

F I N G A L
AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

B O O K VI.

A R G U M E N T.

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

forts him, and sets sail, the next day for Scotland; which concludes the poem.

This book opens with the fourth night, and ends on the morning of the sixth day. The time of five days, five nights, and a part of the sixth day is taken up in the poem. The scene lies in the heath of Lena, the mountain Cromla on the coast of Ulster.

The

The clouds of night come rolling down,
 and rest on *Cromla's* dark-brown steep. The
 stars of the north arise over the rolling of the
 waves of *Ullin*; they shew their heads of
 fire through the flying mist of heaven.
 A distant wind roars in the wood; but
 silent and dark is the plain of death.

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

Be thy soul blest, o *Carril*, in the
 midst of thy eddy winds. O that thou
 wouldst come to my hall, when I am alone
 by night! And thou dost come, my friend,
 I hear often thy light hand on my harp;
 when

when it hangs on the distant wall, and the feeble sound touches my ear. Why dost thou not speak to me in my grief, and tell when I shall behold my friends? But thou passest away in thy murmuring blast; and thy wind whistles through the gray hair of *Ossian*.

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

* By strenght of the shell is meant the liquor the heroes drunk: of what kind it was, cannot be ascertained at this distance of time. The translator has met with several ancient poems, that mention wax-lights and wine as common in the halls of Fingal. The names of both are borrowed from the Latin, which plainly shews, that our ancestors had them from the Romans, if they had them at all. The *Caledonians* in their frequent incursions to the province, might become acquainted with those conveniencies of life, and introduce them into their own country, among the booty which they carried from South-Britain.

the souls of warriors brighten with joy. But the King of *Lochlin* is silent, and sorrow reddens in the eyes of his pride. He often turned towards *Lena*, and remembered that he fell.

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

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

Trenmor * said the mouth of the songs
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**Trenmor* was the great grand - father to *Fingal*. The story is introduced to felicitate the dismissal of *Swaran*.

lived in the days of other years. He bounded over the waves of the north! companion of the storm. The high rocks of the land of *Lochlin*, and its groves of murmuring sounds appeared to the hero through the mist; — he bound his white bosomed-sails. — *Trenmor* pursued the boar, that roared along the woods of *Gormal*. Many had fled from its presence; but the spear of *Trenmor* slew it.

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

The land of *Lochlin* had no hero, that yielded not to *Trenmor*. The shell of joy went round with songs in praise of the

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

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

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

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

Thou shalt never carry my spear,
said the angry King of *Morven*. — Thy
mother shall find thee pale on the shore
of the echoing *Gormal*; and, looking over
the dark blue deep, see the sails of him
that slew her son.

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

and my eye full of tears for the maid. —
Or dost thou chuse the fight? The combat
which thy fathers gave to *Trenmor*, is thi-
ne; that thou mayest depart renowned like
the sun setting in the west.

King of the race of *Morven*, said the
chief of the waves of *Lochlin*; never will
Swaran fight thee, first of thousand heroes!
I saw thee in the halls of *Starno*, and few
were thy years beyond my own. — When
shall I, said I to my soul, lift the spear like
the noble *Fingal*? We have fought here-
tofore, o warrior, on the side of the
shaggy *Malmor*; after my waves had carried
me to thy halls, and the feast of a thou-
sand shells was spread. Let the bard send
him, who overcame, to future years, for
noble was the strife of heathy *Malmor*,

But many of the ships of *Lochlin* have
lost their youth on *Lena*. Take these,
thou King of *Morven*, and be the friend
of

Three days he waited on the shore; and sent his horn abroad. He called *Corlo* to battle from all his echoing hills. But *Corlo* came not to battle. The King of *Lochlin* descended. He feasted on the roaring shore; and gave the maid to *Trenmor*.

King of *Lochlin*, said *Fingal*, thy blood flows in the veins of the foe. Our families met in battle, because they loved the strife of spears. But often did they feast in the hall, and send the joy of the shell. — Let thy face brighten with gladness, and thine ear delight in the harp. Dreadful as the storm of thy ocean, thou hast poured thy valour forth; thy voice has been like the voice of thousands, when they engage in battle. Raise, to-morrow thy white sails to the wind, thou brother of *Agandecca*. Bright as the beam of noon she comes on my mournful soul. I saw thy tears, for the fair one, and spared thee to the halls of *Starano*; when my sword was red with slaughter,

And some hunter may say, when he leans
 on a mossy tomb, here *Fingal* and *Swaran*
 fought; the heroes of other years. Thus
 hereafter shall he say, and our fame shall
 last for ever.

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

We gave the song to the Kings, and
 a hundred harps accompanied our voices.
 The face of *Swaran* brightened like the full
 moon of heaven, when the clouds vanish
 away

of *Swaran*. And when the sons shall come
to the mossy towers of *Gormal*, the feast
of shells shall be spread, and the combat
offered on the vale.

Nor ship, replied the King, shall *Fin-
gal* take, nor land of many hills. The
desart is enough to me, with all its deer
and woods. Rise on the waves again, thou
noble friend of *Agandecca*. Spread thy whi-
te sails to the beam of the morning, and
return to the ecchoing hills of *Gormal*.

Blest be thy soul, thou King of shells,
said *Swaran* of the dark brown shield. In
peace thou art the gale of spring. In war
the mountain-storm. Take now my hand
in friendship, thou noble King of *Morven*.
Let thy bards mourn those who fell. Let
Erin give the sons of *Lochlin* to earth;
and raise the mossy stones of their fame.
That the children of the north hereafter may
behold the place where their fathers fought.

in war; and tell him his fame shall never fail. Many have been overcome in battle, that have shone afterwards like the sun of heaven.

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

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

Fierce was the battle of the heroes,
for

* This passage alludes to the religion of the King of *Craca*. See a note on a familiar subject in the third book.

away, and leave her calm and broad in the midst of the sky.

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

Cuchullin said *Carril* of other times, he lies in the dreary cave of *Tura*. His hand is on the sword of his strength. His thoughts on the battle which he lost. Mournful is the King of spears; for he has often been victorious. He sends the sword of his war to rest on the side of *Fingal*. For like the storm of the desert, thou hast scattered all his foes. Take, o *Fingal*, the sword of the hero; for his fame is departed like mist, when it flies before the rustling wind of the vale.

No: replied the King, *Fingal* shall never take his sword. His arm is mighty
in

hundred voices at once arose, a hundred harps were strung; they sung of other times and the mighty chiefs of former years.

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

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

Call, said *Fingal*, call my dogs, the long bounding sons of the chace. Call
whi-

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

Far from his friends they placed him in the horrid circle of *Brumo*; where often they said, the ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of their fear. But afterwards he shone like a pillar of the light of heaven. They fell his mighty hand, and *Crumal* had his fame.

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

They lay in the heath of *Mora*; the dark winds rustled over the heroes. — A
hun-

Cromla. Soon will thy tomb be hid, and the grass grow rank on thy grave. The sons of the feeble shall pass over it, and not know that the mighty lie there.

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

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

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white-breasted *Bran*; and the surly strength
of *Luath*. — *Fillan* and *Ryno* — but he is
not here; my son rests on the bed of
death. *Fillan* and *Fergus*, blow my horn,
that the joy of the chace may arise; that
the deer of *Cromla* may hear and start at
the lake of roes.

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

One deer fell at the tomb of *Ryno*;
and the grief of *Fingal* returned. He saw
how peaceful lay the stone of him who was
the first at the chace. — No more shalt thou
rise, o my son, to partake of the feast of
Cro-

deeds in arms? Why did we come over the ocean, to aid thy feeble sword? Thou flyest to thy cave of sorrow, and *Connan* fights thy battles: Refign to me these arms of light, yield them, thou son of *Erin*..

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

Youth of the feeble arm said *Fingal*, *Connan* say no more. *Cuchullin* is renowned in battle and terrible over the desert. Often have I heard thy fame, thou stormy chief of *Innisfail*. Spread now thy white sails for the use of mist, and see *Bragela* leaning on her rock. Her tender eye is in tears, and the winds lift her long hair from her heaving breast. She listens to the winds

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

Many are thy words, *Cuchullin*, said *Connan* ** of small renown. Thy words are many, son of *Semo*: but where are thy

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deeds

* This is the only passage in the poem, wherein the wars of *Fingal* against the Romans are alluded to. — The Roman emperor is distinguished in old compositions by the title of *King of the world*.

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

We sat, we feasted, and we sung.
 The soul of *Cuchullin* rose. The strength
 of his arm returned; and gladness bright-
 ened on his face. *Ullin* gave the song,
 and *Carrill* raised the voice. I, often join-
 ed the bards, and sung of battles of the
 spear. — Battles! where I often fought;
 but now I fight no more. The fame of
 my former actions is ceased; and I sit for-
 lorn at the tombs of my friends.

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

* It is allowed by the best Critics, that
 an epic poem ought to end happily. This
 ru-

winds of night, to hear the voice of thy
rowers ***; to hear the song of the sea, and
the sound of thy distant harp.

And long shall she listen in vain; *Cu-
chullin* shall never return. How can I be-
hold *Bragela* to raise the sigh of her breast?
Fingal I was always victorious in the battle
of other spears!

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

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We

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

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 of his arm returned; and gladness bright-
 ened on his face. *Ullin* gave the song,
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rule in its most material circumstances, is observed by the three most deservedly celebrated poets, Homer, Virgil, and Milton; yet I know not how it happens, the conclusions of their poems throw a melancholy damp on the mind. One leaves his reader a funeral; another at the untimely death of a hero; and the third on the solitary scenes of an unpeopled world.

Ὡς οἷγ' ἀμφίπικον τάφον Ἑκτορος ἰπποδά-

μοιο.

Homer.

Such honours Ilium to her hero paid,
And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's shade.

Pope.

— Ferrum adverso sub pectore condit
Fervidus. Ast illis solvuntur frigore
membra,

Vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub
umbras.

Virgil.

He raised his arm aloft; and at the word
Deep in his bosom drove the shining sword.

The streaming blood distain'd his arms
around,

And the disdainful soul came rushing
through the wound.

Dryden.

They hand in hand, with wandring steps
and slow,

Through Eden took their solitary way.

Milton.



