BRUCE'S INVASION;

A Poem.

BRUCE'S

INVASION OF IRELAND;

A Poem.

DUBLIN:

HODGES AND M'ARTHUR.

1826.

M. Goodwin, Printer,
Denmark-street.

PREFACE.

Edward Bruce's invasion forms an important event in the history of Ireland. Wearied and exhausted by sanguinary wars, of which they could foresee no termination, the Irish chiefs became anxious to participate in the blessings of a well-constituted government, and to be admitted, with their people, to the rights and privileges of English subjects. An application to this effect was made to Ufford, the chief governor, accompanied by an offer of 8000 marks for the service of the king. Sound policy would have dictated compliance with a proposal so reasonable, and so advantageous to England as the voluntary submission of "a high-minded and generous people." King Edward himself was of this opinion, and evinced a desire to comply with their request, on the easy terms of their supplying a body of infantry whenever

his affairs should require their assistance. The subject, however, being referred to the Irish Parliament, they were of a different sentiment. They employed every art to prevent a convention of the king's barons and subjects in Ireland to decide on this weighty point, and affirmed that the supplication of the Irish chieftains could not be granted without great prejudice to the king and his government. This parliament of "perjured adventurers," as they are indignantly styled in a letter of Columbanus, thirsting for confiscations, saw a termination to their rapacious schemes in the proposed settlement, and the desire of the Irish people, was "fatally counteracted by those whose duty it was to promote a measure so well calculated for the benefit of the country."*

The chiefs, mortified and disappointed by the rejection of their reasonable entreaties, had recourse to their last and only alternative, the sword. But the spirit of discord was among them, and that redemption of their country, which their zealous co-operation might have accomplished, was frustrated by their disunion. At length, to end the mutual jealousies and rival claims of contending competitors for supremacy, some of the principal potentates agreed to elect a foreign prince to be their sovereign. They heard, with undissembled joy, of the illustrious

* Mod. Un. Hist.

achievements of King Robert Bruce. He had overcome the might of England in the memorable field of Bannockburn, and was now firmly seated on the Scottish throne. His brother Edward became the just object of their admiration, for by his military prowess he had acquired the name and the renown of a hero. He was descended from their ancient kings, and was therefore deemed worthy to ascend their throne. They accordingly invited him to be their monarch, made a pathetic representation of their cruel sufferings, and implored his aid in behalf of an oppressed people, ready to make every exertion to throw off the yoke of their common enemy, and every sacrifice to confirm his possession of the kingdom. Thus was the leopard solicited to protect the fold which had been already wasted by the wolf and the bear.

Such a proposal was too flattering not to be readily embraced. The conquest of Ireland was an object suited to the high and chivalrous spirit of Edward Bruce. King Robert fully accorded in the scheme, and furnished a fleet of three hundred vessels, with an army of six thousand men, the flower of the Scottish forces, under the command of valiant and experienced leaders.

The armament sailed from Ayr, and arrived in "Wyking's frith," the harbour of Larne, in the County of Antrim, on the 25th of May, 1315. The successes

of Bruce were rapid and brilliant.* He spread the terror of his arms through Ulster, and leaving a force to conduct the siege of Carrickfergus, advanced to Dundalk, where he was crowned king of Ireland. Hence pursuing his conquests, and having threatened the metropolis itself, he carried his victorious arms to the gates of Limerick. After a series of adventures, in which he had to struggle with famine and the sword, he was at last obliged to retreat. He took his last stand at Faughard, in the neighbourhood of Dundalk, where, in a desperate conflict with Lord John Birmingham, he fell, surrounded by the bravest of his troops.

Thus terminated an expedition which, if conducted with more prudence, might have had a very different result. Had Edward possessed the calm virtues of his brother Robert, he might have established himself on the throne of Ireland. But robbery, conflagration, and murder, are not the means of subduing nations, much less of securing their gratitude and loyalty. The horrible barbarities and rapacity of the Scotch

* Dalrymple passes a just censure on Leland, for "placing in a doubting parenthesis, every battle in which the Irish Annals, published by Camden, represent Bruce as victorious; and asks, "how can we reconcile such conduct with the generous sentiment in his preface?" Even at this day, the historian of Irish affairs must be armed against censure, only by an integrity which confines him to truth, and a *literary courage which despises every charge but that of wilful and careless misrepresentation.*"

army soon alienated the minds of his Irish allies, and gave them alarming proofs of what they were to expect from a change of masters. When the frogs besought a new king from Jupiter, the stork came and swallowed them up. The Scottish thistle was to Ireland as the bramble which threatened to send forth fires that would devour the cedars of Lebanon.

One of the most circumstantial accounts extant of Bruce's invasion, is to be seen in John Barbour's History of King Robert Bruce. Barbour was archdeacon of Aberdeen, supposed to be born about 1326; he composed his History of Bruce in 1375, and died 1396. Dalrymple, in his Annals of Scotland, observes, that "he often mistakes the names of places and persons. He figured to himself that Richard De Clare was the English deputy in Ireland, and from an error natural enough, he supposed that the deputy always commanded the armies opposed to Edward Bruce. He omits some events altogether, and is too apt to magnify skirmishes into battles; yet his narration contains circumstances curious and characteristical."

In the following poem the Author has of course availed himself of Barbour's narrative, and all other sources of information to which he had access; references to them may be seen in the notes. Should any one suppose him in an error for arraying the Irish forces with the English, in the manner described in

the third canto, let it be recollected that the atrocities of the Scots had converted many of their former friends into enemies—some Irish chiefs opposed him from the first—and moreover, if Bruce were assailed by only a tenth part of the numbers mentioned by Barbour, the great majority must have been Irish, although our annalists notice only the principal English leaders. If this plea be not satisfactory, he claims for that and other liberties the poet's privilege.

"Exit in immensum fœcunda licentia vatum,
Obligat historica nec sua verba fide."
Ovid.

BRUCE'S INVASION.

CANTO FIRST.

BRUCE'S INVASION.

CANTO FIRST.

THE LANDING AND THE MARCH.

Up! up!—grasp your spears, and in martial array,
Away, men of Erin, to battle away!—
The Bruce speeds to Ullin;—before the north breeze,
In ships thrice a hundred, he ploughs the salt seas.
On the beach—mid the waves—ere a keel touch the strand,
Give his fleet the warm welcome of iron and brand!

In long cloudy squadrons, sails pressing on sails,
Like birds of the ocean, impelled by the gales,
Through the loud-sounding billows exulting they sweep—
Wreathed like snow round their prows rolls the foam of the deep;
And shoreward their pennants are dancing in light,
Like boreal streamers, long, ruddy, and bright.

By the Maidens' dark reef, by steep Gobbin they ride,
And up Woking's frith smooth and swiftly they glide;
Now the well-balanced rock of the Druid is past,
And by Olderfleet tower have their keels grounded fast.
From their holds, with shrill hum, forth the soldiery swarm,
Like wasps from their cells, when the summer grows warm;
And now on the shore, with loud cheerings, they bound,
As if the green isle were their own native ground:
Clan crowds upon clan, from the Clyde and the Forth,
From the isles of the west and bleak hills of the north.
In sooth, 'tis a heart-stirring sight to behold
On Erin's fair shores Scotland's standard unrolled,
The red lion rampant on field of bright gold;
And the flower of her warriors, with Carrick's young Lord,
Sir Edward the Bruce, armed with buckler and sword.
What wild love of glory has led them so far,
To inflict and to feel the dire scourges of war?
Ere long they may think it were better to spear
The silver-mailed salmon, or hunt the red deer
In their own land of hills, than come here to molest
Timid maidens, and scare little babes at the breast.

How proudly the chieftains are pacing the strand,
With a targe on their arm and a glaive in their hand!
The bold Earl of Moray towers high o'er the throng,
Well-plumed and well-belted—both stalwart and strong;
With Sir Philip Mowbray, a high-minded chief,
Oft the joy of his friends, oft his enemies' grief;
In sieges and battles inured to contend,
Once a foe to the Bruce, now his sworn trusty friend;

And Sir John the Stewart, well known in the field
As a chivalrous knight. On his broad bossy shield,
Lo! a bird to her young gives her heart's-blood for food,
And a savage confronts a wild man of the wood.
There Ouchterhouse Ramsay is stalking in pride;
With Ellerslie's wight oft he fought side by side:
On his buckler's round disk a black eagle is spread,
And a golden-horned unicorn crests his helmed head.
Sir Fergus comes next, from fair Ardrossan's hill,
More happy, perchance, if he wandered there still;
But of glory one day is more dear to his mind
Than ages of peace, and that day he may find.
There Sir John De Soulis, with corsletted breast,
Bears a dark raven wing shedding night on his crest.
Next Campbell comes on with the youth of Argyle,
Of Jura, of Mull, and far Colonsay's isle;
His shield bears a ship with furled sail and spread oar,
And his crest the couped head of a wild tusky boar.
No ensigns armorial yon chief need declare,
So deeply engrailed is his forehead with care—
Menteith! who, 'tis said, did a dark deed of shame,
For the cursed love of gold, bartered honor and fame;
To Edward, fell tyrant of England, betrayed
The worthiest knight that e'er drew battle-blade;
And now, to allay the dire pangs of remorse,
Longs to mingle in conflicts of swords, man and horse.
Beyond him, De Bosco, with well-polished spear
That he wields like a wand, leads the stout mountaineer;
With Sir Robert Boyd clad in steel's azure hue,
To Scotland's crowned king a liege trusty and true.

And Bisset comes yonder, with hardiment fell,
To war 'gainst his kindred in Erin who dwell.
And many a thane, gallant baron, and lord,
There marshals his clansmen, true sons of the sword:
But none vies with Fleming in limb or in power,
Or Harper, who stalks in his strength like a tower.

No foe to confront them;—all gallant and gay,
They frolic it well in their tartan array,
With claymore and target, dirk, quiver, and bow,
Plumed bonnet, and plaid of the rich crimson glow.
Superb their attire! bright their arms azure glare,
And lofty the dance of their crests in the air,
That sportively wantons in each silky fold
Of pennon and banner emblazoned with gold.
With sound of the pipe, of the trumpet and drum,
They seem to a feast or a wedding to come.
Let the blood-streaming sod be the groom's bridal bed!—
Let them bite the cold steel, and carouse with the dead!

In rich burnished mail, midst a forest of spears,
The Bruce tall and portly his stature uprears;
O'er the chiefs that around him have formed a dark ring,
He towers with the look of a hero and king;
As if instinct with life nods his high ostrich crest,
Like the fair crescent moon shines the gorge on his breast,
His broad bossy shield glows with heraldry bright;
His sword as a beam of the red northern light.
Such blood of high royalty rolls in his veins,
To be less than a monarch he proudly disdains.

He comes, in the land to reap bloody renown,
And win by the sword Erin's sceptre and crown.
Thus comes a young leopard, the flower of his race,
In quest of his prey;—clothed in terrible grace,
He bounds o'er the lawn, and exults in the pride
Of his strength, and the gloss of his fair painted hide;
His spots glow with beauty—fires flash from his eyes,
And his roar all the beasts of the forest defies.

Now their spoil-freighted fleet they speed back through the foam,
As if they ne'er meant to revisit their home:
Their home they call Erin; whate'er she affords
They seize with high hand, as the right of their swords.
Unfurled is their standard—begun their career—
In the van sage Earl Thomas, the Bruce in the rear,
And onward they move, like a fire o'er the heath,
Red champions of havoc, gaunt blood-hounds of death;
And they vow ne'er to stop, till they hear the deep roar
Of the raging Atlantic on Kerry's wild shore.
Well-marked is their track over mountain and dale,
By the smoke of destruction that floats on the gale,
By hamlet and cot wrapt in ruin and gloom,
By the temple despoiled, and the fresh-plundered tomb.
In vain to their shrines wives and children have fled,
The flames mount aloft—bursts the roof o'er their head.

Dalriada, sweet land of the cliff and the cave,
Thy rivers run red to the ocean's blue wave;

And foemen have raised their proud flags o'er thy towers,
From the Bann's rapid streams to the Lagan's green bowers;
Benmore's startled eagle has fearfully screamed,
And Torr's warning fire o'er the dark billows streamed;
In Edinduff-Carrick was heard on the gale,
As it swept o'er the lake, the banshee's fatal wail:
Round his mist-girdled brow Slemis rings with alarms,
Through Connor re-echoes the rude clash of arms.
The tempest of wrath o'er Cuil-rath-can has blown,
And left nought behind it but water and stone.
There the foes were entrapped in a deep swampy fen,
Like a huge salmon shoal in the fisher's close den;
And there the O'Canes' and Mac Quillans' sharp glaives
Had shorn them like rushes, and strewed in the waves,
But Thomas of Down, that "stronge theefe" of the sea,
Ploughed the Bann with his ships, and again set them free.
Would that the nine maids with salt foam for their vest,
Had him clasped with his crew to their cold marble breast!
Let him flee, if he can, when the ensigns he spies
Of Atley's armed fleet on the verge of the skies!

Erin, where are thy chiefs? At the feast or the dance,
While the blood of thy sons is empurpling the lance?
Are they sleeping or dead, while thy foes o'er thee sweep,
Like a storm from the hills, like the waves of the deep?
Though awhile may Knockfergus their onset deride,
And repel,—as her rocks the assault of the tide,
Yet close is she girded, and near her dark walls,
By Harper's dread battle-axe Maundeville falls.
Now see by White-Abbey their banners are spread,
High o'er them the dark Hill of Caves lifts his head;

Oh! now were the time from the cliff and the steep,
From Mac Cart's cloud-girt fort, and the cairn's rocky heap,
As they wend where the limestone's clear rivulet rolls,
To lanch down the bowlders and crush out their souls!
That rough gorge of danger is soon left behind,
And now, as by Lagan's dense forests they wind,
On their helmets and shields Duna's warriours ring
The hail-storm of war from the bow and the sling.
Nor shun the close conflict—but what may avail
The kerns' naked breasts 'gainst the knights clad in mail?
Their way they have hewn over hills of the slain,
Through the closely plashed ravine of Innermalane;
Though gallant De Burgo there manfully stood,
Till his host, man and horse, fell like leaves in the wood.

Lisnagarvy is fired;—fired the Abbey of Saul:
To Strangford the Ards in dismay loudly call
O'er the isle-studded gulf—and Slew-Donard has seen,
From his throne in the clouds, Duna's vallies of green,
Her round fairy mounts and her thrice-hallowed hill
Where sleeps Erin's Saint by the good Columb-kill,
Polluted and trampled by blood-boltered feet.
While Discord, foul demon, to mischief still fleet,
Of all Erin's curses the first and the last,
Through the princes of Connaught her wildfire has cast;
And kinsmen and brothers pierce each others breasts
With steel that should ring on the ravagers' crests.
Roderic falls by the sword, while too high he aspires;
And Feidhlim is placed on the throne of his sires,
But, lured by false hopes, maugre every dear claim
Of country, of honour, of fealty and fame,

He leagues with the Bruce, who receives his late foes
With joy as his friends,—gathering strength as he goes.
De Burgo may chafe till he sicken or bleed.—
The victor moves on and new treasons succeed;
To his standard the Thomond O'Briens have flown:
Thus Erin is conquered by Erin alone.
But wo to the traitors by land or by flood,
Who to wreak private wrongs shed their dear country's blood!
Let the axe or the rope be the parricides' doom,
And the night-shade for ever grow rank on their tomb!

They climb Na-Jur hills, by Slew-Gullen they wend,
And down upon Louth like a tempest descend:
Dundalgan is stormed by the slaughtering sword;
And yet, while her gutters run blood,—at the board
Grows their revelry loud, as they carve the fat chine,
And swill the brown ale with the red sparkling wine.
Whence now their wild shouts and long cheerings? Behold!
The Bruce has encircled his temples with gold.
In all their rich bravery, lofty and proud,
Round his throne knights and barons exultingly croud:
And yet still more highly his triumph to crown,
King Robert the Bruce comes to share his renown.
Fond, fond is their meeting, and high is their cheer,
For each is to each a kind brother and dear,
Of princes and heroes the pride and the flower,
In courts or in camps, in the field or the bower.
But Robert oft fears for the too fiery soul
Of Edward, impatient of rest or controul;
Lest by glory spurred on to some desperate deed,
He may rush on his fate like an unbroken steed.

Though Erin be awe-struck, and humbled her crest,
A spirit invincible dwells in her breast;
Though foemen around her their fetters may bind,
They ne'er can inthral the high thoughts of her mind,
That bound forth to freedom, that mount to the sky,
And the rod and the sword of the tyrant defy.
Hence much he advises, and shews from what springs
Flow the strength, peace and glory of subjects and kings;
Implores him his rashness with prudence to tame,
And allay in his bosom ambition's fierce flame.
Hence Edward holds pleas, and to strengthen his cause,
By semblance of justice, makes judges and laws;
Some high he exalts near his person and throne,
To the scaffold sends some for their crimes to atone.
But soon tired of peace, yearns his soul in the field
To hear the shrill pibroc,—to clash the dry shield.
His chiefs and their men burn the game to pursue,
Boast of what they have done, and of what they will do.
And well may they triumph, and loud may they boast,
As they stalk in the spoils of that proud English host
Whose plumes they sheared down, when with horror and dread
England's monarch turned pale, and ingloriously fled,
Whom, if a true knight, it behoved not to fly,
But to charge through the foe and with Argentine die.

Again, his broad banner has Edward unfurled;
Flushed with ardour, he thinks he could conquer the world.
With the vaward he rushes by moor, hill, and lake,
Regardless what perils pursue in his wake.
The rear and King Robert are left far behind,
Their march through a dark-wooded valley to wind:

Near its gorge two bold archers of Erin are seen;
On Albyn their arrows fly rapid and keen.
"To arms!" cries King Robert—"the foe-men are near,
"Let each, at his post, grasp his target and spear."
But a chivalrous knight has those archers o'erta'en,
And one by his lance lies transfixed on the plain.
Cheer the ranks—but sage Robert approves not the deed;
His truncheon has made the knight reel on his steed,
And taught him to know, that "in science of war,
Cool order surpasses rude courage by far;
And he who obeys not the word of his chief,
On his friends brings dishonour, discomfiture, grief.
And lo! there the foe-men their standards display,
All prancing to burst through our broken array.
From your bows, men of Carrick, their greeting return,
Then, horse, to the charge!—be the word Bannockburn!"
'Tis done—twang their bows—showers of arrows are forth,
Thick and keen as the swift-volleyed sleet from the north.
The rowel grows red in the steed's smoking flank,
And onward they rush to the charge, rank on rank;
The claymore is flashing—firm-couched is the spear,
And loud is the clang of the chargers' career.
Nor tardy is Erin to meet their advance
With the edge of the sword and the point of the lance.
Head to head dash the steeds—and with fearful rebound,
Whole ranks, by the shock, man and horse, bite the ground,
Whence, freed by the stroke of the dirk or the glaive,
In crowds are escaping the souls of the brave.
The red lion triumphs—and spread o'er the turf,
Erin's warriours lie scattered, like wrecks on the surf.

Yet not unavenged, Albyn owns, they lie low ;
Not inglorious her triumph, for brave was her foe.
But with grief to the soul is Sir Edward stung deep,
That his sword, such a day, in its scabbard should sleep !
The day is King Robert's—his prudence retrieved
Edward's error—his valour the triumph achieved.
But yet he forbears not the error to chide
That, by a long march, van and rear would divide.
Through the gap will the foe that is eager to strike,
As the ocean-swell bursts through the severing dyke,
Sweep his thousands in arms, till they deluge the plain,
And the host so divided is ne'er joined again.

Thus by maxims of war, as by curb and by rein,
Would Robert the wildness of Edward restrain,
And his nature controul by sage lessons of art—
Till called by the cares of a throne to depart.
With care not more fond, round her ocean-girt height,
The eagle her young one directs in his flight,
Soars with him aloft through the blue depths of space,
Or o'er the wild heath is his guide in the chace.

Again for more conquests the march is begun.—
They pass by New-Grange, the old cave of the sun ;
Wives, maidens and children, half-wild with affright,
Flee far from their paths, as doves flee from the kite.
E'en while at thy shrines they are bending the knee,
Fire, rapine, and blood tell thy fate, Atherdee !
Though strong be its walls, and its fortresses high,
On Tredagh his banners triumphantly fly.

To sorrow is Slane with its hermitage doomed,
And Trim, where the relics of kings are entombed;
With Kenlis, whose round tower yet tapers sublime
Deeply clad in the mists and the mantle of time:
Here Mortimer came with a deer-hearted crew,
To look Bruce in the face.—Ere a bow-string they drew,
They turned from his glance—for foul treason had spread
Through their chieftains; and first were the Lacies who fled.
Such champions well may the Redshankes deride;
With jest and with laughter their camp echoes wide,
While the pipers skirl loud, with their hearts full of glee,
And the heroes extol who so valiantly flee!
Such easy-earned triumphs Bruce holds in disdain;
No brightness has glory unpurchased by pain.—
The Boyne rolls behind him, and onward he goes,
No walls to retard him,—no arms to oppose;
His hopes to win wealthy Athcliath aspire;
Her suburbs are wasted, her temples on fire;
And now she sits chafing in wrath and despair,
A lioness pent by a troop in her lair.

O'Byrne and O'Toole, from the wood and the glen,
O'Cavnagh, O'Nowlan, come forth and be men;
If e'er with each other ye played a rough game
With the pike and the faulchion, for pastime and fame;
Rushing down like your own mountain cataracts deep,
From the home of your sires these fell ravagers sweep!

Ye hear not the call, though ye spy from afar,
By Knock's castled walls, the foes ensigns of war:

There Tirrel, indignant, in chains vents his rage,
And his fair lady pines, a lorn bird in a cage.
The region all round, like an Eden that bloomed,
Mourns its harvests down-trodden, its hamlets consumed;
Through the smoke of black ruins that darken the vale,
Down the Tolka's stained brook roll the shriek and the wail.
The flocks from the glen, and the beeves from the hill,
Unsparing in slaughter, they wantonly kill;
By the blaze of the corn-sheaf the feast they prepare,
Fire the cottager's roof and carouse in the glare;
Nor dread lest to-morrow, when prowling for prey,
They may rue, in deep anguish, the waste of to-day.

How wanton is man in the pride of a power
Which is fragile as ice, and endures but an hour!
Vain-glorious, improvident, foolish and blind—
Pride stalks on before him, but fate moves behind.
Ambition, still pointing to regions sublime,
Turns his eyes to the stars and allures him to climb,
Till he reach the rough brow of some dizzying height,
Then tilts him down headlong to ruin and night.

O'er the beautiful city, all proud as she reigns
Midst turreted bulwarks, spired temples and fanes,
Could Bruce but behold the victorious play
Of his banners—'twere glorious!—But long the delay
Of siege, or blockade—for her ramparts are steep—
Her brazen gates massy—her fosse broad and deep—
Her ruler, De Nottingham, valiant and true,
Her black-banner warriours not feeble, nor few.

Thus Mowbray advises—"tis wise to hunt down
The fear-stricken quarry—Athcliath will crown
Our toils at the last."—Hence the march of the war,
They guide by the course of the fair western star.
On Leixlip they move, in Kildare they encamp,
Where the daughters of fire trim the ne'er-dying lamp.
In vain has Le Grace, the high-minded and good,
Well-belted in iron, their onset withstood;
O'er Ascul's red plain the dire hurricane past,
And left it in silence and darkness o'ercast.
There quiet he lies with his chivalry's pride,
And Bonneville and Prendergast sleep by his side.
There also, Sir Fergus, thy pilgrimage ends;
And a dark dreamless night on Sir Walter descends.
Leix horror-struck sees her tall belfry and spire
Burst forth in a blaze of pyramidal fire.
Castle-Dermot, their hands sacrilegious they lay
On thy tombs, and thy shrines, and thy costly array;
Of Carlow the corn-covered fields they invade;
The Barrow's clear waters grow dark with their shade;
The Suir rolls beneath them, and in his smooth glass
The Shannon reflects their armed ranks as they pass;
Now fear and dismay dwell in Limerick's bowers;
Kilmallock with all her proud temples and towers,
And Cashel, high-throned on a rock, hear with dread
The noise, from afar, of their swift-coming tread.

BRUCE'S INVASION.

CANTO SECOND.

BRUCE'S INVASION.

CANTO SECOND.

THE RISING OF ERIN—AND ALBYN'S RETREAT.

Unblest is the land where fell Faction prevails;
From Justice she wrests both the sword and the scales;
All counsels of wisdom perverts to the wrong,
And saps to its basis the might of the strong.

Erin, wherefore did nature smile sweet on thy birth,
When first from dark chaos sprang heaven and earth,
Airs of Paradise redolent breathe o'er thy breast,
And form thee a type of that land of the blest
Which poets once sung, and which poets would choose
Where to breathe inspiration and rove with the muse?
What boot thy fair valleys, thy bright-blooming hills,
Thy corn-covered fields and thy crystalline rills,

If those valleys and hills but re-echo thy screams,
While the sword reaps thy crops, and blood purples thy
streams?
Vain are nature's best blessings, if discord, more dire
Than famine and plague and the elements' ire,
Lets them ne'er be enjoyed;—but with wrath-kindled flame
Turns thy song to a dirge—and thy glory to shame.
Oh! didst thou but know thy own bliss and pursue—
If to thy own cause thou wert loyal and true,
All nations would hail thee of isles the renowned,
A queen among queens with prosperity crowned;
Thy sons gathered round thee, an adamant pale,
Or a rampart of fire, that no foeman dared scale,
In accord with thy harp loud their voices would raise
In pæans of joy—or in anthems of praise.
But by thy own fires thou art wasted and burned—
Against thy own bosom thy faulchion is turned;
Low, low art thou fallen, heart-stricken and sore,
Rent, plundered, and bleeding at every pore.
Breathes a spirit within thee? Oh! better to die,
Than thus crushed and trampled ingloriously lie.
Are thy warriors all slain?—Or dispersed far and wide,
In mountains and caverns their terrors to hide,
While their wives and their daughters become the sad spoil
Of the ruthless invaders that widow thy soil?

Where now is the might of Clanrickard's brave line,
De Clare, and Fitz-Thomas, and stout Geraldine,
And Butler, and Desmond, that oft in the strife
For glory, have sported with treasure and life?

Ferns, where is thy Bishop?—On what mission sent
In the dead of the night, did he seek Bruce's tent?
In sooth it behoves not the shepherd to hide,
When the wolf through the fold spreads his ravages wide.
But, mayhap, holy man! through the foes he has passed
To shrive some lorn penitent breathing his last;
Up the heaven-ward way to direct his poor soul,
And anoint the car-wheels ere he starts for the goal.
And where are the Lacies?—Have they too turned good,
Doffed target and sword for the cassoc and hood,
And gone to the Bruce, by entreaty and prayer,
To bend his stern soul bleeding Erin to spare?
Well! let them beware of the scaffold and block,
Though the seas bar them round in the heart of a rock!

Where now are the bards, once so potent to warm
The cold heart of fear, and the coward to arm?
Amergin, and Conla, and Moran, whose lays
In the soul a high tempest of passion could raise,
Have your harp-strings in sorrow, in spite, or disdain,
Burst asunder, and sworn ne'er to vibrate again?
O spirit of Ossian! thou sweet soul of song,
Sire of Oscar the brave, son of Fionn the strong,
In hall and in bower must thy harp's thrilling sound
In the drone of that cursed Highland bagpipe be drowned?
From thy dark airy hall, as thou sailest on high,
Hear the groans of the land, and in terrors come nigh.
These wasters behold of thy harp's native soil,
Who e'en of thy glory would Erin despoil.
Rough, prickly, and horrid, wherever they tread,
The thistle springs up in the shamrog's green bed.

Thou whose was the boast that if hell kept thy sire,
Thou dar'dst with Clan-Boske to storm e'en hell-fire,
And the captive restore, or that realm make thy own;
Let the strength of thy arm to these revers be known—
With hail-shower and torrent, with tempest and night,
With the meteor's red flash, with the thunderbolt's might,
Haste and sweep them, in wrath, from the land of thy birth:
Through the bards, that are now but mere water and earth,
Shoot the life-giving lightning—that, daringly bold,
They may feel as they felt in the good days of old;
Send them forth in defence of their dear father-land,
With a sword by their side, and a harp in their hand,
Replete with thy spirit, again to re-start,
In accord with its own, all the strings of the heart.
Let this be the song—

"Men of Erin arise!
Your country invokes you with agonized cries,
By her tears and her groans, plundered altars and graves,
Awake! or sleep on, and for ever be slaves.
Black shame to the coward, who hears not the sound—
Transfix him, ye darts of the brave, to the ground!
Or bear him, ye tempests, to some desert wild,
Where the dew never fell, where the sun never smiled,
To lap the foul puddle, to browse the bare thorn,
And to flee as a hare flees the hound and the horn!

"Erin once had a sword never tarnished with rust,
And men that would trample her foes in the dust,
And hearts that, to slavery ere they would bow,
Would bleed—and would burst—but oh! where are they now?

Weak, heartless, inglorious, of manhood the shame,
Ye women of Erin, ye men but in name!
Sit down—fold your arms—bow your necks—and your lives,
Though worthless, redeem with your children and wives.
Hew wood and draw water, to please your proud foes;
Let them dance in your halls—in your chambers repose.
Ere ye shrink from their lash, and be bound with their thongs,
Let the lance and the sword in their blood wreak your wrongs.
If yet in your bosoms a chord may be found,
At the dear name of country to trill and rebound,
If honour, and feeling, and shame have not fled,
And left you as clods, soulless, torpid, and dead,
Ere ye hear her last groans, her last agonies see,
Rise, with swords in your hands, still undaunted and free.
Up! up! grasp your spears, and in martial array,
Away, men of Erin, to battle away!"

Ha! hear ye the call, and from sleep have ye sprung,
As if in your ear the last trumpet had rung?
Yes, Erin has heard—lo! she springs to the field,
Unsheathed is her sabre, and struck is her shield.
Loud her harp-strings have rung in their old native tone,
Loud her priests have declaimed for the altar and throne;
Loud her orators thundered, as boldly they flung,
Winged with flashes of thought, the keen bolts of the tongue:
Her lakes, isles, and forests, glens, mountains, and skies,
Reverberate loud—"Men of Erin arise!"
Hark! the soul-stirring sound! as it echoes again,
The aged grow young, and boys start into men.
The youth are aroused, like a thousand swoln rills
That commingling rush down to the vale from the hills,

When the show'ry-winged west, with his dark ocean-clouds,
And torrents of rain, giant Mangerton shrouds,
Thick-teeming they hasten from city and tower,
From the sheeling's low roof, from the boolie's green bower,
From the rath and the dun, from the woods and the rocks;
The hind leaves his furrows, the shepherd his flocks,
The ploughman his share, and the sailor his oar;
His corragh the fisher draws up on the shore.
Boys wage mimic wars—tiny cross-bows they draw;
The women and children chant "Erin go Brah;"
With spirit congenial e'en brutes seem to glow,
And in gesture and look a strange sympathy show.
The winds as they breathe, and the streams as they roll,
Seem animate all with the same quickening soul.

Yes—the Genius of Erin is forth in her might,
Working wonders by day, sending visions by night;—
Clogher stone, like the statue of Memnon renowned,
Was heard to give forth an oracular sound.
From Mithra's rude shrine, where in Callan's dark shade
"The turbulent, swift-footed Conan" is laid;
And from the cold couch where King Tuathal lies;
In Glendaloch's vale came a voice, "Wake, arise!"
As the breeze o'er the round tower swept down the dell,
It bore the unwonted sweet sound of a bell,
Of no earthly tone, and by no mortal rung—
"Erin calls!" wildly chimed its miraculous tongue.
The rath, and the cromleach, and cairn's rocky cone,
Giants' graves, and the Druids' rude circle of stone
Sent warriours forth;—and at even and morn
The small fairy host paced in arms round the thorn.

A bard, as he chanced Tarah's hill to pass by,
When it threw its dark shade on the clear moon-lit sky,
Saw a glorious scene;—Erin's monarchs of old,
That were wont on this hill their sage counsels to hold,
Bards, druids, and brehons, with collars of gold,
Knights and earls, with their steeds in caparisons fair,
In solemn convention were all gathered there.
Awhile in deep counsel they seemed to remain,
Then sprang to their arms, and rushed down to the plain,
As if charging a foe: shone their lances afar,
Like long shafts of light, and each tipped with a star;
Streamed their crests like the locks of a comet—their shields
Shone as meteors that wander o'er Allen's moist fields;
Their steeds were as mists that the north-wind pursues
O'er Neagh's wide lake, when condensing the dews.
But soon they returned, as from victory won,
When the bards swept their harps, and the feast was begun.
In a thrill of emotion the seer made essay
To join in the strain, and all melted away.
But well does he deem that such glittering shows
Image forth the events coming time will disclose.

Fond man in the marvellous finds strange delight,
In the day's waking dreams—in the phantoms of night;
Still led to believe that some mystical tie
His destiny links with the signs of the sky.
As his hopes, or his wishes, or terrors prevail,
They colour the vision, and garnish the tale.
And, as if his prediction could bias the fates,
Full oft the events he foretels it creates.

Now all trim their arms, from the hind to the lord;
New-ground is the war-axe, new-edged is the sword;
The ash-tree descends—rings the anvil afar,
Spades, sickles and scythes turn to weapons of war.
Soon belted and plumed, clad in yellow and green,
By the hill's grassy side their armed thousands are seen:
Each feels a new soul through his frame quickly dart,
Giving strength to his arm, and fresh life to his heart;
A warriour by instinct, he lifts his helmed head,
And paces the ground with a warriour's tread.
At the three-pillared rock, where, as legends have told,
In the moon's silver light worshipped druids of old,
Like their Scythian sires, they have drank a red wine
More costly and rich than e'er flowed from the vine.
An arm, upon which baptist's dew never fell,
Draws a blade that was sheathed in the earth for a spell:
By this have they sworn, by the sun, moon, and fire,
To conquer, or ne'er from the field to retire,
And, panting for glory, the signal demand
To point the fleet arrow, and wield the keen brand.

To the dark marble walls of Saint Canice they crowd,
As fire, sleet and storm, to the thunder's dense cloud.
Again in bright steel Ullin's chivalry gleam,
And long for a day their lost fame to redeem.
The Graces, the Rochforts, Fitzmorrises join
The Powers, the Arnolds, Kildare and Dunboyne,
And Butler, who chafes like a tiger in chains,
For his flocks, and his herds, and his ravaged demesnes.
And these too have vowed to be trusty and true,
"Come life or come death," and the foemen pursue,

And ne'er sheathe the sword till their last drop of gore,
With its rich ruby varnish, have crimsoned it o'er.

To marshal their forces, and firmly combine,
For the march or the charge, in square, wedge, or line,
A chief of high bearing—his boast and his care
Well in council to plan, well in combat to dare—
De Bermingham comes, with a truncheon in hand,
Well-skilled the armed legions of war to command,
The frigid to warm with the sweet breath of praise,
The fiery to cool, and the languid to raise,
And mould, by a gentle or rigid controul,
Till they move in one step, till they breathe but one soul,
And onward, unbroken, invincible sweep,
Like the long, dark, majestic, proud swell of the deep.

When a nation thus rises united and true,
What might upon earth can her spirit subdue?
Every field proves a camp—every hill, and green shade,
Stream, and rock, grows a rampart, tower, fosse, or stockade.
With the hero's bold thoughts peasant bosoms beat high;
Hope nerves every breast, courage fires every eye.
For a season may prosper the power of the strong,
But Freedom and Right, o'er Oppression and Wrong,
Must go forth rejoicing in triumph at last,
As the sun, in his strength, when the tempest is past.

Wary Albyn the gathering war-cloud espies:—
Though loath to relinquish so noble a prize
As Erin's green fields, that, compared with her own,
Are as emerald bright to the dark iron stone;

Reluctant and slow she retraces her ground,
As a lion, when hunters are closing him round,
Recedes from the prey. Now advanced to its height,
Her star must descend in black whirlwinds and night.
Her own bloody scourges her children must feel,
Dire famine, disease, and the edge of the steel:
May the ruthless still feel the fierce pangs they have given,
And stern retribution pursue them from heaven!

Tidings come to their camp that brave Scots not a few,
At Knockfergus, entrapped by the Sassanach crew,
Had entered the fortress, and, horrid to tell,
Were slain and devoured—nay more, that there fell
In battle, five-score full-armed sons of the Gael,
And as many twice-told clad in light single mail,
By the Bissets and Logans who rage o'er the plains;
While Sir Allan Stewart lies fretting in chains.
Yet farther—De Burgo's and Bermingham's powers
Their allies had vanquished by Athenree's towers.
King Feidhlim there lay on the cold bloody ground,
And all his rich chivalry scattered around.
In fine, that the Pope for King Edward had cursed
His foes young and old, and the Bruces the first;
Shut solemnly out, by book, candle, and bell,
From the church upon earth, and predoomed them to hell,
For their wrath upon Erin so recklessly spent,
And their impious gorging of flesh-meat in lent.
While the sons of the church who had sailed by their side,
Now turned with the breeze, and ran back with the tide.

In heart less elated now northward they go,
In battle array, still prepared for the foe;
For oft on their helms, though no foe-men they meet,
Like hail from the clouds pelts the sling's rattling sleet.
Of arms from the dingle they hear the deep clang,
Spears glance in the copse, sounds the bow-string's shrill twang,
On their front and their rear drives the barbed iron shower;
They chafe, but in vain. An invisible power
Besets them; and round them, wherever they tread,
New dangers appal, and new horrors are spread.
Their numbers are thinned by the galloglass stern,
And the skean and the bow of the swift-footed kern.
Through woods, dismal glens, rocky straits is their march;
The torrent flows wide o'er the new-broken arch.
By day, they sink deep in the treacherous swamp;
By night, the cooped river is sluiced on their camp.
'Tis the fall of the leaf—and a cold wintry blast
Has the blood in their veins half congealed as it passed,
As an ice-bolt arrested the courser's warm speed,
And froze to a statue the knight on his steed.
While the elements round them are mustered in wrath,
Howls famine aloud in their desolate path;
Gaunt famine, that in the lone church-yard has fed,
And cooked her last meal in the skulls of the dead.
No welcome now waits them in bower or in hall,
No sheep from the fold, and no ox from the stall.
To the once-plenteous board want and hunger have crept,
The viands have vanished, the tables are swept;
And the ruins they spread, when they passed in their prime,
Now seem to upbraid them with folly and crime.

Of the steeds that erst bore them so gallant and trim,
They drain the red life, and they carve the lean limb;
They dig, with their dirks, for the earth-nut and weed,
And on all noxious things, and forbidden, they feed:
While the wolf's hungry howl fills their souls with dismay,
And the vulture wheels round them expecting her prey.
Oh! now for the sweet highland glen's sunny side,
For the sheaf-studded vales of the Forth and the Clyde,
For the cate-covered board and the maiden's fond wiles,
The prattling of children, the wife's happy smiles!—
'Twixt them and such joys rolls the dark-swelling flood,
Stands a proud bannered host—spreads a red field of blood.

Next, ominous sights and sad bodings invade,
And spread o'er their soul dark and comfortless shade.
In the cataract's fall, shrieking kelpies they hear;
In the mists, lonely wraiths and strange phantoms appear.
By the Flurry's swift stream, a huge altar of stone,
In the dark stilly night, gave a blood-curdling groan,
As if knife sacrificial deep-plunged in the side
Of some human victim, were draining life's tide.
While the ghosts of the slain, whose heads grimly lower,
With gory locks streaming from rampart and tower,
O'er their camp came in crowds with a horrible cry,
And marshalled their battle, and fought in the sky.
So a dreamer declared.—To a seer's second sight
Rose a vision terrific; all scattered in flight,
From a lost battle-field fled his clans like the wind,
Pale, bloody, and fear-struck; their chief left behind
Gashed with wounds widely gaping; the head foully torn
From the trunk, as a gift to a monarch was borne;

The gibbetted members hung up to the gale,
In four distant regions, disclosed a sad tale.

But what cares the Bruce for a wo-boding seer?
His sword is unblunted, his heart void of fear.
Of dark superstition whate'er may be born,
Dreams, omens, and visions, he holds in proud scorn.
To a soldier but one sacred omen is known,
The cause of his country:—her rights to enthrone,
By the bright star of glory his movements he guides,
And the impotent menace of beadsmen derides.
He knows 'tis the lot of the warriour to meet,
Alternate, with triumph—or flee from defeat.
If to-day for lost conquest and fame he deplores,
To-morrow the loss with more lustre restores.
When the shade that eclipses it passes away,
Bursts forth in more radiance the full orb of day.
Again at Dundalgan, though weary and slow,
He stands fierce at bay with his face to the foe.

Thence not far remote a green hill lifts its brow,
Hight Faughard, where pilgrims were oft wont to bow,
And move round Saint Brigid's rough circle of flint,
On their knees, till they marked it with many a dint.
Sad penance!—but vestals so holily live,
That, in man, sin or error they seldom forgive.
More soon might poor pilgrim melt flint by a prayer,
Than their rock-crystal hearts all so cold and so fair;
Though rich ones, 'tis said, more persuasive and bland,
As is meet, e'en the coldest can warm and expand!

Here of holy Monenna the nunnery stood,
And near it an abbey conjoined by a wood;
Such the sympathies still of the pious and good,
That the monk and the abbot will ever be found
Where vestals' devotions have hallowed the ground.

On the slope of this hill Albyn fixes her seat,
Here breathes from the toils of her wasting retreat.
A prey she has brought from the neighbouring plains,
And courage with plenty again warms her veins.
Here the Bruce has resolved the fierce onset to wait;
No farther he flees—here he challenges fate.
But the chieftains, in council, advise not to try
The fortune of war, till their allies be nigh.
"Our foes," cries the Stewart' "come on like the deeps,
When in torment they whirl, as the hurricane sweeps
O'er the dire Corryvrekan. Before they be spread
In fury around us, and burst o'er our head,
To march, I advise, Ullin's passes to gain,
Where a few may the onset of numbers sustain,
Nor here waste our blood. Where such myriads assail
All courage is fruitless, all efforts must fail."

"And what says De Soulis?" cries Bruce in a flame:
"My peer counsels well, and I counsel the same,"
De Soulis replies. Then Bruce, deeply moved,
"Are counsels so dastard by Mowbray approved?"
"Though burns," says the Mowbray, "unwearied our fire,
True wisdom exhorts from this field to retire.
'Tis madness, not courage, to stand in the path
Of the torrent that roars from the field in its wrath.

Though field upon field be well foughten and won,
By victory oft is the victor undone;
While still crowding forward, new columns advance
To fill up the gap made by broadsword and lance.
The lion, though fearless to meet the attack
Of blood-hound and beagle, must yield to the pack.
Recede then, lest, borne down by numbers, we bleed;
Or wait for King Robert, he marches with speed,
And soon will arrive, if the heralds speak truth,
With some thousands of spears, and the flower of his youth."

Bruce hears with disdain, and indignantly cries,
"Ours all be the danger, ours all be the prize!
Such maxims of wisdom, such counsels of fear,
From chivalrous Mowbray we ne'er hoped to hear.
In our own dauntless breasts and good swords we confide;
This day's coming glory with none we divide.
Let the foes crowd around us from mountain and glen,
Thick as swarms of the small summer flies o'er the fen;
Oh! ne'er it be said, they who manfully trod
O'er the pride of King Edward, on Bannockburn's sod,
Fled the wild Irish kern;—no! we'll trample them down;
The greater their number, more great our renown.
Let Mortimer come with his Sassanach bows;
We'll answer his arrows with dirks when we close.
Let Bermingham's horse urge their rapid career;
No steed leaps the hedge-row of target and spear.
How oft have we hewn our red pass through a crowd
Of foes, round us wrapt like a dark stormy cloud?
What once we achieved, we again will perform,
Though the cloud be more dense, and more pelting the storm.

The darker the welkin, more bright is the flash
Of the levin, and louder its earth-shaking crash.
Remember the wrongs of your country and king;
Remember the joys that from victory spring;
Win Erin—and shake to its base England's throne;
Be victors to-day and the land is your own.
Then each to his post, and his clansmen inspire
With all the proud thoughts that can kindle their fire.
In the left, thou, De Soulis, as wont, prove thy might;
Thou, Mowbray, maintain our good cause in the right;
The main-battle ourselves will to victory lead;
For here, by the rood, we must conquer or bleed."

His words to the chiefs his own spirit impart,
And each for bold action soon braces his heart.
"'Tis yours," cried the Mowbray, "our swords to command;
Ours to wield, in thy cause, both with heart and with hand.
To Heaven the issues of battle belong,
It strengthens the weak and enfeebles the strong.
Let the thousands of Erin advance in their pride.
Here our claymores we draw, and let Heaven decide."

BRUCE'S INVASION.

CANTO THIRD.

BRUCE'S INVASION.

CANTO THIRD.

THE ARMIES OF ERIN.

'Tis sublime to look forth from the watch-tower or steep,
When the tempest in foam sheets the billowy deep:
More sublime, from some height, in the young purple day,
To see two armed legions, in bannered array,
Front to front o'er the champaign advancing in pride,
For empire or glory their strife to decide;
All hearts with high hope and strange ecstacy filled;
With war's stern delight e'en to agony thrilled.
'Tis a glorious scene in the morn—but at night—
Oh! hide it in mercy—Oh! blot from the sight
That scene of atrocity bloody and fell,
Where the fiends held their revels, and death raged with hell.

Must man against man ever marshal his power,
And the sword, edged by famine, go forth to devour?
So Fate has decreed; but sure Vengeance, ere long,
Must pounce, in her wrath, on the authors of wrong.
When ambition and guilt yoke the tigers of war,
Screw the scythe to the wheels, mount the soul-crushing car,
And come with oppression the land to enslave;
Rise up in your might, ye high-minded and brave!
Roll back on the demons their own whelming tide,
And sweep from the earth—Heaven wars on your side!

Erin's armies are forth: horse and foot they draw near,
Thick bristled all o'er with the sword and the spear;
With pennon, and banner, and shields dazzling bright,
And feathery crests tipt with silvery light.
In caparisons gorgeous, exultant and proud
Prance their chivalry on—clangs their armour aloud,
And loud are the neighings, and red is the blaze
Of their march, as the sun's through the morn's ruddy haze.

Rank presses on rank—the proud lords of the Pale,
Knights and squires, earls and barons, refulgent in mail,
In corslet and coat of the steel-woven net,
In close-visored helm, or the light bassinet.
And warriours are there, who by Galilee's flood
Their lances have crimsoned in Saracen blood,
When the Temple's red cross, and white cross of Saint John,
O'er the Crescent's waned glories triumphantly shone.
Their well-blazoned shields, as they glance in the sun,
Tell their passions, their hopes, and the deeds they have done.

Some bear on their helms a silk fillet or glove,
The pledge of defiance, or ensign of love;
And each glows with hope soon to find in the field
New plumes for his helm, and new signs for his shield.

At the head of those thousands all rampant and bold,
Stout Bermingham comes, with his target of gold;
Well-taught when in calm or in tempest to move,
Every vantage to seize, every chance to improve,
To meet strength with skill, art with stratagem mate,
And by courage and wisdom wage battle with Fate.
O'er his breast a rich baldrick is gracefully thrown,
With gems starred and figured like heaven's broad zone.
With his truncheon he points, as the posture he scans
Of the foe, and the passage to victory plans.
His war-steed broad-chested, and lofty, and strong,
Of his war-harness proud, bears him prancing along.
Like the antelope's horns butts the chevron's sharp crest,
Of bright iron scales shines the mail on his breast;
To adorn the rich selle gold with silver conjoins,
And a steel-plated wolf-skin hangs deep o'er his loins.
The soul of his lord seems that steed to inspire;
O'er his neck floats his mane clothed in terror and ire,
His eyes roll in lightning, his nostrils breathe fire.
His iron-armed hoof, dark, horny, and round,
Rings loud on the flint, and strikes fire at each bound.
Already, rejoicing, war's music he hears,
The roar of the onset, the crashing of spears;
And buoyant with spirit, and life's thrilling glow,
Longs to charge the armed files, and dash fierce through the foe.

Again comes De Burgo, his hopes soaring high,
The might of his sabre with Albyn to try,
New-edged for the conflict, he longs to restore
To Erin her glory more bright than before.
A whirlwind, with darkness and rage in their path,
Sweep his chivalry on, plumed with vengeance and wrath.
Thro' the dust-cloud around shoots their arms' frequent glance,
As flashes of fire through the night's dark expanse;
And deep is their clang moving on to the shock,
Like the ocean's long swell ere it bursts on the rock.

Next advances Le Poer, a chivalrous lord,
Proved both in the war of the tongue and the sword;
By the one on his head church's vengeance he drew,
In the other the brave Sir John Benneville he slew.
But wherefore, vain wretch, did he offer foul wrong,
Wrong ne'er unatoned, to a sweet son of song?
Let him learn, who insults or dishonours the muse,
Soon or late, in dire dread, his temerity rues:
Against him the Nine all their quivers shall store,
And the arrows of song pierce his heart to the core.
His surcoat armorial two angels adorn,
With swords in their hands, and more fair than the morn.
Blest inmates of heaven, they stand as prepared
Their knight through the perils of conflict to guard.
Float their long golden locks o'er their silvery vest;
And a speared dragon's head hisses high on his crest.

How graceful his warriours their coursers bestride!
Each comes with a light-footed page by his side.

He uses no stirrup, yet mounts at full speed,
And sits on his selle like a part of the steed;
His legs costly buskins of cordwayne enclose;
Of the iron-ringed web are his hauberk and hose;
Streams the hair from his cone like the tresses of night;
Shines his round dazzling shield like the sun in his height,
His spear on the winds, in gay frolic, he proves,
And his iron-sheathed sabre clangs loud as he moves,

Thus comes a winged dragon, in huge volumes rolled,
Clothed in bright-burnished scales of carbuncle and gold;
As, darting his tongue, to the sun-beam he turns,
His gem-studded panoply sparkles and burns.

A sheet of red flame, Grace's standard waves high,
With white lion rampant, that comes to defy
The lion of Albyn, and make him crouch low
From the fear-bringing slogan of "Grasagh aboe."

There Cusack and Sutton, knights valiant and true
As e'er lifted target, or bent the tough yew,
Join Verdon and Tripton, both chiefs of high name;
And Larpulke, who comes glory's chaplets to claim;
With Sir Richard Tute, in rough conflict oft tried,
Whose sires came with Strongbow, and fought by his side.
These lead the Fingallians and Flemings of worth,
From the strong-castled cantreds of Bargie and Forth.
Timed and steady their march—their looks lofty and bold,
And close are they girt in the jack's quilted fold;
With cross-bows, and quarrels, and mallets of lead,
And sallet or morion plumed o'er their head;

Light roundlets some bear—some the pavise, whose swell
Broad and bossy, might seem a huge sea-turtle's shell.
And Husse is there, that brave spirit of fire,
Who at Athenree slew both a knight and his squire;
Thence grown a bold warriour, he left his low den,
And from slaying of oxen now comes to slay men;
Let him try, if high glory his bosom can charm,
With Harper, the might of his slaughtering arm.

Lo! the banners of Ossory, Ormond, and Clare,
Of Carlow, of Uriel, Meath and Kildare;
All brilliant and bright as the sun-lighted dies
Of the seven-woofed ensign hung out in the skies,
Preceding the spirit that comes to deform
Heaven's face with dense darkness, blue lightning and storm.

North, South, East and West, to increase the war-flood,
Send many a chief of Milesian blood;
The bravest of all the brave princes who shoot
From the three branchy arms of the great royal root:
From Heremon, father of monarchs renowned,
Or Heber, transfixed by his steel to the ground,
Or Ir, o'er whose corse howled the hurricane dark,
When the Skeligs' wild breakers had deluged his bark.
There the leopard of Connaught seems couched for a spring,
Here the eagle of Desmond has spread her dark wing.
As birds to the prey that come rushing from far,
They speed to enjoy the grand pastime of war;
Proud Flaiths on whose helmets gemmed coronets shine;
Proud Tanists with baldrics enriched by the mine.

And knights who the honours of knighthood had won,
Ere in years they had measured eight rings of the sun:
These lead to the field chosen friends and allies,
By gossipred's sacred, infrangible ties
Conjoined; or by fosterage, potent to bind
As the same kindred blood, and mind rivet to mind.

Carty-More, rich and potent in vassals and land,
And O'Sullivan Beare of the liberal hand,
Whose cup ever-full, and whose ever-spread board
Refection and strength to the pilgrim afford,
Lead on the armed files of Momonia's rough shore;
Those who drink of the Suir, or the dark Avonmore;
Of th' alder-fringed Mulla, or castle-crowned Lee;
Or Bandon, fair-winding by turret and tree;
Or the silvery eddies of Arragadeen,
Or of Lean's mountain lakes spread in crystalline sheen,
Where the Arbutus blooms ever verdant and green:
Wild haunt of the echoes that sportively play
Round the cliffs, and the peaks, and each wood-skirted bay,
Till nature in ecstacy vibrates and thrills,
As thunders melodious roll round the hills.
With these come the warriours who dwell where expand
The fleet-bearing gulfs, mid the mountain-girt land
Of Bantry and Dingle; or breathe the pure air
Of the wild and magnificent shores of Kenmare.

Blood-royal O'Connor his infantry guides
From regions beyond where the broad Shannon glides;
Great monarch of streams that from upland and dell,
And a thousand steep mountains, his wide current swell;

By cities, lakes, forests, and fields rich with grain,
Sweeping on with his sail-covered tides to the main.
There come those who dwell by the ocean's rough bound,
Where Galway with strong Gothic turrets sits crowned;
Where Corrib her pine-dotted waters spreads wide;
By Cong, where the pious King Roderick died:
Or where o'er Benboola the sun-eagles soar,
And their fleet shadows fling on the lake of Kylemore:
Who view the blest hill where thy saint, Erin, stood,
When he smote and expelled all thy viperous brood;
Who from far see the Curlieus with peaks towering high,
Or Nephin, snow-turbaned and piercing the sky;
Or drink of the Moy, as it flows broad and deep,
By abbey and belfry, fortalice and keep.

With these comes O'Mailey, well-versed in sea-wiles,
The lord of Craig-Uile, a prince of the isles;
Of th' Arrans where health-wafting gales ever blow,
And Bovin, with fat lowing herds, white as snow,
And a thousand green islets, with foam girdled bright,
Like gems chased in silver, and glistening in light.
To far distant shores was this chief wont to roam;
Light he swept from the port, but deep-freighted came home;
His galley would lie in the rock-sheltered bay,
Like the osprey that looks from her eyry for prey,
On the sea-wafted quarry still ready to stoop,
To spread the broad pinion and make the fell swoop.
Now he longs to be trussing more generous game,
And comes from the Bruce wreaths of glory to claim.

Tirconnel's bleak shores send O'Donnell the bold,
Whose sires gave to Albyn her monarchs of old;
He leads the brave race who Kilcrennan surround,
Where, Ullin, thy kings in past ages were crowned;
Who hear ocean thunder in Swin's stormy cave,
Dwell by Derg's hallowed stream; or where Erne's foamy wave
O'er the salmon-leap rock is precipitate rolled,
Or the Esk guards its char dropped with crimson and gold;
By Swilly's wild bay, or the confluent flow
Of the Mourne and the Fin, or the vale of the Roe.
With the Irian race of great Fergus Mac Roy,
Comes O'Loghlin of streams, and of meads Clannaboy.
O'er thy men, Dalriada, the flower of the land,
O'Neil's blazoned banner displays the red hand.
Ere yon sun to his western pavilion return,
That hand with a crimson more glowing shall burn.
'Tis borne by O'Hanlon, whose free martial air
Speaks his time-sanctioned right Ullin's standard to bear.
The chief of a tribe subtle, hardy and brave,
Whose couch is the heath, and whose dwelling the cave.
Oft, at midnight's dark hour, they descend from their rocks;
The vale in the morn looks around for its flocks:
They have found a new fold in the cliff's dark retreats,
And the wilds of Slew-Gullen re-echo their bleats.

Next come the Clan-Collas in quest of renown,
From Ardmacha's heights—and Maginis of Down;
And Savage, the Spartan, who thinks that men's bones
Form a bulwark more strong than a rampart of stones.
With Gronstram, of Innisnabel the rich lord;
Ne'er did warriour more courteous or kind draw a sword,

Hence many a maiden had fain been his bride:
But in scorn Cupid's arrows he wafted aside,
For, lord of th' ascendant, the stern god of war
Shone high, at his birth, o'er the fair Paphian star.
But near him is one who were better I ween,
In the sweet myrtle grove, with Idalia's soft queen,
Hight Redmond, the victim of love and despair,
His eye rolling-wild, his brow clouded with care:
Here he hopes to forget the false maiden who sold
Her hand—Redmond had all her heart—for vile gold.
An aunt with malignity grizzled, and fraught
With the spirit of evil, this misery wrought;
Forced the maid to embrace, maugre honour and truth,
For wealth, a crazed dotard, and leave the fond youth.
But of vengeance and wo is the day speeding fast,
Her selfish and sordid ambition to blast;
When the hideous grin and wild laugh shall reveal
That the horror-struck wretch is at last taught to feel.
Her cold callous heart shall remorse keenly wring,
And avenge wounded love by a noose and a swing.

With flags in proud freedom that winnow the gale,
Come th' O'Tooles of the glens, and O'Byrne of Imayle,
A restless, high-daring, invincible race,
Whose law is the sword, and whose substance the chace.
Walled cities and towers for defence they despise,
While round them their own native ramparts arise,
Woods, hills, cliff-girt valleys, a rough portless shore,
The home of the deer, and the eagle-rock hoar,
Bogs, lakes, and peaked crags, where the foam-torrent speeds,
Climbs the wild mountain goat, and the green plover breeds.

Some on hobbies advance, that have beauty combined
With sinewy strength, and are fleet as the wind:
With croupier, and petryl, and chevron well-dight,
With sliding and gold-bitted reins shining bright.

Each chief bears a gorget that jewels bedeck,
And a collar of fine-twisted gold round his neck.
The crotal's dark crimson is fused through his vest,
That a gem-studded brooch buckles close o'er his breast;
The sea-lion's tusk, well-enameled and gilt,
To his blue polished sword gives an ivory hilt:
And a spear shines before him, elastic and strong,
Armed with nine steely barbs, and twice five cubits long.
Twisted osier the frame of his small moon-like shield,
The boss shining gold—burnished iron the field.
His fingers, like knight's of old Rome, proudly show
Rings and signets of ruby or chrysolite glow,
Or emerald rare; wrought with filigree fine,
His sinewy arms golden bracelets entwine.
An amulet too in his breast might be found,
Marked with dark Runic rhymes, by whose magical sound
Storms are hushed into peace, stayed the dart in its flight,
And blunted the sword's razor edge ere it bite.

Broad-shouldered, and stately, and shirted in brass,
With his war-axe and sword comes the stout galloglass.
His axe double-winged, with each wing shining clear,
And curved like the moon ere she fills up her sphere.
More keen than the razor, more rapid its way
Than the gannet's, or hawk's, rushing down to the prey.

Its shaft seasoned ash, and, when swung in his hand,
Its terrible dint may nought living withstand.
Through the warriour's cuished thigh the dread thunderbolt glides,
Or the helmeted head from the shoulders divides.
Round his casque the green shamrog is gracefully twined,
And his scarf, of the bright saffron dye, flouts the wind.

Next comes the glibbed kern, with his lion-like face,
His frieze purple mantle tight-girt with a brace:
His light nether limbs yellow truise clasp around;
In bull's hairy hide close his ancles are bound.
No target he wields, but to guard him from harm,
In gauntlets of iron he buckles his arm.
More swiftly he bounds than the fleet mountain roe,
With a lance for his work when foe grapples with foe.
Though seldom he joys in the close standing fight,
But in ambushes oft and in skirmishings light.
On his foes, when dark forests entangle their course,
He showers forth his missiles with death-dealing force.
Oft as some errant knight spurs his steed like the wind,
Amazed he discerns a strange rider behind.
The kern on his crupper has sprung with a bound,
And his arms have the knight closely girdled around;
In vain the knight labours those arms to unloose,
The fiercer his struggles more tight grows the noose.
Some spirit unearthly, he thinks, works his wo;
Cold sweat-drops of terror his forehead o'erflow.
The kern has him clasped to his breast like a child,
And he drives on the courser impetuous and wild,

Up mountain, down valley;—deep-plunging they cross
The bog—swim the river and bound o'er the fosse:
Till, in the far glen, joyous cheerings arise,
To greet the return of the kern with his prize.
Two keen-pointed javelins he whirls by a thong,
With aim so unerring, with impulse so strong,
As through shield and hauberk to sluice the red tide:
Hangs a skean, in an ivory sheath, by his side;
With this, when thick carnage the champaign bespreads,
From the wounded and dying he severs the heads.

What knight in black helmet and wo's sable weed,
Is spurring so stoutly his dark glossy steed?
Sir Maupus, of knighthood the pride and the boast,
No warriour more valiant lifts spear in the host.
Armed with vengeance he comes to make Albyn atone
By her blood, for his country's deep wrongs and his own,
For his ravaged demesnes, for his children and wife,
In Dundalgan, who fell by the murderer's knife.
Crossed bones and a skull on his helmet and shield
Are limned, and he vows ne'er to move from the field,
Till the dint of the two-handed blade that he sways
With a helm-crushing force, on the Bruce he essays.

Wide unfurled o'er the host Erin's standard is raised;
In its emerald grain the gold harp shines emblazed:
Gallgrena, the sun-burst, that standard they name,
For it glitters in fight like the sun's bursting flame
Through the dark broken clouds.—Seems the harp to be strung
With his beams, and by spirits aerial rung.

'Tis the prelude of triumph; the bards catch the strain,
And wild from their harps it re-echoes amain.

Lo! the sword-girded bards by that standard are seen,
With harps in their hands, closely cinctured in green,
Or in robes snowy white shot with crimson and blue,
Clasped by bodkin or brooch of the topaze's hue.
The gold-wrought barrad round their temples they wear,
And dark in the wind floats their long raven hair.
On their arms jewelled bracelets, and massy and long,
Round their necks golden chains, splendid honours of song.
'Tis theirs with high thought warriour breasts to inspire,
High thought of high daring the nurse and the sire.
Twelve measures twice told of sweet music they play,
From their own local strains to the foreigner's lay;
Whate'er to the soul can emotion impart,
In nature's wild bursts, or skilled lessons of art.

Nigh these, bands of minstrels Oirfidian behold,
Their Keirnines or Cruits strung with glittering gold.
Some through Ullan or Cuislian pipes smooth and white,
Rich with ferrules of gold, and with keys silver-bright,
From Æolian bags, prisoned winds drive, elate
And whistling with joy, through their ivory gate.

In ages to come, if the muse can foretell,
The souls of those bards in new bodies shall dwell.
Lo! Reda who sang of the dark Hill of Caves,
With him who in Suir found sweet Castaly's waves,
Ardfileas both, skilled with dexterous hand
To wake the harp's spirit, or wield battle-brand.

There is Ybod the sage who of heaven sublime
Has sung—and of hell, and the sin-purging clime.
And nigh him, inspired, comes the young Duvalcour,
Loud and bold rings the cruit of that brave troubadour,
As he wakes the Rosg-catha—impetuous and strong
The torrent of battle rolls mad in his song.
But whose is that harp whence such ecstasy floats,
Those powerful, those magical, heart-thrilling notes?
To-day may th' Ovoca be proud of her child,
Sweet bard of the city, the bower, and the wild.
He seems as if gifted by some sacred spell,
To inflame to high deeds, the rapt bosom to swell
With love of his Erin, and vividly start
The spirit of conflict in each bounding heart.

The "dark chain of silence" the heralds have rung,
And it binds, as in links of enchantment, each tongue:
Dies the hum of the host—e'en to breathe the winds cease,
For the song of the bards all is hushed into peace.

Men of Erin, quick advance!
Firmly grasp the shield and lance,
Fix each heart as flint in rock,
On! like storm-sleet to the shock.
Raise the mound of triumph high,
Or—your faces to the sky,
Sleep with glory; and your fame
Shall the bards aloud proclaim.
On them, men of Erin, dash!
Greet them with the target's clash,
Lance's dint and sabre's flash!

Live the brave with honour crowned!
Ever be their names renowned!
But let faulchion, spear, or dart,
Sluice the craven's coward heart!
By his tomb shall mother weep?
Wife e'er wish to burst his sleep?
Never!—but from earth and sky
Curses on his grave shall lie.
On them, men of Erin, dash!
Greet them with the target's clash,
Lance's dint and sabre's flash!

In the islands of the blest
Shall the souls of heroes rest;
Where through fragrant bowery vales,
Breathe the health-respiring gales,
Youth eternal glads the soul,
Sparkling bliss the fountains roll;
Ever in those isles to live,
Nature's debt to glory give.
On them, men of Erin, dash!
Greet them with the target's clash,
Lance's dint and sabre's flash!

For your dear-loved Erin's right,
Fame, and maiden's love ye fight.
Let your deeds heroic prove
Just your claim to maiden's love.
Now for altar, country, life,
Father, mother, children, wife,

Bliss, and glory, nerve each heart,
Edge the steel and point the dart.
On them, men of Erin, dash!
Greet them with the target's clash,
Lance's dint and sabre's flash!

Shaking terrors from your crest,
Spur in steed, and lance in rest,
Warriours' welcome give the foe,
Steel-bolts hissing from the bow,
Lead-sleet rattling from the sling.
Darts that heroes' dirges sing,
Pike and faulchion, stab and thrust,
Till the foemen bite the dust.
On them, men of Erin, dash!
Greet them with the target's clash,
Lance's dint and sabre's flash!

As the bards in grand chorus the strings sweep along,
The ranks catch the life-spark, and burst into song,
Empassioned and wild as the spirit that rings
On the harp of the winds, when the hurricane sings.

"Men of Erin advance! like the wild-rushing tide;
Like the water-spout's burst down the glen's channelled side,
Like the eagle's fell swoop on the birds of the mere;
Like the blood-hound's fierce leap from his leash on the deer;
Like the volleying bursts of the quick-bolting leven,
When in thunder it flashes and blazes through heaven.
O'er the spoils of the foe—o'er their blood-streaming grave,
To-day let the banner of green proudly wave;

Rend the jaws of the lion that prowls round your shore,
And trample the thistle of Albyn in gore."

Thus music and song through the host breathe their fire;
Religion too comes her warm flame to inspire—
Blest offspring of heaven, whose dictates prevail,
When country and fame, song and minstrelsy fail,
To nerve for the battle by breathings sublime
Of the hope, love and joy of her bliss-teeming clime.
See where, on a charger swift-footed and white,
Rides Jorse, the bold primate, arrayed for the fight.
He wields not to-day, with mild pastoral grace,
The shepherd's long crook, but the warriour's short mace,
Whose ponderous head glitters bright and afar
With spikes densely rayed like the fair morning star.
A casque is his mitre, his sleeve burnished steel;
In a frock of blue mail, with a spur on his heel,
In the centre and flank, in the van and the rear,
He speeds, with his own glowing spirit to cheer,
And urge to high daring, by all that is given
To hope or to wish, upon earth or in heaven.
"Ye fight, men of Erin, from bondage to save
A land of renown, fat with blood of the brave;
A land blest of nature in soil, sun and skies;
Sword ne'er clashed with sword for more noble a prize.
'Tis yours—heaven's gift—let your prowess retain
What God has bestowed, nor that gift render vain.
'Tis the land, from old time, by your fore-fathers trod:
Speaks a voice from their ashes that hallow the sod,
And bids you to prove, by your deeds of high name,
The sons and the heirs of their valour and fame.

The saints too invoke you to valiantly dare,
Holy Brigid, the chief, who first breathed vital air
On Faughard, that hill where she kindles her shrine,
And where she still dwells, working wonders divine.
This day who survives, in her love shall rejoice;
Who falls, falls thrice happy—for, hearken! her voice,
From above, whispers softly, 'to mansions of rest
Shall his soul wing her flight with the souls of the blest.'
See the staff of your national saint, that of yore,
Expelled all things noxious from Erin's green shore—
To-day shall this staff, like the all-potent wand
Of Moses, deliverance work for the land.
Let the Lord God arise, and his foes turn to flight!
Let the whirlwind roll on, and the hail-tempest smite!
Till Erin has vanquished, O sun, stand thou still,
And thou too, O moon, o'er the vale and the hill!
Go—offer them up from the hot-reeking sward,
A holocaust savoury and sweet to the Lord,
For each blood-drop ye shed shall a sin be forgiven,
Each corse forms a round in your ladder to heaven.
Then on to the shock! let the proud foemen feel
What nerve strings your arm, and gives edge to your steel."

BRUCE'S INVASION.

CANTO FOURTH.

BRUCE'S INVASION.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE BATTLE.

Though Mercy must weep that beneath every star
She can trace o'er the earth crimson footsteps of war;
That they blush in the realms of the cold arctic snow,
On the green of the isles, and where sand-deserts glow;
And exclaim that of evils which rage round the ball,
The direst is war—nay, that war speaks them all.
Yet are there some woes in the dull shades of life,
More poignant than e'er raged in stern battle-strife;
Worse passions in halls and rich chambers of state,
More deadly revenge, more invincible hate,
And insults more cruel, and wounds worse to heal
Than the fracture of limb, or the gash of the steel.

True—war is an angel of wrath and of power,
Commissioned by heaven to waste and devour.
Yet, good blends with evil in all things below,
And bliss may be found in the chalice of wo.
From evils more dire than the sword war can save;
It dissevers the chains that would nations enslave.
'Tis the thunder that shakes purple tyrants with dread,
The lightning that strikes the state-pestilence dead;
The shaking of earth by an agent divine,
That opens the fount, and discloses the mine,
Wakes the slumbering spirit, and gives to expand
Each germ in the soul of the good and the grand.

With valour is every great virtue combined,
The generous thought and the high-soaring mind,
Self-devotion and honour, pure friendship and love,
The fire of the eagle, the truth of the dove.
Its gifts the chief blessings to life that belong,
Right, justice, and freedom—truth, eloquence, song.

By its own native grandeur, though dubious its cause,
True valour must still claim the Muse's applause.
Erin's minstrels the Bruce shall embalm with their praise,
The meed of high daring—in ne'er-dying lays.

Close-marshaled, and ready with target and lance,
The warriours of Albyn wait Erin's advance:
In the centre, high-waving, her standard is spread,
And there towers the crest of the Bruce's helmed head.
From his shield the red lion with life seems to spring,
Clothed with terror and ire in defence of his king.

Like azure-winged lightning his good battle-brand
Seems already to hiss and to blaze in his hand.
His guards are around him, a giant-limbed brood,
The flower of his clans, all intrepid and rude:
But none more devoted e'er moved near a throne—
The life of their prince they prize more than their own,
And ere he should feel the light edge of a sword,
Would bare their own hearts to its point to be gored.
Mid these Harper lifts his broad shoulders on high,
With strength in his arm—kindling fires in his eye,
Prepared for his lord, as bold Fleming, to die.
He arms like the Bruce—such the shield he assumes,
The same his device, corslet, helmet and plumes;
A glorious deceit—when the conflict shall burn,
That on him, for the Bruce, all its fury may turn.

Their pibroc the pipers raise stormy and shrill,
With a heart-piercing charm for the sons of the hill;
Fond memory brings to their view, in that strain,
The dear native land they shall ne'er see again.
Like the scowl of the blast, as the thunder sublime,
And rugged and wild as their own mountain clime,
Is that strain to their ears—warm it thrills every chord
In their hearts, waking love for their country and lord:
To die in their cause is the acme of bliss,
And the music of heaven alone equals this.

As friends of the Bruce, ranged the hillocks along,
Apostates and traitors, a renegade throng,
Stand aloof to behold how the battle may speed,
Prepared of his triumph to share the rich meed;

But if vanquished to flee—and with these Kemerdyne,
And White, the arch-spy, and the Lacies combine:
And some too are there who have made their heart-vows,
Whoe'er may be victor, his cause to espouse.
Such a race may be found in all ages and climes,
The hirelings of fortune, the slaves of the times,
Who led by events—in this maxim delight,
What fails must be wrong—and what prospers be right.
May shame be their meed!—Let them flee, spurred by fear,
As flees with the barb in her side the wild deer,
By the curse and the wrath of their country pursued,
And dogged, as by slouth-hounds, thro' mountain and wood.

Front to front lower the foes—and now small is the space
Between—when they pause and look face upon face:
Such the pause, deep and dreadful, that heralds the birth
Of the fearful convulsion that shakes solid earth.
Does Albyn submit, and crave mercy?—for see!
Her ranks to the ground bend a suppliant knee.
Bent indeed is their knee—but to no earthly power;
The great God of battles they ask in this hour
To shield them—for God once before heard their prayer;
Then their cause winged it up to his ear—now in air
'Tis scattered.—But lo! to their feet they have sprung,
With looks more elate, and with nerves better strung,
Yet each, for a moment, feels cold round the heart—
But hark! 'tis the whiz of the death-bearing dart.
The kern are now raising their terrible cries,
The welkin re-echoes, and Albyn replies.

Such at first is the murmuring sound of the breeze,
When it brings the black rain-clouds, and furrows the seas ;
Still louder and louder it swells, till its roar
Thro' a thousand deep caves shakes the foam-beaten shore.
Far down the rough glens dash the brown yeasty floods,
Midst the groans of the cliffs, and the crash of the woods,
By volleying thunders the headlands are riven,
And loudly rebellows the wide vault of heaven.

Shrill-booming the stone-hail is showered from the sling,
The dirge-singing arrows leap swift from the string;
So thick that full oft in mid air they rebound
From the flint's adverse shock, and drop blunt to the ground,
Like quills from the wing of the high-soaring swan,
Or the eagle that swims round the cliffs of Glenaan.

Dark grows the blue sky with the war's hurtling sleet;
Shakes the ground far and wide, with the rushing of feet:
The war-blast is sounding—on ! on to the charge !—
They meet and they close—clashes targe upon targe :
Ten thousand keen sabres flash red in the sun,
The banquet of glory and death is begun ;
War's whole fatal enginery now is at play—
Pike, dagger, and faulchion are revelling away,
As if each knew its task, and rejoiced to perform
Its office of blood, in the dire battle-storm.
Crash helmets—rush javelins—meet spears in rude tilt—
Sword rings upon sword—point to point—hilt to hilt—
Fierce threats and deep cries, the wild scream and the yell
Make in horrible concert, the music of hell.

So meet, and so battle two clouds sweeping fast
Round Bengore's pillared brow, on the wings of the blast,
Foams the ocean below—topple watch-tower and rock—
Rathlin's iron foundations are rent by the shock;
Thick fly the forked fires, and in each collied cloud
Wounded spirits are heard shrieking dismal and loud.

Dimmed grows the array of the erst glittering scene,
How marred is its beauty, how tarnished its sheen!
The rich saffron stole and the plaid's crimson fold,
And pennon and banner of purple and gold,
And corslet, and helmet, and hauberk, and shield,
Shivered lances, and sabres, and darts strew the field.
Severed limbs and pale corses are scattered around,
The blood of the valiant makes slippery the ground;
And feathery crests, that the moment before
Made sport with the winds, lie polluted in gore,
Smote down like the white plumy birds of the deep,
That a slinger has struck on their foam-girdled steep.
While one shouts aloud, comes a shaft winged with death,
And closes for ever the portals of breath.
Lopped off, like a branch, by the keen trenchant brand,
With the sword in its grasp, drops a gauntleted hand.
Here falls a huge Gael, like a statue of lead,
And there lies a chieftain cut short by the head;
All ghastly and glaring, and whirling around
In a current of gore smokes the head on the ground;
Beside him a youth—erst elated and gay,
He hoped hence to bear some rich trophy away.
More blest had he sought a fair chaplet of flowers,
In the still shades of peace, or the Muse's green bowers,

Nor through tempests of wrath sought the laurel that springs
Ever-green from the life-blood of heroes and kings.
The sword of the foe lops his hopes of renown,
And he drops his plumed crest, like the canna's soft down,
That waves in its beauty and pride on the moor,
Till shorn by the severing slane of the boor.

Albyn's warriours to day stand in no listless trance,
Not blunt is their sword, nor unvarnished their lance:
Well Mowbray contends with the galloglass stern,
And well does De Soulis rage wild on the kern,
And well does young Edward his prowess make known
To the Sassanagh host that he claims for his own.
All radiant in arms as a meteor of light,
He shines mid his foes, spreading terror and flight.
Even envy must own that a chief of such fires
Is worthy the sceptre to which he aspires.
Such a heart with the hearts of his people would blend,
Such an arm would their rights, laws, and freedom defend.
Oh! grief—that he bore an untractable soul,
So reckless—so wild, and so fierce to controul.
Like the bird of the rock in her own wide demesnes
Of mountain and ocean, all bounds he disdains.
Now midst a dense cloud of the foes see him turn,
In Faughard he hopes for a new Bannockburn.
On his shield, showering fast, darts and javelins ring;
Round his helm, like the snow-drift, the fleet arrows sing;
He joys in such music—it acts as a charm
To his chivalrous soul, and gives strength to his arm,
And where his broad claymore is whirling around,
Death grins with delight, for the dead heap the ground.

In nice-balanced poise hang the fates of the field;
Not a step these advance—nor a step those will yield;
To its highest dread energies strung is each heart,
To the steel adding sharpness, and speed to the dart;
And each in his ranks, never pausing for breath,
Is wielding his sword like the sceptre of death.
Though struck to the ground—there contending he lies,
Till, by his own efforts exhausted, he dies
Unquailed and unconquered—and grasping his spear,
On the spot where he stood finds a warriour's bier.

Ullin's horse to the charge!—hark! the hoarse bugles sound,
And on, like a whirlwind, they dash o'er the ground.
Collected in strength—o'er their steeds bending low,
With the butt of the lance o'er the firm saddle bow,
On Albyn's wedged ranks they are rushing amain
Their line to dissever—but on the trenched plain
Wary Albyn her sharp spiky caltrops has sown,
By which horse and rider would soon lie o'erthrown.
The peril they spy, and wheel swift from the foe—
More swift flies the shower of winged shafts from his bow.
The galled chargers plunge—loud they clatter and clang
On the arms of the fallen, and many a pang
Inflict, as with brain-spattered fetlocks they tread
On the dying, and trample them down with the dead.
On the flank of the foe now they urge their career,
But there meet a rampart of buckler and spear.
Thick bristled all o'er like the hedge-hog's rough form,
In a sheltrum he waits the approach of the storm,
No open he leaves for their swift-rushing force,
But greets with steel points the fierce charge of the horse.

The steed feels the dint of the pike's iron strokes,
In the brain of the rider the barbed arrow smokes;
He falls a pale corse—springs the charger aloof,
In agony flinging his blood-dripping hoof,
Till he drops, with a horrible shriek, on the loam,
All reeking with gore, bloody sweat, and red foam.

Does Erin relax and ingloriously yield?
For see—she recoils—she recedes from the field.
Oh! no—'tis a feint that perchance may disjoin
Albyn's battle, and open her close-serried line.
And lo! upon Erin now speeding her flight,
She bursts as a billow, with yells of delight.
And Bruce, as his claymore he flourishes high,
Blood-dripping, pursues with a loud scornful cry;
"Flee, Sassanaghs, flee! and add wings to your speed,
Or stay, that the wolf and the vulture may feed.
Pursue, men of Carrick!—their might is o'erthrown,
O'ertake—seize their standards—the day is our own!"
But short is his triumph—for wheeling in ire
Dash the chivalry on, like a tempest of fire,
Through the gaps of his line, and the now-broken chain
To rejoin, chafe De Soulis and Mowbray in vain;
Before them, condensing, crowd faulchion and spear,
And the swords of De Burgo flash quick in the rear.

On! Bermingham, on!—for with no feeble hands,
The Bruce and his guards are upon thy brave bands;
E'en the boldest recoil from the strokes of the Gael
That ring on their crests with an ear-stunning peal.

At their head stalwart Harper, with battle-axe fell,
Smites helmets and shields as a sledge smites a shell.
But reddened with carnage, lo! Husse is near:
They meet—each repelling the other's career.
As a moment they pause, ere the fight they begin,
O'er each blood-spotted face curls a tortuous grin,
The lower of defiance—the grim smile of scorn,
Cries Husse, "proud Scot, thou hast seen thy last morn;
O'er thy threshold ne'er more shall thy long shadow shoot,
On thy hearth shall the bramble and thorn fix their root,
While thy bones here are bleaching the cold blast beneath,
And thy heart's blood is fattening the dark barren heath.
Insatiate spoiler of altar and tomb!
Thou slayer of women—here sealed be thy doom."
"Fell Sassanagh boaster," cries Harper in wrath,
The sounds through clenched teeth scarcely working a path,
"Wordy ruffian!—thou vassal of vassals, to dare
With warriour's of Albyn thine arm to compare!
From the fate that now waits thee, such upstarts shall learn
To rein their presumption—thou leader of kern!
What the force of our arm know from this on thy crown."
Swift as the winged word speeds the battle-axe down;
But Husse's quick eye the lanced lightning had spied;
More swift than its glance has he bounded aside;
And ere 'tis repoised, has his own trenchant blade
On the shield of his foe in wild revelry played.
Clashes steel upon steel, and stroke answering stroke
Dints their mail, as the thunderbolt dints the gnarled oak.
Thus meet two wild bulls in the season of love
For the lordship contending of valley and grove.

They bellow, they foam, spurn the sand, lower in scorn,
Rush front against front—grapples horn upon horn,
Gored in shoulder and flank—mad with fury and pain,
They fight till one falls, or both bleed on the plain.

But who, like a demon of wrath, 'mid the foes
Is dealing around such a tempest of blows?
Through the dense ridge of battle he hews a broad pass,
And mows down the soldiers of Albyn like grass.
Sir Maupus—his steed is transfixed to the ground,
And now upon foot he deals terror around.
Loud he roars on the Bruce, if he dares, to come nigh;
The Bruce's red claymore makes sudden reply.
They meet like two galleys, by wind and by oar
Urged swift to the shock—dashes prore upon prore;
Shiver yards—tremble masts—and recoiling they reel,
With the fearful assault, from the tops to the keel.
So meet two huge bowlders precipitate sent
From two adverse hills by the elements rent;
Each many an acre o'erleaps at a bound,
And with many a trench deeply furrows the ground,
Till, with horrid concussion, they strike in the vale—
The shepherd aloof hears the crash, and turns pale.
Fierce and dire grows the conflict—in circles of flame
Their broadswords are playing their desperate game;
Blow answers to blow—thrust for thrust tells alike;
For each is less careful to ward than to strike;
Rings their oft-stricken mail in a death-telling chime,
Like the anvil with hammer and sledge keeping time.
The shield of Sir Maupus its fissures may mourn,
And the crest of the Bruce for its plumes roughly shorn.

Each chief bears rude marks of the tempest of war,
Battered helm and stained corslet—the gash and the scar.
Now the dense cloud of warriours closes them round,
And hides—but their blows loud and louder resound.
In that cloud's burning centre all th' elements meet
Of havoc and carnage, their fire and their sleet,
The clash of the war-axe—the steel's scorching glance;
There whirls the mad vortex of claymore and lance.
There his shield has the galloglass blazoned anew,
And there dyed his plumes in a fresh crimson dew.
Like a lion whose mane in the blood of the roe
Is dappled, the kern makes his spring on the foe.
Round his visage his locks toss in horrible play,
Besprent with the dash of the war's purple spray;
Half-naked his limbs—unincumbered to strike—
Wives and mothers may curse the fell thrust of his pike.
Quail the foes at his look, for some spirit of ill,
They think, has broke loose, or comes chartered to kill.

Uptripped on the slippery sod, in the fold
Of a kern's nimble arms, a huge Gäel is rolled.
The claymore and sword they have lost in the strife,
And with dirk and with skean wage the contest for life.
The one light, elastic, and supple of limb;
The other all brawny, and stalwart and grim.
Now strength is prevailing—the kern lies beneath—
But his skean in the Gäel's bold heart finds a sheath.
Like the string of a bow by a knife cut in twain,
In a moment relaxed—he is stretched with the slain;
While his steel o'er the foe the kern brandishes high,
And again is prepared a new conflict to try.

Thus the weasel when trussed by a hawk, closely clings
To the high-soaring bird—till beneath her spread wings
He finds where the fountains of life warmly play,
And sluices and drains the red currents away.
Sick and faint she descends from her height in the skies,
Drops her quarry unhurt—gives a flutter—and dies.

The battle is burning more fierce and more fast,
Like a wide conflagration when fanned by the blast.
On! on! men of Erin—lo! Albyn turns pale.
Ye ghosts of our fathers that float on the gale,
Ye Firbolgs—ye Danans—with all thy great line,
Milesius—and Nial of Hostages Nine!
Ye chiefs who drank blood, and ne'er stooped to a fear
Since ye took your first food from the point of a spear;
Great Goll, son of Morna, and Connall renowned,
With an arm unbaptized, Erin's foe-men confound.
Strike, sword of Mananan, as when thy keen blade
Usnach's three gallant sons, at a sweep, headless laid.
Ye kings of proud Tara—chiefs valiant and strong,
Ye bards who their fame have embalmed in your song,
Cuchullin, Finn, Ossian, and Oscar his son,
And Conn, who a hundred grand victories won;
From your dark-rolling clouds, shew your terrible forms,
Shoot dismay through their hearts—smite with thunders and storms.

Weep Albyn, and shriek far o'er mountain and flood,
The faulchion of Erin grows drunk in thy blood.
All pale with his death-wound and laid on a shield,
By his clansmen is Mowbray borne far from the field;

De Soulis has fallen before his brave line,
And Stewart lies cleft from the head to the chine.

On! on! men of Erin—more quick with your steel!
They faint—they grow weary—they stagger—they reel—
They fall—or they flee—all besprinkled with gore,
Torn, riven and shattered like wrecks on the shore.
While Ullin's dread chivalry wide o'er the heath,
With sabres are gleaning the harvest of death.

The kite and the vulture on Ravensdale's peaks,
And Carlingford's mountains, are whetting their beaks;
Or screaming on Mourne's famished birds to inhale
The odour of blood, as it floats on the gale.

Flee! flee! traitor Lacy—be swift as the wind
And leave, if thou canst, shame and sorrow behind.
Yet, wert thou a man, on this field would'st thou bide,
And in glorious death thy life's infamy hide.
But go—thou wert born for the scaffold or tree,
And the bright field of glory was ne'er spread for thee.

Where now is the Bruce?—on the field's crimson bed,
With Maupus, he sleeps the cold sleep of the dead.
In one direful struggle they fell face to face,
And still they lie twined in an iron embrace.
His guards and brave knights here their errantry close,
On the same lowly couch—in the same still repose.
And Harper's huge limbs by the Bruce closely lie,
Spent the might of his arm—quenched the fire of his eye.

For Bruce was his idol, and this was his pride,
In death as in life to be close by his side.

The storm has rolled past—and now all is as still
As the night's breathless calm when the moon lights the hill.
On Faughard's red field Albyn's lion lies torn,
And a pitiless hook her tall thistle has shorn.
Her chieftains and warriours all scattered around,
Their face to the skies, and their back to the ground.
On the heathery couch, 'twas their wont oft to lie,
In bonnet and plaid, 'neath the cold starry sky,
Lulled to sleep by the blast, or the wild torrent's roar,
But ne'er did they slumber so soundly before.
In the morn the fleet deer nigh them fearless may spring,
And the heath-cock arise on his loud-whirring wing—
No hound from their leash, and no shaft from their bow,
Shall the fleet deer pursue—or the heath-cock bring low.

Noble Bruce! though revenge may disturb thy low bed,
And impotent malice wage war with the dead,
Thy worth, valiant prince, Erin's bards shall proclaim,
When the caoinan they sing to their chiefs of high name
Who share in thy slumbers—for though Erin's harp
Breathes her feeling of wrong loud, indignant, and sharp,
Within it a soul great and generous lives,
Which ardently, kindly, and nobly forgives.
That e'en to her foe a due trophy will raise,
Laud the merit she loves and be just in his praise.
'Tis the part of presumptuous upstarts to tread
On the fallen—the ass kicks the lion when dead.

All virtue and all human good they comprise
In cunning, address, and the talent to rise.
Up the column of power ever-crawling they wind,
Nor turn—but to hiss on the friends left behind;
In the specious attire of the generous and brave,
Mask the soul of the tyrant, and heart of the slave,
That can smile while they torture—can stab while they kiss,
And consign to perdition while promising bliss.
Unloved let them live, and unwept let them die;
For their loss groans no bosom—no tear dims an eye.
No friend to their tomb flowery chaplets shall bring,
No high-minded bard shall their requiem sing,
No child in his breast their fond memory nurse:
But the insults they gave shall that memory curse,
Where they lie shall oblivion brood o'er the spot,
And their name on the earth, ere their carcases rot.

Illustrious prince! by thy valour undone,
Thy star sets in glory—thy wild course is run.
That course was a meteor's—all brilliant and bright
It sparkled and blazed, filled the world with its light.
The wonder-struck nations looked up and admired,
Till bursting in one glorious flash, it expired.

Now Erin may raise her victorious cheers:
But still must her joy be commingled with tears;
As her clime is her life, chequered pleasure and wo,
Sun and cloud—the dark storm and the bright rainy bow.
Sad and dear is the joy for a victory won
By the blood of a husband, a father—a son.

And yet what is life since at last it must go
By sickness, affliction, or time's sapping flow?
Oh! better by far prematurely to fall
In the conflict of fame, by the lance or the ball,
Than in sorrow, and shame, and sad servitude live,
Nor know what to life its true blessings can give.

Long, long, may thy daughters, Edina, deplore
Their true lovers stay—they shall ne'er see them more,
For their sons loud may weep the fond mothers of Kyle,
For their husbands deep sorrow the wives of Argyle;
For the chiefs and the clans of the sword-stricken Gael
Let the lone Western Isles raise the dirge and the wail.
Long and oft o'er the waves may their maids cast an eye,
Oft speed on the winds the fond wish and the sigh,
Oft think they behold in the far-distant foam,
Or the sea-bird's white pinion, their sails coming home.
Never more in their sails heaven's breezes shall blow,
But one little skiff comes deep-freighted with wo,
And hope flies for ever—Loud shrieks pierce the air,
Wives, mothers, and maidens are wrapt in despair;
Some rend their black tresses—and some for their grief,
In fast-gushing tears, find a transient relief.
One feels to the core of the heart bruised so deep,
She sees not—she hears not—oh! could she but weep!
One tear-drop would be as a drop of sweet balm
From heaven her agonized spirit to calm.
But the shock has absorbed the sweet fountain of tears;
No life in her chill frozen aspect appears.

The lustre that beamed in her eye has grown dim,
Pale, motionless, rigid and hard is each limb,
As if Gorgon's head had before her been thrown,
And suddenly stiffened and turned her to stone.

NOTES.

NOTES.

CANTO FIRST.

NOTE I.—p. 10.

And up Woking's frith smooth and swiftly they glide.

" In Woking's fyrth arywyt thai
Sauffly, but bargane or assay,
And send their shippis hame ilkane."

Barbour.

Woking's fyrth must be the ancient name of Larne harbour, on the N. coast of the County of Antrim. Hollingshed, in his enumeration of the bays of Ireland, places Wolderfrith between the Bann and " Caregfergus." Jamieson, in a note upon Barbour, says, that the term " is most probably of Norse origin, and may have been corrupted from Wiking's frith. In the language still spoken in Iceland, Viking fiord would signify the sound, or firth of the pirates, or sea kings."

The Nine Maidens, or Hulins, are dangerous rocks in view of the harbour of Larne—the Gobbins, a perpendicular range of dark and lofty cliffs, forming the N. boundary of Island Magee. Olderfleet Tower, stands on a peninsular slip of ground, projecting into Larne bay. Its venerable ruins add greatly to the romantic and picturesque beauty of the surrounding scenery.

NOTE II.—p. 10.

How proudly the chieftains are pacing the strand.

The principal officers of the expedition are thus enumerated by Barbour.

" He had then in his cumpany
The Erle Thomas that was worthe;
And Schyr Philip the Mowbray
That sekyr wes in hard assay;
Schyr Jhone the Soulis ane gude knycht,
And Schyr Jhone Stewart that wes wycht,
And Ramsay als of Ouchterhouss,
That wes wycht and chewalrouss;
And Schyr Fergus of Androssane,
And other knychtis mony ane."

Sir Robert Boyd, and Sir Colin Campbell, the knight whom King Robert's truncheon makes " to reel on his steed," page 18—are afterwards mentioned by Barbour. Others whose names he has omitted are noticed in Cambden's Annals.

NOTE III.—p. 10.

The bold Earl of Moray towers high o'er the throng.

"Sir Thomas Randolph Earl of Murray, was a man of extraordinary merit, a true patriot, and deservedly in great favour with his uncle King Robert, whom he joined as soon as he began to assert his title to the crown. He was sent prisoner to England, by Edward I. in 1306, but was soon released. In 1313, he retook the castle of Edinburgh from the English. The share he had of the glory acquired by the Scots at the memorable battle of Bannockburn, where he commanded the left wing of the army, 1314, is recorded by many historians.

Douglas's Peerage of Scotland.

He led the van of Edward Bruce's army in Ireland, and by his valour and address was often successful in overcoming the enemy.

NOTE IV.—p. 10.

With Sir Philip Mowbray, a high-minded chief.

This distinguished officer had been in the service of King Edward the First, for whom he held the castle of Stirling, when it was besieged by Edward Bruce. Being hard pressed he agreed to deliver it up, provided it were not relieved on a certain day. The day came and no succour having arrived, he fulfilled his engagement, and entered into the service of the Scottish king.

NOTE V.—p. 11.

Sir John the Stewart.

"Probably a son of Sir John Stewart of Bonkill. Sir Walter Stewart, his third son, was one of those patriots who joined King Robert Bruce, as soon as he began to assert his title to the crown, and performed many gallant actions against the enemies of his country."

NOTE VI.—p. 11.

There Ouchterhouse Ramsay is stalking in pride;
With Ellerslie's wight oft he fought side by side.

We learn from blind Harry's poem of Wallace, that his hero sometimes found a welcome retreat from his enemies in Ouchterhouse, the family seat of the Ramsays. Sir John and his son Alexander Ramsay, are both mentioned by the bard in strains of glowing panegyric.

"Sir John Ramsay that righteous was born
Of Ochterhouse, and other lands lord
And Sheriffs als, as my book will record,
Of noble blood, and old ancessary,
Continued well with worthy chevalry.
* * * * * *
In war he was right meikle for to prise,
Busie and true, both sober, wight and wise.
* * * * * *
His son was called the flower of courtliness."

Wallace, Book VII. C. 2.

NOTE VII.—p. 11.

Sir John De Soulis with corsletted breast.

"This chief is supposed by some to have been the grandson of Nicholas De Soulis, who was one of the competitors for the Scottish crown, in right of his grandmother, the daughter of Alexander the Second."

Jamieson.

NOTE VIII.—p. 11.

Next Campbell comes on with the youth of Argyle.

Sir Colin Campbell of Lochow, was a great loyalist, and always adhered to the interests of King Robert Bruce, and his son King David. He went on the expedition to Ireland, in favour of Edward Bruce, where his courage and conduct were so remarkable, that King Robert upon his return, rewarded him with a grant of divers lands, by a charter under the great seal, erecting all his lands in Argyleshire into a free barony.

Douglas's Peerage.

NOTE IX.—p. 11.

Menteith, who, 'tis said, did a dark deed of shame.

Sir John Menteith, a man of great spirit, though he was guilty of that villainous action of betraying the brave Sir William Wallace into the hands of King Edward I. of England, yet, he afterwards became a great patriot, and was not only a firm friend, but a great favourite of King Robert Bruce. He remarkably distinguished himself at the battle of Bannockburn, in 1314, signed that famous letter to the Pope, 1320, and was appointed one of the ambassadors to the Court of England, in 1323.

Douglas.

According to the popular story, King Edward, by his ambassador, "Aymer the Vallance," made splendid offers to Menteith, to betray Wallace, who was under the sacred protection of his roof. Menteith made some objections; but Vallance seeing him beginning to hesitate, pressed his advantage by promising him the Lordship of Lennox, and a considerable sum of gold.

> "Vallance saw him in a study be,
> Three thousand pound of fine gold let him see,
> And beght he should the Lennox have at will;
> Thus treasonably Monteith granted theretil.
> An obligation with his own hand he made,
> Then took the gold and Edward's seal so brade,
> And gave him his, when he his time might see
> To take Wallace. * * * * *
> * * * * * *
> For covetise, Monteith upon false wise,
> Betrayed Wallace who was his gossip thrice."
>
> *Wallace, Book XII.*

NOTE X.—p. 12.

But none vies with Fleming in limb or in power,
Or Harper who stalks in his strength like a tower.

"Neil Fleming, a soldier of uncommon intrepidity, who, to preserve the Scotch army from being surprised by a sally of the garrison of Carrickfergus castle, under Thomas Lord Maundeville, resolved to sacrifice himself and party for their preservation. He immediately despatched a messenger to inform the army of their danger, and placing himself at

the head of his little troop, boldly advanced to meet the assailants. 'Now, of a truth,' cried he, 'they shall see how we can die for our Lord.' His first onset checked the progress of the enemy; but he soon received a mortal wound, and his party were cut to pieces. Maundeville having divided his forces, in order to surround the Scots, now advanced in person, with his best troops, through the principal street of the town, and was met by Bruce with his guards, who had probably been alarmed by the messenger sent to him by Fleming. In front of Bruce's party was Gilbert Harper, a man renowned in the Scottish army for strength and valour, who, knowing Maundeville by the richness of his armour, rushed forward and felled him to the ground with his battle-axe, in which situation he was despatched by Lord Edward Bruce with a knife." The circumstance is thus recorded by Barbour.

"Gib Harpar befor him yeid
That wes the douchteast in deid,
That wes then levand off his state;
And with ane axe maid him sic gat,
That he the first fellyt to the ground;
And off thre, in a litill stound,
The Mawndweill be his armying
He knew, and roucht him sic a swyng,
That he till erd yeid hastily,
Schyr Edward that wes ner him by,
Reversyt him, and with a knyff,
Rycht in that place, reft him the lyff."

The English disheartened by the loss of their commander, (and the Scots continuing to pour in fresh forces, amongst which were 200 Irish horsemen,) fled towards the castle, closely pressed by the enemy; upon which the garrison were obliged to draw up the bridge, lest the Scots should enter with them, leaving their unfortunate comrades to the mercy of those ruthless assailants.—*M'Skimin's History of Carrickfergus.*

NOTE XI.—p. 13.

Thus comes a young leopard.

So Barbour—

"The Erle of Carrik Schyr Edward
That stouter wes than a libbard."

NOTE XII.—p. 14.

The tempest of wrath o'er Cuit-rath-can has blown,
And left nought behind it but water and stone.

Cuil-rath-can, *i.e.* the town of the Forths—Coleraine. Wyntown describing the manner in which the "Kyng of Ingland" wasted Scotland, says—

"In-til our land, he dyd gret skayth,
In slauchtyr, and in herschype bath;
And made him Mayster, Lord, and Syre,
And gert all bow til hys Empyre.
And quha til hym wald noucht do swa,
Owthyr he gert his men thame sla,
Or he thame heryd, sparand nane,
Noucht levand be-hynd, bot wattyr and stane."
Wyntownis Cronykil.—B. VIII. l. 19.

What language can more simply and forcibly describe the terrible desolation of a country, than the last line of this passage?

NOTE XIII.—p. 14.

There the foes were entrapped in a deep swampy fen.

Barbour informs us that Bruce was sometimes in great danger from the stratagems of his enemies. But he generally escaped by good fortune, and the disciplined bravery of his men. On one occasion he was brought into great difficulties by complying with the request of a chieftain who had invited him into his territories, with a promise of hospitable entertainment for himself and his troops. "Toward Ydymsy sync thai raid," and following a treacherous guide, were led into a low swamp, near the issue of a lake, which had been dammed up, and which was intended to be let loose upon them in the night. They escaped this danger, but with great loss of baggage and armour.

On another occasion they were in great peril on the western side of the river Bann.

"The Bann, that is ane arme of the se
That with horss may nocht passyt be,
Was betwix thaim and Hulsyster."

They were freed from their jeopardy by the timely aid of four vessels, under the command of a noted pirate—

"——a scowmar of the se,
Thomas of Downe hattyn was he."

The same personage, I presume, whom Pembridge, in Camden's Annals, names "Thomas Dover, a right strong theefe," whom Sir John Atley encountered at sea, and took; "and about fourty of his men well armed he slew, and his head he brought with him to Dublin."

The Scotch, however, were fully a match for their enemies in all the stratagems of war. After their escape from the Bann, they approached Coigneris, (Connor) then probably a town of some opulence and magnitude, though now a very inconsiderable village. They took prisoners many of the Irish soldiers who had gone out to forage—arrayed themselves in their apparel, fell upon the Irish army, who mistook them for their own foragers, put them to flight, with great slaughter, and entered the town of Connor with them pell-mell. Here they found great abundance of provisions. In this conflict Sir John Stewart was wounded, whence he went to Montpellier, and there remained 'till his wounds were healed. The chiefs of the Ulster army are thus enumerated by Barbour:—

"Brynrane, Wedoune, Fitzwarryne,
And Schyr Paschall of Florentine,
That was a knycht of Lumbardy,
And was full of chewalry.
The Mawndweillis war thar alsua,
Besatis, Loganys, and other ma;
Savages als, and yeit was ane
Hat Schyr Nycholl of Kylkenane."

NOTE XIV.—p. 15.

The closely plashed ravine of Innermalane.

Plashing, from the Franco-Gallic plesser, is to entwine, and equivalent to the Teutonic bawen; so that plashing a place was to strengthen the top of the vallum with stakes, interlacing them with branches.*——

* Ledwich.

"Within half a mile of the entrance of the Moiry, the English found that place, by which they were to pass, being naturally one of the most difficult passages in Ireland, fortified with good art and admirable industry; the enemy having raised from mountain to mountain, and from wood to wood, and bog to bog, long traverses, with huge and high flankers of great stones, mingled with turf, and staked down on both sides, with palisades wattled."*

Ledwich justly remarks that this mode of defence was practised in the Homeric as well as in every other age, and by every people.

Υπερθεν δε σκολοπεσσιν
Οξεσιν ηρηρει.
Hom. Il. 12.

"Non te fossa patens, nec hispidarum
Objectu sudium coronat agger."
Sid. Apol. ad Narb.

NOTE XV.—p. 15.

Though gallant De Burgo there manfully stood.

Richard, the second Earl of Ulster, (usually called, from his complexion, the Red Earl) was educated for some years in the court of King Henry III. and from his large possessions was esteemed the most powerful subject in Ireland. He rendered many important services to King Edward, both at home and abroad. He was the first to encounter Bruce, by whom he was defeated, in a sanguinary engagement near the river Bann. Notwithstanding, he fell under the most unjust suspicion of favouring the designs of the enemy—probably for no reason but his relationship to King Robert, who had married his sister, or, according to Lodge, his daughter Ellen. He was cast into prison in Dublin, at a time when his services in the field would have been most valuable, but was released by Parliament, on his taking an oath, and giving security that neither by himself or his friends, he would bring any grievance on the citizens of Dublin, who had caused his imprisonment—a proceeding which attested his innocence, and their consciousness of having acted towards him with unwarrantable severity and injustice. He was present (though infirm with age and sickness) in 1326, at a Parliament held in Kilkenny on Whitsunday, where he entertained the nobility in a munificent manner, and bidding them a long farewell, retired to the monastery of Athassell, where he died, 28th June, and was there buried.—*Lodge and Pembridge.*

NOTE XVI.—p. 15.

Feidhlim is placed on the throne of his sires.

Feidhlim, or Phelim O'Connor, Prince of Connaught, at first joined De Burgo in opposing Bruce. While he was engaged in this service, his kinsman Roderic seized on the principality, and this usurpation gave rise to a sanguinary war, in which Roderic was slain. Feidhlim then boldly avowed his determination to join the standard of the invader, and his example was followed by the O'Briens of Thomond. An army was raised against them, under the command of William De Burgo, brother to the Earl of Ulster, and Richard De Bermingham. In a desperate battle, fought on St. Laurence's day at Athenry, the latter were eminently

* Moryson's Hist.

successful. Feidhlim was slain, with O'Kelly, King of Imany, and twenty-eight other chiefs. "With the spoils of the slain, walls were said to have been built round the town of Athenry."—*Lodge.*

NOTE XVII.—p. 16.

They climb Na-Jur hills.

The hills of the Yew-trees, now Newry—"The reason of its obtaining this designation appears from an old tradition that two large yew trees grew within the precincts of the abbey. From this circumstance it was called, in the barbarous Latin of the age, *Monasterium de viridi tigno*, and in Irish *Na Jur*, or the yew trees. This gave occasion to the plural appellation by which it was afterwards most commonly known, *the Newries.*—*Newry Mag. March*, 1815.

NOTE XVIII.—p. 16.

Dundalgan is stormed by the staughtering sword.

The Scots being attacked by the Irish forces near Dundalk, put them to flight, pursued them, and took the town, in which they made great carnage, and found ample store of provisions, as we are informed by Barbour.

"In all the town commonally
Thai entryt, bath intremelle;
Thar men mycht felloune slauchtre se;
For the rycht noble Erl Thomas
Thar with his rout folowyt the chas,
Maid swilk a slauchtre in the toun,
And swa felloune occisioun,
That the rewys all bludy war
Of slayn men, that war lyand thar."

The abundance of wine was so great, that the earl, fearful of consequences, laid it under restrictions.

"He made of wine levere
Till ilk man, that he payit suld be."

NOTE XIX.—p. 19.

With grief to the soul is Sir Edward stung deep.

"And when Schyr Edward Bruce the hold
Wist that the king had foughten so,
With so feil folk, and he therefro,
Might no man see a waer man.
But the good king said to him than,
That it was his own folly,
For he rade so unwittingly
So far before, and na vanguard
Made to them of the rereward."—*Barbour.*

NOTE XX.—p. 20.

Here Mortimer came with a deer-hearted crew
To look Bruce in the face.

The Geraldines and Powers had assembled numerous forces to oppose Bruce. But dissention, as usual, arising among the leaders, they with-

drew without striking a blow. Upon this, Lord Roger Mortimer, hoping, as Campion expresses it, to "embeazell" a victory, took the field with 15,000 men. But he was shamefully defeated, principally by the defection of the Lacies, and obliged, with a few followers, to seek his safety in flight. He afterwards went to England, and returned invested with the office of chief justice. On his arrival at Youghal, learning that Butler, De Clare, and other chiefs had collected 30,000 men to oppose Bruce, he despatched letters to Butler, forbidding him to take any decisive step till his arrival. This delay was favourable to Bruce, and enabled him to secure his retreat. Mortimer was one of the most unpopular characters that ever bore sway in Ireland. He went over to the king, says Campion, "indebted to the citizens of Divelin for his viands a thousand poundes, whereof he payde not one smulkin, and many a bitter curse carried with him to the sea."

NOTE XXI.—p. 20.

His hopes to win wealthy Athcliath aspire.

Athcliath, i. e. *the ford of hurdles*, the old Irish name of Dublin, so denominated from the river being made fordable by means of hurdles, before it had the accommodation of quays and bridges.

On the approach of Bruce, the citizens "with common consent burnt Saint Thomas's street; and with the said fire the church of Saint John, with the chappell of St. Marie Maudlin, was by casualty burnt; yea, and all the suburbs of Dublin were set on fire, together with the monasterie of St. Marie: and the church of St. Patricke in Dublin was by the said villaines spoiled."—*Pembridge.*

Dalrymple justly observes, that the public spirit and intrepidity of the citizens of Dublin, at that critical season, ought to be held in perpetual remembrance—they resolved to defend their city, or perish amidst its ruins.

NOTE XXII.—p. 21.

There Tirell indignant in chains vents his rage.

"Bruce took his journey toward the castle of Knocke, and entered the said castle, and took the lord baron of the same, namely, the Lord Hugh Tirell and his wife, who for a peece of money were delivered —— Understanding that the city was strongly walled and fortified, he took his journey toward the salmon leape, and there they pitched their tents—and abode there four daies, and burnt part of the towne, broke downe the church, and spoiled it, and afterwards marched on toward the Naas: and the Lacies, against their oath, conducted them and gave them counsell: and Sir Hugh Canon appointed Wardin White his wife's brother to be their guide through the country, and they came to the Naas, and sacked the town, brake into the churches, opened the tombes in the church yard to seeke for treasure, and did much mischiefe whiles they remained there for two days together. And afterwards they went on towards Tristeldermot, in the second week of Lent, and destroyed the Friers Minours; the bookes, vestments, and other ornaments they had away, and then departed from thence to Balligaveran; and from Balligaveran leaving the towne of Kilkenny, they came as farre as Kallan, about the feast of Saint Gregorie the Pope."—*Pembridge.*

NOTE XXIII.—p. 22.

Where the daughters of fire trim the ne'er-dying lamp.

"In 1220, Loundres, Archbishop of Dublin, extinguished the perpetual

fires which were kept here, and in various parts of Ireland, for superstitious purposes. That at Kildare was kept in a small cell or house, near the church, twenty feet square, some ruins of which are still visible, and called the fire-house. This fire, by which divinations were performed, was kept by virgins, called in Irish Breochuidh, Breoghidh, or Brighid, that is, fire keepers, from whence originated the story of St. Brigid and her nuns. They were indeed a species of nuns, but not the Brigidines, who followed the rule of St. Augustin, though in subsequent ages confounded with them. It doth not appear that any convents of Brigidines were in Ireland, and but one in England."

The *Breoghidh* or *inghean* an Dagha, that is, daughters of fire, as they were frequently called, were often women of the first quality, daughters of chieftains. One of these, Dermod M'Murrogh, King of Leinster, stole out of her cloister, and forced to marry one of his own people—during which act of violence, 170 of the inhabitants of the town and abbey were slain. This fire, probably derived from pagan superstition, was in a few years re-lighted, and continued to burn till the total suppression of monasteries.—*Anth. Hib. vol.* 3, *p.* 241.—*Arch. Monast. p.* 329.

NOTE XXIV.—p. 22.

O'er Ascul's red plain the dire hurricane past.

Sir Hamon le Gras, a descendant of Reymond le Gros, brother-in-law of Strongbow, and progenitor of the illustrious family of Grace, was one of the most successful opponents of Bruce. "His frequent success and unwearied activity effectually frustrated the design of seizing and plundering the capital. A general engagement, however, at length took place; the number of Sir Hamon le Gras's forces scarcely exceeding a fourth of that under the Lord Edward Bruce. The conflict was obstinate and sanguinary; but Sir Hamon, after much fighting, being unfortunately slain, his army fell into confusion, which terminated in defeat. Tradition, as well as history, has carefully perpetuated the memory of an event, which at that period nearly proved of fatal importance to the country. The scene of battle was near Ascul, in the county of Kildare, about a mile north-east of Athy, situated on the river Barrow, and Sir Hamon le Gras, together with the Lord John Bonneville and Sir William Prendergast, were buried in the Dominican abbey of that town. A very ancient crest of the Grace family, formerly in partial use among some of its branches, is described, in the books of the office of arms, to be a lion passant, argent, trampling on a royal Scotch thistle, in allusion to Sir Hamon le Gras's valour and loyalty in opposing Lord Edward Bruce's invasion."—*Note upon "Lines on Jerpoint Abbey," p.* 5.

Ledwich observes that some vestiges of Bruce's invasion yet remain. Near Aghaboe, Queen's-county, is an old fortification, vulgarly called Scotsrath, properly Scottiswaith, or the Scots walls or fortress.

NOTES.

CANTO SECOND.

NOTE—I. p. 27.

Ferns, where is thy bishop?

"Adam of Northampton was consecrated Bishop of Ferns on Trinity Sunday, 1312. * * While he sat in this see, Ferns and the castle of it was plundered and set on fire by the rebels. He adhered some time to the Scotch invaders, and the Irish rebels who fought under them; whether through fear or force, or for what other cause, I know not. For we find a writ dated and issued against him on the 6th of August, 1317, to Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, and justice or custos of Ireland, commanding him to secure the bishop, and bring him to account for his treason in adhering to Edward Bruce, on his arrival in those parts, and afterwards to Robert Bruce his brother, and in furnishing them with provisions, arms, and men."—*Ware*, 442.

Fitz-John, Bishop of Ossory, was a severe sufferer by Bruce, insomuch that "Edward II. recommended him to the Pope as an object of compassion; and on the 20th of January, 1320, wrote to his holiness very movingly in his behalf, to procure instalments for the payment of some debts due by his see to the court of Rome, on account of the irreparable damages he sustained by the devastations of Bruce and the Scots."—*Ware.*

NOTE II.—p. 27.

And where are the Lacies?

The conduct of the Lacies was a tissue of treason throughout. Though they joined the standard of Mortimer, when he marched against Bruce, they were the first to desert the field. After the assembling of parliament, which did nothing for the peace of the country, Sir Walter Lacy came to Dublin to clear himself of treasonable imputations, and after the example of other lords, to tender hostages for his loyalty. By an inquisition which they procured to be held on their conduct relative to the Scots, they were acquitted; they obtained a charter of the king's peace, and took an oath, which they confirmed by the sacrament, to be true to the King of England, and endeavour to destroy the Scots. But in violation of their oath, they joined Bruce on his approach to Dublin, conducted his march, and gave him counsel. When Mortimer took his journey to Tredagh, and thence to Trim, he sent letters to the Lacies to appear before him, and on their contemptuous refusal to come, he sent Sir Hugh Crofts to treat with them, and him they slew. After this, Mortimer marched in arms against them, seized their goods and cattle, slew

many of their adherents, and obliged themselves to seek refuge in Connaught. Sir Walter, it was said, went to Ulster to join Bruce, and he with his brother Hugh, were proclaimed seducers and felons to the king, because they had advanced their banner against the peace of the King of England. John Lacy, it appears, had been imprisoned, for on Sunday, a month after Easter, he was led forth of the castle at Dublin, and brought to Trim to be arraigned, and receive judgment. He was adjudged to be strait dieted, and so he died in prison.

Hugh de Lacy, the younger, was, for various treasons, condemned to be drawn with horses, afterwards to be hanged and quartered, one quarter, with his head, to be set up in Dublin, and the others in Drogheda, Dundalk, and Trim, and his bowels to be burned. But the Archbishop of Armagh and others interceding with the lord justice to respite his execution until the king's pleasure might be known, his body was delivered for safe custody to Richard Taafe, Esq. sheriff of the county of Louth, who kept him until he was ordered to be hanged at Drogheda.—*Camden —Lodge.*

Three of the Lacies, viz. Sir Walter, Sir Robert, and Sir Aumer, were in the camp of Bruce, during his last conflict at Dundalk, and with great difficulty escaped.

NOTE III.—p. 28.

Thou dar'dst with Clan-Boske to storm e'en hell-fire.

In an Irish poem, entitled the Prayer of Ossian, published by Dr. Young, in the first volume of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, Ossian says—

"Na bithad clanna Baosga asteach,
'S clanna Moran na feachd treun,
Bherrmuid Fionn amach ar,
No bhith an teach aguin fein."

"If the clan of Boisgne were alive, and the descendants of Morne of valiant deeds, we would force Finn out of hell, or the house would be our own."

NOTE IV.—p. 28.

Through the bards, that are now but mere water and earth.

Ωμοι, απειλητερες, Αχαϊδες, ηκετ' Αχαιοι.
* * * * * * *
Αλλ' υμεις μεν παντες υδωρ και γαια γενοισθε,
Ημενοι αυθι εκαστοι ἀκηριοι, ακλεες αυτ ως.

Il. H. 99.

NOTE V.—p. 28.

To lap the foul puddle, to browze the bare thorn.

"Here some man happly would thinke it not correspondent to the gravitie of this worke, if I should but relate what a ridiculous opinion hath fully possessed the minds of a number of the Irishress, yea, and perswaded them verily to beleeve that he who in that barbarous Pharoh, and outcry of the soldiers which, with great straining of their voice, they use to set up when they joine battaile, doth not cry and

shout as they doe, is suddenly caught up from the ground, and carried as it were, flying in the aire, into those desert vallies (in the County of Kerry) out of any country of Ireland, whatsoever: where he eateth grasse, lappeth water, knoweth not in what state he is, good or bad, hath some use of reasen, but not of speech, but shall be caught at length with the help of houndes, and the hunters, and brought home to their owne homes."—*Camden.*

NOTE VI.—p. 32.

An arm upon which Baptist's dew never fell.

"In some corners of the land they used a damnable superstition, leaving the right armes of their infants males unchristened (as they tearmed it) to the intent it might give a more ungracious and deadly blow."—*Campion.*

NOTE VII.—p. 32.

By this have they sworn—by the sun, moon, and fire.

"The common oath of the Scythians was by the sword and by the fire, for that they accounted these two speciall divine powers, which should worke vengeance on the perjurers. So do the Irish at this day, when they go to battaile, say certain prayers or charmes to their swords, making a cross therewith upon the earth, and thrusting the points of their blades into the ground, thinking thereby to have the better success in fight. Also, they used commonly to swear by their swords. Also the Scythians used, when they would binde any solemn vow or combination amongst them, to drink a bowl of blood together, vowing thereby to spend their last drop of blood in that quarrell; and even so doth wild Scots,* as you may read in Buchanan."

Spenser's State of Ireland.

NOTE VIII.—p. 34.

Were slain and devoured.

"The garrison of Carrickfergus castle offered to surrender within a limited time, and an agreement to that effect was entered into, by which they were to give up the castle on the 31st of May, unless relieved. The time elapsing without relief, they were required to surrender, according to contract, and thirty Scots advanced to take possession of the castle, but were immediately made prisoners; the garrison declaring they would defend the place to the last extremity. About this time, King Robert Bruce embarked at Lochryan, and soon after landed at Carrickfergus, with a reinforcement to his brother.

"The siege was now more closely pressed than ever, yet the garrison held out to the end of August, before they surrendered. Prior to this event they had endured the utmost horrors of famine, eating hides; and it is even said that they devoured the thirty Scots who were taken prisoners, as just noticed."—*M'Skimin.*

---

* He might have added, even so did the lordly Romans.—"Fuere, ea tempestate qui dicerent, Catilinam, oratione habita, cum ad jusjurandum populares sceleris sui adigeret, humani corporis sanguinem vino permixtum in pateris circumtulisse; inde cum post exsecrationem omnes degustavissent, &c."—*Sallust.*

NOTE IX.—p. 34.

The Pope for King Edward had cursed
His foes young and old, and the Bruces the first.

The following extract from the Pope's Bull, shews what atrocities had incurred his just displeasure.

"Nec sacrilegum execrantes, nec incendiariorum pœnas horrentes ædes sacras, ecclesias, monasteria, ac loca religiosa divino cultui dedicata, destruere ac comburere, Dei calcata reverentia, nequiter præsumpserunt, bonis ac rebus sistentibus inibi quæ potuerunt ab incendio præservari, furtivis manibus, non sine reatu sacrilegii asportantes."
Avinion 4 Kal. Aprilis 1317. *Rymer.*

A Bull was also issued against the Order of Mendicants for preaching rebellion. "Bulla contra fratres de ordine Mendicantium, ad populum Hybernicum, rebellionem prædicantes." It may be seen in Rymer

NOTE X.—p. 35.

And cooked her last meal in the skulls of the dead.

"The ravening of the Scots caused such horrible scarcity in Ulster, that the souldiours which in the yeare before abused the king's authority, to purvey themselves of wanton fare, surfeited with flesh and aqua-vitæ all the Lent long, prolled and pilled insatiably without neede and without regard of poore people, whose onely provision they devoured. Those (I say) now living in slavery under Le Bruise, starved for hunger, when they had first experienced many lamentable shifts, as in scratching the dead bodyes out of their graves, in whose skulls they boyled the same flesh and fed thereof."—*Pembridge.*

The horrors of this dreadful famine have, most probably, been exaggerated by the ambiguity of the word skulls, an appellation frequently given by old writers to a covering for the head—for instance, in Baron Finglas's Breviate of Ireland, "a lad to bear their jacks, *skulls*, bows and arrows." A helmet would be no bad substitute for a pot—supposing the famine had consumed their spits and kettles. "But the aim of the annalist, "says Dalrymple," was to display the enormity of the sin of eating flesh in the season of Lent. It is probable, that the poor Irish violated Lent by eating horse flesh; this, surely, was a venial transgression."

NOTE XI.—p. 36.

Marshalled their battle and fought in the sky.

"At the same time the Irish of Omayll, went towards the parts of Tullogh, and fought a battaile; whereupon of the Irish were slaine about four hundred, whose heads were sent to Dublin: and wonders were afterwards seene there. The dead as it were arose and fought one with another, and cried out *Fennokabo*, which was their signal."
Pembridge.

NOTE XII.—p. 37.

To a soldier but one sacred omen is known,
The cause of his country.

Εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος, ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης.
Il. M. 243

NOTE XIII.—p. 37.

——— *A green hill lifts its brow*
Hight Faughard.

"The Faughard is an artificial mount, composed of stones and terras, with a deep trench round it, raised to the height of sixty feet, in the form of the frustum of a cone, upon the north frontier of what is now called the English pale. There has formerly been some sort of an octagonal building on the top of it, as appears from the foundations remaining. It stands very high, about two miles North of Dundalk. Here Lord Mountjoy encamped from the 15th October, till the 9th of November, 1600, against Tyrone, who was then in possession of the pass of the Moiry, distant about a mile.

"Here was the natal place of St. Brigid, and here she had a pillar raised upon two circular and concentric steps, round which the nuns of her convent used to go upon their knees, on particular occasions, sometimes round the lesser and sometimes round the larger circles, as their penance required."—*Wright's Louthiana.*

"St. Monenna erected a nunnery here, in the year 638, wherein she presided over 150 virgins. A monastery also is said to have been erected here for regular canons, to the honour of St. Brigid."

Archdall's Mon. Hib.

NOTE XIV.—p. 38.

The chieftains in council advise not to try
The fortune of war, till their allies be nigh.

"It is a prevailing notion among our historians, (says Dalrymple) that Edward Bruce rashly fought, while powerful succours under the command of the King his brother, were approaching. This, however confidently and repeatedly asserted, appears to be altogether a popular fiction. The King of Scots was too much engaged at home, and too intent on the preservation of the important conquest of Berwick, to risk his forces in a new invasion of Ireland."

Barbour, in accordance with the popular opinion, informs us that Bruce on the approach of the Irish army sent out his three principal officers, De Soulis, Stewart, and Mowbray, to reconnoitre. When they had surveyed the superior numbers of the enemy, which, in no unusual style of exaggeration, Barbour estimates at 40,000—they endeavoured to dissuade Bruce from his rash purpose of fighting. He heard their remonstrances with indignation; and addressing Mowbray, who had expressed his conviction of the fatal consequences of engaging under such disadvantages, avowed his determined resolution to try the issue of a battle.

"Then with gret ire, 'Allace,' said he,
'I wend never till her that of the!
Now help quha will, for sekyrly,
This day, but mar baid, fetch will I.
Sall no man say, quhill I may drey,
That strenth of men sall ger me fley.
God scheld that ony suld us blam
Gif we defend our noble nam.'
'Now be it swagat than,' quoth thai,
'We sall tak that God will purwai.'"

The Irish allies of Bruce were as averse from fighting as his principal officers. They "counsaillyt him full tenderly," to decline the contest, and promised to keep the enemy employed both that day and the next, till he had secured his retreat. Finding that their counsels made no impression on the fiery spirit of Bruce, they frankly told him that he was to expect no aid from them, as it was contrary to their custom to cope with their enemies in a standing fight.

"For our maner is of this land
To follow and fecht, and fecht fleand;
And nocht to stand in plane melle
Quhill the ta part discomfyt be."

Bruce said all he demanded of them was to retire to a safe distance, and remain spectators of the conflict.—He was, probably, encouraged by past success in similar circumstances, to anticipate a fortunate result: and it was quite in character with his romantically chivalrous spirit, to combat under every disadvantage. Being informed, on a former occasion that Richard De Clare was marching against him with an army of 50,000 men, in five battallions, he exclaimed—

"The ma thai be
The mar honour all out haff we,
Giff that we ber us manfully.
We ar set her in juperty,
To wyn honour or for to dey
We ar to far fra hame to fley;
Tharfor let ilk man worthi be.
Yone ar gadringis of this countre;
And thai sall fley, I trow, lychtly,
An men assail thaim manlily."

NOTES.

CANTO THIRD.

NOTE I.—p. 46.

Le Poer, a chivalrous lord.

"Lord Arnold Le Poer, a descendant of Sir Roger Le Poer, (sometimes written Power) who accompanied Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, in his expedition to Ireland. The Lord Arnold slew Sir John Bonville in single combat, and being tried by a Parliament held at Kildare, in 1310, was acquitted, because he had acted only in self defence. He was one of the commanders against Bruce in the battle of Ascull, in Leinster, in which Haymond Le Gross fell—and afterwards formed one of that numerous confederacy which under Butler and Kildare, assembled to the number of 30,000 to oppose the invaders. He was made Seneschall of the County and City of Kilkenny, and in this situation espoused the cause of William Utlaw, son of the famous Alice Ketyll, whom Richard Lederede, Bishop of Ossory, accused of witchcraft and sorcery. He caused the Bishop to be imprisoned three months; and afterwards quarrelled with the Lord Morris Fitzthomas, whom he provoked by calling him a rhymer, on account of his taste for poetry. This affront gave rise to a sanguinary war, in which Lord Arnold's possessions were laid waste, and himself obliged to seek refuge in England. He was, afterwards, convicted of heresy by the Bishop of Ossory, and confined in the castle of Dublin till he died. And though Roger Outlaw, Prior of Kilmainham, made it appear that the Lord Arnold was falsely accused, yet he remained a long time unburied, because he died unassoyled."
Lodge.

NOTE II.—p. 47.

The fear bringing slogan of "Grasagh aboe."

"Grasagh aboe"—the cause of the Graces.

"In the early days of feudal warfare, most families of note in Ireland had some particular slogan, or war-cry, to distinguish their respective followers. The word *aboe*, in which they usually terminated, is derived from *aba* a cause or business. Thus *Butler aboe*, the slogan of the house of Ormonde, when cried at the beginning of an engagement, was to encourage one another to fight valiantly in the *cause of the Butlers*. Such, also, is the reference of *Grasagh aboe* to the family of *Grace*, Barons of Courtstown. The Earls of Kildare had for their slogan, *Crom aboe*, alluding to their great castle of Crom, in the County of Limerick. The Fitzpatrick slogan, was *Gear laidir aboe*, the cause of the *strong and sharp*, alluding to their crest, viz: a lion surmounted by

a dragon; and the O'Neil slogan was *Lamh dearg aboe*, the cause of the *red hand*, which was the ancient cognisance of that family."

This note is annexed to a translation from Irish of the subjoined "War-song of the Graces," obligingly communicated by Sir William Grace, Baronet, of whom it may be truly affirmed, *concordant nomine facta*. For this, and many other acts of kindness, the author is happy to avail himself of an opportunity to express his grateful thanks.

GRASAGH ABOE—THE CAUSE OF THE GRACES.

O Courtstown! thy walls rise in beauty and pride,
From thy watch-tower's summit the bold foe is descried,
Though the hearts of thy children with courage o'erflow,
Still their strength is the war-shout of "Grasagh aboe."

O Courtstown! thy chieftains in kindness delight;—
As dauntless their valour their glory is bright:
In prowess unequalled they rush on the foe,
While the hills and the vales ring with "Grasagh aboe."

O Courtstown! thou home of the great and renowned,
Thy bulwarks what heroes of battle surround,
The Shees, Rooths, and Shortalls, whose bosoms still glow
To join in the conflict with "Grasagh aboe!"

O Courtstown! ne'er may'st thou demand foreign aid,
When aloft thy red standard is proudly displayed,
And its rampant white lion threats slaughter and wo,
As thy sons raise the slogan of "Grasagh aboe."

O Courtstown! what trophies of conquest you boast,
In the spoils of a noble and valorous host;
O'More and Fitz-Patrick felt the shame of o'erthrow,
As they fled the dire contest with "Grasagh aboe."

O Courtstown! how martial and grand was thy train,
As they stood with the Butlers on combat's red plain;
And Desmond's proud followers, his partners in wo,
Shrunk heart-struck and pale from "Grasagh aboe."

O Courtstown! no strangers thy battles e'er fight,
Thy friends are unnumbered, and matchless in might;
Thy Walshes, thy Purcells, thy Powers, long ago,
Shared the feast and the triumph with "Grasagh aboe."

O Courtstown! can fate in its wrath e'er ordain
That thy name be forgotten, thy bards cease their strain,
Their harps all be mute, and in sorrow forego
The praise of thy heroes and "Grasagh aboe?"

NOTE III.—p. 47.

Flemings of worth
From the strong-castled cantreds of Bargie and Forth.

"The baronies of Bargie and Forth* are situated at the southern extremity of the county of Wexford, and together contain about sixty square Irish miles. They lie due east from Cardiganshire, in Wales; the shortness of the passage caused a frequent intercourse between the Irish and the Britons, from the earliest account of their history."—*Vallancey.*

Dermod, king of Leinster, granted these baronies to Fitzstephen for ever. Fitzstephen surrendered his right to Henry II. who gave it to Pembroke; from whom, by the Earls Mareschals, the Valences of the *Lusignian* line in France, and the Hastings, it descended to the Greies, Lords of Ruthin, who commonly in ancient charters are named Lords of Weisford; although in the reign of King Henry VI. John Talbot is once called in the Records Earl of Shrewsburie and of Weisford.—*Camden.*

An opinion has been entertained that this territory was peopled by a colony of Flemings, and this opinion seems to be founded on the belief, that many of the first adventurers under Strongbow and Fitzstephen were of Flemish extraction. We read in Holinshed that in the year 1108, a great part of Flanders being inundated by the sea, many of the inhabitants sought an asylum in England, and had Pembrokeshire assigned them for their habitation. "But," he adds, "multitudes of Flemings arrived in England before, even in the time of William the Conqueror; through the friendship of the queen, their countrywoman, sithens which time their numbers so increased, that the realme of England was pestered with them: whereupon King Henrie devised to place them in Pembrokeshire, as well to avoid them out of other parts of England, as also by their helpe to tame the bold and presumptuous fiercenesse of the Welshmen. Which thing in those parts they brought verie well to passe; for after they were setled there, they valiantlie resisted their enemies, and made very sharpe warres upon them, sometimes with gaine and sometimes with losse."

Camden says, "this whole territorie (of Bargie and Forth) is passing well peopled with English, who to this very day use the ancient Englishmen's apparell and their language; yet so as they have a certaine kind of mungrell speech between English and Irish." Vallancey affirms that in his day "they still retained their ancient manners, customs, and language—but that not one word of Irish was spoken or understood in these two baronies." In consequence, however, of the introduction of schools, the original language, which has a striking resemblance to some of the provincial English dialects, is rapidly dying. It is known now only to a few of the most aged individuals, and in another generation its oral peculiarities will probably have ceased to exist.

The country is generally level, rich, well cultivated, and thickly studded with ancient castles, some of them in ruins, others in good preservation. The people are industrious, well-clothed, opulent, hospitable, and of good morals. Much might be written on this interesting subject, but it would be doing it wrong to attempt it in a note. The curious reader is referred to General Vallancey's Essay in the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy.

---

* The old Irish names Bargie and Forth signify a fertile spot, viz. *bar*, fruitful; *go*, the sea—the fertile land on the sea coast:—*fortha*, plenty.

NOTE IV.—p. 48.

And Hussc is there, that brave spirit of fire.

"To Sir Richard Bermingham belonged a lusty young swayne, John Hussee,* whom his lord commanded to take a view of the dead carcasses about the walls (of Athenry) and bring him word whether O'Kelly, his mortal foe, were slaine among them. Hussee passed forth with one man to turn up and peruse the bodies. All this marked O'Kelly, who lurking in a bush thereby, being of old well acquainted with the valiantness and truth of Hussee, sore longed to traine him from his captaine, and presuming now upon his opportunity, disclosed himself and said, 'Hussee, thou seest I am at all points armed, and have my esquire, a manly man, besides me; thou art thin, and thy page a youngling, so that if I loved not thee for thine own sake, I might betray thee for thy master's. But come and serve me at my request, and I promise thee by St. Patricke's staff to make thee a lord in Connaught, of more ground than thy master hath in Ireland.' When these wordes waighed him nothing, his owne man (a stout lubber) began to reprove him for not relenting to so rich a proffer, assured him with an oath, whereupon he profferred to gage his soul for performance. Now had Hussee three enemies, and first he turned to his owne knave, whom he slew; next he raught to O'Kellyes squire a great rappe under the pitte of his eare, which overthrew him. Thirdly he bestirred himself so nimbly, that ere any help could be hoped for, he had also slain O'Kelly, and perceiving breath in the squire, he drawed him up againe, and forced him, upon a truncheon, to beare his lord's head into the high towne, which presented to Bermingham, and the circumstances declared, he dubbed Hussee knight, and him advanced to many preferments; whose family became afterwards the Barons of Galtrime."—*Campion.*

NOTE V.—p. 49.

Ere in years they had measured eight rings of the sun.

"Beal ainn, the ring of Baal, or the sun—the Irish for year. Four Irish Kings having promised obedience to King Richard, he was desirous of creating them knights. On the proposal being made to them, they answered that they were knights already, and had been honoured with that title at seven years old; that in Ireland a King makes his son a knight, and should the child have lost his father, then the nearest relation; and the young knight begins to learn to tilt with a light lance against a shield fixed to a post in the field, and the more lances he breaks the more honour he acquires."—*Froissart.*

NOTE VI.—p. 50.

O'Mailey, well-versed in sea wiles.

O'Mailey, the chief of a sept, in the County of Mayo, once powerful in galleys and seamen. The celebrated Grace O'Mailey, better known by the name of Grana Uile, was daughter to a chieftain of that sept, and wife of O'Flaherty. Her name is still renowned in Irish history and tradition, for her intrepid spirit, maritime adventures, her *unsophisticated* manners in the court of Queen Elizabeth, and her abduction of the infant son of Lord Howth. She had a numerous fleet—of which the

* Cox says he was a butcher of Athenry.

largest vessels were stationed at Clare Island—the smaller at Carrick-a-Owly—her own galley was moored by a cable passing through a hole in her castle wall, and fastened to her bed-post, to prevent any sudden surprise. Her exploits are said to have been the theme of many a bardic tale and song.

NOTE VII.—p. 53.

The crotal's dark crimson is fused through his vest.

"Crotall Coilleagh—Irish—Tree Lungwort. *Thretkeld.* Many species of lichen are used, especially by the inhabitants of mountainous and rocky districts, for colouring various kinds of wearing apparel. Saffron appears to have been the favourite dye of the Irish. Smith says, that Castle Saffron, in the County of Cork, was so called from the quantity of saffron cultivated there by the Irish for dying their habits. Its use, however, was beginning to decline in 1571, when Campion was commencing his history of Ireland. Sir William Petty informs us, that a certain mud taken out of the bogs, served them for copperas; the rind of several trees and saw-dust for galls; as for wild and green weeds they find enough, as also of Rhamnus berries. The inhabitants of the Rosses, on the coast of the County of Donegal, use a mud, the same perhaps as that alluded to by Petty, called mire-black which makes a very deep and durable black, a *kind of stuff* called corkar (lichen omphalodes) scraped off the rocks, from which they extract a very fine red, and a kind of plant almost the same and of the same effect as madder."—*See Appendix to Walker's Essay on the dress of the Irish.*

"A Parliament held in Dublin in the reign of Henry VIII. A. D. 1536, enacted among other laws—"That no subject shall be shaved above the ears, or wear Glibbs, or Crom-meals (*i.e.* hair on the upper lip,) or linnen dyed in saffron, or above seven yards of linnen in their shifts, and that no woman wear any kirtle, or coat tucked up, or embroydered, or garnished with silk, or couched, ne laid with Usker, after the Irish fashion, and that no person wear mantles, coats, or hoods after the Irish fashion.'"—*Cox*, 1. *p.* 250.

NOTE VIII.—p. 53.

With his war-axe and sword comes the stout galloglass.

"Galloglass, the Irish grenadier—from *gal-glac* the courageous hand. Spenser thinks it comes from *gal-ogla* the English servitor; but, as it is justly observed in Grose's Antiquities, he did not consider that the Irish never would have given themselves, nor would their countrymen permit them to adopt a hated and degrading appellation. What is stated in the text of the force with which the galloglass could wield the battle-axe, 'the Amazonian bipennis of Scythian origin,' is no poetical fiction but founded on a fact recorded by Cambrensis."

NOTE IX.—p. 54.

Next comes the glibbed kern, with his lion-like face.

"*Kern*, the light-armed infantry—from *carn*, or *kearn*, the victorious or conquering band. Vaunting titles are common among the military corps of every nation".—*Grose.*

"Glibbes," says Spenser, "were thick curled bushes of hair hanging down over their eyes, and monstrously disguising them. They are as fit

maskes as a mantle is for a thiefe. For whensoever he hath run himself into that perill of law, that he will not be knowne, he either cutteth off his glibbe quite, by which he becommeth nothing like himselfe, or pulleth it so low downe over his eyes, that it is very hard to discerne his theevish countenance." The glibbe often became so closely matted and strong, that the wearer required no other protection for his head, even in battle, as it could resist the edge of the sword.

Of the courage and activity of the kerns, numerous testimonies might be adduced, but none more satisfactory or amusing than that of Henry Castide, an English squire, who fought against them, and had ample experience of their military prowess. He is introduced in Froissart's Chronicle giving the following account:—

"When they find a favourable opportunity to attack their enemies to advantage, which frequently happens, from their knowledge of the country, they fail not to seize it; and no man at arms, be he ever so well mounted, can overtake them, so light are they on foot. Sometimes they leap from the ground behind a horseman, and embrace the rider (for they are very strong in their arms) so tightly, that he can no way get rid of them. It happened that the Earl of Ormond was sent with three hundred lances and one thousand archers to make war on the Irish. The Earl, whose lands bordered on his opponents, had that day mounted me on one of his best horses, and I rode by his side. The Irish having formed an ambuscade to surprise the English, advanced from it, but were so sharply attacked by the archers, whose arrows they could not withstand, for they are not armed against them, that they soon retreated. The Earl pursued them, and I, who was well mounted, kept close by him. It chanced that in this pursuit my horse took fright, and ran away with me, in spite of all my efforts, into the midst of the enemy. My friends could never overtake me; and in passing through the Irish, one of them, by a great feat of agility, leaped on the back of my horse, and held me tight with both his arms, but did me no harm with lance or knife. He pressed my horse forward for more than two hours, and conducted him to a large bush, in a very retired spot, where he found his companions, who had run thither to escape the English."

Castide lived seven years in captivity with Bryan Costeret, his captor, who treated him well, for he gave him his daughter in marriage. Bryan, notwithstanding his address, was at last taken prisoner, mounted on Castide's horse. He was offered his liberty for that of Castide, and though reluctaut to accept such terms, having no alternative, he complied, and Castide, with his wife and children, fixed his residence in Bristol.

NOTE X.—p. 56.

Twelve measures, twice told, of sweet music they play.

We read in the learned and ingenious dissertation prefixed to Bunting's Irish Melodies, that the Irish minstrels had twenty-four measures of music, commencing with *Maghaum-in ttir*, i. e. for the county plains, passing through all the varieties of high and low, warlike and pacific, joyous and melancholy, and terminating with the *Allmharach* or foreign strains. These measures, borrowed from the Irish, were instituted in Wales by Prince Griffyd ab Cynan, in the 12th century. It is a singular and remarkable fact, that the meaning of these measures was unknown to the Welsh, and had never been explained by their best antiquaries. On a manuscript copy being lately presented to an eminent Irish scholar, (Theophilus O'Flannigan, Esq. Trinity College, Dublin,) he found himself incapable of rendering the preamble, (which is Welsh,) but instantly pro-

nounced the *measures* themselves Irish; and, without hesitation, wrote them out in their own character, with English meanings. On the other hand, the preamble being offered to a Welsh scholar, it was as speedily translated, being in the language of his country.

"We are thus presented with an historical incident nearly of 700 years standing, established by a new species of testimony, the affirmation of ancient Welsh and Scottish annalists; that the instrumental music of Wales was, in King Stephen's time, (A. D. 1135,) at least *settled and improved*, if not introduced, by a body of Irish bards, to that country by one of their princes."

NOTE XI.—p. 57.

He wakes the Rosg-catha.

"Rosg-catha, an extempore martial ode, a rhapsody;" the Irish pibrock, by which the Irish minstrel stimulated his chief to battle—*mares animos in Martia bella versibus exacuit*. In the Second volume of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, may be seen a specimen of this kind of composition, viz. an ode sung by Fergus, the chief bard of Goll, in the battle of Cnucha, in which Goll slew Cumhal, master of the Leinster knights, A. D. 155. Were we, from this specimen, to judge of the other battle-songs of the Irish, we should infer that they were more indebted for the effects which they are said to have produced, to the music which accompanied them, than to their own intrinsic excellence. It breathes no spirit-stirring thought—it warms with no Tyrtæan fire—it is a chaos of laudatory, high-sounding appellations, unconnected by a single sentiment —for example;—

> "Goll, vigorous and warlike, chief of heroes!
> Generous and puissant hand; meditator of glorious deeds;
> Bulwark dreadful as fire; terrible is thy wrath!
> Champion of many battles; royal hero!
> Like a lion rapid to the attack; ruin to the foe!
> Overwhelming billow; Goll, frequent in action;
> Invincible in the most dreadful conflicts."

The whole is in the same style.

If any of those bardic strains, which once exercised so powerful a controul over the minds of their hearers, have escaped the ravages of time, it would confer an obligation on the admirers of Irish antiquity, to present them to their attention in an English dress.

"Diodorus Siculus informs us, in his account of the Gauls, that when armies were ready to engage, if their bards but came between them, they immediately put an end to the battle, as if their warriors were so many wild beasts, which they had charmed by the power of their songs. This extraordinary power was possessed, in an eminent degree, by the Irish bards. We will select one instance from many.—In the celebrated contention for precedence between Fin and Goll, near Fin's palace at Almhain, the attending bards, observing the engagement to grow very sharp, were apprehensive of the consequence, and determined, if possible, to cause a cessation of hostilities. To effect this, they shook the *chain of silence*, and flung themselves among the ranks, extolling the sweets of peace, and the achievements of the combatants' ancestors. Immediately both parties laying down their arms, listened with attention to the harmonious lays of their bards, and, in the end, rewarded them with precious gifts."—*Walker's History of the Irish Bards.*

NOTE XII.—p. 60.

Jorse, the bold primate, arrayed for the fight.

"Roland Jorse, a Dominican friar, succeeded to the primacy of Armagh by the Pope's provision, bearing date the 13th of November, 1311. He resigned the archbishoprick of Armagh on the 20th of March, 1321, being, it seems, grieved on account of the impoverishing of his see, by the ravages and devastations of Bruce and his Scots, and the perpetual demands of the Pope for the fees of his promotion"—*Ware*.

In the days of Jorse, the characters of the soldier and ecclesiastic were often blended in one person; and prelates were the conductors both of naval and military expeditions. Jorse took a very active and decided part against the Scots, and by his exertions may have contributed not a little to their discomfiture. It is stated by our historians, that before the battle he rode among the troops, exhorting and encouraging them. He assoyled or absolved them from their sins, promising the rich fruits of victory to those who should survive, and the more glorious rewards of paradise to those who should fall; and stimulated them to valiant deeds by all the arguments becoming a patriot, a soldier, and a divine.

NOTES.

CANTO FOURTH.

NOTE—I.—p. 67.

He arms like the Bruce.

It was customary for some of the principal officers, on the eve of battle, to array themselves like their chief, to divert the attention of the enemy, and prevent him from being singled out as the special object of attack. Hence the exclamation of Richard III. at Bosworth—

> "I think there be six Richmonds in the field;
> Five have I slain to-day instead of him."
>
> *Shakespear.*

Barbour informs us that Bruce, on the day of battle, did not wear

> "His cot armour; bot Gib Harper
> That men held als withoutyn per
> Off his estate, had on that day
> All hale Schyr Edouardis aray."

His body being found among the slain, in the armour of Bruce, he was mistaken and dismembered for his master.

> ——"Thai that at the fechting wer,
> Soucht Schyr Eduuard to get his hed
> Among the folk that thar wes ded,
> And fand Gib Harper in his ger;
> And for so gud hys armys wer,
> Thai struk hys hed of, and syn it
> Thai have gert salt in till a kyt,
> And sent it in till Ingland
> Till the king Eduuard in presand;
> Thai wend Schyr Euuardis it had bene,
> Bot for the armying that wes schene,
> Thai of the heid dissawyt wer;
> All thought Schyr Eduuard deyt thar."

Bruce, of course, was buried *cadavere toto*. A pillar in Faughard burying ground marks his grave. This pillar is said to have stood, within the memory of man, seven feet above the ground; but at present, the adjacent soil has been so elevated by the deposit of dead bodies, that it does not rise more than four feet, perhaps not so much. Every peasant in the neighbourhood can point out the resting place of King Bruce, as he is universally styled.

A learned friend, to whose literary labours the public is greatly indebted, informs the author, that he, with some antiquarian associates, had fixed a day for opening the grave, to ascertain whether Bruce's head had been buried with the rest of the body; but some wag having circulated a report of their design, and that one of them had found out, in the Scottish records, that a golden helmet, golden spurs, breast-plate, crown and sceptre, were inhumed with the slain monarch, above 20,000 persons assembled to see or to share the imaginary treasure. Such an assemblage naturally excited some alarm, and prevented the intended investigation.

A considerable diversity of opinion prevails among historians with respect to the final catastrophe of Bruce. "Edward de Bruse, the king of Scottis brother," says Prynne, "was *taken* by Englishmen, and was beheaded at Dundalk." The same is recorded by Walsingham—"E. le Bruse * * * a fidelibus regis Angliæ *captus est* & propter suam præsumptionem & superbiam decollatus in Dondalk." Another story is told by Lodge, which differs from all the rest:—"Bruce had so far prevailed with the Irish," says he, "that they crowned him king of Ireland, at Knocknemelan, within half a mile of Dundalk; but Sir John Birmingham, by his prudent conduct, gave him a total overthrow; for encamping about half a mile from the enemy, Roger de Maupas, a burgess of Dundalk, disguised himself in a fool's dress, and in that character entering their camp, killed Bruce by striking out his brains with a plummet of lead. He was instantly cut to pieces, and his body found stretched over that of Bruce; but for this service his heir was rewarded with forty francs a year; of which action Sir John having intelligence, met the Scots in good order of battle, and 28th May routed their whole army with a very great slaughter; after which he cut off Bruce's head, and sent it (or as Marlburgh says, took it himself) to King Edward, who, in recompence of so signal a service, created him Earl of Louth."

The author feels reluctant to give any credence to an account that thus strips the whole affair, so far as the hero is concerned, of all the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war;" and instead of ennobling his death by the arm of a warriour, makes him the victim of a masked assassin. The date is evidently erroneous. The day of the battle is particularly marked, as being that of Pope Calixtus, the 14th of October—the anniversary of the famous battle of Hastings.

"The corpse of Edward Bruce," says Dalrymple, "was not treated with honours like those which the King of Scots bestowed on the brave English who fell at Bannockburn. His body was quartered and distributed, for a public spectacle, over Ireland."

NOTE II.—p. 68.

now in air
'Tis scattered.

Volucres dispersit in auras.—VIRG.

In the field of Bannockburn, "Maurice, Abbot of Inchaffray, placing himself on an eminence, celebrated mass in sight of the Scottish army. He then passed along the front, barefooted, and bearing a cross in his hands, and exhorted the Scots, in a few and forcible words, to combat for their rights and liberty. The Scots kneeled down. 'They yield,' cried Edward; 'see, they implore mercy.' 'They do,' answered Ingelram de Umfraville, 'but not ours. On that field they will be victorious, or die.'" *(Dalrymple.)* He spoke like a Spartan, and the event justified his speech.

NOTE III.—p. 69.

Such, at first, is the whispering sound of the breeze.

Excipiunt eos jam gesturientes barritum ciere vel maximum: qui clamor ipso fervore certaminum a tenui susurro incipiens, paulatimque adolescens, ritu extollitur fluctuum cautibus illisorum.—*Amm. Marcell.*

The Irish war cry is adduced by Spenser as a proof of the Scythian origin of the Irish. He observes, that "Diodorus Siculus and Herodotus describe the manner of the Scythians and Parthians coming to give the charge at battles; at which it is said, they came running as if heaven and earth would have gone together, which is the very image of the Irish hubub, which their kerne use at their first encounter."

"In all their encounters," he continues, "they use one common word—Ferragh, Ferragh, which is a Scottish word, to wit, the name of one of the first kings of Scotland, called Feragus, or Fergus; but, according to others, it was of more ancient date—the name of their chief captaine, under whom they fought against the Africans."

Stanihurst thinks it the name of Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, under whose daughter Scota, they first came into Ireland—an imagination which Spenser severely handles and exposes.

Whatever argument may be founded on the word Ferragh, none can rest on the war-cry itself, since its use was common to all nations, as well as the Scythians and the Irish; and for the obvious reason noticed by Cæsar, to keep up the courage of the assailants, and strike the enemy with terror. "Neque frustra antiquitus institutum est, ut signa undique concinerint, clamoremque universi tollerent, quibus rebus & hostes terreri & suos incitari existimarunt." The Greeks had their ἀλαλὰ, and the Germans their *Barditus;* savages have their warwhoop; and the English, "St. George and victory." Tacitus says that the Germans augured the issue of the conflict from the spirit of the war cry—"Accendunt animos, futuræque pugnæ fortunam ipso cantu augurantur; terrent enim, trepidantque, prout sonuit acies." An anecdote of Sir Ewen Cameron, related by Pennant, contains a good illustration of this species of augury. Just before the battle of Killicrankie, Sir Ewen "commanded such of the Camerons as were posted near him to make a great shout, which being seconded by those who stood on the right and left, ran quickly through the whole army; but the noise of the muskets and cannon, with the echoing of the hills, made the Highlanders fancy that their shouts were much louder and brisker than those of the enemy; and Lochiel cried out, 'Gentlemen, take courage, the day is ours. I am the oldest commander in the army, and have always observed something ominous and fatal in such a dull, hollow, and feeble noise as the enemy made in their shout, which prognosticates that they are all doomed to die by our hands this night; whereas ours was brisk, lively and strong, and shows we have vigour and courage.' These words spreading quickly through the army, animated the troops in a strange manner. The event justified the prediction; the Highlanders obtained a complete victory."

Hence we may learn the value of Homer's panegyric, βοὴν ἀγαθὸς. From the importance of such a qualification, must have arisen the guilt and punishment attached to feeble and spiritless shouting among the Irish. *See Note V. page 95.*

What if the Irish war-cry, Ferragh, were radically the same as the German Barditus, or, as some critics would read it, Barrhitus, and derivable from the strains of the bards? Selden, in a note to the sixth song of Drayton's Polyolbion, seems to be of this opinion.

Ferrau is the name of one of Ariosto's knights.

NOTE IV.—p. 71.

Till shorn by the scoring slane of the boor.

The *slane* is an instrument well known to the Irish turf-cutter. Dr. Campbell, in his Philosophical Survey, describes it as a spade about four inches broad, with a steel blade of the same breadth, standing at right angles to the edge of the spade.

NOTE V.—p. 72.

In a sheltrum he waits the approach of the storm.

Sheltrum, or shyltrum, a body of armed men drawn up in a round form.

> In that schyltrum thai slw down
> And sawfyd of Berwyk swa the town.
>
> *Wyntown.*

It is used by Barbour, Holinshed, and other old writers. In such a form Randolph, in the battle of Bannockburn, waited the attack of Clifford's cavalry. He said to his men—

> Set your spearis you before,
> And back to back set all your rout,
> And all your spearis their points out.
> So-gat us best defend may we,
> Environed with them if we be.
>
> *Barbour.*

NOTE VI.—p. 77.

Strike, sword of Mananan.

The three sons of Usnach being condemned to die, a contest arose between them which of them should first submit to the stroke, to avoid the pain of seeing his brothers suffer. Naisi proposed that they should all die at the same instant. "I have a sword," said he "which Mananan, the son of Lear, gave me, and it leaves not remains of stroke or blow, and let us three be struck together with it, and we will be killed at once."

"True it is," says every one, "and stretched by you be your heads and necks," say they. "They then stretched their noble, stately, polished necks on the block at once, and then Maini dealt them a quick, forceful blow of the sword, and took the three heads off them at a stroke."—*Deirdri, an ancient Irish tale.*

NOTE VII.—p. 77.

By his clansmen is Mowbray borne far from the field.

It appears from Barbour that Sir Philip Mowbray had been "dosynt," or stunned by the blows and wounds which he had received in the conflict, and being taken prisoner, was led along a causeway, that lay between Dundalk and the scene of action. When about the middle of the causeway, he began to recover from the "desynis" by which he had been overcome, and perceiving his situation, he *swappyt* one of his captors from him,

and then the other, and nimbly drawing his sword, took his way towards the field of battle, compelling above a hundred of the enemy to flee before him. Here he met John Thomason, leader of the men of Carrik, who told him of the total discomfiture of their forces, and advised him to join in effecting their retreat to an Irish king who was still their friend. It is probable Mowbray died of his wounds, as nothing farther is recorded of him. Thomason, who appears to have been a man of good conduct, collected the fugitives, and led them to Carrickfergus, whence they sailed for their own country. He

wrought syne sa wittily,
That all that thidder fled than wer,
Thoucht that thai lossyt of thair ger,
Came to Cragfergus hale and fer.

Dalrymple thinks it likely that Barbour learned what he records of the Irish war from this Thomason.

Mr. Stuart, in his "Historical Memoirs of the City of Armagh," a work which discovers a most intimate knowledge, not only of the local history and antiquities of his subject, but of his country in general, states that "the fugitive Scots of Bruce's army are said to have lost or buried considerable quantities of coined money, in their flight across the country. On the 25th of August, 1814, a man who was labouring in a field, near Castlelenaghan, within five miles of Newry, dug up a large cow-horn, full of old silver coins. On some of these, the words

ROBERTUS DEI GRA: REX SCOTTORUM,

are perfectly legible, and the king's face, in profile, is distinctly visible. He is crowned, and a waving line, not inelegantly designed, which terminates at each side of the neck, almost surrounds his head. Betwixt this line and the visage of the monarch, a sceptre appears parallel to his face. These are all enclosed in a complete circle, which is itself inscribed within the king's title. On the reverse is a cross, the lines of which are nearly diameters of the coin, and cut two concentrical circles, whose common centre is also that of the cross. In the vertical angles are four stars, each of which has five irradiations. The outer circle contains the following inscription—

DNS: PTECTOR MS ✠ LIBATOR MS.

Dominus Protector meus——*Christus Liberator meus.*

The inner circle contains the words

VILLA EDINBURGH.

Some of the coins bear the *imprimatur* of David. In these, the word SCOTORUM is written with a single T. The horn has proved the true horn of Amalthea to the poor labourer. It has enriched him and his family."

A horn of similar description was found a few years ago, between Belfast and Carrickfergus. Some of the coins are in possession of a friend of the author's.

Mr. Stuart also informs us, that "in the year 1739, a great gun was dug up near Dundalk, which, it is alleged, was left there by John Lord Bir-

mingham, after the defeat of Bruce. If so, the use of cannon must have been known at an earlier period than is generally conceived. This piece of artillery was encircled and secured with many hoops."

It seems strange that the date of inventions so extraordinary as gunpowder and cannon, should be left in the least uncertainty. Roger Bacon knew the composition of the former; but its invention is generally ascribed to Shwartz, a German, in 1330. Cannons are said to have been first used by the Moors, at the siege of Algesiras, in Spain, in 1344; and next, by the English, at the battle of Cressy, in 1346. Had such a novel instrument of destruction been employed by Birmingham against the Scots, it could not, by any possibility, have escaped the notice of our annalists; and Barbour would most gladly have ascribed the defeat of his countrymen to the "machina infernal,"

> " Which many a good tall fellow has destroyed
> So cowardly';"

and gladly would he have joined in such an invective as that of the Italian poet, against the use of artillery;—

> *Come trovasti, o scelerata e brutta*
> *Invention, mai loco in uman core?*
> *Per te la militar gloria e distrutta;*
> *Per te il mestier de l'arme e senza onore.*
> *Per te e il valore, e la virtu ridutta,*
> *Che spesso par del buono il rio migliore;*
> *Non piu la gagliardia, non piu l'ardire*
> *Per te puo' in campo al paragon venire.*
> * * * * * *
> *Per te son gitti, et anderan sotterra*
> *Tanti signori, e cavalieri tanti.*
>
> *Ariosto, Canto* xi. 26.

> How could'st thou, curst invention, ever find
> Reception in the brave, the generous mind!
> By thee the glorious war is turned to shame,
> By thee the trade of arms has lost its fame!
> By thee, no more shall gallantry or might
> Avail the warriour in the field of fight;
> By thee so many lords and knights are slain,
> By thee such numbers yet must press the plain.
>
> *Hoole.*

" A blessing," says Don Quixote, " on those happy ages that were strangers to the dreadful fury of these devilish instruments of artillery, whose inventor, I verily believe, is now in hell, receiving the reward of his diabolical invention."

NOTE VIII.—p. 78.

With sabres are gleaning the harvest of death.

Authors differ greatly in their account both of the numbers engaged, and of those who fell. Barbour, whose object it was to pay all possible honour to the valour of his countrymen, says that Bruce's army contained

about 2000 men, not including his Irish auxiliaries; and that they were opposed by the overwhelming multitude of 40,000. Bruce, at his landing, had 6000 men, and he afterwards received reinforcements from Scotland. Now, though he sustained some loss from the sword, famine, and other casualties of war, it is scarcely credible that his forces were reduced to one-third. The Irish annals compute his numbers at 3000; but Ware says that 8274 fell in the field, and that they were opposed by only 1324 men at arms. Walsingham states the number of the slain to be 5800, besides 29 barons and knights. The Anglo-Irish army is not said to have sustained any loss beside that of Maupus. But even so, this victory does not equal another gained some time afterwards, viz. in 1336, when the English gave the Irishmen a great defeat in Connaught, and with the loss of one man, slew 10,000 of their enemies! So says Cox—that most candid and veracious historian!!!

THE END.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

Lately Published, by HODGES & M'ARTHUR, *Dublin, and* ARCHER, *Belfast,*

POEMS ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS,

8vo. Price 6s. 6d.

CLONTARF, A POEM,

24mo. Price 2s.

A TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST BOOK OF T. LUCRETIUS CARUS, OF THE NATURE OF THINGS, 12mo. EDINBURGH: Printed for MUNDELL, DOIG, and STEVENSON; and for LONGMAN, HURST, REES and ORME, LONDON.

For character see Monthly Review, Vol. lx. *p.* 413—17; *and Moss's Manual of Classical Biography, Vol.* ii. *p.* 291.