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**Fingal, An Ancient Epic Poem, In Six Books**

**Macpherson, James**

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Book V.

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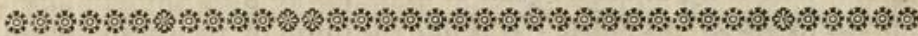
F I N G A L,

A N A N C I E N T

E P I C P O E M.



B O O K V\*.



NOW Connal, on Cromla's windy side, spoke to the chief of the noble car. Why that gloom, son of Semo? Our friends are the mighty in battle. And renowned art thou, O warrior! many were the deaths of thy steel. Often has Bragela met with blue-rolling eyes of joy; often has she met her hero, returning in the midst of the valiant; when his sword was red with slaughter, and his foes silent in the fields of the tomb. Pleasant to her ears were thy bards, when thine actions rose in the song.

\* The fourth day still continues. The character of Connal.—No poet has adapted the cadence of his verse more to the temper of the speaker, than Ossian has done. It is more than probable that the whole poem was originally designed to be sung to the harp, as the versification is so various, and so much suited to the different passions of the human mind.

BUT



BUT behold the king of Morven ; he moves below like a pillar of fire. His strength is like the stream of Lubar, or the wind of the ecchoing Cromla ; when the branchy forests of night are overturned.

HAPPY are thy people, O Fingal, thine arm shall fight their battles : thou art the first in their dangers ; the wisest in the days of their peace. Thou speakest and thy thousands obey ; and armies tremble at the sound of thy steel. Happy are thy people, Fingal, chief of the lonely hills.

WHO is that so dark and terrible coming in the thunder of his course ? who is it but Starno's son to meet the king of Morven ? Behold the battle of the chiefs : it is like the storm of the ocean, when two spirits meet far distant, and contend for the rolling of the wave. The hunter hears the noise on his hill ; and sees the high billows advancing to Ardven's shore.

SUCH were the words of Connal, when the heroes met in the midst of their falling people. There was the clang of arms ! there every blow, like the hundred hammers of the furnace ! Terrible is the battle of the kings, and horrid the look of their eyes. Their dark-brown shields are cleft in twain ; and their steel flies, broken, from their helmets. They fling their weapons down. Each rushes \* to his hero's grasp. Their sinewy arms bend round each other : they turn from side to side, and strain and stretch their large spread-

\* This passage resembles one in the twenty third Iliad.

Cloſe lock'd above their heads and arms  
are mixt ;

Below their planted feet at diſtance fixt ;

Now to the graſp each manly body bends ;  
The humid ſweat from ev'ry pore deſcends ;  
Their bones reſound with blows : ſides,  
ſhoulders, thighs,  
Swell to each gripe, and bloody tumours riſe.

POPE.

ing



ing limbs below. But when the pride of their strength arose, they shook the hill with their heels; rocks tumble from their places on high; the green-headed bushes are overturned. At length the strength of Swaran fell; and the king of the groves is bound.

THUS have I seen on Cona; but Cona I behold no more, thus have I seen two dark hills removed from their place by the strength of the bursting stream. They turn from side to side, and their tall oaks meet one another on high. Then they fall together with all their rocks and trees. The streams are turned by their sides, and the red ruin is seen afar.

SONS of the king of Morven, said the noble Fingal, guard the king of Lochlin; for he is strong as his thousand waves. His hand is taught to the battle, and his race of the times of old. Gaul, thou first of my heroes, and Ossian king of songs, attend the friend of Agandecca, and raise to joy his grief.—But, Oscar, Fillan, and Ryno, ye children of the race! pursue the rest of Lochlin over the heath of Lena; that no vessel may hereafter bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inistore.

THEY flew like lightning over the heath. He slowly moved as a cloud of thunder when the sultry plain of summer is silent. His sword is before him as a sun-beam, terrible as the streaming meteor of night. He came toward a chief of Lochlin, and spoke to the son of the wave.

WHO is that like a cloud at the rock of the roaring stream? He cannot bound over its course; yet stately is the chief! his bossy shield is on his side; and his spear like the tree of the desert. Youth of the dark-brown hair, art thou of Fingal's foes?

I AM



I AM a son of Lochlin, he cries, and strong is my arm in war.  
My spouse is weeping at home, but Orla \* will never return.

OR fights or yields the hero, said Fingal of the noble deeds? foes  
do not conquer in my presence; but my friends are renowned in the  
hall. Son of the wave, follow me, partake the feast of my shells,  
and pursue the deer of my desert.

No: said the hero, I assist the feeble: my strength shall remain  
with the weak in arms. My sword has been always unmatched,  
O warrior: let the king of Morven yield.

I NEVER yielded, Orla, Fingal never yielded to man. Draw thy  
sword and chuse thy foe. Many are my heroes.

AND does the king refuse the combat, said Orla of the dark-brown  
hair? Fingal is a match for Orla: and he alone of all his race.

BUT, king of Morven, if I shall fall; as one time the warrior  
must die; raise my tomb in the midst, and let it be the greatest on  
Lena. And send, over the dark-blue wave, the sword of Orla to  
the spouse of his love; that she may shew it to her son, with tears,  
to kindle his soul to war.

SON of the mournful tale, said Fingal, why dost thou awaken my  
tears? One day the warriors must die, and the children see their

\* The story of Orla is so beautiful and affecting in the original, that many are in possession of it in the north of Scotland, who never heard a syllable more of the poem. It varies the action, and awakes the

attention of the reader when he expected nothing but languor in the conduct of the poem, as the great action was over in the conquest of Swaran.

useless



useless arms in the hall. But, Orla, thy tomb shall rise, and thy white-bosomed spouse weep over thy sword.

THEY fought on the heath of Lena, but feeble was the arm of Orla. The sword of Fingal descended, and cleft his shield in twain. It fell and glittered on the ground, as the moon on the stream of night.

KING of Morven, said the hero, lift thy sword, and pierce my breast. Wounded and faint from battle my friends have left me here. The mournful tale shall come to my love on the banks of the streamy Loda; when she is alone in the wood; and the rustling blast in the leaves.

No; said the king of Morven, I will never wound thee, Orla. On the banks of Loda let her see thee escaped from the hands of war. Let thy gray-haired father, who, perhaps, is blind with age, hear the sound of thy voice in his hall.—With joy let the hero rise, and search for his son with his hands.

BUT never will he find him, Fingal; said the youth of the streamy Loda.—On Lena's heath I shall die; and foreign bards will talk of me. My broad belt covers my wound of death. And now I give it to the wind.

THE dark blood poured from his side, he fell pale on the heath of Lena. Fingal bends over him as he dies, and calls his younger heroes.

OSCAR and Fillan, my sons, raise high the memory of Orla. Here let the dark-haired hero rest far from the spouse of his love. Here let him rest in his narrow house far from the sound of Loda.

K

The



The sons of the feeble will find his bow at home, but will not be able to bend it. His faithful dogs howl on his hills, and his boars, which he used to pursue, rejoice. Fallen is the arm of battle; the mighty among the valiant is low!

EXALT the voice, and blow the horn, ye sons of the king of Morven: let us go back to Swaran, and send the night away on song. Fillan, Oscar, and Ryno, fly over the heath of Lena. Where, Ryno, art thou, young son of fame? Thou art not wont to be the last to answer thy father.

RYNO, said Ullin first of bards, is with the awful forms of his fathers. With Trathal king of shields, and Trenmor of the mighty deeds. The youth is low,—the youth is pale,—he lies on Lena's heath.

AND fell the swiftest in the race, said the king, the first to bend the bow? Thou scarce hast been known to me; why did young Ryno fall? But sleep thou softly on Lena, Fingal shall soon behold thee. Soon shall my voice be heard no more, and my footsteps cease to be seen. The bards will tell of Fingal's name; the stones will talk of me. But, Ryno, thou art low indeed,—thou hast not received thy fame. Ullin, strike the harp for Ryno; tell what the chief would have been. Farewel, thou first in every field. No more shall I direct thy dart. Thou that hast been so fair; I behold thee not—Farewel.

THE tear is on the cheek of the king, for terrible was his son in war. His son! that was like a beam of fire by night on the hill; when the forests sink down in its course, and the traveller trembles at the sound.



WHOSE fame is in that dark-green tomb, begun the king of generous shells? four stones with their heads of moss stand there; and mark the narrow house of death. Near it let my Ryno rest, and be the neighbour of the valiant. Perhaps some chief of fame is here to fly with my son on clouds. O Ullin, raise the songs of other times. Bring to memory the dark dwellers of the tomb. If in the field of the valiant they never fled from danger, my son shall rest with them, far from his friends, on the heath of Lena.

HERE, said the mouth of the song, here rest the first of heroes. Silent is Lamderg\* in this tomb, and Ullin king of swords. And who, soft smiling from her cloud, shews me her face of love? Why, daughter, why so pale art thou, first of the maids of Cromla? Dost thou sleep with the foes in battle, Gelchoffa, white-bosomed daughter of Tuathal?—Thou hast been the love of thousands, but Lamderg was thy love. He came to Selma's mossy towers, and, striking his dark buckler, spoke:

WHERE is Gelchoffa, my love, the daughter of the noble Tuathal? I left her in the hall of Selma, when I fought with the gloomy Ulfadda. Return soon, O Lamderg, she said, for here I am in the midst of sorrow. Her white breast rose with sighs. Her cheek was wet with tears. But I see her not coming to meet me; and to sooth my soul after battle. Silent is the hall of my joy; I hear not the voice of the bard.—Bran † does not shake his chains at the gate, glad

\* Lamh-dhearg signifies *bloody hand*. north of Scotland, to give the names of Gelchoffa, *white legged*. Tuathal, *furly*. the heroes mentioned in this poem, to Ulfadda, *long-beard*. Ferchios, *the conquerer of men*. their dogs; a proof that they are familiar to the ear, and their fame generally known.

† Bran is a common name of gray-hounds to this day. It is a custom in the





at the coming of Lamderg. Where is Gelchoffa, my love, the mild daughter of the generous Tuathal?

LAMDERG! says Ferchios the son of Aidon, Gelchoffa may be on Cromla; she and the maids of the bow pursuing the flying deer.

FERCHIOS! replied the chief of Cromla, no noise meets the ear of Lamderg. No sound is in the woods of Lena. No deer fly in my sight. No panting dog pursues. I see not Gelchoffa my love, fair as the full moon setting on the hills of Cromla. Go, Ferchios, go to Allad\* the gray-haired son of the rock. His dwelling is in the circle of stones. He may know of Gelchoffa.

THE son of Aidon went; and spoke to the ear of age. Allad! thou that dwellest in the rock: thou that tremblest alone, what saw thine eyes of age?

I SAW, answered Allad the old, Ullin the son of Cairbar. He came like a cloud from Cromla; and he hummed a surly song like a blast in a leafless wood. He entered the hall of Selma.—Lamderg, he said, most dreadful of men, fight or yield to Ullin. Lamderg, replied Gelchoffa, the son of battle, is not here. He fights Ulfada mighty chief. He is not here, thou first of men. But Lamderg never yielded. He will fight the son of Cairbar.

\* Allad is plainly a druid: he is called the son of the rock, from his dwelling in a cave; and the circle of stones here mentioned is the pale of the druidical temple. He is here consulted as one who had a supernatural knowledge of things; from the druids, no doubt, came the ridiculous notion of the second sight, which prevailed in the highlands and isles.

LOVELY



LOVELY art thou, said terrible Ullin, daughter of the generous Tuathal. I carry thee to Cairbar's halls. The valiant shall have Gelchoffa. Three days I remain on Cromla, to wait that son of battle, Lamderg. On the fourth Gelchoffa is mine, if the mighty Lamderg flies.

ALLAD! said the chief of Cromla, peace to thy dreams in the cave. Ferchios, found the horn of Lamderg that Ullin may hear on Cromla. Lamderg\*, like a roaring storm, ascended the hill from Selma. He hummed a furly song as he went, like the noise of a falling stream. He stood like a cloud on the hill, that varies its form to the wind. He rolled a stone, the sign of war. Ullin heard in Cairbar's hall. The hero heard, with joy, his foe, and took his father's spear. A smile brightens his dark-brown cheek, as he places his sword by his side. The dagger glittered in his hand. He whistled as he went.

GELCHOSSA saw the silent chief, as a wreath of mist ascending the hill.—She struck her white and heaving breast; and silent, tearful, feared for Lamderg.

CAIRBAR, hoary chief of shells, said the maid of the tender hand; I must bend the bow on Cromla; for I see the dark-brown hinds.

SHE hasted up the hill. In vain! the gloomy heroes fought.—Why should I tell the king of Morven how wrathful heroes fight!

\* The reader will find this passage altered from what it was in the fragments of ancient poetry.—It is delivered down very differently by tradition, and the translator has chosen that reading which favours least of bombast.



—Fierce Ullin fell. Young Lamderg came all pale to the daughter of generous Tuathal.

WHAT blood, my love, the soft-haired woman said, what blood runs down my warrior's side?—It is Ullin's blood, the chief replied, thou fairer than the snow of Cromla! Gelchoffa, let me rest here a little while. The mighty Lamderg died.

AND sleepest thou so soon on earth, O chief of shady Cromla? three days she mourned beside her love.—The hunters found her dead. They raised this tomb above the three. Thy son, O king of Morven, may rest here with heroes.

AND here my son will rest, said Fingal, the noise of their fame has reached my ears. Fillan and Fergus! bring hither Orla; the pale youth of the stream of Loda. Not unequalled shall Ryno lie in earth when Orla is by his side. Weep, ye daughters of Morven; and ye maids of the streamy Loda. Like a tree they grew on the hills; and they have fallen like the oak\* of the desert; when it lies across a stream, and withers in the wind of the mountain.

OSCAR! chief of every youth! thou seest how they have fallen, Be thou, like them, on earth renowned. Like them the song of bards. Terrible were their forms in battle; but calm was Ryno in the days of peace. He was like the bow † of the shower seen far

\* —ὡς ὅτε τις δρῦς ἤριπεν— HOM. II. 16. —What mean those colour'd streaks in  
—as the mountain oak heav'n,

Nods to the ax, till with a groaning sound Distended as the brow of God appears'd,  
It sinks, and spreads its honours on the Or serve they as a flow'ry verge to bind  
ground. POPE. The fluid skirts of that same watry cloud?

† —a bow MILTON.  
Conspicuous with three list'd colours gay.

distant



distant on the stream; when the sun is setting on Mora, and silence on the hill of deer. Rest, youngest of my sons, rest, O Ryno, on Lena. We too shall be no more; for the warrior one day must fall.

SUCH was thy grief, thou king of hills, when Ryno lay on earth. What must the grief of Ossian be, for thou thyself art gone. I hear not thy distant voice on Cona. My eyes perceive thee not. Often forlorn and dark I sit at thy tomb; and feel it with my hands. When I think I hear thy voice; it is but the blast of the desert.—Fingal has long since fallen asleep, the ruler of the war.

THEN Gaul and Ossian sat with Swaran on the soft green banks of Lubar. I touched the harp to please the king. But gloomy was his brow. He rolled his red eyes towards Lena. The hero mourned his people.

I LIFTED my eyes to Cromla, and I saw the son of generous Semo.—Sad and slow he retired from his hill towards the lonely cave of Tura. He saw Fingal victorious, and mixed his joy with grief. The sun is bright on his armour, and Connal slowly followed. They sunk behind the hill like two pillars of the fire of night: when winds pursue them over the mountain, and the flaming heath resounds. Beside a stream of roaring foam his cave is in a rock. One tree bends above it; and the rushing winds echo against its sides. Here rests the chief of Dunscach, the son of generous Semo. His thoughts are on the battles he lost; and the tear is on his cheek. He mourned the departure of his fame that fled like the mist of Cona. O Bragela, thou art too far remote to cheer the soul of the hero. But let him see thy bright form in his soul; that his thoughts may return to the lonely sun-beam of Dunscach.

WHO



WHO comes with the locks of age? It is the son of the songs. Hail, Carril of other times, thy voice is like the harp in the halls of Tura. Thy words are pleasant as the shower that falls on the fields of the sun. Carril of the times of old, why comest thou from the son of the generous Semo?

OSSIAN king of swords, replied the bard, thou best raisest the song. Long hast thou been known to Carril, thou ruler of battles. Often have I touched the harp to lovely Evirallin. Thou too hast often accompanied my voice in Branno's hall of generous shells. And often, amidst our voices, was heard the mildest Evirallin. One day she sung of Cormac's fall, the youth that died for her love. I saw the tears on her cheek, and on thine, thou chief of men. Her soul was touched for the unhappy, though she loved him not. How fair among a thousand maids was the daughter of the generous Branno!

BRING not, Carril, I replied, bring not her memory to my mind. My soul must melt at the remembrance. My eyes must have their tears. Pale in the earth is she the softly-blushing fair of my love.

BUT fit thou on the heath, O Bard, and let us hear thy voice. It is pleasant as the gale of spring that sighs on the hunter's ear; when he wakens from dreams of joy, and has heard the music of the spirits \* of the hill.

\* ———Others more mild  
Retreated in a silent valley, sing  
With notes angelical. ———  
———The harmony,

What could it less when spirits immortal  
sing?  
Suspended hell, and took with ravishment  
The thronging audience. MILTON.

F I N G A L,

