

F I N G A L

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

B O O K IV.

A R G U M E N T.

The action of the poem being suspended by night, Ossian takes that opportunity to relate his own action at the lake of Lugo and his courtship of Eivirallin, who was the mother of Oscar and had died some time before the expedition of Fingal into Ireland. Her ghost appears to him and tells him; that Oscar, who had been sent, at the beginning of the night to observe the enemy, was engaged with an advanced party and almost overpowered. Ossian relieves 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 one wing, Gaul, who was at-

attacked by Swaran in person, was on the point
 of retreat in the other. Fingal sends Ullin his
 bard, to encourage him with a war-song, but
 not withstanding 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, passes himself
 of a rising ground, restores the ranks, and waits
 the approach of Fingal. The King, having en-
 couraged 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 Fura, 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 Con-
 nal from joining Fingal who was himself upon
 the point of obtaining a complete victory sends
 Carril to congratulate that hero on his success.

Who

Who comes with her songs from the mountain, like the bow of the showery *Lena*? It is the maid of the voice of love. The white armed daughter of *Toscar* *). Often hast thou heard my song, and 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 eye is darkened with sorrow,

Daugh-

*) *Fingal* being asleep, and the action suspended by night, the poet introduces the story of his courtship of *Evirallin* the daughter of *Branno*. 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 *Ossians* other compositions is addressed to the beautiful *Malvina* the daughter of *Toscar*. She appears to have been in love with *Oscar*, and to have affected the company of the father after the death of the son.

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 fought 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* fable fudge; 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. Tho' twelve daughters of beauty were mine, thine were the choice thou son of fame! — Then he opened the hall

of

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 peo-
 ple of stately *Cormac*. Eight were the he-
 roes of the chief; and the heath flamed
 with their arms. There *Colla*, *Durra* of
 the wounds, there mighty *Toscar*, and *Ta-
 go*, there *Frestal* the victorious stood; *Dairo*
 of the happy deeds, and *Dala* the battle's
 bulwark in the hand of *Cormac*, and gra-
 ceful was the look of the hero.

Eight were the heroes of *Offian*; *Ul-
 tin* stormy son of war; *Mullo* of the gene-
 rous deeds; the noble, the graceful *Scelacha*;
Oglan and *Cerdal* the wrathful, and *Du-
 ma-riccan's* brows of death. And why
 should *Ogar* be the last; so wide renowned
 on the hills of *Arduen*?

Ogar met *Dala* the strong, face to fa-
 ce, on the field of heroes.

The

The battle of the chiefs was like the wind on ocean's foamy waves. The dagger is remembered by *Oscar*; 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 hook it by the lock. The friends of *Cormac* fled.

Whoever would have told me, lovely maid *) when 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

G

blaft

*) The poet addresses himself to *Malvina* the daughter of *Tofear*.

**) The poet returns to his 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

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.

O *Ossian* rise and save my son; save *Oscar* chief of men: near the red oak of *Lubar's* stream, he fights with *Lochlin's* sons. — 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

and the winds are variable, both which circumstances agree with that season of the year.

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

Forth marched the chief, and distant from
the crowd

High on the rempart rais'd his voice aloud,

So

I called him like a distant stream. My son, return, over *Lena*. No further pursue the foe, 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 son of heaven that rises in a storm.

Fingal had started from a dream, and leaned on *Trenmor's* shield; the dark-brown

G 2

shield

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

Pope.

shield of 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 *Crom-la*; 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 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

the grey shield on his side. For the faint
beam of the morning came over the waters
of *Ullin*.

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 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 sword 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

here you 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 hea-
ven, and flying westward from the mor-
ning's beam the King of hills removed. Ter-
rible is the light of his armour, and two
spears are in his hands. — 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 wa-
ved, 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-boun-
 ding 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 *Evirallin* 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

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

Gaul rushed on like a whirlwind in
Arduen. The destruction of heroes is on
 his sword. *Swaran* 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 amain 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 began the king of *Morven*. Remind the mighty *Gaul* of battle; remind him of his fathers. Support the yielding fight with song; forsongenlivens 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

* *Ossian* never fails to give a fine character of 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

Hard heart that never yields, Chief 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 steeds, 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

down like a torrent; and consists almost entirely of epithets. The custom of encouraging men to 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 group of epithets, without beauty or harmony, utterly destitute of poetical merit.

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 *Morven*, and stopped in
 the midst of his course. Dark he leaned on
 his spear, rolling his red eyes around. Si-
 lent and tall he seemed as an oak of *Lubar*,
 which had its branches blasted of old 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 power. Raise my standards * on
 high — spread them on *Lena's* wind, like
 the

* Th'imperial ensign, which full high ad-
 vanced,
 Shone like a meteor streaming to the
 wind.

Milton.

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 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 *Offian* King of many songs,
 be near your fathers arm.

We reared the sun-beam ** 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 gloo-
 my men.

Behold

** Fingal's standard was distinguish'd 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*.

Behold said the king of generous shells,
 how *Lochlin* 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 mete-
 or 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 ec-
 choing groves bound on the waves of *Inis-
 tore*.

Mine, said *Gaul*, be the seven chiefs
 that came from *Lano's* lake. — Let *Inis-
 tore'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
Mudan's chief or I, said brown-haired *Der-
 mid*, 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 wim the hero's dark-brown
 shield. — Blest and victorious be my chiefs,
 said *Fingal* of the mildest look! *Swaran*,
 King

king of roaring waves, thou art the choice
of *Firgal*.

Now like an hundred different winds,
that pour through many vales; divided, dark,
the sons of the hill advanced, and *Cromla*
ecchoed around.

How, can I relate the deaths, when
we closed in the strife of our steel? O daugh-
ter 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 chief full filled his
promise. Besid the murmur of *Branno* thou
didst often sit, o maid; when thy white
bosom rose frequent, like the down of the
swan, when flow the sails the lake, and
sidelong winds are blowing. — Thou hast
seen the sun * retire red and flow behind his
cloud

* Sol quoque et exoriens et cum se condit
in undas;
Signa dabit, Solem certissima signa sequun-
tur,
Ut

cloud: night gathering round on the mountain, while the unrequent blast ** roared
in

Ut quae mane refert, et quae surgentibus
astris.

Ille ubi nascentem maculis variaverit ortum
Conditus in nubem, medioque refugerit
orbe;

Suspecti tibi sunt imbres,

Virg.

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 shoots his fullen beams,
Frugal of light, in loose and straggling
streams:

Suspect a drifling day.

Dryden.

** Continuo ventis surgentibus aut freta
ponti

Incipiunt agitata tumescere; et aridus altis,
Montibus audiri fragor, aut resonantia
longe

Littora misceri, et nemorum increbescere
murmur.

Virg.

For ere the rising winds begin to roar,
The working seas advance to wash the
shore;

Soft

in narrow vales, At length the rain beats
 hard; and thunder rolls in peals. Lightning
 glances on the rocks. Spirits ride on beams of
 fire. And the strength of the mountain
 streams* come roaring down the hills. Such
 was the noise of battle, maid 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 o' fall my friends.

It

Soft whispers run along the leafy wood;
 And mountains whistle to the murmuring
 flood.

Dryden.

* — *ruunt de montibus amnes.*

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

Dryden.

H

It was then by *Fingal's* hand a hero fell,
 For his grief — Gray-haired he rolled in the
 dust, and lifted his faint eyes to the King.
 And 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 *Starnos*. Thou hast been the foe of
 the foes of my love, and hast thou fallen by
 my hand? Raise, *Ullin*, 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 *Arduen*.

Cuchullin, from the cave of *Cromla*
 heard the noise of the troubled war. He cal-
 led to *Connal* chief of swords, and *Carril*
 of other times. The grey-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

dark wind blows from the deep, and rolls
the billows through the sandy vale.

Cuchullin kindled at the sight, and dark-
ness 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* sub-
dues the foe. Seek not a part of the fame
of the King! he 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 the battle is over, then be thy voice
sweet in his ear; to praise the King of swords.
Give him the sword of *Caithbat*! for *Cuchul-
lin* is worthy no more to lift the arms of his
fathers.

But O ye ghosts of the lonely *Cromla*!
ye souls of 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. *Conna!* 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 sun-beam of *Dunscaich*,
