

F I N G A L
AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

B O O K II.

A R G U M E N T.

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 dishonorable 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 gave 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 shew, that ill success did not always attend those, who innocently killed their friends, introduces the episode of Comal and Galvina.

Connal * lay by the sound of the mountain stream, beneath the aged tree. A stone,

* 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 familiar subject.

Ἠλθῆ δ' ἐπὶ ψυχῇ Πατροκλῆος δειλοῖο
 Παντ' αὐτῷ ἰμέγεθός τε καὶ ὄμματα καὶ τ'
 εἰκῆσια

καὶ φωνήν, &c.

Hom. Il. 23.

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.

In somnis ecce ante oculos moestissimus
 Hector

Vilus adesse mihi, largosque effundere fletus,
 Raptatus bigis, ut quondam, aterque cruento
 Pulvere, perque pedes trajectus lora tumentes
 Hei mihi qualis erat? quantum mutatus ab illo
 Hec-

stone, with its moss, supported his head. Shril
thro' the heath of *Lena*, he heard the voice
of night. At distance from the heroes he
lay, for the son of the sword feared no foe.

C 5

My

Hectore, qui redit exuviis indutus Achillis
Vel Danaum Phrygios jaculatus puppibus
ignis;
Squallentem barbam & concretos sanguine
crines,
Vulneraque illa gerens, quae circum pluri-
ma muros

Acceptit patrios.

Aen. Lib. 2.

When Hector's ghost before my sight appe-
ars:

A bloody shroud he seem'd, and bath'd in
tears.

Such as he was, when, by Pelides slain,
Thessalian coursers drag'd him o'er the plain.
Swoln were his feet, as when the tongs
were thrust

Through the bor'd holes, his body black
with dust.

Unlike that Hector, who return'd from toils
Of war triumphant, in Aeacian 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.

My hero saw in his rest a dark, red 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 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 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

his lone steps in the heath. I am light as
 the blast of *Cromla*, and I move like the
 shadow of mist. *Connal*, son of *Colgar**,
 I see the dark cloud of death: it hovers over
 the plain of *Lena*. The sons of green *E-*
rin 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*, my
 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

* *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.

* Ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χροῶν, ἥτε ταποῖς
 ὄχετο τετραγυῖα.

Hom. II. 23. v. 100.

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

Pope.

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 founding arms. He struck his shield above *Cuchullin*. 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 son 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 *Dun-caich*; or fly over the heath of *Lena*.

He

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 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 could tell him there of our death!

Ghosts fly on clouds and ride on winds, said *Connal's* voice of wisdom. They rest

* 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, something like the *εὐδωλον* of the ancient Greeks.

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 *Bragéla*. 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 sounds in the midst of the battles of *Erin*. Though *Fingal* delays his coming with the race of the stormy hills; we shall fight, *Colgar's* son, and die in the battle of heroes.

The

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 eccho to the stream of frost, and their
 withered leaves rustle to the wind.

High *Cromla's* head of clouds is gray;
 the morning trembles on the half-enlight-
 ened 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

* — As when heaven'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.

hills of *Ullin* 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

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 *Swart*, 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 *Ullin'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*, tell that heart of pride, that *Cuchullin* never yields. — I give him the dark-blue rolling of ocean, or give his people graves in *Erin!* Never shall a

D

stran-

stranger have the lovely sun-beam of *Dun-scaich*; nor ever deer fly on Lochlin's hills before the nimble footed *Luäth*.

Vain ruler of the ear, 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 *Ullin* 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 thought 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

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 inelose him with fire, and the dark winds are in his hands. — *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,

D 2

Sad

* — As evening mist

Rif'n from a river over the marish glides,
And gathers ground fast at the laborer's heel

Homeward returning.

Milton.

* The ancient Scots, as well as the present Highlanders, drunk in shells, hence it is

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 mountain-bee, or collected flies of evening. But *Degrena* falls like a cloud of the morn; the sword of *Lochlin* is in her side. *Cairbar*, the rising thought of thy youth. She is fallen, o *Cairbar*, the thought of thy youth-ful hours

Fier-

is that we so often meet, in the old poetry, with the *chief of the shells*, and the *balls of the shells*.

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

** *Deo-ghrena* signifies a *sun-beam*.

Fierce *Cairbar* heard the mournful
 sound, and rushed on like ocean's whale;
 he saw the death of his daughter; and roar-
 ed in the midst of thousands *. His spear
 met a son of *Lochlin*, and battle spread
 from wing to wing. As a hundred 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. *Mor-
 glan* lies in lasting rest; and *Ca-
 old* 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
 spread 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 chace prepared the bow.

D 3

Still

* mediisque in millibus ardet.

Virg.

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 *Cuchulliu* stood befo-
 re him like a hill *, that catches the clouds
 of

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

Quantus Athos, aut quantus Eryx, aut ipse
coruscis

Cum fremit illicibus, quantus gauderque
nivali

Vertice se attollens pater Appeninus ad auras.
Virg.

Like Eryx or like Athos great he shews,
 Or father Appenine when white with
 snows;

His head divine obscur'd in clouds he hides,
 And shakes the sounding forest on his sides.

Dryden.

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

Milton.

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 midsts of thousands. Blood
rises like the fount of a rock, from pan-
ting heroes around him. But *Erin* falls on
either wing, like snow in the day of the
sun.

O sons of *Innis-fail*, said *Grumal*,
Lochlin conquers on the field. Why strive
we as reeds against the wind? Fly to the
hill of darkbrown hinds. He fled like the
stag of *Morven*, and his spear is a trem-
bling 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*
ecchoing 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 flying 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* panted 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

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 gives light in the night. O *Connal*, 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 *Car-*
ril 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? Well I remember,
 said *Connal*, the noble son of *Damman*!
 Tall and fair he was like the rain-bow of
 the hill.

Fer-

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

Son of *Damman*, begun 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 pearce 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, *Deugála!* but may I fall 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

near with 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 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.

Mournfull 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 chace. 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 chace was one and happy were their words in secret. — But *Grumal* loved the maid, the dark chief of the gloomy *Ardven*. He watched her lone steps in the heath; the foe of unhappy *Comal*.

One

One day, tired of the chase, when
 mist had concealed their friends, *Comal*
 and the daughter 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 ap-
 pears on *Mora's* brow. I go; but I will
 soon

* The unfortunate death of this *Ronan* is
 the subject of the ninth fragment of ancient
 poetry published last year; 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 imi-
 tated; 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 hands. They are
 trivial and dull to the last degree; swelling
 into ridiculous bombast, or sinking into the
 lowest kind of prosaic style.

soon return. I fear the said dark *Gormal* 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 *Mora*. The daughter of *Conloch* would try his love. She cloathed her white sides with his armour, and strode 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 run with wildness in his steps and called the daughter *Conloch*. No answer in the lonely rock. Where art thou o my love! He saw at length, her heaving heart beating around the featherd dart. O *Conloch's* daughter is it thou? He sunk upon her breast.

The

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 fleet 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.