arose, they shook the hill with their heels; rocks tumble from their places on high; the green-headed bushes are overturned. At length the strength of Swaran fell; and the king of the groves is bound.

Thus have I seen on Cona; (but Cona I behold no more) thus have I seen two dark hills removed from their place by the strength of the

† This passage resembles one in the twenty-third Iliad.

Close lock'd above their heads and arms are mixt;

Below their planted feet a distance fixt;

Now to the grasp each manly body bends;

The humid sweat from ev'ry pore descends;

Their bones resound with blows; sides, shoulders, thighs,

Swell to each gripe, and bloody tumours rise,

POPE.

bursting stream. They turn from side to side, and their tall oaks meet one another on high. Then they fall together with all their rocks and trees. The streams are turned by their sides, and the red ruin is seen afar

“Sons of the king of Morven,” said the noble Fingal, “guard the king of Lochlin; for he is strong as his thousand waves. His hand is taught to the battle, and his race of the times of old. Gaul, thou first of my heroes, and Ossian king of songs, attend the friend of Agandecca, and raise to joy his grief. But, Oscar, Fillan, and Ryno, ye children of the race! pursue the rest of Lochlin over the heath of Lena; that no vessel may hereafter bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inistore.”

They flew like lightning over the heath. He slowly moved as a cloud of thunder when the sultry plain of summer is silent. His sword is before him as a sun-beam, terrible as the streaming meteor of night. He came toward a chief of Lochlin, and spoke to the son of the wave.

“Who is that like a cloud at the rock of the roaring stream? He cannot bound over its course; yet stately is the chief! his bossy shield is on his side; and his spear like the tree of the desert. Youth of the dark brown hair, art thou of Fingal’s foes?”

“I am a son of Lochlin,” he cries, “and strong is my arm in war. My spouse is weeping at home, but Orla† will never return.”

† The story of Orla is so beautiful and affecting in the original, that many are in possession of it in the north of Scotland, who never heard a syllable more of the poem. It varies the action, and awakes the attention of the reader, when

"Or fights or yields the hero," said Fingal of the noble deeds, "foes do not conquer in my presence; but my friends are renowned in the hall. Son of the wave, follow me; partake the feast of my shells; pursue the deer of my desert; and be the friend of Fingal."

"No," said the hero, "I assist the feeble: my strength shall remain with the weak in arms. My sword has been always unmatched, O warrior: let the king of Morven yield."

"I never yielded, Orla! Fingal never yielded to man. Draw thy sword and chuse thy foe. Many are my heroes."

"And does the king refuse the combat?" said Orla of the dark-brown hair. "Fingal is a match for Orla: and he alone of all his race. But, king of Morven, if I shall fall; (as one time the warrior must die;) raise my tomb in the midst, and let it be the greatest on Lena. And send, over the dark-blue wave, the sword of Orla to the spouse of his love, that she may shew it to her son, with tears, to kindle his soul to war."

"Son of the mournful tale," said Fingal, "why dost thou awaken my tears? One day the warriors must die, and the children see their useless arms in the hall. But, Orla, thy tomb shall rise, and thy white-bosomed spouse weep over thy sword."

"They fought on the heath of Lena, but feeble was the arm of Orla. The sword of Fingal descended, and cleft his shield in twain. It fell and glittered on the ground, as the moon on the stream of night.

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he expected nothing but languor in the conduct of the poem, as the great action was over in the conquest of Swaran.

“ King of Morven,” said the hero, “ lift th sword and pierce my breast. Wounded ar faint from battle, my friends have left me her The mournful tale shall comē to my love on ti banks of the streamy Loda; when she is alo in the wood; and the rustling blast in ti leaves.”

“ No;” said the king of Morven, “ I w never wound thee, Orla. On the banks of Loda I her see thee escaped from the hands of war. L thy gray-haired father, who, perhaps, is blis with age, hear the sound of thy voice in his ha With joy let the hero rise, and search for his s with his hands.”

“ But never will he find him, Fingal;” sa the youth of the streamy Loda. “ On Lena heath I shall die; and foreign bards will talk me. My broad olt covers my wound of deat And now I give it to the wind.”

The dark blood ponred from his side, he fi pale on the heath of Lena. Fingal bends ov him as he dies, and calls his younger heroes.

“ Oscar and Fillan, my sons, raise high ti memory of Orla. Here let the dark-haired he rest, far from the spouse of his love. Here I his rest in his narrow house, far from the sou of Loda. The sons of the feeble w'll find t bow at home, but will not be able to bend it. F faithful dogs howl on his hills, and his boar which he used to pursue, rejoice. Fallen is t arm of battle; the mighty among the valiant low!

“ Exalt thy voice, and blow the horn, ye so of the king of Morven? let us go back to Sw ran, and send the night away in song. Filla Oscar, and Ryno, fly over the heath of Len Where, Ryno, art thou, young son of fam? Thou art not went to be the last to answ thy father.”



“Ryno,” said Ullin first of bards, “is with the awful forms of his fathers. With Trathal king of shields, and Trenmor of the mighty deeds. The youth is low, the youth is pale, he lies on Lena’s heath.”

“And fell the swiftest in the race,” said the king, “the first to bend the bow? Thou scarce hast been known to me: why did young Ryno fall? But sleep thou softly on Lena, Fingal shall soon behold thee. Soon shall my voice be heard no more, and my footsteps cease to be seen. The yards will tell of Fingal’s name; the stones will talk of me. But, Ryno, thou art low indeed, thou hast not received thy fame. Ullin, strike the harp for Ryno; tell what the chief would have been. Farewell, thou first in every field. No more shall I direct thy dart. Thou that hast been so fair: I behold thee not. Farewell.”

The tear is on the cheek of the king; for terrible was his son in war. His son! that was like a beam of fire by night on the hill; when the forests sink down in its course, and the traveller trembles at the sound.

“Whose fame is in that dark green tomb?” began the king of generous shells; “four stones with their heads of moss stand there; and mark the narrow house of death. Near it let my Ryno rest, and be the neighbour of the valiant. Perhaps some chief of fame is here to fly with my son on clouds. O Ullin, raise the songs of other times. Bring to memory the dark dwellers of the tomb. If in the field of the valiant they never fled from danger, my son shall rest with them, far from his friends on the heath of Lena.”

“Here,” said the mouth of the song, “here rest the first of heroes. Silent is Lamderg† in

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† Lamb-dæarg signifies ‘bloody hand.’ Oct.

this tomb, and Uliin king of swords. And who soft smiling from her cloud, shews 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 Ulfadda. Return soon, O Lamderg, she said, for here I am in the midst of sorrow. Her white breast rose with sighs. Her cheek was wet with tears. But I see her not coming to meet me; and to sooth my soul after battle. Silent is the hall of my joy; I hear not the voice of the bard. Bran does not shake his chains at the gate, glad at the coming of Lamderg. Where is Gelchossa, my love, the mild daughter of the generous Tuathal?”

“Lamderg!” says Ferchois the son of Aidor. “Gelchossa may be on Cromla; she and the maids of the bow pursuing the flying deer!”

“Ferchois!” replied the chief of Cromla, “no noise meets the ear of Lamderg. No sound

chossa, ‘white legged.’ Tuathal, ‘surly.’ Ulfadda, ‘long-beard.’ Ferchois, ‘the conqueror of men.’

|| Bran is a common name of greyhounds to this day. It is a custom in the north of Scotland to give the names of the heroes mentioned in this poem to their dogs; a proof that they are familiar to the ear, and their fame general.

in the woods of Lena. No deer fly in my sight. No panting dog pursues. I see not Gelchossa my love, fair as the full moon setting on the hills of Cromla. Go, Ferchois, go to Allad†, the gray haired son of the rock. His dwelling is in the circle of stones. He may know of Gelchossa."

The son of Aiden went and spoke to the ear of age. Allad: thou that dwellest in the rock, thou that tremblest alone, what saw thine eyes of age?"

"I saw," answered Allad the old, "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 the battle is not here. He fights Ultadda 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 carry 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. Ferchois, sound the

† Allad is plainly a druid; he is called the son of the rock, from his dwelling in a cave; and the circle of stones here mentioned is the pale of the Druidical temple. He is here consulted as one who had a supernatural knowledge of things. From the druids, no doubt, came the ridiculous notion of the second sight, which prevailed in the Highlands and Isles.

horn of Lamderg, that Ullin may hear on Cromla. Lamderg, like a roaring storm, ascended the hill from Selma. He hummed a surly song as he went, like the noise of a falling stream. He stood like a cloud on the hill, that varies its form to the wind. He rolled a stone, the sign of war. Ullin heard in Cairbar's hall. The hero heard, with joy, his foe, and took his father's spear. A smile brightens his dark-brown cheek, as he places his sword by his side. The dagger glittered in his hand. He whistled as he went.

"Gelchossa saw the silent chief, as a wreath of mist ascending the hill. She struck her white and heaving breast; and silent, tearful, feared for Lamderg.

"Cairbar, hoary chief of shells," said the maid of the tender hand; "I must bend the bow on Cromla; for I see the dark brown hind.

"She hasted up the hill. In vain, the gloomy heroes fought. Why should I tell the king of Morven how wrathful heroes fight! Fierce Ullin fell. Young Lamderg came all pale to the daughter of generous Tuathal."

"What blood, my love," the soft haired woman said, "what blood runs down my warrior's side?" "It is Ullin's blood," the chief replied, "thou fairer than the snow of Cromla! Gelchossa, let me rest here a little while." The mighty Lamderg died.

"And sleepest thou so soon on earth, O chief

|| The reader will find this passage altered from what it was in the fragments of ancient poetry. It is delivered down very differently by tradition, and the translator has chosen that reading which savours least of bombast.

of shady Cronia! Three days she mourned beside her love. The hunters found her dead. They raised this tomb above the three. Thy son, O king of Morven, may rest here with heroes."

"And here my son shall rest," said Fingal, "the noise of their fame has reached my ears. Filian and Fergus! bring hither Oria; the pale youth of the stream of Loda. Not unequalled shall Ryno lie in earth when Oria is by his side. Weep, ye daughters of Morven; and ye maids of the streamy Loda. Like a tree they grew on the hills; and they have fallen like the oak † of the desert; when it lies across a stream, and withers in the wind of the mountain.

"O-car! chief of every youth! thou seest how they have fallen. Be thou, like them, on earth renowned, like them the song of bards. Terrible were their forms in battle; but calm was Ryno in the days of peace. He was like the bow of the shower seen far distant on the stream, when the sun is setting on Mora, and silence on the hill of deer. Rest, youngest of my sons, rest, O Ryno, on Lena. We too shall be no more; for the warrior one day must fall."

Such was thy grief, thou king of hills, when Ryno lay on earth. What must the grief of Ossian be, for thouthyself art gone. I hear not thy distant voice on Cona. My eyes perceive thee not. Often forlorn and dark I sit at thy tomb; and feel it with my hands. When I think I hear thy voice; it is but the blast of the desert.

† ————— as the mountain oak

Nods to the ax, till with a groaning sound  
It sinks and spreads its honours on the ground;  
POPE.

Fingal has long since fallen asleep, the ruler of the war.

Then Gaul and Ossian sat with Swaran on the soft green banks of Lubar. I touched the harp to please the king. But gloomy was his brow. He rolled his red eyes towards Lena. The hero mourned his people.

I lifted my eyes to Cromla, and I saw the son of generous Semo. Sad and slow he retired from his hill towards the lonely cave of Tura. He saw Fingal victorious, and mixed his joy with grief. The sun is bright on his armour, and Cennal slowly followed. They sunk behind the hill like two pillars of the fire of night: when winds pursue them over the mountain, and the flaming heath resounds. Beside a stream of roaring foam his cave is in a rock. One tree bends above it; and the rushing winds echo against its sides. Here rests the chief of Dunstaich, the son of generous Semo. His thoughts are on the battle he lost; and the tear is on his cheek. He mourned the departure of his fame, that fled like the mist of Cona. O Pragma, thou art too far remote to cheer the soul of the hero. But let him see thy bright form in his soul; that his thoughts may return to the lonely sun-beam of Dunstaich.

Who comes with the locks of age? It is the son of song. Hail, Carril of other times! thy voice is like the harp in the halls of Tura. Thy words are pleasant as the shower that falls on the fields of the sun. Carril of the times of old, why comest thou from the son of the generous Semo?

“Ossian, king of swords,” replied the bard, “thou hast raisest the song. Long hast thou been known to Carril, thou ruler of battles. Of us have I touched the harp to lovely Everglia.

Thou too hast often accompanied my voice in Branno's hall of generous shells. And often, amidst our voices, was heard the mildest Everzilin. One day she sung of Cormac's fall, the youth that died for her love. I saw the tears on her cheek, and on thine, thou chief of men. Her soul was touched for the unhappy, though she loved him not. How fair among a thousand maids was the daughter of the generous Branno!"

"Bring not, Carril," I replied, "bring not her memory to my mind. My soul must melt at the remembrance. My eyes must have their tears. Pale in the earth is she, the softly blushing fair of my love. But sit thou on the heath, O bard, and let us hear thy voice. It is pleasant as the gale of spring that sighs on the hunter's ear; when he wakens from dreams of joy, and has heard the music of the spirits of the hill."

# Fingal:

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

Night comes on. Fingal gives a feast to his army, at which Swaran is present. The king commands Ullin his bard to give the song of peace; a custom always observed at the end of a war. Ullin relates the actions of Trenmor, great grandfather to Fingal, in Scandinavia, and his marriage with Inibaca, the daughter of a king of Lochlin who was ancestor to Swaran; which consideration, together with his being brother to Agandecca, with whom Fingal was in love in his youth, induced the king to release him, and permit him to return, with the remains of his army, into Lochlin, upon his promise of never returning to Ireland in a hostile manner. The night is spent in settling Swaran's departure, in songs of bards, and in a conversation in which the story of Grumal is introduced by Fingal. Morning comes. Swaran departs; Fingal goes on a hunting party, and finding Cuchullin in the cave of Tura, comforts him, and sets sail, the next day, for Scotland; which concludes the poem.

## BOOK VI. †

**T**HE clouds of night come rolling down, and rest on Cromla's dark brown steep. The stars of the north arise over the rolling of the waves

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† This book opens with the fourth night, and ends on the morning of the sixth day. The time



of Ullin; they shew their heads of fire through the flying mist of heaven. A distant wind roars in the wood; but silent and dark is the plain of death.

Still on the darkening Lena arose in my ears the tuneful voice of Carril. He sung of the companions of our youth, and the days of former years; when we met on the banks of Lego, and sent round the joy of the shell. Cronla, with its cloudy steps answered to his voice. The ghosts of those he sung came in the rustling blasts. They were seen to bend with joy towards the sound of their praise.

Be thy soul blest, O Carril, in the midst of thy eddying winds. O that thou would come to my hall, when I am alone by night! And thou dost come, my friend: I hear often thy light hand on my harp, when it hangs on the distant wall, and the feeble sound touches my ear. Why dost thou not speak to me in my grief, and tell when I shall behold my friends? But thou passest away in thy murmuring blast: and thy wind whistles through the gray hair of Ossian.

Now on the side of Mora the heroes gathered to the feast. A thousand aged oaks are burning to the wind. The strength† of the shells goes

of five days, five nights, and a part of the sixth day is taken up in the poem. The scene lies in the heath of Lena, and the mountain Cronla on the coast of Ulster.

† By the strength of the shell is meant the liquor the heroes drank; of what kind it was, cannot be ascertained at this distance of time. The translator has met with several ancient poems, that mention wax-lights and wine as common in the halls of Fingal. The names of both are borrowed from the Latin, which plainly

round. And the souls of warriors bright'ed with joy. But the king of Lochlin is silent, and sorrow reddens in the eyes of his pride. He often turned toward Lena, and remembered that he fell.

Fingal leaned on the shield of his fathers. His gray locks slowly waved in the wind, and glittered to the beam of night. He saw the grief of Swaran, and spoke to the first of bards.

“Raise, Ulin, raise the song of peace, and soothe my soul after battle, that my ear may forget the noise of arms. And let a hundred harps be near to gladden the king of Lochlin. He must depart from us with joy.—None ever went sad from Fingal. Oscar! the lightning of my sword is against the strong in battle; but peaceful it lies by my side when warriors yield in war.”

“Trennor||,” said the mouth of the songs, “lived in the days of other years. He rounded over the waves of the north; companion of the storm. The high rocks of the land of Lochlin, and its groves of murmuring sounds, appear to the hero through the mist; he bound his white-bosomed sails. Trennor pursued the bear that roared along the woods of Gormal. Many had fled from its presence; but the spear of Trennor slew it.

shews that our ancestors had them from the Romans, if they had them at all. The Caledonians in their frequent incursions to the province, might become acquainted with those conveniences of life, and introduce them into their own country, among the booty which they carried from South Britain.

|| Trennor was great grandfather to Fingal. The story is introduced to facilitate the dismission of Swaran.

“ Three chiefs, that beheld the deed, told of the mighty stranger. They told that he stood like a pillar of fire in the bright arms of his valour. The king of Lochlin prepared the feast, and called the blooming Trenmor. Three days he feasted at Gormal’s windy towers; and got his choice in the combat.

“ The land of Lochlin had no hero that yielded not to Trenmor. The shell of joy went round with songs in praise of the king of Morven; he that came over the waves, the first of mighty men.

“ Now when the fourth grey morn arose, the hero launched his ship; and walking along the silent shore, waited for the rushing wind. For loud and distant he heard the blast murmuring in the grove.

“ Covered over with arms of steel a son of the woody Gormal appeared. Red was his cheek and fair his hair. His skin like the snow of Morven. Mild rolled his blue and smiling eye when he spoke to the king of swords.

“ Stay, Trenmor, stay thou first of men, thou hast not conquered Lonval’s son. My sword has often met the brave. And the wise shun the strength of my bow.”

“ Thou fair-haired youth,” Trenmor replied, “ I will not fight with Lonval’s son. Thine arm is feeble, sun-beam of beauty. Retire to Gormal’s dark-brown hinds.

“ But I will retire,” replied the youth, “ with the sword of Trenmor, and exult in the sound of my fame. The virgins shall gather with smiles around him who conquered Trenmor. They shall sigh with the sighs of love, and admire the length of thy spear; when I shall carry it among thousands, and lift the glittering point to the sun.”

“ Thou shalt never carry my spear,” said the

angry king of Morven. "Thy mother shall find  
 pale on the shore of the echoing Gormal;  
 and looking over the dark-blue deep, see the sails  
 of him that slew her son."

"I will not lift the spear," replied the youth,  
 "my arm is not strong with years. But with  
 the feathered dart I have learned to pierce a  
 distant foe. Throw down that heavy mail of  
 steel; for Trenmor is covered all over. I first  
 will lay my mail on earth. Throw now thy dart,  
 thou king of Morven."

He saw the heaving of her breast. It was the  
 sister of the king. She had seen him in the  
 halls of Gormal; and loved his face of youth.  
 The spear dropt from the hand of Trenmor! he  
 bent his red cheek to the ground, for he had seen  
 her like a beam of light that meets the sons of  
 the cave, when they revisit the fields of the sun,  
 and bend their aching eyes.

"Chief of the windy Morven," begun the  
 maid of the arms of snow; "let me rest in thy  
 bounding ship, far from the love of Corla. For  
 he, like the thunder of the desert, is terrible to  
 Inbaca. He loves me in the gloom of his pride,  
 and shakes ten thousand spears!"

"Rest thou in peace," said the mighty Tren-  
 mor, "behind the shield of my fathers. I will  
 not fly from the chief, though he shakes ten  
 thousand spears."

Three days he waited on the shore; and sent  
 his horn abroad. He called Corla to battle from  
 all his echoing hills. But Corla came not to bat-  
 tle. The king of Lochlin descended. He feast-  
 ed on the roaring shore; and gave the maid to  
 Trenmor."

"King of Lochlin," said Fingal, "thy blood  
 flows in the veins of thy foe. Our families met  
 in battle, because they loved the strife of spears.  
 Not often did they feast in the hall, and send  
 round the joy of the shell. Let thy face brighten

with gladness, and thine ear delight in the harp. Dreadful as the storm of thine ocean thou hast poured thy valour forth. thy voice has been like the voice of thousands when they engage in battle. Raise, to-morrow, thy white sails to the wind, thou brother of Agandecca. Bright as the beam of noon she comes on my mournful soul. I saw thy tears for the fair one, and spared thee in the halls of Starvo; when my sword was red with slaughter, and my eye full of tears for the maid. Or dost thou chuse the fight? The combat which thy fathers gave to Trenmor is thine: That thou mayest depart renowned like the sun setting in the west."

"King of the race of Morven," said the chief of the waves of Lochlin; "never will Swaran fight with thee, first of a thousand heroes! I saw thee in the halls of Starvo, and few were thy years beyond my own. When shall I, said I to my soul, lift the spear like the noble Fingal? We have fought heretofore, O warrior, on the side of the shaggy Malmor; after my waves had carried me to thy halls, and the feast of a thousand shells was spread. Let the bards send his fame who overcame to future years, for noble was the strife of Malmor.

"But many of the ships of Lochlin have lost their youths on Lena. Take these, thou king of Morven, and be the friend of Swaran: And when thy sons shall come to the mossy towers of Gormal, the feast of shells shall be spread, and the combat offered on the vale."

"Nor ship," replied the king, "shall Fingal take, nor land of many hills. The desert is enough to me, with all its deer and woods. Rise on thy waves again, thou noble friend of Agandecca. Spread thy white sails to the beam of the morning, and return to the echoing hills of Gormal."

“Blest be thy soul, thou king of shells,” said Swaran of the dark-brown shield. “In peace thou art the gale of spring. In war the mountain storm. Take now my hand in friendship, thou noble king of Morven. Let thy bards mourn those who fell. Let Erin give the sons of Lochlin to earth: and raise the mossy stones of their fame. That the children of the north hereafter may behold the place where their fathers fought. And some hunter may say, when he leans on a mossy tomb, here Fingal and Swaran fought, the heroes of other years. Thus hereafter shall he say, and our fame shall last for ever.

“Swaran,” said the king of the hills, “to-day our fame is greatest. We shall pass away like a dream. No sound will be in the fields of our battles. Our tombs will be lost in the heath. The hunter shall not know the place of our rest. Our names may be heard in song, but the strength of our arms will cease. O Ossian, Carril, and Ullin, you know of heroes that are no more. Give us the song of other years. Let the night pass away on the sound, and morning return with joy.”

We gave the song to the kings, and an hundred harps accompanied our voice. The face of Swaran brightened like the full moon of heaven, when the clouds vanish away, and leave her calm and broad in the midst of the sky.

It was then that Fingal spoke to Carril the chief of other times. “Where is the son of Semo; the king of the isle of mist? has he retired like the meteor of death, to the dreary cave of Tura?”

“Cuchullin,” said Carril of other times, “lies in the dreary cave of Tura. His hand is on the sword of his strength. His thoughts on the battle which he lost. Mournful is the king of spears; for he has often been victorious. He

sends the sword of his war to rest on the side of Fingal. For, like the storm of the desert, thou hast scattered all his foes. Take, O Fingal, the sword of the hero; for his fame is departed like mist when it flies before the rising wind of the vale."

"No," replied the king, "Fingal shall never take his sword. His arm is mighty in war; his fame shall never fail. Many have been overcome in battle, that have shone afterwards like the sun of heaven.

"O Swaran, king of the resounding woods, give all thy grief away. The vanquished, if brave, are renowned; they are like the sun in a cloud when he hides his face in the south, but looks again on the hills of grass.

"Grumal was a chief of Cona. He fought the battle on every coast. His soul rejoiced in blood; his ear in the din of arms. He poured his warriors on the sounding Craca; and Craca's king met him from his grove; for then within the circle of Brumo† he spoke to the stone of power.

"Fierce was the battle of the heroes, for the maid of the breast of snow. The fame of the daughter of Craca had reached Grumal at the streams of Cona; he vowed to have the white-bosomed maid, or die on the echoing Craca: Three days they strove together, and Grumal on the fourth was bound.

"Far from his friends they placed him in the horrid circle of Brumo; where often, they said, the ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of

† This passage alludes to the religion of the king of Craca. See a note on a similar subject in the third book.

their fear. But afterwards he shone like a pillar at the light of heaven. They fell by his mighty hand, and Grumal had his fame.

“ Raise, ye bards of other times, raise high the praise of heroes; that my soul may settle on their fame; and the mind of Swaran cease to be sad.”

They lay in the heath of Mora; the dark winds rustled over the heroes. A hundred voices at once arose, a hundred harps were strung; they sung of other times, and the mighty chiefs of former years.

When now shall I hear the bard; or rejoice at the fame of my fathers? The harp not strung on Morven; nor the voice of music raised on Cona. Dead with the mighty is the bard; and fame is in the desert no more.

Morning trembles with the beam of the east, and glimmers on grey-headed Cromla. Over Lena is heard the horn of Swaran, and the sons of the ocean gather around. Silent and sad they mount the wave, and the blast of Uilin is behind their sails. White, as the mist of Morven, they float along the sea.

“ Call,” said Fingal, “ call my dogs, the long-bounding sons of the chase. Call white-breasted Bran; and the surly strength of Luath. Fillan, and Kyn, but he is not here! My son rests on the bed of death. Fillan and Fergus, blow my horn, that the joy of the chase may arise; that the deer of Cromla may hear and start at the lake of roes.”

The shrill sound spreads along the wood. The sons of heathy Cromla arise. A thousand dogs fly off at once, grey-bounding through the heath. A deer fell by every dog, and three by the white-breasted Bran. He brought them, in their flight, to Fingal, that the joy of the king might be great.



One deer fell at the tomb of Ryno; and the grief of Fingal returned. He saw how peaceful lay the stone of him who was the first at the chase. "No more shalt thou rise, O my son, to partake of the feast of Cromla. Soon will thy tomb be hid, and the grass grow rank on thy grave. The sons of the feeble shall pass over it, and shall not know that the mighty lie there.

"Ossian and Fillan, sons of my strength, and Gaul king of the blue swords of war, let us ascend the hill to the cave of Tura, and find the chief of the battles of Erin. Are these the walls of Tura? grey and lonely they rise on the heath. The king of shells is sad, and the halls are desolate. Come, let us find the king of swords, and give him all our joy. But is that Cuchullin, O Fillan, or a pillar of smoke on the heath? The wind of Cromla is on my eyes, and I distinguish not my friend."

"Fingal!" replied the youth, "it is the son of Semo. Gloomy and sad is the hero; his hand is on his sword. Hail to the son of battle, breaker of the shields!"

"Hail to thee!" replied Cuchullin, "hail to all the sons of Morven! Delightful is thy presence, O Fingal! it is like the sun on Cromla; when the hunter mourns his absence for a season, and sees him between the clouds. Thy sons are like stars that attend thy course, and give light in the night. It is not thus thou hast seen me, O Fingal, returning from the wars of the desert; when the kings of the world† had fled, and joy returned to the hill of hinds."

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† This is the only passage in the poem, wherein the wars of Fingal against the Romans are alluded to; The Roman emperor is distinguished

“Many are thy words, Cuchullin,” said Connan, of small renown. “Thy words are many, son of Semo, but where are thy deeds in arms? Why did we come over the ocean to aid thy feeble sword? Thou flyest to thy cave of sorrow, and Connan fights thy battles: Resign to me these arms of light; yield them, thou son of Erin.”

“No hero,” replied the chief, “ever sought the arms of Cuchullin; and had a thousand heroes sought them it were in vain, thou gloomy youth. I fled not to the cave of sorrow, as long as Erin’s warriors lived.”

“Youth of the feeble arm,” said Fingal, “Connan, say no more. Cuchullin is renowned in battle, and terrible over the desert. Often have I heard thy fame, thou stormy chief of Innis-fail. Spread now thy white sails for the isle of mist, and see Bragela leaning on her rock. Her tender eye is in tears, and the winds lift her long hair from her heaving breast. She listens to the winds of night to hear the voice of thy rowers; to hear the song of the sea, and the sound of thy distant harp.”

In old compositions by the title of the king of the world.

‡ Connan was of the family of Morni. He is mentioned in several other poems, and always appears with the same character. The poet passed him over in silence till now, and his behaviour here deserves no better usage.

¶ The practice of singing when they row is universal among the inhabitants of the north-west coast of Scotland and the isles. It deceives time, and inspires the rowers.

“ And long shall she listen in vain; Cuchullin shall never return. How can I behold Bragela to raise the sigh of her breast? Fingal, I was always victorious in the battles of other spears.”

“ And hereafter thou shalt be victorious,” said Fingal king of shells. “ The fame of Cuchullin shall grow like the branchy tree of Cromra. Many battles await thee, O chief, and many shall be the wounds of thy hand. Bring hither, Oscar, the deer, and prepare the feast of shells; that our souls may rejoice after danger, and our friends delight in our presence.”

We sat, we feasted, and we sung. The soul of Cuchullin rose. The strength of his arm returned; and gladness brightened on his face. Ullin gave the song, and Carril raised the voice. I often joined the bards, and sung of battles of the spear. Battles! where I often fought: but now I fight no more. The fame of my former actions is ceased; and I sit forlorn at the tombs of my friends.

Thus they passed the night in the song; and brought back the morning with joy. Fingal arose on the heath, and shook his glittering spear. He moved first toward the plains of Lena, and we followed like a ridge of fire. “ Spread the sail,” said the king of Morven, “ and catch the winds that pour from Lena.” We rose on the wave with songs, and rushed, with joy, through the foam of the ocean.

# Comala:

A DRAMATIC POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

This poem is valuable on account of the light it throws on the antiquity of Ossian's compositions. The Caracul mentioned here, is the same with Caracalla the son of Severus, who in the year 211 commanded an expedition against the Caledonians. The variety of the measures shew that the poem was originally set to music, and perhaps presented before the chiefs upon solemn occasions. Tradition has handed down the story more completely than it is in the poem. "Comala, the daughter of Sarno king of Inistore or Orkney islands, fell in love with Fingal the son of Comhal at a feast, to which her father had invited him, (Fingal, B. III.) upon his return from Lochlin, after the death of Agandecca. Her passion was so violent, that she followed him disguised like a youth, who wanted to be employed in his wars." She was soon discovered by Hidalian the son of Lamor, one of Fingal's heroes, whose love she had slighted some time before. Her romantic passion and beauty recommended her so much to the king, that he had resolved to make her his wife; when

news was brought him of Caracul's expedition. He marched to stop the progress of the enemy, and Comala attended him. He left her on a hill, within sight of Caracul's army, when he himself went to battle, having previously promised, if he survived, to return that night.\* The sequel of the story may be gathered from the poem itself.

### THE PERSONS.

FINGAL.	MELILCOMA.	} daughters of Morni.
HIDALLAN.	DEBSAGRENA.	
COMALA.	BARDS.	

### DEBSAGRENA.

**T**HE chase is over. No noise on Ardven but the torrent's roar! Daughter of Morni, come from Crona's banks. Lay down the bow and take the harp. Let the night come on with songs, and our joy be great on Ardven.

† MELIL. And night comes on, thou blue-eyed maid, grey night grows dim along the plain. I saw a deer at Crona's stream; a mossy bank he scented through the gloom, but soon he bounded away. A meteor played round his branchy horns; and the awful faces of other times looked from the clouds of Crona.

‡ DEBSA. These are the signs of Fingal's death. The king of shields is fallen! and Caracul prevails. Rise, Comala§, from thy rocks;

† Melilcoma, 'soft-rolling eye.'

‡ Debsagrena, 'the brightness of a sun-beam.'

§ Comala, 'the maid of the pleasant brow.'

daughter of Sarno, rise in tears. The youth o thy love is low, and his ghost is already on our hills.

MELIL. There Comala sits forlorn! two grey dogs, near, shake their rough ears, and catch the flying breeze. Her red cheek rests on her arm, and the mountain wind is in her hair. She turns her blue-rolling eyes towards the field of his promise. Where art thou, O Fingal, for the night is gathering around?

COMALA. O Carun\* of the streams! why do I behold thy waters rolling in blood? Has the noise of the battle been heard on thy banks; and sleeps the king of Morven? Rise, moon, thou daughter of the sky! look from between the clouds, that I may behold the light of his steel on the field of his promise. Or rather let the meteor, that lights our departed fathers through the night, come with its red light to shew me the way to my fallen hero. Who will defend me from sorrow? Who from the love of Hidalian Long shall Comala look before she can behold Fingal in the midst of his host; bright as the beam of the morning in the cloud of an early shower.

† HIDAL. Roll, thou mist of gloomy Crona

\* Carun, or Cra'on, 'a winding river,' This river retains still the name of Carron, and falls into the Forth some miles to the north of Falkirk.

† Hidalian was sent by Fingal to give notice to Comala of his return; he, to revenge himself on her for slighting his love some time before, told her that the king was killed in battle. He even pretended that he carried his body from the field to be buried in her presence; and this circumstance makes it probable that the poem was composed of old.

fell on the path of the hunter. Hide his steps from mine eyes, and let me remember my friend no more. The bands of battle are scattered, and no crowding steps are round the noise of his steel. O Carun, roll thy streams of blood, for the chief of the people fell.

COMALA, Who fell on Carun's grassy banks, son of the cloudy night? Was he white as the snow of Arden? Blooming as the bow of the shower? Was his hair like the mist of the hill, soft and curling in the day of the sun? Was he like the thunder of heaven in battle? Flect as the roe of the desert?

HIDAL. O that I might behold his love, fair-leazing from her rock! Her red eye dim in tears, and her blushing cheek half hid in her locks! Blow, thou gentle breeze, and lift the heavy locks of the maid, that I may behold her white arm, and lovely cheek of her sorrow!

COMALA. And is the son of Comhal fallen, chief of the mournful tale? The thunder rolls on the hill! The lightning flies on wings of fire! But they frighten not Comala; for her Fingal fell. Say, chief of the mournful tale, ell the breaker of shields?

HIDAL. The nations are scattered on their hills: for they shall hear the voice of the chief no more.

COMALA. Confusion pursue thee over thy plains; and destruction overtake thee, thou king of the world. Few be thy steps to thy grave; and let one virgin mourn thee. Let her be, like Comala, tearful in the days of her youth. Why hast thou told me, Hidallan, that my hero fell? might have hoped a little while his return, and have thought I saw him on the distant rock; a see might have deceived me with his appearance; and the wind of the hill been the sound of a horn in mine ear. O that I were on the

banks of Carun! that my tears might be warm on his cheek!

HIDAL. He lies not on the banks of Carun: on Ardven, heroes raise his tomb. Look on them, O moon, from thy clouds; be thy beam bright on his breast, that Comala may behold him in the light of his armour.

COMALA. Stop, ye sons of the grave, till I behold my love. He left me at the chase alone, I knew not that he went to war. He said he would return with the night; and the king of Morven is not returned! Why didst thou not tell me that he would fall, O trembling son of the rock\*? Thou hast seen him in the blood of his youth, but thou didst not tell Comala.

MELIL. What sound is that on Ardven? Who is that bright in the vale? Who comes like the strength of rivers, when their crowded waters glitter to the moon?

COMALA. Who is it but the foe of Comala, the son of the king of the world! Ghost of Fingal! do thou, from thy cloud, direct Comala's bow. Let him fall like the hart of the desert. It is Fingal in the crowd of his ghosts! Why dost thou come, my love, to frighten and please my soul?

FINGAL. Raise, ye bards of the song, the wars of the streamy Carun. Caracul has fled from my arms along the fields of his pride. He sets far distant like a meteor that incloses a spirit.

\* By the son of the rock she means a druid. It is probable that some of the order of the druid remained as late as the beginning of the reign of Fingal; and that Comala had consulted one of them concerning the event of the war with Caracul.



of night, when the winds drive it over the heath,  
and the dark woods are gleaming around. I  
heard a voice like the breeze of my hills. Is it  
the huntress of Galmal, the white-handed daugh-  
ter of Sarno! Look from thy rocks, my love;  
and let me hear the voice of Comala.

COMALA. Take me to the cave of thy rest,  
O lovely son of death!

FINGAL. Come to the cave of my rest. The  
storm is over, and the sun is on our fields.  
Come to the cave of my rest, huntress of echo-  
ing Cona.

COMALA. He is returned with his fame; I  
feel the right hand of his battles. But I must  
rest beside the rock till my soul settle from fear.  
Let the harp be near; and raise the song, ye  
daughters of Morni.

DERSA. Comala has slain three deer on Ard-  
ven, and the fire ascends on the rock; go to the  
feast of Comala, king of the woody Morven!

FINGAL. Raise, ye sons of song, the wars of  
the streamy Carun; that my white-handed maid  
may rejoice; while I behold the feast of my love.

EARDS. Roll, streamy Carun, roll in joy, the  
sons of battle fled. The steed is not seen on our  
fields; and the wings of their pride spread in  
other lands. The sun will now rise in peace,  
and the shadows descend in joy. The voice of  
the chase will be heard; and the shields hang in  
the hall. Our delight will be in the war of the  
ocean, and our hands be red in the blood of  
Lochlin. Roll, streamy Carun, roll in joy; the  
sons of battle fled.

MELIL. Descend, ye light mists from high  
ye moon-beams, lift her soul. Pale lies th'  
maid at the rock! Comala is no more!

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¶ Perhaps the poet alludes to the Roman eagle.

**FINGAL.** Is the daughter of Sarno dead ;  
the white-bosomed maid of my love ! Meet me  
Comala, on my heaths, when I sit alone at the  
streams of my hills.

**HIDAL.** Ceased the voice of the huntress of  
Gaimal ? Why did I trouble the soul of the  
maid ? When shall I see thee, with joy, in the  
chase of the dark-brown hinds ?

**FINGAL.** Youth of the gloomy brow ; no  
more shalt thou feast in my halls. Thou shalt  
not pursue my chase, and my foes shall not fall  
by thy sword †. Lead me to the place of re-  
rest that I may behold her beauty. Pale she lie  
at the rock, and the cold winds lift her hair  
Her bow-string sounds in the blast, and her ar-  
row was broken in her fall. Raise the praise of  
the daughter of Sarno, and give her name to the  
wind of the hills.

**BARDS.** See ! meteors roll around the maid  
and moon-beams lift her soul ! Around her, from  
their clouds, bend the awful faces of her fathers  
Sarno † of the gloomy brow ; and the red-rollin-  
g eyes of Fidallan. When shall thy white han-  
garise, and thy voice be heard on our rocks ? Th  
maid's shall seek thee on the heath, but they wi-  
not find thee. Thou shalt come, at times, to  
their dreams, and settle peace in their soul. Th  
voice shall remain in their ears, and they sha-  
think with joy on the dreams of their rest. Me-  
teors roll around the maid, and moon-beams lif-  
the soul !

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† The sequel of the story of Hidallan is intro-  
duced, as an episode, in the poem which imme-  
diately follows in his collection.

‡ Sarno the father of Comala died soon after  
the flight of his daughter. Fidallan was the fir-  
king that reigned in Inistore.

THE

*War of Caros :*

A POEM.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Caros is probably the noted usurper Carausius, by birth a Menapian, who assumed the purple in the year 284; and, seizing on Britain, defeated the emperor Maximilian Herculus in several naval engagements, which gives propriety to his being called in this poem the king of ships. He repaired Agricola's wall, in order to obstruct the incursions of the Caledonians; and when he was employed in that work, it appears he was attacked by a party under the command of Oscar the son of Ossian. This battle is the foundation of the present poem, which is addressed to Malvina the daughter of Toscar.

**B**RING, daughter of Toscar, bring the harp;  
 the light of the song rises in Ossian's soul.  
 It is like the field, when darkness covers the  
 hills around, and the shadow grows slowly on  
 the plain of the sun.

I behold my son, O Malvina, near the mossy  
rock of Crona†. But it is the mist of the deser-  
tinged with the beam of the west: Lovely is the  
mist that assumes the form of Oscar! turn from  
it yewinds, when ye roar on the side of Ardrven

Who comes towards my son, wit' the murmu-  
of a song? His staff is in his hand, his grey hai  
loose on the wind. Surely joy lightens his face  
and he often looks back to Caros. It is Ryno‡  
of the song, he that went to view the foe.

“What does Caros' king of ships?” said th  
son of the now mournful Oasian; “spreads h  
the wings|| of his pride, bard of the times o  
eld?”

“He spreads them, Oscar,” replied the bard  
“but it is behind his gathered heap\*. He look  
over his stones with fear, and beholds thee, ter-  
rible, as the ghost of night that roils the wave t  
his ships.”

“Go, thou first of my hardy,” says Oscar  
“and tak: the spear of Fingal. Fix a flame o  
its point, and shake it to the winds of heaven. Bi  
him in songs to advance, and leave the rolling o  
his wave. Tell to Caros that I long for battle  
and that my bow is weary of the chase of Con  
Tell him the mighty is not here; and that m  
arm is young.”

He went with the sound of his song. Osc

† Crona is the name of a small stream whic  
runs into the Carron. On its banks is the sce.  
of the preceding dramatic poem.

‡ Ryno is often mentioned in the ancie  
poetry. He seems to have been a bard of th  
first rank, in the days of Fingal.

|| The Roman eagle.

\* Agricola's wall, which Carausius repaired

teared his voice on high. It reached his heroes on Arden, like the noise of a cave, when the sea of Togorma rolls before it; and its trees meet the roaring winds. They gather round my son like the streams of the hill; when, after rain, they roll in the pride of their course.

Ryno came to the mighty Caros, and struck his flaming spear. "Come to the battle of Oscar, O thou that sittest on the rolling of waters. Fingal is distant far; he hears the songs of his bards on Morven: and the wind of his hall is in his hair. His terrible spear is at his side; and his shield that is like the darkened moon. Come to the battle of Oscar; the hero is alone."

He came not over the streamy Carron†; the bard returned with his song. Grey night grows dim on Crona. The feast of shells is spread. A hundred oakburn to the wind, and faint light gleams over the heath. The ghosts of Arden pass through the beam, and shew their dim and distant forms. Comala‡ is half unseen on her meteor; and Hidallan is soiled and dim, like the darkened moon behind the mist of night.

"Why art thou sad?" said Ryno; for he alone beheld the chief. "Why art thou sad, Hidallan, hast thou not received thy fame? The songs of Ossian have been heard, and thy ghost has brightened in the wind, when thou didst bend from thy cloud to hear the song of Morven's bard."

† The river Carron.

‡ This is the scene of Comala's death, which is the subject of the dramatic poem: The poet mentions her in this place, in order to introduce the sequel of Hidallan's story, who, on account of her death, had been expelled from the wars of Fingal.

“And do thine eyes behold the hero,” said Oscar, “like the dim meteor of night? Say Ryno, say, how fell the chief that was so renowned in the days of our fathers? His name remains on the rocks of Cona; and I have often seen the streams of his hills.”

Fingal, replied the bard, had driven Hidarlan from his wars. The king's soul was sad for Comala, and his eyes could not behold Hidarlan Lonely, sad, along the heath, he slowly moved with silent steps. His arms hang disordered on his side. His hair flies loose from his helmet. The tear is in his down-cast eyes; and the sigh half silent in his breast. Three days he strayed unseen, alone, before he came to Lamor's halls the mossy halls of his fathers, at the stream of Balva†. There Lamor sat alone beneath a tree for he had sent his people with Hidarlan to war. The stream ran at his feet, and his grey head rested on his staff. Sightless are his aged eyes. He hums the song of other times. The noise of Hidarlan's feet came to his ear: he knew the tread of his son.

“Is the son of Lamor returned; or is it the sound of his ghost? Hast thou fallen on the bank of Carun, son of the aged Lamor? Or, if I hear the sound of Hidarlan's feet, where are the mighty in war? Where are my people, Hidarlan that were wont to return with their echoing shields? Have they fallen on the banks of Carun?”

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† This is perhaps that small stream still retaining the name of Balva, which runs through the romantic valley of Glentivar in Stirlingshire. Balva signifies a silent stream; and Glentivar the sequestered vale.

“No:” replied the sighing youth, “the people of Lamor live. They are renowned in battle, my father; but Hidallan is renowned no more. I must sit alone on the banks of Balva, when the roar of the battle grows.”

“But my fathers never sat alone,” replied the rising pride of Lamor. “They never sat alone on the banks of Balva, when the roar of battle rose. Dost thou not behold that tomb? Mine eyes discern it not: there rests the noble Garmallon who never fled from war. Come, thou renowned in battle, he says, come to thy father’s tomb. How am I renowned, Garmallon; my son has fled from war!”

“King of the streamy Balva!” said Hidallan with a sigh, “why dost thou torment my soul? Lamor, I never feared. Fingal was sad for Comala, and denied his wars to Hidallan:—Go to the grey streams of thy land, he said, and moulder like a leafless oak, which the winds have bent over Balva, never more to grow!”

“And must I hear,” Lamor replied, “the lonely tread of Hidallan’s feet? When thousands are renowned in battle, shall he bend over my grey streams? Spirit of the noble Garmallon! carry Lamor to his place: his eyes are dark; his soul is sad: and his son has lost his fame!”

“Where,” said the youth, “shall I search for fame to gladden the soul of Lamor? From whence shall I return with renown, that the sound of my arms may be pleasant in his ear? If I go to the chase of hinds, my name will not be heard. Lamor will not feel my dogs, with his hands, glad at my arrival from the hill. He will not enquire of his mountains, or of the dark-brown deer of his deserts.”

“I must fall,” said Lamor, “like a leafless oak: it grew on a rock, but the winds have overturned it. My ghost will be seen on my

hills, mournful for my young Hidallan. Will not ye, ye mists, as ye rise, hide him from my sight? My son! go to Lamor's hall: there the arms of our fathers hang. Bring the sword of Garmallon; he took it from a foe."

He went and brought the sword with all its studded thongs. He gave it to his father. The grey-haired hero felt the point with his hand.

"My son! lead me to Garmallon's tomb; it rises beside that rustling tree. The long grass is withered; I heard the breeze whistling there. A little fountain murmurs near, and sends its water to Balva. There let me rest; it is noon and the sun is on our fields!"

He led him to Garmallon's tomb. Lamor pierced the side of his son. They sleep together and their ancient halls moulder on Balva's banks. Ghosts are seen there at noon: the valley is silent, and the people shun the place of Lamor.

"Mournful is thy tale," said Oscar, "son of the times of old! My soul sighs for Hidallan, he fell in the days of his youth. He flies on the blast of the desert, and his wandering is in a foreign land. Sons of the echoing Morven draw near to the foes of Fingal. Send the night away in songs; and watch the strength of Caros. Oscar goes to the people of other times; to the shades of silent Ardven; where his fathers sit dim in their clouds, and behold the future war. And thou art there, Hidallan, like a half-extinguished meteor? Come to my sight, in thy sorrow, chief of the roaring Balva!"

The heroes move with their songs. Oscar slowly ascends the hill. The meteors of night are setting on the heath before him. A distant torrent faintly roars. Unfrequented blasts rush through aged oaks. The half-enlightened moor sinks dim and red behind her hill. Feeble voices are heard on the heath. Oscar drew his sword,



"Come," said the hero, "O ye ghosts of my fathers! ye that fought against the kings of the world! Tell me the deeds of future times; and your discourse in your caves: when you talk together and behold your sons in the fields of the valiant."

Trenmor came from his hill, at the voice of his mighty son. A cloud, like the steed of the stranger, supported his airy limbs. His robe is of the mist of Lano, that brings death to the people. His sword is a meteor half-extinguished. His face is without form, and dark. He sighed thrice over the hero: and thrice the winds of the night roared around. Many were his words to Oscar; but they only came by halves to our ears: they were dark as the tales of other times, before the light of the song arose. He slowly vanished, like a mist that melts, on the sunny hill. It was then, O daughter of Toscar, my son began first to be sad. He foresaw the fall of his race; and, at times, he was thoughtful and dark: like the sun when he carries a cloud on his face: but he looks afterwards on the hills of Coaa.

Oscar passed the night among his fathers; grey morning met him on the banks of Caron. A green vale surrounded a tomb which arose in the times of old. Little hills lift their heads at a distance; and stretch their old trees to the wind. The warriors of Caron sat there, for they had passed the stream by night. They appeared like the trunks of aged pines, to the pale light of the morning. Oscar stood at the tomb and raised thrice his terrible voice. The rocking hills echoed around: the starting roes bounded away, And the trembling ghosts of the dead fled, shrieking on their clouds. So terrible was the voice of my son, when he called his friends.

A thousand spears rose around, the people of Caros rose. Why, daughter of Tostar, why that tear? My son, though alone, is brave. Oscar is like a beam of the sky; he turns around and the people fall. His hand is like the arm of a ghost, when he stretches it from a cloud; the rest of his thin form is unseen; but the people die in the vale! My son beheld the approach of the foe; and he stood in the silent darkness of his strength. "Am I alone," said Oscar, "in the midst of a thousand foes! Many a spear is there! many a darkly rolling eye! Shall I fly to Ardven! But did my fathers ever fly! The mark of their arm is in a thousand bottles. Oscar too will be renowned. Come, ye dim ghosts of my fathers, and behold my deeds in war! I may fall; but I will be renowned like the race of the echoing Morven." He stood dilated in his place, like a flood swelling in a narrow vale. The battle came, but they fell: bloody was the sword of Oscar.

The noise reached his people at Crona; they came like a hundred streams. The warriors of Caros fled, and Oscar remained like a rock left by the ebbing sea.

Now dark and deep, with all his steeds, Caros rolled his might along: the little streams are lost in his course; and the earth is rocking round. Battle spreads from wing to wing: ten thousand swords gleam at once in the sky. But why should Ossian sing of battles? For never more shall my steel shine in war. I remember the days of my youth with sorrow; when I feel the weakness of my arm. Happy are they who fell in their youth, in the midst of their renown! They have not beheld the tombs of their friends; or failed to bend the bow of their strength. Happy art thou, O Oscar, in the midst of thy rising host. Thou often goest to the fields of

thy fame, where Caros fled from thy lifted sword.

Darkness comes on my soul, O fair daughter of Tostar, I behold not the form of my son at Carun; nor the figure of Oscar on Crona. The rustling winds have carried him far away; and the heart of his father is sad.

But lead me, O Malvina, to the sound of my woods, and the roar of my mountain-streams. Let the chase be heard on Cona; that I may think on the days of other years. And bring me the harp, O maid, that I may touch it when the light of my soul shall arise. Be thou near, to learn the song; and future times shall hear of Ossian.

The sons of the feeble hereafter will lift the voice on Cona; and, looking up to the rocks, say, "Here Ossian dwelt." They shall admire the chiefs of old, and the race that are no more: while we ride on our clouds, Malvina, on the wings of the roaring winds. Our voices shall be heard, at times, in the desert; and we shall sing on the winds of the rock.

THE

*War of Inis-thona :*

A POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

This poem is an episode, introduced in a great work composed by Ossian, in which the actions of his friends, and his beloved son Oscar, were interwoven. The work itself is lost, but some episodes, and the story of the poem, are handed down by tradition. Inis-thona was an island of Scandinavia, subject to its own king, but depending upon the kingdom of Lochlin.

**O**UR youth is like the dream of the hunter on the hill of heath. He sleeps in the mild beams of the sun; but he awakes amidst a storm: the red lightning flies around: and the trees shake their heads to the wind. He looks back with joy on the day of the sun, and the pleasant dreams of his rest!

When shall Ossian's youth return, or his ear delight in the sound of arms? When shall I, like Oscar, travel in the lights of my steel? Come, with your streams, ye hills of Cona, and listen to the voice of Ossian! The song rises,

like the sun, in my soul; and my heart feels the joys of other times.

I behold thy towers, O Selma! and the oaks of thy shaded wall: thy streams sound in my ear; thy heroes gather round. Fingal sits in the mist; and leans on the shield of Trenmor: his spear stands against the wall; he listens to the song of his bards. The deeds of his arm are heard; and the actions of the king in his youth.

Oscar had returned from the chase, and heard the hero's praise. He took the shield of Branno† from the wall; his eyes were filled with tears. Red was the cheek of youth. His voice was trembling, low. His spear shook its bright head in his hand; he spoke to Morven's king.

"Fingal! thou king of heroes! Ossian, next to him in war! ye have fought the battle in your youth; your names are renowned in song. Oscar is like the mist of Cona: I appear and vanish. The bard will not know my name. The hunter will not search in the heath for my tomb. Let me fight, O heroes, in the battles of Inis-thona. Distant is the land of my war! ye shall not hear of Oscar's fall. Some bard may find me there, and give my name to the song. The daughter of the stranger shall see my tomb, and weep over the youth that came from afar. The bard shall say, at the feast, hear the song of Oscar from the distant land."

"Oscar," replied the king of Morven; "thou shalt fight, son of my fame! Prepare my dark-

† This is Branno, the father of Everallin, and grandfather to Oscar; he was of Irish extraction, and lord of the country round the lake of Ligo. His great actions are handed down by tradition, and his hospitality has passed into a proverb.

bosomed ship to carry my hero to Inis-thona. Son of my son, regard our fame: for thou art of the race of renown. Let not the children of strangers say, feeble are the sons of Morven! Be thou in battle, like the roaring storm: mild as the evening sun in peace. Tell, Oscar, to Inis-thona's king, that Fingal remembers his youth; when we strove in the combat together in the days of Agandecca."

They lifted up the sounding sail; the wind whistled through the thongs† of their masts. Waves lashed the oozy rocks; the strength of ocean roared. My son beheld, from the wave, the land of groves. He rushed into the echoing bay of Runa; and sent his sword to Annir king of spears. The grey-haired hero rose, when he saw the sword of Fingal. His eyes were full of tears; and he remembered the battles of their youth. Twice they lifted the spear before the lovely Agandecca: heroes stood far distant, as if two ghosts contended.

"But now," began the king, "I am old; the sword lies useless in my hall. Thou art of Morven's race! Annir has been in the strife of spears; but he is pale and withered now, like the oak of Lano. I have no son to meet thee with joy, or to carry thee to the halls of his fathers. Argon is pale in the tomb, and Ruro is no more. My daughter is in the hall of strangers, and longs to behold my tomb. Her spouse shakes ten thousand spears; and comes; like a cloud of death

† Leather thongs were used in Ossian's time, instead of ropes.

‡ Cormac had resolved on a war against his father-in-law, Annir, king of Inis-thona, in order to deprive him of his kingdom; the injustice of

from Lano. Come thou to share the feast of Annir, son of echoing Morven."

Three days they feasted together; on the fourth Annir heard the name of Oscar<sup>¶</sup>. They rejoiced in the shell<sup>¶</sup>; and pursued the boars of Runa. Beside the fount of mossy stones, the weary heroes rest. The tear steals in secret from Annir; and he broke the rising sigh. "Here darkly rest," the hero said, "the children of my youth. This stone is the tomb of Ruro: that tree sounds over the grave of Argon. Do ye hear my voice, O my sons, within your narrow house? Or do ye speak in these rustling leaves, when the winds of the desert rise?"

"King of Ivis-thona," said Oscar, "low fell the children of youth? The wild-boar often rushes over their tombs, but he does not disturb

his designs was so much resented by Fingal, that he sent his grandson, Oscar, to the assistance of Annir. Both armies came soon to a battle, in which the conduct and valour of Oscar obtained a complete victory. An end was put to the war by the death of Cornalo, who fell in a single combat, by Oscar's hand. Thus is the story delivered down by tradition; though the poet, to raise the character of his son, makes Oscar himself propose the expedition.

It was thought, in those days of heroism, an infringement upon the laws of hospitality, to ask the name of a stranger, before he had feasted three days in the great hall of the family. 'He that asks the name of a stranger,' is to this day, an opprobrious term, applied, in the north, to the inhospitable.

¶ 'To rejoice in the shell' is a phrase for feasting sumptuously, and drinking freely.

the hunters. They pursue deer § formed of clouds, and bend their airy-bow. They still love the sport of their youth; and mount the wind with joy."

"Cornaloo," replied the king, "is chief of ten thousand spears; he dwells at the dark-rolling waters of Lano †; which send forth the cloud of death. He came to Runa's echoing halls, and sought the honour of the spear †. The youth was lovely as the first beam of the sun! and few were they who could meet him in fight! My heroes yielded to Cornaloo: and my daughter loved the son of Lano. Argon and Ruro returned from the chase; the tears of their pride descended: They rolled their silent eyes on Runa's heroes, because they yielded to a stranger: three days they feasted with Cornaloo: on the fourth my Argon fought. But who could fight with Argon? Lano's chief was overcome. His heart swelled with pride, and he resolved in secret to behold the death of my sons. They went to the hills of Runa, and pursued the dark-brown hinds.

§ The notion of Ossian concerning the state of the deceased, was the same with that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. They imagined that the souls pursued, in their separate state, the employments and pleasures of their former life.

† Lano was a lake of Scandinavia, remarkable in the days of Ossian, for emitting a pestiferous vapour in autumn. "And thou, O valiant Duchomar, like the mist of marshy Lano: when it sails over the plains of autumn, and brings death to the people." Fingal, B. I.

‡ By the honour of the spear is meant a kind of tournament practised among the ancient northern nations.



The arrow of Cormalo flew in secret; and my children fell. He came to the maid of his love; to Inis-thona's dark-haired maid. They fled over the desert, and Annir remained alone. Night came on, and day appeared; nor Argon's voice, nor Ruro's came. At length their much-lov'd dog is seen; the fleet and bounding Runar. He came into the hall and howled; and seemed to look towards the place of their fall. We followed him; we found them here: and laid them by this mossy stream. This is the haunt of Annir, when the chase of the hings is over. I bend like the trunk of an aged oak above them; and my tears for ever flow."

"O Ronnan!" said the rising Oscar, "Ogar king of spears! call my heroes to my side, the sons of streamy Morven. To-day we go to Lano's water, that sends forth the cloud of death. Cormalo will not long rejoice; death is often at the point of our swords."

They came over the desert like stormy clouds, when the winds roll them over the heath: their edges are tinged with lightning; and the echoing groves foresee the storm. The horn of Oscar's battle was heard; and Lano shook in all its waves. The children of the lake conveyed around the sounding shield of Cormalo. Oscar fought, as he was wont in battle. Cormalo felt beneath his sword; and the sons of the dismal Lano fled to their secret vales. Oscar brought the daughter of Inis-thona to Annir's echoing halls. The face of age was bright with joy; he blest the king of swords.

How great was the joy of Oasian, when he beheld the distant sail of his son! It was like a cloud of light that rises in the east, when the traveller is sad in a land unknown; and dismal night, with her ghosts, is sitting around him. We brought him, with songs, to Scina's halls.

Fingal-ordered the feast of shells to be spread. A thousand bards raised the name of Oscar : and Morven answered to the noise. The daughter of Toscar was there, and her voice was like the harp ; when the distant sound comes, in the evening, on the soft rustling breeze of the vale.

O lay me, ye that see the light, near some rock of my hills ; let the thick hazels be around, let the oak be near. Green be the place of my rest ; and let the sound of the distant torrent be heard. Daughter of Toscar, take the harp, and raise the lovely song of Selma : that sleep may overtake my soul in the midst of joy ; that the dreams of my youth may return, and the days of the mighty Fingal. Selma ! I behold thy towers, thy trees, and shaded wall. I see the heroes of Morven : and hear the song of bards. Oscar lifts the sword of Cormalo ; and a thousand youths admire its studded thongs. They look with wonder on my son ' and admire the strength of his arm. They mark the joy of his father's eyes ; they long for an equal fame. And ye shall have your fame, O sons of streamy Morven. My soul is often brightened with the song ; and I remember the companions of my youth. But sleep descends with the sound of the harp ; and pleasant dreams begin to rise. Ye sons of the chase stand far distant, nor disturb my rest. The bard of other times converses now with his fathers, the chiefs of the days of old. Sons of the chase stand far distant ; disturb not the dreams of Ossian.

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THE  
*Battle of Lora :*

A POEM.

—○○○○—  
THE ARGUMENT.

Fingal, on his return from Ireland, after he had expelled Swaran from that kingdom, made a feast to all his heroes. He forgot to invite Maronnan and Aldo, two chiefs, who had not been along with him on his expedition. They resented his neglect; and went over to Erragon king of Sora, a country of Scandinavia, the declared enemy of Fingal. The valour of Aldo soon gained him a great reputation in Sora; and Lorma the beautiful wife of Erragon fell in love with him. He found means to escape with her, and to come to Fingal, who resided then in Selma on the western coast. Erragon invaded Scotland, and was slain in battle by Gaal the son of Mornal, after he had rejected terms of peace offered him by Fingal. In this war Aldo fell in a single combat, by the hands of his rival Erragon; and the unfortunate Lorma afterwards died of grief.

**S**ON of the distant land, who dwellest in the secret cell! do I hear the sound of thy grove! Or is it the voice of thy songs! The tor-

rent was loud in my ear, but I heard a tuneful voice; dost thou praise the chiefs of thy land; or the spirits † of the wind? But, lonely dweller of the rocks! look over that heathy plain: thou seest green toads, with their rank, whistling grass; with their stones of mossy heads: thou seest them, son of the rock; but Ossian's eyes have failed.

A mountain-stream comes roaring down and sends its waters round a green hill: four mossy stones, in the midst of withered grass, rear their heads on the top: two trees, which the storms have bent, spread their whistling branches around. This is thy dwelling, Erragon †; this thy narrow house; the sound of thy shells has been long forgot in Sora; and thy shield is become dark in thy hall. Erragon, king of ships! chief of distant Sora! how hast thou fallen on our mountains! How is the mighty low? Son of the secret cell! dost thou delight in songs? Hear the battle of Lora: the sound of its steel is long since past. So thunder on the darkened hill roars and is no more. The sun returns with his silent beams: the glittering rocks, and green heads of the mountains smile.

The bay of Cona received our ships †, from Ullin's rolling waves: our white sheets hung loose to the masts: and the boisterous winds

† The poet alludes to the religious hymns of the Cu'dees.

‡ Erragon, or Ferg-thoun, signifies the race of the waves: probably a poetical name given him by Ossian himself; for he goes by the name of Annir in tradition.

† This was at Fingal's return from his war against Swaran.

reared through the groves of Morven. The horn of the king is sounded, and the deer start from their rocks. Our arrows flew in the woods: the feast of the hill was spread. Our joy was great on our rocks; for the fall of the terrible Swaran. Two heroes were forgot at our feast: and the rage of their bosoms burned. They rolled their red eyes in secret: the sigh bursts from their breasts. They are seen to talk together, and to throw their spears on earth. They were two dark clouds in the midst of our joy; like pillars of mist on the settled sea: it glitters to the sun, but the mariners fear a storm.

“Raise my white sails,” said Ma-ronnan, “raise them to the winds of the west; let us rush, O Aldo, through the foam of the northern wave. We are forgot at the feast: but our arms have been red in blood. Let us leave the hills of Fingal, and serve the king of Sora. His countenance is fierce, and the war darkens round his spear. Let us be renowned, O Aldo, in the battles of echoing Sora.”

They took their swords and shields of thongs, and rushed to Lumar’s sounding bay. They came to Sora’s haughty king, the chief of bounding steeds. Erragon had returned from the chase; his spear was red in blood. He bent his dark face to the ground; and whistled as he went. He took the strangers to his feasts; and they fought and conquered in his wars.

Aldo returned with his fame towards Sora’s lofty walls. From her tower looked the spouse of Erragon, the humid, rolling eyes of Lorma. Her dark-brown hair flies on the wind of ocean: her white breast heaves, like snow on the heath; when the gentle winds arise, and slowly move it in the light. She saw young Aldo, like the beam of Sora’s setting sun. Her soft heart sighed: tears filled her eyes; and her white arm sup-

ported her head. Three days she sat within the hall, and covered grief with joy. On the fourth she fled with the hero, along the rolling sea. They came to Cona's mossy towers, to Fingal king of spears.

"Aldo of the heart of pride!" said the rising king of Morven, "shall I defend thee from the wrath of Sora's injured king! Who will not receive my people into their halls, or give thee feast of strangers, since Aldo of the little son has carried away the fair of Sora? Go to the hills, thou feeble hand, and hide thee in the caves; mournful is the battle we must fight with Sora's gloomy king. Spirit of the noble Trenmor! when will Fingal cease to fight? I was born in the midst of battle,† and my step must move in blood to my tomb. But my hand did not injure the weak, my steel did not touch the feeble in arms. I behold thy tempests, O Morven, which will overturn my halls; when my children are dead in battle, and none remains to dwell in Selma. Then will the feeble come, but they will not know my tomb: my renown is in the song; and my actions shall be as a dream to future times."

His people gathered around Erragon, as the storms round the ghost of night; when he called them from the top of Morven, and prepared to pour them on the head of the stranger. He came to the shore of Cona, and sent his bard to the king, to demand the combat of thousands:

† Comhal the father of Fingal was slain in battle, against the tribe of Morni, the very day that Fingal was born; so that he may, with propriety, be said to have "been born in the midst of battles."

of the land of many hills. Fingal sat in his hall with the companions of his youth around him. The young heroes were at the chase, and far distant in the desert. The grey-haired chiefs talked of other times, and of the actions of their youth; when the aged NARTHMO† came, the king of streamy Lora.

“This is no time,” begun the chief, “to hear the songs of other years: Erragon frowns on the coast, and lifts ten thousand swords. Gloomy is the king among his chiefs! he is like the darkened moon amidst the meteors of night.”

“Come,” said Fingal, “from thy hall, thou daughter of my love; come from thy hall BOSMINA‡, maid of streamy Morven! NARTHMO, take the steeds¶ of the strangers, and attend the daughter of Fingal: let her bid the king of Sora to our feast, to Selma’s shaded wall. Offer him, O Bosmina, the peace of heroes, and the wealth of generous Aldo; our youths are far distant, and age is on our trembling hands.”

She came to the host of Erragon, like a beam of light to a cloud. In her right hand shone an arrow of gold; and in her left a sparkling shell, the sign of Morven’s peace. Erragon brightened in her presence as a rock before the sudden beams of the sun; when they issue from a broken cloud, divided by the roaring wind.

† NARTH-MOR, ‘great strength.’ Lora, ‘noisy.’

‡ BOS-MHINA, ‘soft and tender hand.’ She was the youngest of Fingal’s children.

¶ These were probably horses taken in the incursions of the Caledonians into the Roman province, which seems to be intimated in the phrase of “the steeds of strangers.”

“ Son of the distant Sora,” began the mild blushing maid, “ come to the feast of Morven king, to Selma’s shaded walls. Take the peer of heroes, O warrior, and let the dark sword rest by thy side. And if thou chusest the wealth of kings, hear the words of the generous Aldo. He gives to Erragon an hundred steeds, the children of the rein; an hundred maids from distant lands; an hundred hawks with fluttering wing, that fly across the sky. An hundred girdles<sup>§</sup> shall also be thine, to bind high-bosomed women; the friends of the births of heroes, and the cure of the sons of toil. Ten shells studded with gems shall shine in Sora towers: the blue water trembles on their star and seems to be sparkling wine. They gladdened once the kings of the world<sup>†</sup>, in the midst of their echoing halls. These, O hero, shall be thine; or thy white-bosomed spouse. Lorn shall roll her bright eyes in thy halls; though Fingal loves the generous Aldo: Fingal! who never injured a hero, though his arm is strong.

“ Soft voice of Cona!” replied the king, “ to him, that he spreads his feast in vain. Let Fin

<sup>§</sup> Sanctified girdles, till very lately, were kept in many families in the north of Scotland; they were bound about women in labour, and were supposed to alleviate their pains, and to accelerate the birth. They were impressed with several mystical figures, and the ceremony of binding them about the woman’s waist, was accompanied with words and gestures which shew the custom to have come originally from the druids.

<sup>†</sup> The Roman emperors. These shells were some of the spoils of the province.



al pour his spoils around me; and bend beneath my power. Let him give me the swords of his fathers, and the shields of other times: that my children may behold them in my halls, and say, These are the arms of Fingal."

"Never shall they behold them in thy halls," said the rising pride of the maid. "They are in the mighty hands of heroes who never yielded in war. King of the echoing Sora! the storm is gathering on our hills. Dost thou not foresee the fall of thy people, son of the distant land?"

She came to Selma's silent halls; the king beheld her down-cast eyes. He rose from his place, and his strength, and shook his aged locks. He took the sounding mail of Trenmor, and the dark-brown shield of his fathers. Darkness filled Selma's hall, when he stretched his hand to his spear: the ghosts of thousands were near, and foresaw the death of the people. Terrible joy rose in the face of the aged heroes: they rushed to meet the foe; their thoughts are on the actions of other years; and on the fame of the orb.

Now the dogs of the chase appeared at Trabal's tomb: Fingal knew that his young heroes followed them, and he stopt in the midst of his course. Oscar appeared the first, then Morn's son, and Nemi's race: Fear-cuth† shewed his loomy form: Dermid spread his dark hair on the wind. Ossian came the last. I hummed the song of other times: my spear supported my eyes over the little streams, and my thoughts were of mighty men. Fingal struck his bossy shield; and gave the dismal sign of war; a thou-

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† Fear-cuth, the same with Fergus, 'the man the word,' or a commander of an army.

and swords, at once unsheathed, gleam on the waving heath. Three grey-haired sons of sor raise the tuneful, mournful voice. Deep and dark with sounding steps, we rush, a gloom-ridge, along: like the shower of a storm, when it pours on the narrow vale:

The king of Morven sat on his hill: the sun-beam of battle flew on the wind: the companions of his youth are near, with all their waving locks of age. Joy rose in the hero's eyes when he beheld his sons in war; when he saw the amidst the lightning of swords, and mindful of the deeds of their fathers. Erragon came on in his strength, like the roar of a winter-storm: the battle falls in his course, and death is at his side.

"Who comes," said Fingal, "like the bounding roe, like the hart of echoing Cona? His shield glitters on his side, and the clang of his arms mournful. He meets with Erragon in the strife? Behold the battle of the chiefs! it is like the contending of ghosts in a gloomy storm. Be fallenest thou, son of the hill, and is thy white bosom stained with blood? Weep, unhappy Lorn! Aldo is no more!"

The king took the spear of his strength; for he was sad for the fall of Aldo: he bent his deathful eyes on the foe: but Gaul met the king of Sora! Who can relate the fight of the chief? The mighty stranger fell.

"Sons of Cona!" Fingal cried aloud, "stand the hand of death. Mighty was he that is now so low? and much is he mourned in Sora! The stranger will come towards his hall, and wonder why it is silent. The king is fallen, O stranger, and the joy of his house is ceased. Listen to the sound of his woods: perhaps his ghost is there: but he is far distant, on Morven, beneath the sword of a foreign foe." Such were the words

of Fingal, when the bard raised the song of peace; we stopped our uplifted swords, and spared the feeble foe. We laid Erragon in that tomb; and I raised the voice of grief: the clouds of night came rolling down, and the ghost of Erragon appeared to some. His face was cloudy and dark; and an half-formed sigh is in his breast. Blest be thy soul, O king of Sora! thine arm was terrible in war!

Lorma sat, in Aldo's hall, at the light of a laming oak: as night came, but he did not return; and the soul of Lorma is sad. "What retains thee, hunter of Cona? for thou didst promise to return. Has the deer been distant far; and do the dark winds sigh, round thee, on the heath? I am in the land of strangers, where is my friend? But Aldo, come from thy echoing hills, O my best beloved!"

Her eyes are turned toward the gate, and she listens to the rustling blast. She thinks it is Aldo's tread, and joy rises in her face: but sorrow returns again, like a thin cloud on the moon.

And wilt thou not return, my love? Let me behold the face of the hill. The moon is in the east. Calm and bright is the breast of the lake! When shall I behold his dogs returning from the chase? When shall I hear his voice loud and distant on the wind? Come from thy echoing hills, hunter of wood, Cona!"

His thin ghost appeared, on a rock, like the stray beam of the moon, when it rushes from between two clouds, and the midnight shower on the field. She followed the empty form over the heath, for she knew that her hero fell. She heard her approaching cries on the wind, like the mournful voice of the breeze, when it sighs over the grass of the cave.

She came, she found her hero: her voice was heard no more; silent she rolled her sad eyes;

she was pale as a watry cloud, that rises from the lake, to the beam of the moon. Few were her days on Cona: she sunk into the tomb. Fingal commanded his bards; and they sang over the death of Lorma. The daughters Morven mourned her for one day in the year when the dark winds of autumn returned.

Son of the distant land †! thou dwellest the field of fame: O let thy song rise, at times in the praise of those that fell: that their ghosts may rejoice around thee; and the soul of Lorma come on a moon-beam ‡, when thou liest down to rest, and the moon looks into thine eye. Then shalt thou see her lovely, but a tear is still on her cheek.

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† The poet addresses himself to the Culdee.  
 ‡ "Be thou a moon-beam, O Morna, near the window of my rest; when my thoughts are peace and the din of arms is over." Fingal, B.

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# Conlath & Cuthona:

A POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

Conlath was the youngest of Morni's sons, and brother to the celebrated Gaul, who is so often mentioned in Ossian's poems. He was in love with Cuthona the daughter of Rumar, when Toscar the son of Kinsena, accompanied by Percuth his friend, arrived, from Ireland, at Mora where Conlath dwelt. He was hospitably received, and according to the custom of the times, feasted three days with Conlath. On the fourth he set sail, and crossing the island of waves, probably, one of the Hebrides, he saw Cuthona hunting, fell in love with her, and carried her away, by force, in his ship. He was forced, by stress of weather, into L-thona a desert isle. In the mean time Conlath hearing of the rape, sailed after him, and found him on the point of sailing for the coast of Ireland. They fought; and they, and their followers, fell by mutual wounds. Cuthona did not long survive; for she died of grief the third day after. Fingal,

hearing of their unfortunate death, sent Steinal the son of Moran to bury them, but forgot to send a bard to sing the funeral song over their tombs. The ghost of Conlath came long after, to Ossian, to entreat him to transmit to posterity his and Cuthona's fame for it was the opinion of the times, that the souls of the deceased were not happy till their elegies were composed by a bard.

**D**ID not Ossian hear a voice? or is it the sound of days that are no more? Oft does the memory of former times come, like the evening-sun, on my soul. The noise of the chase is renewed; and, in thought, I lift the spear. But Ossian did hear a voice: Who art thou, son of the night? The sons of little men are asleep, and the midnight wind is in my hair. Perhaps it is the shield of Fingal that echoes the blast: it hangs in Ossian's hall, and he feels it sometimes with his hands. Yes! I hear the voice of my friend: long has thy voice been absent from mine ear! What brings thee, on thy cloud, Ossian, son of the generous Morni! Are thy friends of the aged near thee? Where is Oscar son of fame? He was often near thee, O Conlath, when the din of battle rose.

**GHOST OF CONLATH.** Sleeps the sweet voice of Cona, in the midst of his rustling hall? Sleeps Ossian in his hall, and his friends without their fame? The sea rolls round the dark I-thona†, and our tombs are not seen by the stranger. How long shall our fame be unheard, so of the echoing Morven?

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† I-thona, 'island of waves,' one of the uninhabited western isles.

OSSIAN. O that mine eyes could behold thee, as thou sittest, dim, on thy cloud! Art thou like the mist of Lano; or an half-extinguished meteor? Of what are the skirts of thy robe? Of what is thine airy bow? But he is gone on his blast like the shadow of mist. Come from thy wall, my harp, and let me hear thy sound. Let the light of memory rise on I-thona; that I may behold my friends. And Ossian does behold his friends, on the dark-blue isle. The cave of Thona appears, with its mossy rocks and bending trees. A stream roars at its mouth, and Toscar bends over its course. Fercuth is sad by his side: and the maid¶ of his love sits at a distance and weeps. Does the wind of the waves deceive me? Or do I hear them speak?

TOSCAR. The night was stormy. From their hills the groaning oaks came down. The sea darkly-tumbled beneath the blast, and the roaring waves were climbing against our rocks. The lightning came often and shewed the blasted fern. Fercuth! I saw the ghost of night¶. Silent he stood, on that bank; his robe of mist flew on the wind. I could behold his tears: an aged man he seemed, and full of thought.

FERCUTH. It was thy father, O Toscar; and he foresees some death among his race.

¶ Cuthona the daughter of Rumar, whom Toscar had carried away by force.

|| It was longthought, in the north of Scotland, that storms were raised by the ghosts of the deceased. This notion is still entertained by the vulgar; for they think that whirlwinds, and sudden squalls of wind are occasioned by spirits, who transport themselves, in that manner, from one place to another.

Such was his appearance on Cromla, before the great Ma-ronnan† fell. Ullin‡ with thy bill of grass, how pleasant are thy vales! Silence near thy blue streams, and the sun is on the fields. Soft is the sound of the harp in Selama\* and pleasant the cry of the hunter on Cromla. But we are in the dark I-thona, surrounded by the storm. The billows lift their white heads above our rocks; and we tremble amidst the night.

**TOSCAR.** Whither is the soul of battle fled Fercuth with the locks of age? I have seen the undaunted in danger, and thine eyes burn with joy in the fight. Whither is the soul of battle fled? Our fathers never feared. Go view the settling sea: the stormy wind is laid. The billows still tremble on the deep, and seem to fear the blast. But view the settling sea: morning is grey on our rocks. The sun will look soon from his east; in all his pride of light I lifted up my sails, with joy, before the halls of generous Conlath. My course was by the isle of waves, where his love pursued the dear. I saw her, like that beam of the sun that issues from the cloud. Her hair was on her heaving breast she, bending forward, drew the bow: her white arm seemed, behind her, like the snow of Cromla. Come to my soul, I said, thou huntress of the isle of waves! But she spends her time in tears, and thinks of the generous Conlath. Where can I find thy peace, Cutlona, lovely maid!

† Ma-ronnan was the brother of Toscar.

‡ Ulster in Ireland.

\* Selamath.—‘beautiful to behold,’ the name of Toscar’s palace, on the coast of Ulster, near the mountain Cromla, the scene of the epic poem.



**CUTHONA** †. A distant steep bends over the sea, with aged trees and mossy rocks: the billows roll at its feet: on its side is the dwelling of noes. The people call it *A dven*. There the towers of *Mora* rise. There *Conlath* looks over the sea for his only love. The daughters of the chase returned, and he beheld their downcast eyes. Where is the daughter of *Rumar*? But they answered not. My peace dwells on *Arduen*, son of the distant land!

**TOSCAR**. And *Cuthona* shall return to her peace; to the halls of generous *Conlath*. He is the friend of *Toscar*: I have feasted in his halls. Rise, ye gentle breezes of *Ullin*, and stretch my sails towards *Arduen's* shores. *Cuthona* shall rest on *Arduen*; but the days of *Toscar* will be sad. I shall sit in my cave in the field of the sun. The blast will rustle in my trees, and I shall think it is *Cuthona's* voice. But she is distant far, in the halls of the mighty *Conlath*.

**CUTHONA**. Oh! what cloud is that? It carries the ghosts of my fathers, I see the skirts of their robes, like grey and watry mist. When shall I fall, O *Rumar*? Sad *Cuthona* sees her death. Will not *Conlath* behold me, before I enter the narrow house? ‡

**OSSIAN**. And he will behold thee, O maid: he comes along the rolling sea. The death of *Toscar* is dark on his spear; and a wound is in his side. He is pale at the cave of *Thona*, and

† *Cuthona*, 'the mournful sound of the waves; a poetical name given her by *Ossian*, on account of her mourning to the sound of the waves; her name, in tradition, is *Gornu-huil*, 'the blue eyed maid.'

‡ The grave.

shews his ghastly wound. Where art thou with thy tears, Cuthona? the chief of Moradies. The vision grows dim on my mind: I behold the chiefs no more. But, O ye bards of future times, remember the fall of Con-ath with tears: he fell before his day; and sadness darkened in his hall. His mother looked to his shield on the wall, and it was bloody||. She knew that her hero died, and her sorrow was heard on Mora. Art thou pale on thy rock, Cuthona, beside the fallen chiefs? Night comes, and day returns, but none appears to raise their tomb. Thou frightenest the screaming fowls away, and thy tears for ever flow. Thou art pale as a watry cloud, that rises from a lake.

The sons of the desert came, and they found her dead. They raise a tomb over the heroes: and she rests at the side of Conlath. Come not to my dreams, O Conlath; for thou hast received thy fame. Be thy voice far distant from my hall; that sleep may descend at night. O that I could forget my friends; till my footsteps cease to be seen! till I come among them with joy; and lay my aged limbs in the narrow house!

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|| It was the opinion of the times, that the arms left by the heroes at home, became bloody the very instant their owners were killed, tho' at ever so great a distance.

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# Carthon:

A POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

This poem is complete, and the subject of it, as of most of Ossian's compositions, tragical. In the time of Comhal the son of Trathal, and father of the celebrated Fingal, Clessammor the son of Thaddu and brother of Morna, Fingal's mother, was driven by a storm into the river Clyde, on the banks of which stood Balclutha, a town belonging to the Britons between the walls. He was hospitably received by Reuthamir, the principal man in the place, who gave him Moina his only daughter in marriage. Reuda, the son of Cormo, a Briton who was in love with Moina, came to Reuthamir's house, and behaved haughtily towards Clessammor. A quarrel ensued, in which Reuda was killed; the Britons who attended him pressed so hard on Clessammor, that he was obliged to throw himself into the Clyde, and swim to his ship. He hoisted sail, and the wind being favourable, bore him out to sea. He often endeavoured to return, and carry off his beloved Moina by night; but the wind continuing contrary, he was forced to desist.

Malvina, who had been left with child by her husband, brought forth a son, and died soon after. Reuthamir named the child Carthon, i. e. 'the murmur of waves,' from the storm which carried off Clessamnor his father, who was supposed to have been cast away. When Carthon was three years old, Comhal the father of Fingal, in one of his expeditions against the Britons, took and burnt Balclutha. Reuthamir was killed in the attack: and Carthon was carried safe away by his nurse, who fled farther into the country of the Britons. Carthon, coming to man's estate, was resolved to revenge the fall of Balclutha on Comhal's posterity. He set sail from the Clyde, and, falling on the coast of Morven, defeated two of Fingal's heroes, who came to oppose his progress. He was, at last, unwittingly killed by his father Clessamnor, in a single combat. This story is the foundation of the present poem, which opens on the night preceding the death of Carthon, so that what passed before is introduced by way of episode. The poem is addressed to Malvina the daughter of Toscar.

**A** TALE of the times of old! The deeds of days of other years.

The murmur of thy streams, O Lora, brings back the memory of the past. The sound of thy woods, Gama-lar, is lovely in mine ear. Dost thou not behold, Malvina, a rock with its head of heath? Three aged firs bend from its face: green is the narrow plain at its feet; there the flower of the mountain grows, and shakes its white head in the breeze. The thistle is there alone, and sheds its aged beard. Two stones, half sunk in the ground, shew their heads of moss. The deer of the mountain avoids the place, for he beholds the grey ghost that guards

it), for the mighty lie, O Malvina, in the narrow plain of the rock.

A tale of the times of old! the deeds of days of other years.

Who comes from the land of strangers, with his thousands around him? the sun-beam pours its bright stream before him; and his hair meets the wind of his hills. His face is settled from war. He is calm as the evening beam, that looks from the cloud of the west; on Coma's silent vale. Who is it but Conhal's son †, the king of mighty deeds! he beholds his hills with joy, and bids a thousand voices rise. Ye have fled over your fields, ye sons of the distant land! The king of the world sits in his hall, and hears of his people's flight. He lifts his red eye of pride, and takes his father's sword. "Ye have fled over your fields, sons of the distant land!"

Such were the words of the bards, when they came to Selma's halls. A thousand lights ‡ from the stranger's land arose, in the midst of the people. The feast is spread around; and the night passed away in joy. "Where is the noble Clessanmor †" said the ten-hundred Fingal.

† It was the opinion of the times, that deer saw the ghosts of the dead. To this day, when beasts suddenly start without any apparent cause, the vulgar think, that they see the spirits of the deceased.

‡ Fingal returns here, from an expedition against the Romans, which was celebrated by Ossian in a particular poem.

§ Probably wax-lights: which are often mentioned as carried, among other booty, from the Roman province.

† Clessanmor, 'mighty deeds.'

“Where is the companion of my father, in the days of my joy? Sullen and dark he passes his days in the vale of echoing Lora: but, behold, he comes from the hill, like a steed in his strength, who finds his companions in the breeze; and tosses his bright mane in the wind. Blest be the soul of Clessammor, why so long from Selma?”

“Returns the chief,” said Clessammor, “in the midst of his fame? Such was the renown of Comhal in the battles of his youth. Often did we pass over Carun to the land of the strangers; our swords returned, not unstained with blood: nor did the kings of the world rejoice. Why do I remember the battles of my youth? My hair is mixed with grey. My hand forgets to bend the bow; and I lift a lighter spear. O that my joy would return, as when I first beheld the maid; the white-bosomed daughter of strangers, Moina\* with the dark-blue eyes!”

“Tell,” said the mighty Fingal, “the tale of thy youthful days. Sorrow, like a cloud on the sun, shades the soul of Clessammor. Mournful are thy thoughts, alone, on the banks of the roaring Lora. Let us hear the sorrow of thy youth, and the darkness of thy days.

“It was in the days of peace,” replied the great Clessammor, “I came, in my bounding ship, to Balclutha’s|| walls of towers. The wind had

\* Moina, ‘soft in temper and person.’ We find the British names in this poem derived from the Gaelic, which is a proof that the ancient language of the whole island was one and the same.

|| Balclutha, i. e. the town of Clyde, probably the Alcluta of Bede.

scared behind my sails, and Clutha'st streams received my dark-bosomed vessel. Three days I remained in Reuthamir's halls, and saw that beam of light, his daughter. The joy of the shell went round, and the aged hero gave the fair. Her breasts were like foam on the wave, and her eyes like stars of light: her hair was dark as the raven's wing: her soul was generous and mild. My love for Moira was great; and my heart poured forth in joy.

“The son of a stranger came; a chief who loved the white-bosomed Moira. His words were mighty in the hall, and he often half un-sheathed his sword. Where, he said, is the mighty Comhal, the rest-less wanderer, of the heath? Comes he, with his host, to Balclutha, since Clessammor is so bold? My soul, I replied, O warrior! burns in a light of its own. I stand without fear in the midst of thousands, though the valiant are distant far. Stranger! thy words are mighty, for Clessammor is alone. But my sword trembles by my side, and longs to glitter in my hand. Speak no more of Comhal, son of the winding Clutha!”

“The strength of his pride arose. We fought;

‡ Clutha, or Cluth, the Gaelic name of the river Clyde; the signification of the word is ‘bending,’ in allusion to the winding course of that river. From Clutha is derived its Latin name, Glotta.

§ The word in the original here rendered ‘restless wanderer,’ is Scuta, which is the true origin of the Scots of the Romans; an opprobrious name imposed by the Britons, on the Caledonians, on account of the continual incursions into their country.

he fell beneath my sword. The banks of Clutha heard his fall, and a thousand spears glittered around. I fought: the strangers prevailed. I plunged into the stream of Clutha. My white sails rose over the waves, and I bounded on the dark-blue sea. Moina came to the shore, and rolled the red eye of her tears: her dark hair flew on the wind, and I heard her cries. Often did I turn my ship; but the winds of the east prevailed. Nor Clutha ever since have I seen: Nor Moina of the dark-brown hair. She fell on Balclutha; for I have seen her ghost. I knew her as she came through the dusky night, along the murmur of Lora: she was like the new moon seen through the gathered mist: when the sky pours down its flaky snow, and the world is silent and dark."

"Raise\*, ye bards," said the mighty Fingal, "the praise of unhappy Moina. Call her ghost, with your songs, to our hills; that she may rest with the fair of Morven, the sun-beam, of other days, and the delight of heroes of old. I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded in the halls: and the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place, by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook, there,

† The title of this poem, in the original, is 'Duan na niaoi, i. e. the Poem of the Hymns;' probably on account of its many digressions from the subject, all which are in a lyric measure, as this song of Fingal. Fingal is celebrated by the Irish historians for his wisdom in making laws, his poetical genius, and his foreknowledge of events—O'Flaherty goes so far as to say, that Fingal's laws were extant in his own time.



its lovely head: the moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out from the windows, the rank grass of the wall waved round his head. Desolate is the dwelling of Moina, silence is in the house of her fathers. Raise the song of mourning, O bards, over the land of strangers. They have but fallen before us: for, one day, we must fall. Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy towers to-day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty court, and whistles round thy half-worn shield. And let the blast of the desert come! we shall be renowned in our day. The mark of my arm shall be in the battle, and my name in the song of bards. Raise the song; send round the shell: and let joy be heard in my hall. When thou, sun of heaven, shalt fall! if thou shalt fall, thou mighty light! if thy brightness<sup>4</sup> is for a season, like Fingal; our fame shall survive thy beams."

Such was the song of Fingal, in the day of his joy. His thousand bards leaned forward from their seats, to hear the voice of the king. It was like the music of the harp on the gale of the spring. Lovely were thy thoughts, O Fingal! why had not Ossian the strength of thy soul! But thou standest alone, my father; and who can equal the king of Morven?

The night passed away in song, and morning returned in joy: the mountains shewed their grey heads; and the blue face of ocean smiled. The white wave is seen tumbling round the distant rock; the grey mist rises, slowly, from the lake. It came, in the figure of an aged man, along the silent plain. Its large limbs did not move in steps; for a ghost supported it in mid air. It came towards Selma's hall, and dissolved in a shower of blood.

The king alone beheld the terrible sight, and he foresaw the death of the people. He came, in silence, to his hall; and took his father's spear. The mail rattled on his breast. The heroes rose around. They looked in silence on each other, marking the eyes of Fingal. They saw the battle in his face: the death of armies on his spear. A thousand shields, at once, are placed on their arms: and they drew a thousand swords. The hall of Selma brightened around. The clang of arms ascends. The grey dogs howl in their place. No word is among the mighty chie's. Each marked the eyes of the king; and half-assumed his spear.

"Sons of Morven," begun the king, "this is no time to fill the shell. The battle darkens near us; and death hovers over the land. Some ghost, the friend of Fingal, has forewarned us of the foe. The sons of the stranger come from the darkly rolling sea. For, from the water came the sign of Morven's gloomy danger. Let each assume his heavy spear, and gird on his father's sword. Let the dark helmet rise on every head; and the mail pour its lightning from every side. The battle gathers like a tempest and soon shall ye hear the roar of death."

The hero moved on before his host, like a cloud before a ridge of heaven's fire; when it pours on the sky of night, and mariners foresee a storm. On Cona's rising heath they stood: the white-bosomed maids beheld them above like a grove. They foresaw the death of their youths, and looked towards the sea with fear. The white waves deceived them for distant sails, and the tear is on their cheek. The sun rose on the sea, and we beheld a distant fleet. Like the mist of ocean they came: and poured their youth upon the coast. The chief was among them, like the stag in the midst of the herd. His shield is studded

with gold, and stately strode the king of spears;  
He moved towards Selma; his thousands moved  
behind.

“Go, with thy song of peace,” said Fingal;  
“go, Ullin, to the king of swords. Tell him  
that we are mighty in battle; and that the ghosts  
of our foes are many. But renowned are they  
who have feasted in my halls! they shew the  
arms† of my fathers in a foreign land: the sons  
of the strangers wonder, and bless the friends of  
Morven’s race; for our names have been heard  
afar; the kings of the world shook in the midst  
of their people.”

Ullin went with his song. Fingal rested on  
his spear: he saw the mighty foe in his armour;  
and he blest the stranger’s son. “How stately  
art thou, son of the sea!” said the king of woody  
Morven. “Thy sword is a beam of might by  
thy side: thy spear is a fir that defies the storm.  
The varied face of the moon is not broader than  
thy shield. Ruddy is thy face of youth! soft  
the ringlets of thy hair! But this tree may fall;  
and his memory be forgot! The daughter of the  
stranger will be sad, and look to the rolling sea:  
the children will say, “We see a ship; perhaps  
it is the king of Baidlutha.” The tear starts  
from their mother’s eye. Her thoughts are of  
him that sleeps in Morven.”

Such were the words of the king, when Ullin  
came to the mighty Carthon: he hrew down  
the spear before him; and raised the song of

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† It was a custom among the ancient Scots, to  
exchange arms with their guests, and those arms  
were preserved long in the different families, as  
monuments of the friendship which subsisted be-  
tween their ancestors.

peace. "Come to the feast of Fingal, Carthon, from the rolling sea! partake the feast of the king, or lift the spear of war. The ghosts of our foes are many: but renowned are the friends of Morven! Behold that field, O Carthon; many a green hill rises there with mossy stones and rustling grass; these are the tombs of Fingal's foes, the sons of the rolling sea."

"Dost thou speak to the feeble in arms," said Carthon, "bard of the woody Morven? Is my face pale for fear, son of the peaceful song? Why, then, dost thou think to darken my soul with the tales of those who fell? My arm has fought in the battle; my renown is known afar. Go to the feeble in arms, and bid them yield to Fingal. Have not I seen the fallen Balclutha? and shall I feast with Comhal's son? Comhal! who threw his fire in the midst of my father's hall! I was young, and knew not the cause why the virgin wept. The columns of smoke pleased mine eye, when they rose above my walls; I often looked back, with gladness, when my friends fled along the hill. But when the years of my youth came on, I beheld the moss of my fallen walls: my sigh arose with the morning, and my tears descended with night. Shall I not fight, I said to my soul, against the children of my foes? And I will fight, O bard; I feel the strength of my soul."

His people gathered around the hero, and drew, at once, their shining swords. He stands, in the midst, like a pillar of fire: the tear half-starting from his eye, for he thought of the fallen Balclutha, and the crowded pride of his soul arose. Sidelong he looked up to the bill, where our heroes shone in arms; the spear trembled in his hand: and, bending forward, he seemed to threaten the king.

"Shall I," said Fingal to his soul, "meet,

at once, the king : Shall I stop him, in the midst of his course, before his fame shall arise ? But the bard, hereafter, may say, when he sees the tomb of Carthon ; Fingal took his thousands, along with him, to battle, before the noble Carthon fell. No : bards of the times to come ! thou shalt not lessen Fingal's fame. My heroes will fight the youth, and Fingal behold the battle. If he overcomes, I rush, in my strength, like the roaring stream of Cona. Who, of my heroes, will meet the son of the rolling sea ? Many are his warriors on the coast : and strong is his ashen spear !”

Cathul† rose, in his strength, the son of the mighty Lormar : three hundred youths attend the chief, the race|| of his native streams. Feeble was his arm against Carthon ; he fell, and his heroes fled. Connal¶ resumed the battle, but he broke his heavy spear ; he lay bound on the field ; and Carthon pursued his copie. “ Clessammor !” said the king\* of Morven, “ where is the spear of thy strength ! Wilt thou behold Connal bound ; thy friend, at the stream of Lora ! Rise, in the light of thy steel, thou friend of Conhal. Let the youth of Balclutha

† Cath-’huil, ‘ the eye of battle.’

|| It appears, from this passage, that clanship was established in the days of Fingal, though not on the same footing with the present tribes in the north of Scotland.

¶ This Connal is very much celebrated, in ancient poetry, for his wisdom and valour : there is a small tribe still subsisting, in the North, who pretend they are descended from him.

\* Fingal did not then know that Carthon was the son of Clessammor.

feel the strength of Morven's race." He rose in the strength of his steel, shaking his grisly locks. He fitted the shield to his side; and rushed, in the pride of valour.

Carthon stood, on that heathy rock, and saw the hero's approach. He loved the terrible joy of his face; and his strength, in the locks of age. "Shall I lift that spear," he said, "that never strikes, but once, the foe? Or shall I, with the words of peace, preserve the warrior's life? Stately are his steps of age? lovely the remnant of his years. Perhaps it is the love of Moina; the father of ear-borne Carthon. Often have I heard, that he dwelt at the echoing stream of Lora."

Such were his words, when Clessammor came, and lifted high his spear. The youth received it on his shield, and spoke the words of peace. "Warrior of the aged locks! Is there no youth to lift the spear? Hast thou no son, to raise the shield before his father, and to meet the arm of youth? Is the spouse of thy love no more? or weeps she over the tombs of thy sons? Art thou of the kings of men? What will be the fame of my sword if thou shalt fall?"

"It will be great, thou son of pride!" began the tall Clessammor; I have been renowned in battle; but I never told my name † to a foe. Yield

† To tell one's name to an enemy was reckoned in those days of heroism, a manifest evasion of fighting him: for, if it was once known, the friendship subsisted, of old, between the ancestors of the combatants, the battle immediately ceased: and the ancient amity of their forefather was renewed. A man who tells his name to his enemy, was of old, an ignominious term for a coward.

to me, son of the wave, and then thou shalt know, that the mark of my sword is in many a field." "I never yielded, king of spears!" replied the noble pride of Carthon: "I have also fought in battles! and I beheld my future fame. Despise me not, thou chief of men; my arm, my spear is strong. Retire among thy friends, and let young heroes fight." "Why dost thou wound my soul!" replied Clessammor with a tear. "Age does not tremble on my hand; I still can lift the sword. Shall I fly in Fingal's sight; in the sight of him I loved? Son of the sea? I never fled: exalt thy pointed spear."

They fought, like two contending winds, that strive to roll the wave. Carthon bade his spear to err; for he still thought that the foe was the spouse of Moina. He broke Clessammor's beamy spear in twain, and seized his shining sword. But as Carthon was binding the chief, the chief drew the dagger of his fathers. He saw the foe's uncovered side; and opened, there, a wound.

Fingal saw Clessammor low: he moved in the sound of his steel. The host stood silent, in his presence; they turned their eyes towards the hero. He came, like the sullen noise of a storm, before the winds arise: the hunter hears it in the vale, and retires to the cave of the rock. Carthon stood in his place: the blood is rushing down his side: he saw the coming down of the king; and his hopes of fame arose†; but pale

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† This expression admits of a double meaning, either that Carthon hoped to acquire glory by killing Fingal, or to be rendered famous by falling by his hand; the last is the most probable, as Carthon is already wounded.

was his cheek: his hair flew loose, his helme  
shook on high: the force of Carthon failed! but  
his soul was strong.

Fingal beheld the hero's blood; he stoop'd the  
uplifted spear. "Yield, king of swords!" said  
Comhal's son; "I behold thy blood. Thou has  
been mighty in battle; and thy fame shall neve  
fade." "Art thou the king so far renowned?"  
replied the car-borne Carthon. "Art thou the  
light of death, that frightens the kings of th  
world? But why should Carthon ask? for he i  
like the stream of the desert; strong as a river  
in his course; swift as the eagle of the sky. (t  
that I had fought with the king; that my fam  
might be great in the song! that the hunter be  
holding my tomb, might say, he fought with th  
mighty Fingal. But Carthon dies unknown! h  
has poured out his force on the feeble."

"But thou shalt not die unknown," replie  
the king of woody Morven: "my bards ar  
many, O Carthon! and their songs descend t  
future times. The children of the years to com  
shall hear the fame of Carthon; when they s  
round the burning oak||, and the night is spen  
in the songs of old. The hunter, sitting in th  
heath, shall hear the rustling blast; and, raisin  
his eyes, behold the rock where Carthon fel  
He shall turn to his son, and shew the plac  
where the mighty fought; There the king o  
Balclutha fought, like the strength of a thousan  
streams."

|| In the north of Scotland, till very lately, the  
burnt a large trunk of an oak at their festivals  
it was called the trunk of the feast. Time ha  
so much consecrated the custom, that the vulga  
thought it a kind of sacrilege to disuse it.



Joy rose in Carthon's face: he lifted his heavy eyes. He gave his sword to Fingal, to lie within his hall, that the memory of Balclutha's king might remain on Morven. The battle ceased along the field, for the bard had sung the song of peace. The chiefs gathered round the falling Carthon, and heard his words, with sighs. Silent they leaned on their spears, while Balclutha's hero spoke. His hair sighed in the wind, and his words were feeble.

"King of Morven," Carthon said, "I fall in the midst of my course. A foreign tomb receives, a youth, the last of Reuthanir's race. Darkness dwells in Balclutha: and the shadows of grief in Crathmo. But raise my remembrance on the banks of Lora: where my fathers dwelt. Perhaps the husband of Moina will mourn over his fallen Carthon." His words reached the heart of Clessammor: he fell, in silence, on his son. The host stood darkened around: no voice on the plains of Lora. Night came, and the moon, from the east, looked on the mournful field: but still they stood, like a silent grove that fits its head on Gormal, when the loud winds are laid, and dark autumn is on the plain.

Three days they mourned over Carthon: on the fourth his father died. In the narrow plain of the rock they lie; and a dim ghost defends their tomb. There lovely Moina is often seen: when the sun-beam darts on the rock, and all around is dark. There she is seen, Malvina, but not like the daughters of the hill. Her robes come from the strangers land; and she is still one

Fingal was sad for Carthon; he desired his bards to mark the day, when shadowy autumn turned. And often did they mark the day, and sing the hero's praise. "Who comes so dark on ocean's rear, like autumn's shadowy cloze:

Death is trembling in his hand! his eyes are flames of fire! Who roars along dark Lora's death? Who but Carthon king of swords? The people fall! see! how he strides, like the sulle ghost of Morven! But there he lies a goodly oak which sudden blasts overturned! When shalt thou rise, Balclotha's joy! lovely car-borne Carthon? Who comes so dark from ocean's roar like autumn's shadowy cloud?" Such were the words of the bards, in the day of their mourning I have accompanied their voice; and added to their song. My soul has been mournful for Carthon, he fell in the days of his valour: and thou O Clessmor! where is thy dwelling in the air? Has the youth forgot his wound? And flie he, on the clouds, with thee? I feel the sun, Malvina, leave me to my rest. Perhaps they may come to my dreams; I think I hear a feeble voice. The beam of heaven delights to shine on the grave of Carthon: I feel it warm around

O thou that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers! Whence are thy beams, O sun thy everlasting light? Thou comest forth, in thy awful beauty, and the stars hide themselves: the sky; the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the western wave. But thou thyself movest alone who can be a companion of thy course? The oaks of the mountains fall: the mountains themselves decay with years; the ocean shrinks and grows again: the moon herself is lost in heaven; but thou art for ever the same; rejoice in the brightness of thy course. When the world is dark with tempests, when thunder rolls, and lightning flies; thou lookest in thy beauty, from the clouds, and laughest at the storm. But Ossian, thou lookest in vain; for he beholds thy beams no more; whether thy yellow hair flows on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the west. But thou art perhaps, li

me, for a season, and thy years will have an end. Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds, careless of the voice of the morning. Exult then, O sun, in the strength of thy youth! Age is dark and unlovely; it is like the glimmering light of the moon, when it shines through broken clouds, and the mist is on the hills; the blast of the north is on the plain, the traveller shrinks in the midst of his journey.

THE

*Death of Cuchullin:*

A POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

Arth the son of Cairbre, supreme king of Ireland, dying, was succeeded by his son Cormac a minor. Cuchullin, the son of Semo, who had rendered himself famous by his great actions, and who resided, at the time, with Corual, the son of Caithbat, in Ulster, was elected regent. In the twenty-seventh year of Cuchullin's age, and the third of his administration, Torlath, the son of Cantala, one of the chiefs of that colony of Belgæ, who were in possession of the south of Ireland, rebelled in Connaught, and advanced towards Temor in order to dethrone Cormac, who, excepting Feradath, afterwards king of Ireland, was the only one of the Scottish race of kings existing in that country. Cuchullin marched against him, came up with him at the lake of Leg and totally defeated his forces. Torlath fell in the battle by Cuchullin's hand; but as he his

self pressed too eagerly on the flying enemy, he was mortally wounded by an arrow, and died the second day after. The good fortune of Cormac fell with Cuchillin: many set up for themselves, and anarchy and confusion reigned. At last Cormac was taken off; and Cairbar, lord of Acha, one of the competitors for the throne, having defeated all his rivals, became sole monarch of Ireland. The family of Fingal, who were in the interest of Cormac's family, were resolved to deprive Cairbar of the throne he had usurped. Fingal arrived from Scotland with an army, defeated the friends of Cairbar, and re-established the family of Cormac in the possession of the kingdom. The present poem, concerns the death of Cuchillin. It is, in the original, called 'Duan loch Leigo', i. e. 'The poem of Lego's Lake,' and is an episode introduced in a great poem, which celebrated the last expedition of Fingal into Ireland. The greatest part of the poem is lost, and nothing remains but some episodes, which a few old people in the north of Scotland retain on memory.

**I**S the wind on Fingal's shield? Or is the voice of past times in my hall? Sing on, sweet voice, for thou art pleasant, and carriest away my night with joy. Sing on, O Bragela, daughter of car-borne Surlan!

"It is the white wave of the rock, and not Cuchillin's sails. Often do the mists deceive me for the ship of my love! when they rise round some ghost, and spread their grey skirts on the wind. Why dost thou delay thy coming, son of the generous Semo! Four times has autumn returned with its winds, and raised the seas of To-

gorma†, since thou hast been in the roar of battles and Bragela distant far. Hills of the isle of mist when will ye answer to his hounds? But ye are dark in your clouds, and sad Bragela calls in vain. Night comes rolling down: the face of ocean fails. The heath-cock's head is beneath his wing: the hind sleeps with the hart of the desert. They shall rise with the morning's light, and feed on the mossy stream. But my tears return with the sun, my sighs come on with the night. When wilt thou come in thine arms, O chief of mossy Tura?"

Pleasant is thy voice in Ossian's ear, daughter of car-borne Sorglan! but retire to the hall of shells; to the beam of the burning oak. Attend to the murmur of the sea: it rolls at Denstaich's walls: let sleep descend on thy blue eyes, and the hero come to thy dreams.

Cuchullin sits at Lego's lake, at the dark rolling of waters. Night is around the hero; and his thousands spread on the heath: a hundred oaks burn in the midst, the feast of shells is smoking wide. Carril strikes the harp beneath a tree: his grey locks glitter in the beam, the rustling blast of night is near, and lifts his aged hair. His song is of the blue Togorma, and of its chief

† Togorma, i. e. the island of blue waves, one of the Hebrides, was subject to Connal, the son of Caithbat, Cuchullin's friend. He is sometime called the son of Colgar, from one of that name who was the founder of the family. Connal, a few days before the news of Torlath's revolt came to Temora, had sailed to Togorma, his native isle; where he was detained by contrary winds during the war in which Cuchullin was killed.

Cuchollin's friend. "Why art thou absent, Connal, in the day of the gloomy storm? The chiefs of the south have convened against the car-borne Cormac; the winds detain thy sails, and thy blue waters roll around thee. But Cormac is not alone; the son of Semo fights his battles. Semo's son his battles fight: the terror of the stranger! he that is like the vapour of death slowly borne by sultry winds. The sun reddens in its presence, the people fall around."

Such was the song of Carril, when a son of the fee appeared; he threw down his pointless spear and spoke the words of Torlath; Torlath the chief of heroes, from Lego's sable surge: he that led his thousands to battle, against car-borne Cormac; Cormac who was distant far, in Temora's† echoing halls: he learned to bend the bow of his fathers; and to lift the spear. Nor long didst thou lift the spear, mildly shining beam of youth! death stands dim behind thee, like the darkened half of the moon behind its growing light. Cuchullin rose before the bard‡, that came from generous Torlath; he offered him the shell of joy, and honoured the son of songs. "Sweet voice of Lego!" he said, "what are the words

† The royal palace of the Irish kings; Teamh-rath, according to some of the bards.

‡ The bards were the heralds in ancient times; and their persons were sacred on account of their office. In latter times they abused that privilege, and as their persons were inviolable, they satyrised and lampooned so freely those who were not liked by their patrons, that they became a public nuisance. Screened under the character of heralds, they grossly abused the enemy when he would not accept the terms they offered.

of Torlath? Comes he to our feast or battle, the car-borne son of Cantela¶?"

"He comes to thy battle," replied the bard, "to the sounding strife of spears. When morning is grey on Lego, Torlath will fight on the plain: and wilt thou meet him, in thine arms, king of the isle of mist? Terrible is the spear of Torlath! it is a meteor of night. He lifts it, and the people fall: death sits in the lightning of his sword." "Do I fear?" replied Cuchullin, "the spear of car-borne Torlath? He is brave as a thousand heroes; but my soul delights in war. The sword rests not by the side of Cuchullin, bard of the times of old! Morning shall meet me on the plain, and gleam on the blue arms of Semo's son. But sit thou on the heath, O bard! and let us hear thy voice: partake of the joyful shíl: and hear the songs of Femora."

"This is no time," replied the bard, "to hear the song of joy; when the mighty are to meet in battle like the strength of the waves of Lego. Why art thou so dark, Slimora\*! with all thy silent woods? No green star trembles on thy top; no moon-beam on thy side. But the meteors of death are there, and the grey watry forms of ghosts. Why art thou dark, Slimora! with thy silent woods?" He retired, in the sound of his song: Carril accompanied his voice. The music was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul. The ghosts of departed bards heard it from Slimora's side. Soft sounds spread along the wood, and the silent valleys of night rejoice. So, when he sits in the silence of noon, in the valley of his breeze,

¶ Cean-teola, 'head of a family.'

\* Slia'-mor, 'great hill.'



the humming of the mountain bee comes to Ossian's ear : the gale drowns it often in its course ; but the pleasant sound returns again.

“ Raise,” said Cuchull'n, to his hundred bards, “ the song of the noble Fingal : that song which he hears at night, when the dreams of his rest descend : when the bards strike the distant harp, and the faint light gleams on Selma's walls. Or let the grief of Lara rise, and the sighs of the mother of Calmar †, when he was sought, in vain, on his hills ; and she beheld his bow in the hall. Carril, place the shield of Cathbat on that branch ; and let the spear of Cuchullin be near ; that the sound of my battle may rise with the grey beam of the east.” The hero leaned on his father's shield : the song of Lara rose. The hundred bards were distant far : Carril alone is near the chief. The words of the song were his ; and the sound of his harp was mournful.

“ Alcitha ‡ with the aged locks ! mother of ear-borne Calmar ! why dost thou look towards the desert, to behold the return of thy son ? These are not his heroes, dark on the heath ; nor is that the voice of Calmar ; it is but the distant grove, Alcitha ! but the roar of the

† Calmar the son of Matha. His death is related at large in the third book of Fingal. He was the only son of Matha : and the family was extinct in him. The seat of the family was on the banks of the river Lara, in the neighbourhood of Lego, and probably near the place where Cuchullin lay ; which circumstance suggested to him the lamentation of Alcitha over her son.

‡ *Aid-cla'tha*, ‘decaying beauty ;’ probably a poetical name given the mother of Calmar, by the bard himself.

mountain wind!" "Whence bounds over Lara's stream, sister of the noble Calmar? Does not Alcitha behold his spear? But her eyes are dim! Is it not the son of Matha, daughter of my love?"

"It is but an aged oak, Alcitha!" replied the lovely weeping Al-naf. "It is but an oak, Alcitha, bent over Lara's stream. But who comes along the plain? sorrow is in his speed. He lifts high the spear of Calmar. Alcitha! it is covered with blood!" "But it is covered with the blood of foes, sister of car-borne Calmar! his spear never returned unstained with blood, nor his bow from the strife of the mighty. The battle is consumed in his presence: he is a flame of death, Alona! Youth of the mournful speed! where is the son of Alcitha? Does he return with his fame? in the midst of his echoing shields? Thou art dark and silent! Calmar is then no more. Tell me not, warrior, how he fell, for I cannot hear of his wound."

"Why dost thou look towards the desert, mother of car-borne Calmar?"

Such was the song of Carril, when Cuchullin lay on his shield: the bards rested on their harps,

¶ Alcitha speaks. Calmar had promised to return by a certain day, and his mother and his sister Alona are represented by the bard, as looking with impatience, towards that quarter where they expected Calmar would make his first appearance.

† Aluine, 'exquisitely beautiful.'

‡ Alcitha speaks.

¶ She addresses herself to Lanir, Calmar's friend, who had returned with the news of his death.

and sleep fell softly around. The son of Seme was awake alone; his soul was fixed on the war. The burning oaks began to decay; faint red light is spread around. A feeble voice is heard! the ghost of Calmar came. He stalked in the beam. Dark is the wound in his side. His hair is disordered and loose. Joy sits darkly on his face: and he seems to invite Cuchullin to his cave.

“Son of the cloudy night!” said the rising chief of Erin: “Why dost thou bend thy dark eyes on me, ghost of the car-bore Calmar? Wouldest thou frighten me, O Matha’s son! from the battles of Cormac? Thy hand was not feeble in war; neither was thy voice<sup>¶</sup> for peace. How art thou changed, chief of Lara! if thou now dost advise to fly! But, Calmar, I never fled. I never feared<sup>‡</sup> the ghost of the desert. Small is their knowledge and weak their hands; their dwelling is in the wind. But my soul grows in danger, and rejoices in the noise of steel. Retire thou to thy cave; thou art not Calmar’s ghost; he delighted in battle, and his arm was like the thunder of heaven.”

He retired in his blast with joy, for he had heard the voice of his praise. The faint beam of the morning rose, and the sound of C-ithbat’s buckler spread. Green Ullin’s warriors convened, like the roar of many streams. The horn of war is heard over Lego; the mighty Torlata came.

“Why dost thou come with thy thousands, Cuchullin?” said the chief of Lego. I know the

¶ See Calmar’s speech, in the first book of Fingal.

‡ See Cuchullin’s reply to Connal, concerning Cregal’s ghost, Fingal, B. II.

strength of thy arm, and thy soul is an unextinguished fire. Why fight we not on the plain, and let our hosts behold our deeds? Let them behold us like roaring waves, that tumble round a rock: the mariners hasten away, and look on their strife with fear."

"Thou risest, like the sun, on my soul," replied the son of Seno. "Thine arm is mighty, O Torlath; and worthy of my wrath. Retire, ye men of Uilin, to Slimora's shady side; behold the chief of Erin, in the day of his fame. Carril! tell to mighty Connal, if Cuchullin must fall, tell him I accused the winds which roar on Togorma's waves. Never was he a' sent in battle, when the strife of my fame arose. Let this sword be before Cormac, like the beam of heaven: let his counsel sound in Temora in the day of danger."

He rushed, in the sound of his arms, like the terrible spirit of Loda<sup>§</sup>, when he comes in the roar of a thousand storms, and scatters battles from his eyes. He sits on a cloud over Lochlin's seas: his mighty hand is on his sword, and the winds lift his flaming locks. So terrible was Cuchullin in the day of his fame. Torlath fell by his hand, and Lego's heroes mourned. They gather around the chief like the clouds of the desert. A thousand swords rose at once; a thousand arrows flew; but he stood like a rock in the midst of a roaring sea. They fell around; he strode in blood: dark Slimora echoed wide. The sons of Uilin came, and the battle spread

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§ Loda, in the third book of Fingal, is mentioned as a place of worship, in Scandinavia by the spirit of Loda, the poet probably means Odin, the great deity of the northern nations.

over Lego. The chief of Erin overcame; he returned over the field with his fame. But pale he returned! The joy of his face was dark. He rolled his eyes in silence. The sword hung, unsheathed, in his hand, and his spear bent at every step.

“ Carril,” said the king in secret, “ the strength of Cuchullin fails. My days are with the years that are past; and no morning of mine shall arise. They shall seek me at Temora, but I shall not be found. Corinac will weep in his hall, and say ‘ Where is Tura’s chief?’ But my name is renowned! my fame is in the song of bards. The youth will say in secret, ‘ O let me die as Cuchullin died! renown clothed him like a robe; and the light of his fame is great.’ Draw the arrow from my side; and lay Cuchullin beneath that oak. Place the shield of Caithbat near, that they may behold me amidst the arms of my fathers.”

“ And is the son of Semo fallen?” said Carril with a sigh. “ Mournful are Tura’s walls; and sorrow dwells at Dunscaich. Thy spouse is left alone in her youth, the son of thy love is alone. He shall come to Braxla and ask her why she weeps. He shall lift his eyes to the wall, and see his father’s sword. ‘ Whose sword is that?’ he will say; and the soul of his mother is sad. Who is that like the hart of the desert, in the murmur of his course? His eyes look wildly

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¶ Conloch, who was afterwards very famous for his great exploits in Ireland. He was so remarkable for his dexterity in handling the javelin, that when a good marksman is described, it has passed into a proverb, in the north of Scotland, ‘ He is unerring as the arm of Conloch.’

round in search of his friend. Connal, son of Colgar, where hast thou been, when the mighty fell? Did the seas of Togorma roll round thee? Was the wind of the south in thy sails? The mighty have fallen in battle, and thou wast not there. Let none tell it in Selma, nor in Morven's woody land; Fingal will be sad, and the sons of the desert mourn."

By the dark-rolling waves of Lego they raised the hero's tomb. Luath†, at a distance, lies, the companion of Cuchullin, at the chase.

"Blest be thy soul, son of Semo; thou wert mighty in battle. Thy strength was like the strength of a stream: thy speed like the eagle's wing. Thy path in the battle was terrible: the steps of death were behind thy sword. Blest be thy soul, son of Semo; car-borne chief of Dunscaich! Thou hast not fallen by the sword of the mighty, neither was thy blood on the spear of the valiant. The arrow came, like the sting of death in a blast, nor did the feeble hand, which drew the bow, perceive it. Peace to thy soul, in thy cave, chief of the isle of mist!

† It was of old, the custom to bury the favourite dog near the master. This was not peculiar to the ancient Scots, for we find it practised by many other nations in their ages of heroism. There is a stone shewn still at Dunscaich, in the isle of Sky, to which Cuchullin commonly bound his dog Luath. The stone goes by his name to this day.

‡ This is the song of the bards over Cuchullin's tomb. Every stanza closes with some remarkable title of the hero, which was always the custom in funeral elegies. The verse of the song is a lyric measure; and it was of old sung to the harp.

“The mighty are dispersed at Temora: there is none in Cormac’s hall. The king mourns in his youth, for he does not behold thy coming. The sound of thy shield is ceased: his foes are gathering round. Soft be thy rest in thy cave, chief of Erin’s wars! Brageia will not hope thy return, or see thy sails in ocean’s foam. Her steps are not on the shore: nor her ear open to the voice of thy rowers. She sits in the hall of shells, and sees the arms of him that is no more. Thine eyes are full of tears, daughter of car-borne Sorghan! Blest be thy soul in death, O chief of shady Cromla!”

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# *Dar-thula :*

A POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

It may not be improper here, to give the story which is the foundation of this poem, as it is handed down by tradition. Usnoth, lord of Etha, which is probably that part of Argyleshire which is near Loch Ets, an arm of the sea in Lorn, had three sons, Nathos, Althos and Ardan, by Slissama, the daughter of Seimo, and sister to the celebrated Cuchullin. The three brothers when very young, were sent over to Ireland, by their father, to learn the use of arms under their uncle Cuchullin, who made a great figure in that kingdom. They were just landed in Ulster when the news of Cuchullin's death arrived. Nathos, though very young, took the command of Cuchullin's army, made head against Cairbar the usurper, and defeated him in several battles. Cairbar at last having found means to murder Cormac, the lawful king, the army of Nathos shifted sides, and he himself was obliged to return into Ulster, in order to pass over into Scotland.



Dar-thula, the daughter of C-lla, with whom Cairbar was in love, resided, at that time, in Selama, a castle in Ulster; she saw, fell in love, and fled with Nathos; but a storm rising at sea, they were unfortunately driven back on that part of the coast of Ulster, where Cairbar was encamped with his army, waiting for Fin-gal, who meditated an expedition into Ireland, to re-establish the Scottish race of kings on the throne of that kingdom. The three brothers, after having defended themselves, for some time, with great bravery, were overpowered and slain, and the unfortunate Dar-thula killed herself upon the body of her beloved Nathos.

Ossian opens the poem, on the night preceding the death of the sons of Usnoth, and brings in, by way of episode, what passed before. He relates the death of Dar-thula differently from the common tradition; his account is the most probable, as suicide seems to have been unknown in those early times: for no traces of it are found in the old poetry.

**D**AUGHTER of heaven†, fair art thou! the  
 silence of thy face is pleasant. Thou  
 comest forth in loveliness: the stars attend thy  
 blue steps in the east. The clouds rejoice in thy  
 presence, O moon, and brighten their dark-brown  
 sides. Who is like thee in heaven, daughter of  
 the night? The stars are ashamed in thy pre-  
 sence, and turn aside their green, sparkling eyes.  
 Whither dost thou retire from thy course, when

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† The address to the moon is very beautiful in the original. It is in a lyric measure, and appears to have been sung to the harp.

the darkness] of thy countenance grows? Hast thou thy hall like Ossian? Dwellest thou in the shadow of grief? Have thy sisters fallen from heaven? Are they who rejoiced with thee, at night, no more? Yes! they have fallen, fair light! and thou dost often retire to mourn. But thou thyself shalt fall, one night; and leave thy blue path in heaven. The stars will then lift their green heads: they who were ashamed in thy presence, will rejoice. Thou art now clothed with thy brightness: look from thy gates in the sky. Burst the cloud, O wind, that the daughter of night may look forth, that the shaggy mountains may brighten, and the ocean roll its blue waves in light.

Nathos† is on the deep, and Althos that beam of youth; Ardan is near his brothers; they move in the gleam of their course. The sons of Usnoth move in the darkness, from the wrath of car-borne Cairbar‡. Who is that dim, by their side! the night has covered her beauty: her hair sighs on ocean's wind; her robe streams in dusky wreaths. She is like the fair spirit of heaven, in the midst of his shadowy mist. Who is it but Dar-thula¶,

|| The poet means the moon in her wane.

† Nathos signifies 'youthful;' Althos, 'exquisite beauty;' Ardan, 'pride.'

‡ Cairbar, who murdered Cormac king of Ireland, and usurped the throne. He was afterwards killed by Oscar the son of Ossian in a single combat. The poet, upon other occasions gives him the epithet of red-haired.

¶ Dar-thula, or Dgirt-'huile, 'a woman with fine eyes.' She was the most famous beauty of antiquity. To this day, when a woman is praised for her beauty, the common phrase is, that 'she is as lovely as Dar-thula.'

the first of Erin's maids? She has fled from the love of Cairbar, with the ear-borne Nathos. But the winds deceive thee, O Dar-thula; and deny the woody Etha to thy sails. These are not thy mountains, Nathos, nor is that the roar of thy climbing waves. The halls of Cairbar are near; and the towers of the foe lift their heads. Ullin stretches its green head into the sea; and Tura's bay receives the ship. Where have ye been, ye southern winds! when the sons of my love were deceived? but ye have been sporting on plains, and pursuing the thistle's beard. O that ye had been rustling in the sails of Nathos, till the hills of Etha rose! till they rose in their clouds, and saw their coming chief! Long hast thou been absent, Nathos! and the day of thy return is past.

But the land of strangers saw thee, lovely: thou wast lovely in the eyes of Dar-thula. Thy face was like the light of the morning, thy hair like the raven's wing. Thy sou was generous and mild, like the hour of the setting sun. Thy words were the gale of the reeds, or the gliding stream of Lora. But when the rage of battle rose, thou wast like a sea in a storm; the clang of thy arms was terrible: the host vanished at the sound of thy course. It was then Dar-thula beheld thee, from the top of her mossy towers: from the tower of Selama†, where her fathers dwelt.

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† The poet does not mean that Selama, which is mentioned as the seat of Toscar in Ulster, in the poem of Conlath and Cuthona. The word in the original signifies either beautiful to behold, or a place with a pleasant or wide prospect. In those times they built their houses upon eminences.

“Lovely art thou, O stranger!” she said, for her trembling soul arose. “Fair art thou in thy battles, friend of the fallen Cormac‡! Why dost thou rush on, in thy valour, youth of the ruddy look? Few are thy hands in battle, against the car-borne Cairbar! O that I might be freed of his love¶! that I might rejoice in the presence of Nathos! Blest are the rocks of Etha; they will behold his steps at the chase! they will see his white bosom, when the winds hit his raven hair!”

Such were thy words, Dar-thula, in Selama's mossy towers. But, now, the night is round thee: and the winds have deceived thy sails. The winds have deceived thy sails, Darthula: their blustering sound is high. Cease a little while, O north wind, and let me hear the voice of the lovely. Thy voice is lovely, Dar-thula, between the rustling blasts.

“Are these the rocks of Nathos, and the roar of his mountain streams? Comes that beam of light from Usnoth's nightly hall? The mist rolls around, and the beam is feeble; but the light of Dar-thula's soul is the car-borne chief of Etha! Son of the generous Usnoth, why that broken sigh? Are we not in the land of strangers, chief of echoing Etha?”

“These are not the rocks of Nathos,” he replied, “nor the roar of his streams. No light

ces, to command a view of the country, and to prevent their being surprised: many of them, on that account, were called Selama. The famous Selma of Fingal is derived from the same root.

‡ Cormac the young king of Ireland, who was murdered by Cairbar.

¶ That is, of the love of Cairbar.

comes from Etha's halls, for they are distant far. We are in the land of strangers, in the land of car-borne Cairbar. The winds have deceived us, Dar-thula. Ullin lifts here her green hills. Go towards the north, Althos; be thy steps, Ardan, along the coast; that the foe may not come in darkness, and our hopes of Etha fail. I will go towards that mossy tower, and see who dwells about the beam. Rest, Dar-thula, on the shore! rest in peace, thou beam of light! the sword of Nathos is around thee, like the lightning of heaven."

He went. She sat alone and heard the rolling of the wave. The big tear is in her eye; and she looks for the car-borne Nathos. Her soul trembles at the blast. And she turns her ear towards the tread of his feet. The tread of his feet is not heard. "Where art thou, son of my love? the roar of the blast is around me. Dark is the cloudy night. But Nathos does not return. What detains thee, chief of Etha? Have the foes met the hero in the strife of the night?"

He returned, but his face was dark: he had seen his departed friend. It was the wall of Tara, and the ghost of Cuchullin stalked there. The sighing of his breast was frequent; and the decayed flame of his eyes terrible. His spear was a column of mist; the stars looked dim through his form. His voice was like hollow wind in a cave: and he told the tale of grief. The soul of Nathos was sad, like the sun in the day of mist, when his face is watery and dim.

"Why art thou sad, O Nathos?" said the lovely daughter of Colla. "Thou art a pillar of light to Dar-thula; the joy of her eyes is in Etha's chief. Where is my friend, but Nathos? My father rests in the tomb. Silence dwells on Se-tama; sadness spreads on the blue streams of my

land. My friends have fallen with Cormac. The mighty were slain in the battle of Ullin.

“Evening darkened on the plain. The blue streams failed before mine eyes. The unfrequent blast came rustling in the tops of Selama’s groves. My seat was beneath a tree on the walls of my fathers. Truthil past before my soul; the brother of my love; he that was absent † in battle against the car-borne Cairbar. Bending on his spear, the grey haired Colla came: his downcast face is dark, and sorrow dwells in his soul. His sword is on the side of the hero: the helmet of his fathers on his head. The battle grows in his breast. He strives to hide the tear.

“Dar-thula,” he sighing said, “thou art the last of Colla’s race. Truthil is fallen in battle. The king ‡ of Selama is no more. Cairbar comes, with his thousands, towards Selama’s walls. Colla will meet his pride, and revenge his son. But where shall I find thy safety, Dar-thula with the dark-brown hair? thou art lovely as the sun-beam of heaven, and thy friends are low! “And is the sun of battle fallen?” I said with a bursting sigh. “Ceased the generous soul of Truthil to lighten through the field? My safety, Colla, is in that bow; I have learned to pierce the deer. Is not Cairbar like the hart of the desert, father of fallen Truthil?”

The face of age brightened with joy: and the crowded tears of his eyes poured down. The lip of Colla trembled. His grey beard whistled

† The family of Colla preserved their loyalty to Cormac long after the death of C. chullin.

‡ It is very common, in Ossian’s poetry, to give the title of king to every chief that was remarkable for his valour.

in the blast. "Thou art the sister of Truthil," he said; "thou burnest in the fire of his soul. Take, Dar-thula, take that spear, that brazen shield, that burnished helmet: they are the spoils of a warrior: a son ¶ of early youth. When the light rises on Selama, we go to meet the car-borne Cairbar. But keep thou near the arm of Colla; beneath the shadow of my shield. Thy father, Dar-thula, could once defend thee, but age is trembling on his hand. The strength of his arm has failed, and his soul is darkened with grief."

We passed the night in sorrow. The light of the morning rose. I shone in the arms of battle. The grey-haired hero moved before. The sons of Selama convened around the sounding shield of Colla. But few were they in the plain, and their locks were grey. The youths had fallen with Truthil, in the battle of Car-borne Cor-inac.

"Companions of my youth!" said Colla "it was not thus you have seen me in arms. It was not thus I strode to battle, when the great Con-fadan fell. But ye are laden with grief. The darkness of age comes like the mist of the desert. My shield is worn with years; my sword is fixed † in its place. I said to my soul, thy

¶ The poet to make the story of Dar-thula's arming herself for battle, more probable, makes her armour to be that of a very young man, otherwise it would shock all belief, that she, who was very young, should be able to carry it.

† It was the custom of those times, that every warrior at a certain age, or when he became unfit for the field, fixed his arms, in the great hall, where the tribe feasted, upon joyful occasions.

evening shall be calm, and thy departure like a fading light. But the storm has returned; I bend like an aged oak. My boughs are fallen on Selama, and I tremble in my place. Where art thou, with thy fallen heroes, O my beloved Truthil? Thou answerest not from thy rushing blast: and the soul of thy father is sad. But I will be sad no more; Cairbar or Colla must fall. I feel the returning strength of my arm. My heart leaps at the sound of battle."<sup>19</sup>

The hero drew his sword. The gleaming blades of his people rose. They moved along the plain. Their grey hair streamed in the wind. Cairbar sat, at the feast, in the silent plain of Lona. He saw the coming of heroes, and he called his chiefs to battle. Why<sup>20</sup> should I tell to Nathos, how the strife of battle grew? I have seen thee in the midst of thousands, like the beam of heaven's fire: it is beautiful, but terrible; the

He was afterwards never to appear in battle; and this stage of life was called the 'time of fixing of the arms.'

[<sup>19</sup> Lona, 'a marshy plain.' It was the custom, in the days of Ossian, to feast after a victory. Cairbar had just provided an entertainment for his army upon the defeat of Truthil the son of Colla, and the rest of the party of Cormac, when Colla and his aged warriors arrived to give him battle.

<sup>20</sup> The poet avoids the description of the battle of Lona, as it would be improper, in the mouth of a woman, and could have nothing new, after the numerous descriptions, of that kind, in his other poems. He, at the same time, gives an opportunity to Dar-thula to pass a *fine* compliment on her lover.



people fall in its red course. The spear of Colla flew, for he remembered the battles of his youth. An arrow came with its sound, and pierced the hero's side. He fell on his echoing shield. My soul started with fear; I stretched my buckler over him; but my heaving breast was seen. Cairbar came, with his spear, and he beheld Selama's maid: joy rose on his dark-brown face: he stayed the lifted steel. He raised the tomb of Colla; and brought me weeping to Selama. He spoke the words of love, but my soul was sad. I saw the shields of my fathers, and the sword of car-borne Truthil. I saw the arms of the dead, and the tear was on my cheek.

Then the tidings came, O Nathos: and gloomy Cairbar fled. He fled like the ghost of the desert before the morning's beam. His hosts were not near: and feeble was his arm against thy steel. "Why art thou sad, O Nathos?" said the lovely maid of Colla.

"I have met," replied the hero, "the battle in my youth. My arm could not lift the spear, when first the danger rose; but my soul brightened before the war, as the green narrow vale, when the sun pours his streamy beams, before he hides his head in a storm. My soul brightened in danger before I saw Selama's fair; before I saw thee, like a star, that shines on the hill, at night; the cloud slowly comes, and threatens the lovely light. We are in the land of the foe, and the winds have deceived us, Dardhala! the strength of our friends is not near, nor the

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† It is usual with Ossian, to repeat, at the end of the episodes, the sentence which introduces them. It brings back the mind of the reader to the main-story of the poem.

mountains of Etha. Where shall I find thee  
 peace, daughter of mighty Colla? The brothers  
 of Nathos are brave: and his own sword is  
 shone in war. But what are the sons of Usnoth  
 to the host of ear-borne Cairbar! O that the  
 winds had brought thy sails, Oscar, king of me  
 thou didst promise to come to the battles of fa-  
 en Cormac. Then would my hand be strong  
 the flaming arm of death. Cairbar would trea-  
 ble in his halls, and peace dwell round the low  
 Dar-thula. But why dost thou fall, my son?  
 The sons of Usnoth may prevail."

"And they will prevail, O Nathos," said the  
 rising soul of the maid: "never shall Dar-thula  
 behold the halls of gloomy Cairbar. Give me  
 those arms of brass, that glitter to that passi-  
 meteor; I see them in the dark-bosomed sh  
 Dar-thula will enter the battle of steel. Give  
 me the noble Colla! do I behold thee on the  
 cloud? who is that dim beside thee? It is  
 ear-borne Truthil. Shall I behold the halls  
 him that slew Selama's chief? No: I will not  
 behold them, spirits of my love!"

Joy rose in the face of Nathos when he beheld  
 the white-bosomed maid. "Daughter of Selama!  
 thou shinest on my soul. Come, with thy  
 thousands, Cairbar! the strength of Nathos  
 returned. And thou, O aged Usnoth, shalt  
 hear that thy son has fled. I remember  
 words on Etha, when my sails began to rise  
 when I sailed towards Ullin, towards the

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¶ Oscar, the son of Ossian, had long resolved  
 on the expedition, into Ireland, against Cairbar,  
 who had assassinated his friend Cathol, the  
 of Moran, an Irishman of noble extraction,  
 the interest of the family of Cormac.

massy walls of Tura. "Thou goest," he said, "O Nathos, to the king of shields; to Cuchulain, chief of men, who never fled from danger. Let not thine arm be feeble: neither be thy thoughts of flight; lest the son of Semo say that Etia's race are weak. His words may come to Usnoth, and sadden his soul in the hall." The tear was on his cheek. He gave this shining sword.

"I came to Tura's bay: but the halls of Tura were silent. I looked around, and there was none to tell of the chief of Dunscaich. I went to the hall of his shells, where the arms of his fathers hung. But the arms were gone, and aged Lamhor† sat in tears. "Whence are the arms of steel?" said the rising Lamhor. "The light of the spear has long been absent from Tura's dusky walls. Come ye from the rolling seas? Or from the mournful halls of Temora?"

"We came from the sea," I said, "from Tenoth's rising towers. We are the sons of Sissania‡, the daughter of ear-borne Semo. Where is Tura's chief, son of the silent hall? but why should Nathos ask? for I behold thy tears. How did the mighty fall, son of the lonely Tura?"

"He fell not," Lamhor replied, "like the silent star of night, when it shoots through dark-

† Lamh-mhor, 'mighty hand.'

‡ Temora was the royal palace of the supreme kings of Ireland. It is here called mournful, in account of the death of Cosmac, who was murdered there by Cairbar, who usurped his throne.

§ Siss-scamba 'soft Semo.' She was the wife of Usnoth, and daughter of Semo, the chief of the isle of mist.

ness and is no more. But he was like a mete that falls in a distant land; death attends its course, and itself is the sign of wars. Mournful are the banks of Lego, and the roar of stream Lara! There the hero fell, son of the noble Usnoth."

"The hero fell in the midst of slaughter," said with a bursting sigh. "His hand was strong in battle; and death was behind his sword."

"We came to Lego's mournful banks. I found his rising tomb. His companions in battle are there; his beads of many songs. Three days we mourned over the hero: on the fourth I struck the shield of Caithbat. The heroes gathered around with joy, and shook their beards, spears. Colath was near with his horse, the friend of ear-borne Cairbar. We came like a storm by night, and his heroes fell. When the people of the valley rose, they saw the blood with morning's light. But we rolled away like wreaths of mist, to Cormac's echoing hills. Our swords rose to defend the king. But Fenra's halls were empty. Cormac had fallen in youth. The king of Erin was no more.

"Sadness seized the sons of Ullin, they slowly, gradually, retired: like clouds that, long threatened rain, retire behind the hills. The sons of Usnoth moved, in their grief, toward Tara's sounding bay. We passed by Selma and Cairbar retired like Lano's mist, when I driven by the winds of the desert.

"It was then I beheld thee, O maid, like the light of Etha's sun. Lovely is that beam said, and the crowded sigh of my bosom rose. Then camest in thy beauty, Dar-thula, to Eith mournful tales. But the winds have deceived me, daughter of Collo, and the foe is near."

"Yes! the foe is near," said the rust

strength of Althos†. I heard their clanging arms on the coast, and saw the dark wreaths of Erin's standard. Distinct is the voice of Cairbar||, and loud as Cromla's falling stream. He had seen the dark ship on the sea, before the dusky night came down. His people watch on Lena's plain, and lift ten thousands swords." "And let them lift ten thousand swords," said Nathos with a smile. "The sons of ear-borne Usnoth will never tremble in danger. Why dost thou roll with all thy foam, thou rolling sea of Uilin! Why do ye rustle, on your dark wings, ye whistling tempests of the sky? Do ye think, ye storms, that ye keep Nathos on the coast? No: his soul detains him, children of the night! Althos! bring my father's arms: thou seest them beaming to the stars. Bring the spear of Semo¶, it stands in the dark-homed ship."

He brought the arms. Nathos clothed his

† Althos had just returned from viewing the coast of Lena, whither he had been sent by Nathos, the beginning of the night.

|| Cairbar had gathered an army, to the coast of Ulster, in order to oppose Fingal, who prepared for an expedition into Ireland, to re-establish the house of Cormac on the throne, which Cairbar had usurped. Between the wings of Cairbar's army was the bay of Tu.a, into which the ship of the sons of Usnoth was driven: so that there was no possibility of their escaping.

¶ Semo was grandfather to Nathos by the mother's side. The spear mentioned here was given to Usnoth on his marriage, it being the custom then for the father of the lady to give his arms to his son-in-law. The ceremony used upon these occasions is mentioned in other poems.

lances in all their shining steel. The stride of the chief is lovely: the joy of his eyes terrible. He looks towards the coming of Cairbar. The wind is rustling in his hair. Dar-thula is silent at his side: her look is fixed on the chief. She strives to hide the rising sigh, and two tears swell in her eyes.

“Althos!” said the chief of Etha, “I see a cave in that rock. Place Dar-thula there: and let thy arm be strong Ardan! we meet the foe and call to battle gloomy Cairbar. O that he came in his sounding steel, to meet the son of Usnoth! Dar-thula! if thou shalt escape, look not on the falling Nathos. Lift thy sails, O Althos, towards the echoing groves of Etha.

“Tell to the chief† that his son fell with fame that my sword did not shun the battle. Tell him I fell in the midst of thousands, and let the joy of his grief be great. Daughter of Colla call the maids to Etha's echoing hall. Let their songs arise for Nathos, when shadowy autumn returns. O that the voice of Cona‡ might be heard in my praise! then would my spirit rejoice in the midst of my mountain winds.” And my voice shall praise thee, Nathos, chief of the woody Etha! The voice of Ossian shall rise in thy praise, son of the generous Usnoth! Why was I not on Lena, when the battle rose! Then would the sword of Ossian have defended thee or himself have fallen low.

We sat, that night, in Selma, round the strength of the shell. The wind was abroad, in

† Usnoth.

‡ Ossian, the son of Fingal, is, often, poetically called the voice of Cona.

the oak; the spirit of the mountain ¶ shrieked. The blast came rustling through the hail, and gently touched my harp. The sound was mournful and low, like the song of the tomb. Fingal heard it first, and the crowded sighs of his bosom rose. "Some of my heroes are low," said the grey-haired king of Morven. "I hear the sound of death on the harp of my son. Ossian, touch the sounding string; bid the sorrow rise; that their spirits may fly with joy to Morven's woody hills." I touched the harp before the king, the sound was mournful and low. "Bend forward from your clouds," I said, "ghosts of my fathers! bend; lay by the red terror of your course, and receive the falling chief; whether he comes from a distant land or rises from the rolling sea. Let his robe of mist be near; his spear that is formed of a cloud. Place an half-extinguished meteor by his side, in the form of the hero's sword. And, oh! let his countenance be lovely, that his friends may delight in his presence. Bend from your clouds," I said, "ghosts of my fathers! bend."

Such was my song, in Selma, to the lightly-trembling harp. But Nathos was on Ullin's shore surrounded by the night; he heard the voice of the foe amidst the roar of tumbling waves. Silent he heard their voice, and rested on his spear. Morning rose, with its beams: the sons of Erin appear; like grey rocks, with all their trees, they spread along the coast. Cair-bar stood, in the midst, and grimly smiled when

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¶ By the spirit of the mountain in meant that deep and melancholy sound which precedes a storm, well known to those who live in a high country.

he saw the foe. Nathos rushed forward in his strength; nor could Dar-thula stay behind. She came with the hero, lifting her shining spear. And who were these, in their armour, in the pride of youth? Who but the sons of Usnoth; Altho and dark-haired Ardan.

“Come,” said Nathos, “come! chief of the high Temora! Let our battle be on the coast for the white-bosomed maid! His people are not with Nathos! they are behind that rolling sea. Why’st thou bring thy thousands against the chief of Etha? Thou didst fly † from him, in battle, when his friends were around him.”

“Youth of the heart of pride, shall Erin’s king fight with thee? Thy fathers were not among the renowned, nor of the kings of men. Are the arms of foes in their halls? or the shields of other times? Cairbar is renowned in Temora, nor does he fight with little men.”

The tear starts from ear-borne Nathos; he turned his eyes to his brothers. Their spears flew, at once, and three heroes lay on earth. Then the light of their swords gleamed on high: the ranks of Erin yield; as a ridge of dark clouds before a blast of wind. Then Cairbar ordered his people; and they drew a thousand bows. A thousand arrows flew; the sons of Usnoth fell. They fell like three young oaks which stood alone on the hill; the traveller saw the lovely trees, and wondered how they grew so lonely: the blast of the desert came, by night, and laid their green heads low; next day he returned, but they were withered, and the heath was bare.

Dar-thula stood in silent grief, and beheld their

† He alludes to the flight of Cairbar from Selama.



fall; no tear is in her eye: but her look is wildly sad. Pale was her cheek; her trembling lips broke short an half-formed word. Her dark hair flew on the wind. But gloomy Cairbar came. "Where is thy lover now, the car-borne chief of Etha? Hast thou beheld the halls of Usnoth? or the dark-brown hills of Fingal? My battle had roared on Morven, did not the winds meet Dar-thula. Fingal himself would have been low, and sorrow dwelling in Selma." Her shield fell from Dar-thula's arm, her breast of snow appeared. It appeared, but it was stained with blood, for an arrow was fixed in her side. She fell on the fallen Nathos, like a wreath of snow. Her dark hair spreads on his face, and their blood is mixing round.

"Daughter of Colla thou art low!" said Cairbar's hundred bards; "silence is at the blue streams of Selma, for Truthil's† race have failed. When wilt thou rise in thy beauty, first of Erin's maids! Thy sleep is long in the tomb, and the morning distant far. The sun shall not come to thy bed, and say, "Awake, Dar-thula! awake, thou first of women! the wind of spring is abroad. The flowers shake their heads on the green hills; the woods wave their growing leaves." Retire, O sun, the daughter of Colla is asleep. She will not come forth in her beauty: she will not move, in the steps of her loveliness."

Such was the song of the bards, when they raised the tomb. I sung, afterwards, over the grave, when the king of Morven came; when he came to green Ullin to fight with car-borne Cairbar.

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† Truthil was the founder of Dar-thula's family.

# *Carric-thura :*

A POEM.



## THE ARGUMENT.

Finga<sup>l</sup>, returning from an expedition which he had made into the Roman province, resolved to visit Cathulla king of Inistore, and brother to Comala, whose story is related, at large, in the dramatic poem published in this collection. Upon his coming in sight of Carric-thura, the palace of Cathulla, he observed a flame on its top, which, in those days, was a signal of distress. The wind drove him into a bay, at some distance from Carric-thura, and he was obliged to pass the night on the shore. Next day he attacked the army of Frothal king of Sora, who had besieged Cathulla in his palace of Carric-thura, and took Frothal himself prisoner, after he had engaged him in a single combat. The deliverance of Carric-thura is the subject of the poem, but several other episodes are interwoven with it. It appears from tradition, that this poem was addressed to a Culdee, or one of the first Christian missionaries, and that the story of the spirit of Loda, supposed to be the ancient Odin of Scandinavia, was introduced by Os-

sian in opposition to the Culdee's doctrine. Be this as it will, it lets us into Ossian's notions of a superior being; and shews that he was not addicted to the superstition which prevailed all the world over, before the introduction of Christianity.

HAS T† thou left thy blue course in heaven,  
 golden haired son of the sky! The west  
 has opened its gates; the bed of thy repose is  
 there. The waves come to behold thy beauty;  
 they lift their trembling heads: they see thee  
 lovely in thy sleep; but they shrink away with  
 fear. Rest in thy shadowy cave, O sun! and let  
 thy return be in joy. But let a thousand lights  
 arise to the sound of the harps of Selma: let the  
 beam spread in the hall, the king of shells is re-  
 turned! The strife of Crona‡ is past, like sounds  
 that are no more: raise the song, O bards, the  
 king is returned with his fame!

Such was the song of Ullin, when Fingal re-  
 turned from battle: when he returned in the  
 fair blushing of youth; with all his heavy locks.  
 His blue arms were on the hero; like a grey  
 cloud on the sun, when he moves in his robes of

† The song of Ullin, with which the poem opens, is in a lyric measure. It was usual with Fingal, when he returned from his expeditions, to send his bards singing before him. This species of triumph is called by Ossian, the 'song of victory.'

‡ Ossian has celebrated the 'strife of Crona,' in a particular poem. This poem is connected with it, but it was impossible for the translator to procure that part which relates to Crona, with any degree of purity.

mist, and shews but half his beams. His heroes follow the king: the feast of shells is spread. Fingal turns to his bards, and bids the song to rise.

Voices of echoing Cona! he said, O bards of other times! Ye, on whose souls the blue hosts of our fathers rise! strike the harp in my hall; and let Fingal hear the song. Pleasant is the joy of grief! it is like the shower of spring, when it softens the branch of the oak, and the young leaf lifts its green head. Sing on, O bards, to-morrow we lift the sail. My blue course is thro' the ocean, to Carric-thura's walls; the mossy walls of Sarno, where Comala dwelt. There the noble Cathulla spreads the feast of shells. The dogs of his woods are many, and the sound of the chase shall arise.

Cronnan, son of song! said Ulin, Minona, graceful at the harp! raise the song of Shilric, to please the king of Morven. Let Vinvela come in her beauty, like the showery bow, when it shews its lovely head on the lake, and the setting sun is bright. And she comes, O Fingal! her voice is soft, but sad.

VINVELA. My love is a son of the hill. He pursues the flying deer. His grey dogs are panting around him; his bow-string sounds in the wind. Dost thou rest by the fount of the rock,

† One should think that the parts of Shilric and Vinvela were represented by Cronnan and Minona, whose very names denote that they were singers, who performed in public. Cronnan signifies 'a mournful sound;' Minona, or Min-nan, 'soft air.' All the dramatic poems of Ossian appear to have been presented before Fingal, upon solemn occasions.

or by the noise of the mountain-stream? The rushes are nodding with the wind, the mist is flying over the hill. I will approach my love unperceived, and see him from the rock. Lovely I saw thee first by the aged oak of Branno; thou wert returning tall from the chase; the fairest among thy friends.

SHILRIC. What voice is that I hear? the voice like the summer wind. I sit not by the nodding rushes; I hear not the tount of the rock. Afar, Vinvela, afar I go to the wars of Fingal. My dogs attend me no more. No more I tread the hill. No more from on high I see thee, fair-moving by the stream of the plain; bright as the bow of heaven; as the moon on the western wave.

VINVELA. Then thou art gone, O Shilric! and I am alone on the hill. The deer are seen on the brow; void of fear they gaze along. No more they dread the wind; no more the rustling tree. The hunter is far removed; he is in the field of graves. Strangers! sons of the waves! spare my lovely Shilric.

SHILRIC. If fall I must in the field, raise high my grave, Vinvela. Grey stones and heaped-up earth, shall mark me to future times. When the hunter shall sit by the mound, and produce

|| Bran, or Branno, signifies a mountain-stream; it is here some river known by that name, in the days of Ossian. There are several small rivers in the north of Scotland, still retaining the name of Bran; in particular, one which falls into the Tay at Dunkeld.

|| Bhin-bheul, 'a woman with a melodious voice' Bh in the Gaelic language has the same sound with the V in English.

his food at noon, "Some warrior rests here," he will say; and my fame shall live in his praise. Remember me, Vinvela, when low on earth I lie!

VINVELA. Yes! I will remember thee; indeed my Shilric will fall. What shall I do, my love! when thou art gone for ever? Through these hills I will go at noon: I will go through the silent heath. There I will see the place of thy rest, returning from the chase. Indeed my Shilric will fall; but I will remember him.

And I remember the chief, said the king of woody Morven; he consumed the battle in his rage. But now my eyes behold him not. I met him, one day, on the hill; his cheek was pale; his brow was dark. The sigh was frequent in his breast: his steps were towards the desert. But now he is not in the crowd of my chiefs, when the sounds of my shields arise. Dwells he in the narrow house<sup>§</sup>, the chief of high Carmora||?

Croonan! said Ullin of other times, raise the song of Shilric; when he returned to his hills, and Vinvela was no more. He leaned on her grey mossy stone; he thought Vinvela lived. He saw her fair-moving\* on the plain: but the bright form lasted not: the sun-beam fled from the field, and she was seen no more. Hear the song of Shilric, it is soft, but sad.

§ The grave.

|| Carn-mor, 'high rocky hill'

\* The distinction, which the ancient Scots made between good and bad spirits, was, that the former appeared sometimes in the day time in lonely unfrequented places, but the latter seldom but by night, and always in a dismal gloomy scene.

I sit by the mossy fountain; on the top of the hill of winds. One tree is rustling above me. Dark waves roll over the heath. The lake is troubled below. The deer descend from the hill. No hunter at a distance is seen; no whistling cow-herd is nigh. It is mid-day: but all is silent. Sad are my thoughts alone. Didst thou but appear, O my love, a wanderer on the heath! thy hair floating on the wind behind thee: thy bosom heaving on the sight; thine eyes full of tears for thy friends, whom the mist of the hill had concealed! Thee I would comfort, my love, and bring thee to thy father's house.

But is it she that there appears, like a beam of light on the heath? bright as the moon in autumn, as the sun in a summer-storm, comest thou, lovely maid, over rocks, over mountains to me? She speaks: but how weak her voice, like the breeze in the reeds of the pool.

"Returnest thou safe from the war? where are thy friends, my love? I heard of thy death on the hill; I heard and mourned thee, Shilric!" Yes, my fair, I return; but I alone of my race. Thou shalt see them no more: their graves I raised on the plain. But why art thou on the desert hill? Why on the heath, alone?

"Alone I am, O Shilric! alone in the winter-house. With grief for thee I expired. Shilric, I am pale in the tomb."

She fleets, she sails away, as grey mist before the wind! and, wilt thou not stay, my love? Stay and behold my tears! fair thou appearest, Vinvela: fair thou wast, when alive!

By the mossy fountain I will sit; on the top of the hill of winds. When mid-day is silent around, converse, O my love with me! come on the wings of the gale! on the blast of the mountain, come! Let me hear thy voice, as thou passest, when mid-day is silent around.

Such was the song of Cronnan, on the night of Selma's joy. But morning rose in the east; the blue waters rolled in light. Fingal bade his sails to rise, and the winds came rustling from their hills. Inistore rose to sight, and Carric-thura's mossy towers. But the sign of distress was on their top: the green flame edged with smoke. The king of Morven struck his breast: he assumed, at once, his spear. His darkened brow bends forward to the coast: he looks back to the lagging winds. His hair is disordered on his back. The silence of the king is terrible.

Night came down on the sea: Rotha's bay received the ship. A rock bends along the coast with all its echoing wood. On the top is the circle of Loda, and the moss, stone of power. A narrow plain spreads beneath, covered with grass and aged trees, which the midnight winds, in their wrath, had torn from the shaggy rock. The blue course of a stream is there: and the lonely blast of ocean pursues the thistle's beard. The flame of three oaks arose: the feast is spread around: but the soul of the King is sad, for Carric-thura's battling chief.

The wan, cold moon rose, in the east. Sleep descended on the youths. Their blue helmets glitter to the beam, the fading fire decays. But sleep did not rest on the king: he rose in the midst of his arms, and slowly ascended the hill to behold the flame of Sarno's tower.

The flame was dim and distant; the moon hid her red face in the east. A blast came from the

† The circle of Loda is supposed to be a place of worship among the Scandinavians, as the spirit of Loda is thought to be the same with their god Odin.



mountain, and bore, on its wings, the spirit of Loda. He came to his place in his terrors, and he shook his dusky spear. His eyes appear like flames in his dark face; and his voice is like distant thunder. Fingal advanced with the spear of his strength, and raised his voice on high.

Son of night, retire: call thy winds and fly: Why dost thou come to my presence, with thy shadowy arms? Do I fear thy gloomy form, dismal spirit of Loda? Weak is thy shield of clouds: feeble is that meteor, thy sword. The blast rolls them together, and thou thyself dost vanish. Fly from my presence, son of night! call thy winds and fly!

Dost thou force me from my place, replied the hollow voice? The people bend before me. I turn the battle in the field of the valiant. I look on the nations and they vanish; my nostrils pour the blast of death. I come abroad on the winds: the tempests are before my face. But my dwelling is calm, above the clouds; the fields of my rest are pleasant.

Dwell then in thy calm field, said Fingal, and let Comhal's son be forgot. Do my steps ascend, from my hills, into thy peaceful plains? Do I meet thee, with a spear, in thy cloud, spirit of dismal Loda? Why then dost thou frown on me? Why shake thine airy spear? Thou frownest in vain: I never fled from the mighty in war. And shall the sons of the wind frighten the king of Morven! No: he knows the weakness of their arms!

Fly to thy land, replied the form: receive the wind and fly. The blasts are in the hollow of

|| He is described, in a simile, in the poem concerning the death of Cuthullin.

my hand : the course of the storm is mine. The king of Sora is my son, he bends at the stone of my power. His battle is around Carrié-thura, and he will prevail. Fly to thy land, son of Comhal, or feel my flaming wrath.

He lifted high his shadowy spear; and bent forward his terrible height. But the king, advancing, drew his sword; the blade of dark-brown Lunot. The gleaming path of the steel winds through the gloomy ghost. The form fell shapeless into air, like a column of smoke, which the staff of the boy disturbs, as it rises from the half-extinguished furnace.

The spirit of Loda shrieked, as, rolled into himself, he rose on the wind. Inistore shook at the sound. The waves heard it on the deep: they stopped, in their course, with fear: the companions of Fingal started, at once; and took their heavy spears. They missed the king; they rose with rage: all their arms resound.

The moon came forth in the east. The king returned in the gleam of his arms. The joy of his youths was great; their souls settled, as a sea from a storm. Ullin raised the song of gladness. The hills of Inistore rejoiced. The flame of the oak arose; and the tales of heroes are told.

But Frothal, Sora's battling king, sits in sadness beneath a tree. The host spreads around Carrié-thura. He looks towards the walls with rage. He longs for the blood of Cathullu, who once overcame the king in war. When Annir reigned|| in Sora, the father of car-borne Frothal,

† The famous sword of Fingal, made by Lun, or Luno, a smith of Lochlin.

|| Annir was also the father of Erragon, who was killed after the death of his brother Frothal. The death of Erragon is the subject of the battle of Lora, a poem in this collection.

a blast rose on the sea, and carried Frothal to Inistore. Three days he feasted in Sarno's halls, and saw the slow-rolling eyes of Comala. He loved her, in the rage of youth, and rushed to seize the white-armed maid. Cathulla met the chief. The gloomy battle rose. Frothal is bound in the hall: three days he pined alone. On the fourth, Sarno sent him to his ship, and he returned to his land. But wrath darkened his soul against the noble Cathulla. When Annir's stone of fame arose, Frothal came in his strength. The battle burned round Caric-thura, and Sarno's mossy walls.

Morning rose on Inistore. Frothal struck his dark-brown shield. His chiefs started at the sound; they stood, but their eyes were turned to the sea. They saw Fingal coming in his strength; and first the noble Thubar spoke.

"Who comes like the stag of the mountain, with all his herd behind him? Frothal, it is a foe; I see his forward spear. Perhaps it is the king of Morven, Fingal, the first of men. His actions are well known on Gormal; the blood of his foes is in Sarno's halls. Shall I ask the peace of kings? He is like the thunder of heaven."

"Son of the feeble hand," said Frothal, "shall my days begin in darkness? Shall I yield before I have conquered in battle, chief of streamy Tora? The people would say in Soru, Frothal flew forth like a meteor; but the dark cloud met it, and it is no more. No: Thubar, I will never yield; my fame shall surround me like light. No: I will never yield, king of streamy Tora."

† That is, after the death of Annir. To erect the stone of one's fame, was, in other words, to say that the person was dead.

‡ Honourable terms of peace.

He went forth with the stream of his people, but they met a rock: Fingal stood unmoved, broken they rolled back from his side. Nor did they roll in safety; the spear of the king pursued their flight. The field is covered with heroes. A rising hill preserved the flying host.

Frothal saw their flight. The rage of his bosom rose. He bent his eyes to the ground, and called the noble Thubar. "Thubar! my people fled. My fame has ceased to rise. I will fight the king; I feel my burning soul. Send a bard to demand the combat. Speak not against Frothal's words. But, Thubar! I love a maid; she dwells by Thano's stream, the white-bosomed maid of Herman, Utha with the softly-rolling eyes. She feared the daughter¶ of Inistore, and her soft sighs rose, at my departure. Tell to Utha that I am low; but that my soul delighted in her."

Such were his words, resolved to fight. But the soft sigh of Utha was near. She had followed her hero over the sea, in the armour of a man. She rolled her eye on the youth, in secret, from beneath a glittering helmet. But now she saw the bard as he went, and the spear fell thrice from her hand. Her loose hair flew on the wind. Her white breast rose, with sighs. She lifted up her eyes to the king; she would speak, but thrice she failed.

Fingal heard the words of the bard; he came in the strength of steel. They mixed their deathful spears, and raised the gleam of their swords.

¶ By the daughter of Inistore, Frothal means Comala, of whose death Utha probably had not heard; consequently she feared that the former passion of Frothal for Comala might return.

But the steel of Fingal descended and cut Frothal's shield in twain. His fair side is exposed; half-bent he foresees his death.

Darkness gathered on Utha's soul. The tear rolled down her cheek. She rushed to cover the chief with her shield; but a fallen oak met her steps. She fell on her arm of snow; her shield, her helmet flew wide. Her white-bosom heaved to the fight; her dark-brown hair is spread on earth.

Fingal pitied the white-armed maid; he stayed the upraised sword. The tear was in the eye of the king, as, bending forward, he spoke. "King of streamy Sora! fear not the sword of Fingal. It was never stained with the blood of the vanquished; it never pierces a fallen foe. Let thy people rejoice along the blue waters of Tora: let the maids of thy love be glad. Why shouldst thou fall in thy youth, king of streamy Sora?"

Frothal heard the words of Fingal; and saw the rising maid: they stood in silence, in their beauty; like two young trees of the plain, when the shower of spring is on their leaves, and the loud winds are laid.

"Daughter of Herman," said Frothal, "didst thou come from Tora's streams; didst thou come in thy beauty, to behold thy warrior low? But he was low before the mighty, maid of the slow-rolling, etc! The feeble did not overcome the son of car-borne Annir. Terrible art thou, O king of Mervin! in battles of the spear. But, in peace, thou art like the sun, when he looks through a silent shower: the flowers lift their fair heads before him; and the gales shake their rustling wings. O that thou wert in Sora! that

my feast were spread! The future kings of Sora would see thy arms and rejoice. They would rejoice at the fame of their fathers, who beheld the mighty Fingal.

“Son of Annir,” replied the king, “the fame of Sora’s race shall be heard. When chiefs are strong in battle then does the song arise! But if their swords are stretched over the feeble: if the blood of the weak has stained their arms; the bard shall forget them in the song, and their tombs shall not be known. The stranger shall come and build there, and remove the heaped up earth. An half-worn sword shall rise before him; and bending above it he will say, “These are the arms of chiefs of old, but their names are not in song. Come thou, O Frothal, to the feast of Ialstore; let the maid of thy love be there: and our faces will brighten with joy,”

Fingal took his spear, moving in the steps of his might. The gates of Carric-thura are opened. The feast of shells is spread. The voice of music arose. Gladness brightened in the hall. The voice of Ullin was heard, the harp of Selma was strung. Utha rejoiced in his presence, and demanded the song of grief; the big tear hung in her eye, when the soft Crimora† spoke. Crimora the daughter of Kinva’, who dwelt at Lotha’s‡ mighty stream. The tale was long, but lovely, and pleased the blushing maid of Sora.

† There is a propriety in introducing this episode, as the situation of Crimora and Utha were so similar.

‡ Lotha was the ancient name of one of the great rivers in the north of Scotland. The only one of them that still retains a name of a like sound is Lochy, in Invernesshire; but whether it is the river mentioned here, the translator will not pretend to say.

CRIMORA †. Who cometh from the hill,  
 Like a cloud tinged with the beam of the west?  
 Whose voice is that loud as the wind, but pica-  
 sant as the harp of Carril\*? It is my love in the  
 light of steel; but sad is his darkened brow.  
 Live the mighty race of Fingal? or what dis-  
 turbs my Connal ‡?

CONNAL. They live. I saw them return  
 from the chase, like a stream of light. The sun  
 was on their shields. Like a ridge of fire they  
 descended the hill. Loud is the voice of the  
 youth; the war, my love is near. To-morrow  
 the terrible Dargo comes to try the force of our  
 race. The race of Fingal he defies; the race  
 of battle and wounds.

CRIMORA. Connal, I saw his sails like grey  
 mist on the sable wave. They slowly came to  
 land. Connal, many are the warriors of Dargo!

CONNAL. Bring me thy father's shield; the  
 bossy, iron shield of Rival; that shield like the  
 full moon when it moves darkened through  
 heaven.

CRIMORA. That shield I bring, O Connal;  
 but it did not defend my father. By the spear of  
 Gormar he fell. 'Thou may'st fall, O Connal!

CONNAL. Fall indeed I may: But raise my

† Crimora, 'a woman of a great soul.'

\* Perhaps the Carril mentioned here is the  
 same with Carril the son of Kinsena, Cuchullin's  
 bard. The name itself is proper to any bard, as  
 it signifies a sprightly and harmonious sound.

‡ Connal, the son of Diaran, was one of the  
 most famous heroes of Fingal; he was slain in a  
 battle against Dargo, a Briton; but whether by  
 the hand of the enemy, or that of his mistress,  
 tradition does not determine.

tomb, Crimora. Grey stones, a mound of earth, shall keep my memory. Bend thy red eye over my tomb and beat thy mournful heaving breast. Thou fair thou art, my love, as the light; more pleasant than the gale of the hill; yet I will not stay. Raise my tomb, Crimora.

CRIMORA. Then give me those arms of light; that sword, and that spear of steel. I shall meet Dargo with thee, and aid my lovely Connal. Farewell, ye rocks of Aiden! ye deer! and ye streams of the hill! We shall return no more. Our tombs are distant far.

“And did they return no more?” said Utha’s bursting sigh. Fell the mighty in battle, and did Crimora live? Her steps were lonely, and her soul was sad for Connal. Was he not young and lovely; like the beam of the setting sun?” Ullin saw the virgin’s tear, and took the softly trembling harp: the song was lovely, but sad, and silence was in Carric-hura.

Autumn is dark on the mountains; grey mist rests on the hills. The whirlwind is heard on the heath. Dark rolls the river through the narrow plain. A tree stands alone on the hill, and marks the slumbering Connal. The leaves whirl round with the wind, and strew the grave of the dead. At times, are seen here, the ghosts of the deceased, when the musing hunter alone stalks slowly over the heath.

Who can reach the source of thy race, O Connal? and who recount thy fathers? Thy family grew like an oak on the mountain, which meeteth the wind with its lofty head. But now it is torn from the earth. Who shall supply the place of Connal? Here was the din of arms? and here the groans of the dying. Bloody are the wars of Fingal! O Connal! it was here thou didst fall. Thine arm was like a storm; thy sword a beam of the sky; thy height, a rock on the plain;



thine eyes, a furnace of fire. Louder than a storm was thy voice, in the battles of thy steel. Warriors fell by thy sword, as the thistle by the staff of a boy. Dargo the mighty came on, like a cloud of thunder. His brows were contracted and dark. His eyes like two caves in a rock. Bright rose their swords on each side: dire was the clang of their steel!

The daughter of Rinval was near; Crimona, bright in the armour of man; her yellow hair is loose behind, her bow is in her hand. She followed the youth to the war, Connal, her much beloved. She drew the string on Dargo; but, erring, pierced her Connal! He falls like an oak on the plain; like a rock from the shaggy hill. What shall she do, hapless maid? He bleeds, her Connal dies! All the night long she cries, and all the day, "O Connal my love and my friend!" With grief the sad mourner dies. Earth here incloses the loveliest pair on the hill. The grass grows between the stones of the tomb; I often sit in the mournful shade. The wind sighs through the grass; their memory rushes on my mind. Undisturbed you now sleep together; in the tomb of the mountain you rest alone.

"And soft be your rest," said Utha, "children of streamy Lotha! I will remember you with tears, and my secret song shall rise; when the wind is in the groves of Tura, and the stream is roaring near. Then shall ye come on my soul, with all your lovely grief."

Three days feasted the kings: on the fourth their white sails arose. The winds of the north carry the ships of Fiagal to Morven's woody land. But the spirit of Leda sat, in his cloud, behind the ships of Frothal. He hung forward with all his blasts, and spread the white-bosomed

sails. The wounds of his form were not forgot ;  
 he still feared the hand of the king †.

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† The story of Fingal, and the spirit of Loda, supposed to be the famous Odin, is the most extravagant fiction in all Ossian's poems. It is not, however, without precedents in the best poets ; and it must be said for Ossian, that he says nothing but what perfectly agreed with the notions of the times, concerning ghosts. They thought the souls of the dead were material, and consequently susceptible of pain. Whether a proof could be drawn from this passage, that Ossian had no notion of a divinity, I shall leave to others to determine : It appears, however, that he was of opinion, that superior beings ought to take no notice of what passed among men.

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END OF VOLUME FIRST.











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