

FINGAL

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

BOOK III.

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 the death of Agandecca the beautiful sister of Swaran. He had scarce finished when Calmar the son of Maitha, who had advised the first battle came wounded from the field, and told them of Swaran's design to surprize 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,

pass

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 Fanasollis, 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.

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(The second night since the opening of the poem continues; and Cuchullin, Connal, and Carril still sit in the place described in the preceding book. The story of Agandecca 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.)

Pleasant are the words of the songs, said *Cuchullin*, 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 sides, 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 shields 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 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 *Starno* *.

He sat in the hall of his shells in *Lochlin's* woody land. He called the grey-haired *Snivon*, 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.

E 3

Go,

* *Starno* was the father of *Swaran* as well as *Agandecca*. — 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 *Scandanavia*.

Go, gray-haired *Snivan*, *Starvo* said to *Arduon'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 *Albin's* windy hills: and fair-haired *Fingal* went. His kindled soul flew before him, as he bounded on the waves of the north.

Welcome, said the dark-brown *Starvo*, 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

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 songs of death were afraid, and fled
 from the eyes of 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. *Ul-
 lin*, *Fingal's* bard, was there; the sweet
 voice of the hill of *Cona*. He praised the
 daughter of snow; and *Morven's* ** high-
 descended chief. — The daughter of snow
 over-heard, and left the hall of her secret
 sigh. She came in all her beauty, like the
 moon from the cloud of the east. — Lo-
 veliness was around her as light. Her steps
 were like the music of songs. She saw the
 E 4 youth

* *Starvo* 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
 probably went of old under the name of *Mor-
 ven*, which signifies a ridge of very high
 hills.

youth and loved him. He was the stolen sigh of her soul. Her blue eye rolled 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* *

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

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

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

Before the halls of *Starno* the songs of
the chace 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 *Morusn*. 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 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 rock of *Ronan*; when the
woods are still and the eccho 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
Arduen, and the sea roars round the dark
 dwelling of *Agandecca*.

Blessed be her soul said *Cuchullin*, 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 be-
 fore the King of echoing *Morven*. Shew
 thy face from a cloud, o moon; light his
 white sails on the wave of the night. And if
 any strong spirit * of heaven sits on that
 lowhung 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
Calenar ascended the hill, the wounded son of
Ma-

* This is the only passage in the poem that
 has the appearance of religion. — But *Cu-
 chullin's* apostrophe to this spirit is accom-
 panied 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.

Matha. From the field he came in his blood.
He leaned on his bending spear. Feeble is
the arm of battle! but strong the soul of the
hero!

Welcome! o son of *Matha*, said *Con-
nal*, welcome art thou to thy friends! Why
bursts that broken sigh from the breast of
him that never 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 through the storms of the waves. His
black skiff bounded on the ocean and travelled
on the wings of the blast. A spirit once em-
broiled the night. Seas swell and rocks re-
found. Winds drive along the clouds. The
lightning flies on wings of fire. He feared
and came to land: then blushed that he fea-
red 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
sword unsheathed. When the low-hung
vapour passed, he took it by the curling head,
and searched his 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-valleyed
Erin, retire from *Lena's* bloody heath.
Collect the sad 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 corse. After
Fingal has wasted the field, place me by some
stone of remembrance, that future times may
hear

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 on the unequal field; my soul increases in danger. *Connal*; and *Carril* of other times, carry off the sad sons 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 intralld, and bid the King of *Morven* hasten. O let him come like the sun in storm, when he shines on the hills of grass.

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

* *Aeoltha*, her lamentation over her son is introduced in the poem concerning the death of *Cuchullin*, printed in the collection of *Ossian's* works.

leaned on his father's spear. That spear which he brought from *Lara's* hall, when the soul of his mother was sad. — But slowly 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

* — — — ἕτερον πέτρῃ

Ἡλίβαλος, μεγάλη, πολιῆς ἀλός ἐγγύς
ἔσσα, &c.

Hom. II, 15.

So some tall rock o'erhangs the hoary main,
By winds assail'd, by billows beat in vain,
Unmov'd it hears, above, the tempests

blow,

And sees the watty mountains break
below.

Pope.

resounding sea through the hundred Isles of
Inisore; so loud so vast, so immense retur-
 ned the sons of *Lochlin* against the King of
 the desert hill. But bending, weeping, sad
 and slow, and dragging his long spear be-
 hind, *Cuchullin* sunk in *Cromla's* wood, and
 mourned his fallen friends. He feared 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 *Innis-fail*! they that were chearful
 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 chace of the
 hinds. Pale, silent, low on bloody beds are
 they who were my friends! O spirits of the
 lately deceased, meet *Cuchullin* on his heath.
 Converse with him on the wind, when the
 rustling tree of *Tura's* cave resounds. There,
 far remote, I shall lie unknown. No bard
 shall hear of me. No gray stone shall rise to
 my renown. Mourn me with the death, o
Bragela! departed is my fame.

Such

Such were the words of *Cuchullin*,
when he sunk in the woods of *Cromla*.

Fingal tall in his ship, stretched his
bright lance before him. Terrible was the
gleam of the steel: it was like the green me-
teor of death, setting in the heath of *Mal-
mor*, when the traveller is alone, and the
broad moon is darkened in heaven.

The battle is over, said the King; and
I behold the blood of my friends. Sad is the
heath of *Lena*; and mournful the oaks of
Cromla: the hunters have fallen there in
their strength; and the son of *Semo* is no
more. — *Ryno* and *Fillan*, my sons, found
the horn of *Fingal's* war. Ascend that hill
on the shore, and call the children of the
foe. Call them from the grave *Lamdarg*,
the chief of other times. — Be your voice
like that of your father, when he enters the
battles of his strength. I wait for the dark
mighty man; I wait on *Lena's* shore for *Swa-
ran*. And let him come with all his race;
for

for strong in battle are the friends of the dead.

Fair *Ryno* flew like lightning; dark *Fillan* as the shade of autumn. On *Lena's* heath their voice is heard; the sons of ocean heard the horn of *Fingal's* war. As the roaring eddy of ocean returning from the Kingdom of snows; so strong, so dark, so sudden came down the sons of *Lochlin*. The King in their front appears in the dismal pride of his arms. Wrath burns in his dark-brown face; and his eyes roll in the fire of his valour.

Fingal beheld the son of *Starno*; and he remembered *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 first of his loves.

Ullin came with aged steps, and spoke to *Starno's* son. O thou dwellest afar,

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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 ecchoing shields.

To day, said *Starvo's* wrathful son,
 we break the ecchoing shields: to morrow
 my feast 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 ecchoing shields.
 — *Ossian* stand thou near my arm. *Gaul*
 lift thy terrible sword. *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 desert: so roaring, so vast, so

ter-

terrible the armies mixed on *Lena's* echoing heath. — The groan 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 on 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 re-found on their hills, and the rocks fall down before him. — Bloody was the hand of my father, when he whirled the lightning 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 feet of wind; and *Fillan* like the mist of the hill. Myself*), like a rock,

F 2

came

*) Here the poet celebrates his own actions, but he does it in such a manner that we are not displeas'd. The mention of the great actions of his youth immediately suggests to him

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 eyes were not closed in darkness: nor failed my feet in the race.

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

him the helpless situation of his age. We do not despise him for selfish praise, but feel his misfortunes.

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 acti-
 ons were swelling in his soul.

Son of my son, begun the King, o
Oscar, pride of youth, I saw the shining of
 thy sword, and gloried in my race. Pur-
 sue 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 *Tra-
 thal* was, and such has *Fingal* 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 *Fainafollis* 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-failed boat appeared far off; we saw it like a mist that rode on ocean's blast. 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!

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*) 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.

The King of *Craca's* echoing isle owned
 me the sun-beam of his race. And often
 did the hills of *Cromla* reply to the sighs of
 love for the unhappy *Fainafollis*. *Sora's* chief
 beheld my fair; and loved 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
 gloomy 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 dan-
 ger threatens, I rejoice in the storms of
 spears. — I saw the tears upon her cheek,
 I pitied *Craca's* fair.

Now like a dreadful wave afar, appear
 red the ship of stormy *Borbar*. His masts
 high-bended 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. Unerring is
 thy hand, I said but feeble was the foe. —
 We fought, nor weak was the strife of de-
 ath: He sunk beneath my sword. We
 laid them in two tombs of stones, the un-
 happy children of youth.

Such have I been in my youth, o *Oscar*;
 be 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 the race; fly
 over the heath of roaring winds; and view
 the sons of *Lochlin*. Far off I hear the noi-
 se of their fear, like storms of echoing *Co-
 na*. Go: that they may not fly my sword
 along the waves of the north. — For ma-
 ny chiefs of *Erin's* race lie here on the
 dark

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 sooth *Erin's* friends to rest. And *Fingal*, sheath thy sword

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whi-

*) *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 sometimes 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,

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. Rise, raise the voice, sons of the song, and lull me into rest. Here will *Fingal* lie amidst the wind of night. — And if thou, *Agandecca*, art near, among the children of thy land; if thou sittest on a blast of wind among the high - throwded masts of *Lochlin*; come to my dreams *) my fair one, and shew thy bright face to my soul.

Ma-

*) The poet prepares us for the dream of *Fingal* in the next book

Many a voice, and many a harp in
 tuneful sounds arose. Of *Fingal's* noble
 deeds they sung, and of the noble race
 of the hero. And sometimes on the love-
 ly sound was heard the name of the now
 mournful *Offian*.

Often have I fought, and often won
 in battles of the spear. But blind, and
 tearful, and forlorn I now walk with little
 men. O *Fingal*, with 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 *Cona*.

FIN.