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The poems of Ossian

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poems of Ossian

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F I N G A L,

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

A R G U M E N T

TO BOOK I.

CUTHULLIN (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 Togorma, and an intimate friend of Cuthullin, 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. Cuthullin, of himself willing to fight, went into the opinion of Calmar. Marching towards the enemy, he missed three of his bravest heroes, Fergus, Duchomar, and Cathba. Fergus arriving, tells Cuthullin of the death of the two other chiefs; which introduces the affecting episode of Morna, the daughter of Cormac. The army of Cuthullin 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 Cuthullin's chariot, and the terrible appearance of that hero. The armies engage, but night coming on, leaves the victory undecided. Cuthullin, 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 Cuthullin 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.

F I N G A L,
AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK I.

CUTHULLIN^a sat by Tura's wall: by the tree of
the rustling sound. His spear leaned against
a rock. His shield lay on grass, by his side.
Amid his thoughts of mighty Cairbar,^b a hero

^a Cuthullin, the son of Semo, and grandson to Caithbat, a druid celebrated in tradition for his wisdom and valour. Cuthullin, when very young, married Bragela, the daughter of Sorglan, and, passing over into Ireland, lived some time with Connal, grandson by a daughter, to Congal, the petty king of Ulster. His wisdom 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 Cuthullin." They shew the remains of his palace at Dunscaich in the Isle of Skye; and a stone, to which he bound his dog Luath, goes still by his name.

^b Cairbar, or Cairbre, signifies *a strong man*.

slain by the chief in war; the scout^c of ocean comes; Moran,^d the son of Fithil!

“Arise,” says the youth, “Cuthullin, arise. I see the ships of the north! Many, chief of men, are the foe. Many the heroes of the sea-borne Swaran!” “Moran!” replied the blue-eyed chief, “thou ever tremblest, son of Fithil! Thy fears have increased the foe. It is Fingal, king^e of deserts, with aid to green Erin of streams.” “I beheld their chief,” says Moran, “tall as a glittering rock. His spear is a blasted

^c Cuthullin, having previous intelligence of the invasion intended by Swaran, sent scouts all over the coast of Ullin or Ulster, to give early notice of the first appearance of the enemy, at the same time that he sent Munan, the son of Stir-mal, to implore the assistance of Fingal. He himself collected the flower of the Irish youth to Tura, a castle on the coast, to stop the progress of the enemy till Fingal should arrive from Scotland. We may conclude from Cuthullin's applying so early 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.

^d Moran signifies *many*; and Fithil, or rather Fili, an *inferior bard*.

^e 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.

pine. His shield the rising moon! He sat on the shore! like a cloud of mist on the silent hill! Many, chief of heroes! I said, Many are our hands of war. Well art thou named, the Mighty Man: but many mighty men are seen from Tura's windy walls.

“He spoke, like a wave on a rock, Who in this land appears like me? Heroes stand not in my presence: they fall to earth from my hand. Who can meet Swaran in fight? Who but Fingal, king of Selma of storms? Once we wrestled on Malmor;^f our heels overturned the woods. Rocks fell from their place; rivulets, changing their course, fled murmuring from our side. Three days we renewed the strife; heroes stood at a distance and trembled. On the fourth, Fingal says, that the king of the ocean fell! but Swaran says, he stood! Let dark Cuthullin yield to him, that is strong as the storms of his land!”

“No:” replied the blue-eyed chief, “I never yield to mortal man! Dark Cuthullin shall be great or dead! Go, son of Fithil, take my spear. Strike the sounding shield of Semo.[§] It hangs

^f Meal-mór, *a great hill*.

[§] 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 fourth book. A horn was the most common instrument to call the army together.

at Tura's rustling gate. The sound of peace is not its voice! My heroes shall hear and obey." He went. He struck the bossy shield. The hills, the rocks reply. The sound spreads along the wood: deer start by the lake of roes. Curach^h leaps from the sounding rock; and Connal of the bloody spear! Crugal'sⁱ breast of snow beats high. The son of Favi leaves the dark-brown hind. It is the shield of war, said Ronnar! the spear of Cuthullin, said Lugar! son of the sea, put on thy arms! Calmar, lift thy sounding steel! Puno, dreadful hero, arise! Cairbar, from thy red tree of Cromla! Bend thy knee, O Eth! descend from the streams of Lena. Ca-olt stretch thy 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 rocky Cuthon.^k

Now I behold the chiefs, in the pride of their former deeds! Their souls are kindled at the battles of old; at the actions of other times. Their eyes are flames of fire. They roll in search of the foes of the land. Their mighty hands are on their swords. Lightning pours from their sides of steel. They come like streams from the mountains; each rushes roar-

^h Curach signifies *the madness of battle.*

ⁱ Cruth-geal, *fair-complexioned.*

^k Cu-thón, *the mournful sound of waves.*

ing from his hill. Bright are the chiefs of battle, in the armour of their fathers. Gloomy 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. Unequal bursts the song of battle. Rocking Cromla¹ echoes round. On Lena's dusky heath they stand, like mist that shades the hills of autumn: when broken and dark it settles high, and lifts its head to heaven!

"Hail," said Cuthullin, "sons of the narrow vales! hail, hunters of the deer! Another sport is drawing near: It is like the dark rolling of that wave on the coast. Or shall we fight, ye sons of war! or yield green Erin^m to Lochin? O Connalⁿ speak, thou first of men! thou

¹ Crom-leach signified a place of worship among the Druids. It is here the proper name of a hill on the coast of Ullin or Ulster.

^m Ireland, so called from a colony that settled there, called Falans. Inis-fail, the island of the Fa-il or Falans.

ⁿ Connal, the friend of Cuthullin, was the son of Caith-bait, prince of the Tongorma, or the *island of blue waves*, probably one of the Hebrides. His mother was Fioncoma, the daughter of Congal. He had a son by Foba of Conacharnessar, who was afterwards petty king of Ulster. For his services in the war against Swaran, he had lands conferred on him, which, from his name, were called Tir-chonnail, or Tir-connel, i. e. the land of Connal.

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

"Cuthullin!" calm the chief replied; "the spear of Connal is keen: it delights to shine in battle; to mix with the blood of thousands. But though my hand is bent on fight, my heart is for the peace of Erin.^o Behold, thou first in Cormac's war, the sable fleet of Swaran. His masts are many on our coast, like reeds in the lake of Lego. His ships are forests clothed with mists, when the trees yield by turns to the squally wind. Many are his chiefs in battle. Connal is for peace! Fingal would shun his arm, the first of mortal men! Fingal, who scatters the mighty, as stormy winds the heath, when streams roar through echoing Cona; and night settles with all her clouds on the hill!"

"Fly, thou man of peace!" said ^p Calmar, "fly," said the son of Matha; "go, Connal, to thy silent hills, where the spear never brightens in war! Pursue the dark-brown deer of Cromla: stop with thine arrows the bounding roes of

^o 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, l. 2 & 4. CASAUB. l. 1.

^p Calm-er, a strong man.

Lena. But, blue-eyed son of Semo, Cuthullin, ruler of the field, scatter thou the sons of Lochlin!⁹ roar through the ranks of their pride. Let no vessel of the kingdom of snow bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inistore.[†] Rise, ye dark winds of Erin, rise! roar, whirlwinds of Lara of hinds! Amid the tempest let me die, torn, in a cloud, by angry ghosts of men; amid the tempest let Calmar die, if ever chase was sport to him, so much as the battle of shields!”

“Calmar!” Connal slow replied, “I never fled, young son of Matha! I was swift with my friends in fight; but small is the fame of Connal! The battle was won in my presence; 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 Fingal shall arrive on our coast. Or, if war be thy choice, I lift the sword and spear. My joy shall be in the midst of thousands; my soul shall lighten through the gloom of the fight!”

“To me,” Cuthullin 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 pass along the heath, bright

⁹ The Galic name of Scandinavia in general.

[†] The Orkney islands.

as the sun-shine before a storm; when the west wind collects the clouds, and Morven echoes over all her oaks! But where are my friends in battle? The supporters of my arm in danger? Where art thou, white-bosomed C athbar? Where is that cloud in war, Duch omar?^s Hast thou left me, O Fergus!^t 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 Malmor? Like a hart from thy echoing hills? Hail, thou son of Rossa! what shades the soul of war?"

"Four stones,"^u replied the chief, "rise on the grave of C athba. These hands have laid in earth Duch omar, that cloud in war. C athba, son of Torman! thou wert a sun-beam in Erin. And thou, O valiant Duch omar! a mist of the marshy Lano; when it moves on the plains of

^s Dubhchomar, a *black well-made man*.

^t Fear-guth, *the man of the word*; or a commander of an army.

^u 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 mold, and four stones placed on end to mark the extent of the grave. These are the four stones alluded to here.

autumn, bearing the death of thousands along. Morna! fairest of maids! calm is thy sleep in the cave of the rock! Thou hast fallen in darkness, like a star, that shoots across the desert, when the traveller 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 strong in arms to the dark and narrow house?"

"Câthba," replied the hero, "fell by the sword of Duchômar, at the oak of the noisy streams. Duchômar came to Tura's cave; he spoke to the lovely Morna. Morna,^{*} fairest among women, lovely daughter of strong-armed Cormac! Why in the circle of stones? in the cave of the rock alone? The stream murmurs along. The old tree groans in the wind. The lake is troubled before thee; dark are the clouds of the sky! But thou art snow on the heath; thy hair is the mist of Cromla, when it curls on the hill; when it shines to the beam of the west! Thy breasts are two smooth rocks, seen from Branno of streams. Thy arms, like two white pillars, in the halls of the great Fingal."

"From whence," the fair-haired maid re-

* Muirne, or Morna, *a woman beloved by all.*

plied, "from whence, Duchômar, 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, Duchômar?" "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 daughter of Cormac, I love thee as my soul! I have slain one stately deer for thee. High was his branchy head; and fleet his feet of wind." "Duchômar!" calm the maid replied, "I love thee not, thou gloomy man! hard is thy heart of rock; dark is thy terrible brow. But Câthba, young son of Torman,^y thou art the love of Morna. Thou art a sun-beam, in the day of the gloomy storm. Sawest thou the son of Torman, lovely on the hill of his hinds? Here the daughter of Cormac waits the coming of Câthba!"

"Long shall Morna wait," Duchômar said; "long shall Morna wait for Câthba! Behold this sword unsheathed! Here wanders the blood of Câthba. Long shall Morna wait. He fell by the stream of Branno! On Croma I will raise his tomb. Daughter of blue-shielded Cormac, turn on Duchômar thine eyes; his arm is strong

^y Torman, *thunder*. This is the true origin of the Jupiter Taramis of the ancients.

as a storm." "Is the son of Torman fallen?" said the wildly-bursting voice of the maid. "Is he fallen on his echoing hills; the youth with the breast of snow? The first in the chase of hinds? The foe of the strangers of ocean? Thou art dark^z to me, Duchômar, cruel is thine arm to Morna! Give me that sword, my foe! I love the wandering blood of Câthba!"

He gave the sword to her tears. She pierced his manly breast! He fell, like the bank of a mountain-stream; and, stretching forth his hand, he spoke: "Daughter of blue-shielded Cormac! Thou hast slain me in youth! the sword is cold in my breast: Morna, I feel it cold. Give me to Moina^a the maid. Duchômar was the dream of her night! She will raise my tomb; the hunter shall raise my fame. But draw the sword from my breast. Morna, the steel is cold!" She came, in all her tears she came; she drew the sword from his breast. He pierced her white side! He spread her fair locks on the ground! Her bursting blood sounds from her side: her white arm is stained with red. Rolling in death she lay. The cave re-echoed to her sighs.

"Peace," said Cuthullin, "to the souls of

^z She alludes to his name, *the dark man*.

^a Moina, *soft in temper and person*.

the heroes! their deeds were great in fight. Let them ride around^b me on clouds. Let them shew their features of war. My soul shall then be firm in danger; mine 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; when the din of arms is past. Gather the strength of the tribes! 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 battle darkens round the beams of my steel!"

As rushes a stream of foam from the dark shady deep of Cromla; when the thunder is travelling above, and dark-brown night sits on half the hill. Through the breaches of the tempest look forth the dim faces of ghosts. So fierce, so vast, so terrible, rushed on the sons of Erin. The chief, like a whale of ocean, whom all his billows pursue, poured valour forth, as a stream, rolling his might along the shore. The sons of Lochlin heard the noise, as the sound of

^b 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.

a winter storm. Swaran struck his bossy shield: he called the son of Arno; "What murmur rolls along the hill, like the gathered flies of the eve? The sons of Erin descend; or rustling winds roar in the distant wood! Such is the noise of Gormal, before the white tops of my waves arise. O son of Arno! ascend the hill; view the dark face of the heath!"

He went. He, trembling, swift returned. His eyes rolled wildly round. His heart beat high against his side. His words were faltering, broken, slow. "Arise, son of ocean! arise, chief of the dark-brown shields! I see the dark, the mountain-stream of battle! the deep-moving strength of the sons of Erin! The car, the car of war comes on, like the flame of death! the rapid car of Cuthullin, the noble son of Semo! It bends behind like a wave near a rock; like the sun-streaked mist of the heath. Its sides are embossed with stones, and sparkle like the sea round the boat of night. Of polished yew is its beam; its seat of the smoothest bone. The sides are replenished with spears; the bottom is the foot-stool of heroes! Before the right side of the car is seen the snorting horse! The high-maned, broad-breasted, proud, wide-leaping, strong steed of the hill. Loud and re-sounding is his hoof; the spreading of his mane above is like a stream of smoke on a ridge of

rocks. Bright are the sides of the steed! his name is Sulin-Sifadda!

“ Before the left side of the car is seen the snorting horse! The thin-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 mists, fly over the streamy vales! The wildness of deer is in their course; the strength of eagles descending on their prey. Their noise is like the blast of winter, on the sides of the snow-headed Gormal.

“ Within the car is seen the chief; the strong-armed son of the sword. The hero's name is Cuthullin, 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. “ When fled Swaran from the battle of spears? When did I shrink from danger, chief of the little soul? I met the storm of Gormal, when the

foam of my waves beat high. I met the storm of the clouds; shall Swaran fly from a hero? Were Fingal himself before me, my soul should not darken with fear. Arise to 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 pines to the wind!"

Like autumn's dark storms pouring from two echoing hills, toward each other approached the heroes. Like two deep streams from high rocks meeting, mixing, roaring on the plain; loud, rough, and dark in battle, meet Lochlin and Inisfail. Chief mixes his strokes with chief, and man with man: steel clanging, sounds on steel. Helmets are cleft on high; blood bursts and smokes around. Strings murmur on the polished yews. Darts rush along the sky. Spears fall like the circles of light, which gild the face of night. As the noise of the troubled ocean, when roll the waves on high. As the last peal of thunder in heaven, such is the din of war! Though Cormac's hundred bards were there, to give the fight to song; feeble was the voice of a hundred bards to send the deaths to future times! For many were the deaths of heroes; wide poured the blood of the brave!

Mourn, ye sons of song, mourn the death of

the noble Sithállin.^c Let the sighs of Fjöna rise, on the lone plains of her lovely Ardan. They fell, like two hinds of the desert, by the hands of the mighty Swaran; when, in the midst of thousands, he roared; like the shrill spirit of a storm. He sits dim, on the clouds of the north, and enjoys the death of the mariner. Nor slept thy hand by thy side, chief of the isle of mist!^d many were the deaths of thine arm, Cuthullin, thou son of Semo! 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^e snorted over the bodies of heroes. Sisadda^f bathed his hoof in blood. The battle 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!^g Bend thy fair head over the waves,

^c Sithállin signifies *a handsome man*; Fjöna, *a fair maid*; and Ardan, *pride*.

^d The Isle of Sky; not improperly called the *isle of mist*, as its high hills, which catch the clouds from the western ocean, occasion almost continual rains.

^e One of Cuthullin's horses. Dubhstron-gheal.

^f Sith-sadda, i. e. *a long stride*.

^g *The maid of Inistore* was the daughter of Gorlo, king of Inistore, or Orkney islands. Trenar was brother to the king

thou lovelier than the ghosts 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 thy love to match the blood of kings. Trenar, graceful Trenar died, O maid of Inistore! His grey dogs are howling at home! they see his passing ghost! His bow is in the hall unstrung. No sound is in the hill of his hinds.

As roll a thousand waves to the rocks, so Swaran's host came on. As meets a rock a thousand waves, so Erin met Swaran of spears. Death raises all his voices around, and mixes with the sounds of shields. Each hero is a pillar of darkness; 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; these so gloomy and dark? Who

of Iniscon, 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 Trenar are sensible at home of the death of their 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.

are these like two clouds, and their swords like lightning above them? The little hills are troubled around; the rocks tremble with all their moss. Who is it but Ocean's son, and the car-borne chief of Erin? Many are the anxious eyes of their friends, as they see them dim on the heath. But night conceals the chiefs in clouds, and ends the dreadful fight!

It was on Cromla's shaggy side that Dorglass had placed the deer,^h the early fortune of the chase, before the heroes left the hill. A hundred youths collect the heath; ten warriors wake the fire; three hundred chuse the polished stones. The feast is smoking wide! Cuthullin, chief of Erin's war, resumed his mighty soul. He stood upon his beamy spear, and spoke to the son of songs; to Carril of other times, the grey-haired son of Kinfena.ⁱ "Is this feast spread for me alone, and the king of Lochlin

^h 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.

ⁱ Cean-feana, i. e. *the head of the people*.

on Erin's shore, far from the deer of his hills, and sounding halls of his feasts? Rise, Carril of other times; carry my words to Swaran. Tell him from the roaring of waters, that Cuthullin 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!"

Old Carril went, with softest voice. He called the king of dark-brown shields! "Rise from the skins of thy chase; rise, Swaran, king of groves! Cuthullin 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, Inisfail! should stretch their arms of snow; should raise the heavings of their breasts, and softly roll their eyes of love; yet, fixed as Lochlin's thousand rocks, here Swaran should remain; till morn, with the young beams of the east, shall light me to the death of Cuthullin. Pleasant to my ear is Lochlin'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, which often echoed to my winds, when my spear was red in the chase of the boar. Let dark Cuthullin yield to me the

ancient throne of Cormac; 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 the 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 Inisfail: and lovely are the songs of woe that are heard in Albion's rocks; when the noise of the chase is past, and the streams of Cona answer to the voice of Ossian."^k

"In other days,"¹ Carril replies, "came the sons of ocean to Erin! a thousand vessels bounded on waves to Ullin's lovely plains. The sons of Inisfail arose, to meet the race of dark-brown shields. Cairbar, first of men, was there,

^k The Cona here mentioned, is that small river that runs through Glenco in Argyleshire. One of the hills which environ that romantic valley, is still called Scorna-fena, or the hill of Fingal's people.

¹ This episode is introduced with propriety. Calmar and Connal, 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.

and Grudar, stately youth! Long had they strove for the spotted bull, that lowed on ^m Golbun's echoing heath. Each claimed him as his own. Death was often at the point of their steel! Side by side the heroes fought; 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 Golbun's echoing heath? They saw him leaping like snow. The wrath of the chiefs returned!

“On Lubar's” grassy banks they fought: Grudar fell in his blood. Fierce Cairbar came to the vale, where Brassolis, ^o fairest of his sisters, all alone, raised the song of grief. She sung of the actions of Grudar, the youth of her secret soul! She mourned him in the field of blood; but still she hoped for his return. Her white bosom is seen from her robe, as the moon from the clouds of night, when its edge heaves white on the view, from the darkness which covers its orb. Her voice was softer than the harp, to raise the song of grief. Her soul was fixed on Grudar. The secret look of her eye was his. “When shalt thou come in thine arms, thou mighty in the war?”

^m Golb-bhean, as well as Cromleach, signifies *a crooked hill*.

ⁿ Lubar, a river in Ulster. *Labhar*, loud, noisy.

^o Brassolis signifies *a woman with a white breast*.

“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. Dis-
tracted, pale, she flew. She found her youth
in all his blood; she died on Cromla’s heath.
Here rests their dust, Cuthullin! these lonely
yews sprung from their tombs, and shade them
from the storm. Fair was Brassolis on the
plain! Stately was Grudar on the hill! The
bard shall preserve their names, and send them
down to future times!”

“Pleasant is thy voice, O Carril,” said the
blue-eyed chief of Erin. “Pleasant 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 Bragéla; she 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 Cuthullin? The sea is rolling distant
far; its white foam deceives thee for my sails.
Retire, for it is night, my love; the dark winds
sing in thy hair. Retire to the halls of my
feasts; think of the times that are past. I will
not return till the storm of war is ceased. O
Connal! speak of war and arms, and send her

from my mind. Lovely, with her flowing hair, is the white-bosomed daughter of Sorglan."

Connal, slow to speak, replied, "Guard again the race of Ocean. Send thy troop of night abroad, and watch the strength of Swaran. Cuthullin! I am for peace till the race of Selma come; till Fingal come, the first of men, and beam, like the sun, on our fields!" The hero struck the shield of alarms; the warriors of the night moved on! The rest lay in the heath of the deer, and slept beneath the dusky wind. The ghosts^p of the lately dead were near, and swam on the gloomy clouds: and far distant, in the dark silence of Lena, the feeble voices of death were faintly heard.

^p 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 place 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.

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