

The Elysium of Erin

OR

The Mystery of Tara

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The Elysium of Erin.

The Assembly of the Shades.



THE ELYSIUM OF ERIN

OR

THE MYSTERY OF TARA

An Epic of Ancient and Modern Days

BY

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P R E F A C E.



THE main idea which runs throughout this volume, is that of a National Elysium. This Elysium is formed of all the noble good and the departed great of a country. The members of this ideal sphere have a real and perpetual influence, in moulding the destinies of their native land, and in evolving the fate of their descendants. They not only advance the weal and the welfare of the land, but elevate and ennoble the character of the people.

This doctrine is not altogether new; although the form in which it is here set forth, may be so. Why do we write history, and erect monuments? We speak of the departed good and great as immortal. Why? Wherein lies their immortality? In their name merely, or in their influence as well? Is not the persistence of Moral Force and Spiritual

Energy, as sound a doctrine, as the persistence of the force or forces, which pervade the material universe? The Moral Worth of the men, of say a hundred or a thousand years ago, is surely no more lost to Humanity, or to the world of Being, than the energy of the sun, which shone over their heads, is lost to the universe.

The peculiarity in the present case, lies in transforming a latent and unconscious influence, into a direct and personal one ; as well, as in the creation of a sphere, in which this influence is displayed. The members of this sphere are moreover endowed with powers, to determine who are to be admitted, or excluded from their lofty realm. It is the Elysium of Erin which is here specially unveiled, and the supernatural tribunal is convened, to weigh the last eight centuries in the balance.

31st October 1889.

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BOOK I.

The Harp of Power.



THE ELYSIUM OF ERIN.

Book I.

THE HARP OF POWER.

THE sun had set behind the hill ;
The air was clear, the eve was still ;
The heaven above was fair and bright,
The stars just sparkling into sight ;
While softly crooned the moaning sea,
As I lay pensive on the lea.

Then swift as spark, along the wire,
Flashed from each hill a beacon-fire :
“ Why flash these fires along the main ?
What news of note flow in their train ? ”

I asked ; 'twas of a grey-beard Sire,
Who fronted me with ancient lyre ;
I asked, nor thought me whence he came,
So sudden gleamed the vale with flame.

I deemed him then, good flesh and bone,
A minute erst, he seemed a stone.

He gazed on me with piercing eye,
My soul shrank up, my spirits fly ;
And o'er me crept a weirdly chill,
My hair uprose, my pulse stood still ;
And every sense seemed numb and dead,
As thus he spake in accents dread :
“Why dare you tread with unholy feet,
The vale, where the Good People love to meet ?
Why trample you down, on this mystic eve,
The sward, where fair Spirits their mazes weave ?”

I shivered like an aspen-leaf,
Was mute, as counsel without brief,
My lips refused to sound a note,
My voice stuck fast within my throat ;
The aged BARD, with baneful gaze,
Seemed to dissolve me to a haze.

“Away,” said the Bard, “if thou lovest thy life,
Leave this vale far behind thee, where ruin is rife ;
Where Tarah's proud halls, lie low in the dust,
And her sword, and her sceptre, are eaten with rust.
For the hour is at hand, on this midsummer night,
When the Shades of the Past, will arise in the light ;
Even the sons of old Erin, the good and the great,
Who will sift her dire lot, now pregnant with fate ;

“And the Spirits of Ages, will pass o’er the scene,
In their wisdom and beauty, their lustre and sheen ;
And the issues of time, they in part may unroll ;
But their glory will quench each unpurified soul.
Then away, haste away, for thus it is writ,
That ‘mortal must die when Tara is lit.’”

Thus spake the Bard, yet not in ire ;
Though stern, he calmly touched his lyre.
His eye was mild, yet piercing keen ;
And grand, and reverend, his whole mien.
His look was earnest, and, I trow,
Some lofty purpose stamped his brow ;
His aspect now seemed to appease,
So, quietly, I regain my ease.

I deemed him but some wandering sage,
Who used the freedom of old age,
To test the measure of my brain,
And rouse some superstitious vein.
So thinking, I at once display
My cultured doubts, and thus I say :

“Nay, then, O Sage ! you vainly try,
In this shrewd nineteenth century,
To stir quaint feeling ; for low and high,
From superstition, now are free.
In this enlightened age, none can
Care aught, for supernatural ban ;

“Nor even by Spirits or Shades be moved ;
 For science, long ago, has proved,
 That spirits are but protoplasm,
 For Nature never knew a chasm.”

These words my dignity relieved.
 Alas ! my prudence is deceived.
 For when I turned from this short fray,
 Behold ! the scene hath passed away,
 And what was green and fertile plain,
 Is now piled up with stones amain.
 But hark the Bard !—“ Dost thou not fly ?
 “Rash mortal ! take thy doom and die !”
 Thus said, in deep sepulchral tone,
 He touched his lyre, I turned to stone.

Ah ! well for me that there's a power,
 More potent far, than wizard's lour ;
 That simple means may thwart the plans,
 Of weirdly hosts, and all their bans.
 Ah ! well for me, full well I ween,
 There move around us, though unseen,
 Pure influences, which may save,
 From many a crisis, dark and grave ;
 And one pure thought, and good, oft may
 Bring us within their generous sway.
 For simple faith in honest right,
 Will prove a panoply of might :

And one unconscious act, if true,
May ward off dangers fraught with rue.

'Twas thus, my love for nature gave
The instinct, which appeared to save ;
The impulse, which afforded aid,
When sense was numb, and hope had fled.

For I had loitered by the way,
And gathered, why I cannot say,
A seeded fern-leaf in a dell ;
And now it proved a potent spell.
(So deemed I, though one may be wrong,
Mid new sensations, weird and strong.)
For while my body lay stone dead,
My spirit soared, free, overhead ;
And I could see, while yet unseen,
A transformation of the scene,
Such as mankind had ne'er before
Beheld on earth, even from of yore.

O marvellous ! O rarest herb !
Which can unfold scenes so superb ;
Which gifts a mortal full and free
With wonderful capacity,
To see beneath material rind,
The acts of more than earth-born mind.
What power unseen lies in your leaf ?
What occult essence yields relief,

Transcending fancy's fond belief,
 Transcending even Nature's laws,
 Effecting ends by no known cause?

Nay, then! proud Science! it is true,
 That there are scenes beyond your view;
 That you can measure but by sense;
 Your keenest gauge is far too dense,
 To fathom mind's mysterious whole,
 Or sound depths of the human soul.

For now I feel, from earth set free,
 Alone! on Being's vergeless sea,
 With an unbounded liberty;
 The one existence far or near;
 The infinite my private sphere;
 An isolated atom cast,
 Amid immensity so vast;
 All being centred in my mind;
 No outer link my soul to bind;
 A weird, yet not a drear estate,
 For thought may fly, while sense must wait.
 (So have I felt when all was still,

Mid silence of the murk midnight,
 My senses numb, yet quick my will,
 And roamed the universe for light.)
 'Twas but a moment I felt so,
 As corporate, doth to incorporate, grow.

For now, I feel a Presence near,
Thrilling my soul, with radiance clear ;
Touching my mind, and will, and heart,
Loosing their latent powers with art,
And dowering me with mystic skill
To read the acts of Spirit-will.

“O Presence ! say who mayest thou be,
Whose genial touch, thus thrilleth me ?
Art thou the Fairy of the fern ?
The Genius for whom mortals yearn ?
Art thou some Nymph surpassing fair ?
Some brighter Spirit of the air ?”

Thus spake I, how, I scarce can tell ;
But gently on mine ear there fell
These words, like music of the spheres,
Which trust inspire, and banish fears :

“O mortal ! it bodes not, to tell thee my name,
Enough ! that the true, may my guidance aye claim ;
Else the fate, which hath led thee to this ruined vale,
Might have given thee full cause, thy lot to bewail ;
Nay ! have reft thee of reason, as now on the sward,
Thy body lies, reft of all sense, by the Bard.
But from grossness of earth, I have given thee release ;
And I breathe o'er thy soul, the pure kiss of peace.
Be free from distrust, from all doubt, and vain care,
And the mysteries unveiling, their ken ye may share.

“ Be thine, then, full faith, and ye may behold,
The scenes which the Spirits of Ages unfold.”

Thus spake a sweet, melodious voice,
In tones which made my heart rejoice.
A breeze breathed o'er my soul like balm,
And soothed my mind to peace and calm.

Meantime, the Bard had ceased the strain
Whose notes had quenched my breath amain ;
When suddenly before my sight,
There flashed a brilliant train of light ;
A meteor gleamed athwart the sky,
And all at once the bonfires die.

But hark ! the Bard, with skill most rare,
Plies on his lyre another air.
I vouch the Bard is at his best,
For music scarce could yield more zest.

“ I do forgive thee, hoary Sire,
The fate inflicted by thy lyre.
Your tones would soothe the wildest strife,
And calm the raging of the seas ;
Nay, even raise the dead to life,

Give mind to matter, tongues to trees,”—

But there ! the very things I tell,
Evolved by his melodious spell.
For see ! the very stones appear
To raise themselves, up, tier on tier.

See! ruins to fair order rise,
See! dome expand to princely size ;
And, from the keystone to the roof,
The texture fine as any woof ;
And see! fair gardens bloom apace,
Serried with walks, in charming grace ;
And myriad flowers, and shrubs, and trees
Shed perfume round, without a breeze ;
And see!—but who will list my lead,
Should I rehearse each wondrous deed ?
Should I detail each varied part
Upreamed by dint of mystic art ?
Enough! there stands before my eyes,
A palace, towering to the skies ;
Some mansion, seen in poet's dreams,
The dwelling of the Sun it seems.

'Tis Tarah's stately hall, I ween ;
The goodliest pile that e'er was seen ;
The praise of all, but Erin's pride ;
The glory of the country wide ;
Where liberty and love did rain
The golden age on earth again.
But now it rises to the view,
Of ample space, of gorgeous hue ;
Noble and grand, august, complete,
Where strength of frame, and grace, both meet ;

In grandeur, greater than before,
Tenfold more glorious, than of yore.

So thought I, yet from fact erred far.

For, as the Sun excels a star,
So, did this wondrous dome excel,
All buildings of which earth can tell.

Yet strange! 'tis 'Tara we must call,
The name of this most wondrous hall,
Not Tarah, as on earth it stood,

Which earned for Erin her chief fame ;
But Ta-ra, mansion of the good,

Of fairer fibre, finer frame,
Abode of Sun, most bright and pure,
Where peace doth reign, and joys endure ;
Where men, the noblest and the best,
Walk in the light, for ever blest.

But why thus linger on my theme,
When all passed swiftly as a dream ?
When the whole fabric, with its train,
Rose, while the Bard played one refrain ?

The meteor gleam had died away,
And shed its dust above the bay,
Just as fair 'Tara perfect stood
And graced the soil o'er many a rood.
Yet all within is dark and mute ;
Even silence walks with muffled foot.

Were mortal here, his pulse would toll,
As Big Ben, when the years do roll.
A second seems to me a day.

But hark ! the Bard begins to play.
I see him through the murky dark,
His eyes, they twinkle like a spark
Of holy beam, and full of peace,
As if he could give heaven release,
And shed it o'er this ruesome earth,
To give perpetual joy its birth.

But there ! the Bard, his next refrain,
Is softer now, falls, swells again ;
And when it reaches its full height,
The hall shines forth, with heavenly light.
A myriad windows bright and keen ;
A myriad diamonds flash their sheen ;
Each diamond, of a myriad rays,
Each window, myriad diamonds splays.
And lo ! what seemed all void before,
Is crammed from ceiling unto floor,
With beings of a higher mien,
Than could, methought, on earth be seen.
And yet they're human, not divine,
The children of an ancient line,
The race of Erin from of old,
But cast now, in celestial mould.

They sit, revolving counsel high,
With conscious look, with beaming eye ;
As if the matters they now weigh,
Were for an age, not for a day ;
And yet all's hushed, and calm, and grave ;
And speech, they for the moment waive,
As if awaiting some known sign,
Ere they, their thoughts to words, resign.

The eyes of all turned to the east,
Just as the Bard, his strain, had ceased ;
But ceased, to seek another air,
To grace the scene, beyond compare.
He struck his harp, no more a lyre ;
The music changed, at his desire,
And for his three-stringed lyre doth bear,
A seven-stringed harp, both rich and rare.
One touch, sufficeth for the cue,
To countless keys, with each tone true.
For now the scene became so strange,
The Bard doth seek a wider range ;
And on this harp, he may command
A range, most glorious, lofty, grand ;
So bold the tone, the reach so high,
A seraph's voice, could never vie.
Joyful, inspiring, grave or gay,
Solemn or cheerful, hymn or lay,

Epic or lyric, dirge or round,
O'er the full compass of pure sound,
The air appeared to ebb and flow,
From deepest shades of night below,
Until it seemed to die away,
In far-off spheres of endless day.
At first, 'tis tender, sweet, and low,
But soon, doth wild, and gladder grow,
Until the hall with joy resounds,
And ecstasy o'erleaps its bounds.
It seemed to make the human heart
A living second, to its art.

To east, I said, each look is bent ;
At the first note, the door is rent,
And, opening wide, reveals to view,
A brilliant train of dazzling hue ;
Near and afar, as eye can reach,
As many as the sand on beach,
All canopied with glorious light,
Mortal before ne'er saw such sight.

They move with grand, majestic gait ;
Order and ease, upon them wait.
And thus march in, with stately grace,
The noblest sons of Erin's race.
Kings, queens, and chieftains, each degree
With bards and retinue, we see,

From first of line, in dimmest past,
Through every age, until the last ;
The last which gained its fond desire,
Through purity's pure purge of fire.
But those alone, have here a place,
Whose wit and worth adorned their race ;
Whose wit, did seek each wound to heal,
Whose worth, was worn for Erin's weal.

The hall was hushed, and brightly shone ;
The noble train moved slowly on,
With banners waving, bright and fair,
More grandly than if waved in air.
The Bard in centre hath his stand,
And strikes his harp with loving hand ;
As king and prince before him passed,
The music varies, slow or fast,
And to the time given by the strain,
In order, move the stately train.

A thousand kings now pass along
A thousand queens, to voice of song ;
Each king hath fifty men and true,
Each queen hath fifty maidens too ;
In beauty, passing mortal ken,
In grace, more rare, than bloomed for men ;
Whose simple look might bliss impart,
Whose every smile might win a heart.

But countless princes intertwine,
 And chiefs of many an ancient line,
 Which long have disappeared from earth,
 Their names are heired, but not their worth.
 The people too most fair appear,
 Moving in van, as well as rear ;
 The choicest sons of Erin's race,
 Who knew not wealth, nor power, nor place,
 Knew innocence, and warmest sooth,
 Who scorned a lie, and loved the truth,
 Who never reached to earthly fame,
 Yet here, have won a fadeless name.

But who are these, whose noble brow,
 Mark them as chief of all this throng ?
 To whom all royal traits belong,

Before whom kings and princes bow ?
 See ! how much majesty they wear !
 Divinely simple is their air !
 See ! how the host rise them to greet,
 And stand, awhile they take their seat !
 Calm, as they move with measured pace,
 Sublime and godlike, in the face !
 These are the heroes, leal and true,
 OLLAVE, and CORMAC, and BORU !

And scarce less noble are their peers,
 Who walk serene, before, behind ;

THE HARP OF POWER.

Kings both of early, and late years,
Dowered with a fertile, generous mind,
Whose heart was fixed on Erin's good,
Whose hand might err, but not their mood.

Through the grand aisles, the train now pass,
Moving with ease the brilliant mass,
Until they reach now, last of all,
The centre of the ample hall.

But see! and say what can it mean?
What change has crossed the wondrous scene?
Why is the hall so strangely moved?
Can music be so rare approved?
Or what melodious note hath skill,
To move bright spirits with such thrill,
That every feeling of the heart
Doth ebb and flow with supple art?

Here, some are silent with surprise ;
There, they are glad with moistening eyes ;
Here, weep they, yet with no sad soul ;
There, pleased as if they gained some goal ;
Now calm and serene, as sage of yore ;
Now roused, as if to heaven they'd soar ;
But why run on? I felt the strain,
But not the charm, which spake so plain,
And yet methinks, I'm not so numb,
To music's power, as now be dumb.

Then passed a voice, across my mind,
No words, no sound, but sweet and kind ;
It was my fairy Nymph, I ween,
Whose touch had made my sense so keen :

“ O muse, not of mystery, for what’s tangled and
dark,

To the sons of mankind, is but simple and clear,
To the soul that is touched, with the Heaven-gifted
spark,

Of truth as it is, not what to man may appear.

For know, that true music, hath a sway and a spell,
And a speech of its own, to the heart that is pure,

For each note strikes a thought, and each chord tells
a tale,

And the soul that’s attuned, can read it most sure.

Thus, as each noble hero, on the pure light doth
wait,

The harp sings his story, yet the ill doth not blend,

And all that is noble, and worthy, and great,

Is revealed to each true heart, from beginning to end.”

So said the Nymph, to soothe my care ;

Why in the thrill, I could not share.

And thus, I knew that there are thoughts,

Too deep, for human skill to know ;

That feelings, wider, vaster, grow

Beyond this wharve of changing doubts ;

That something's hidden in the breast
Of Nature, which we cannot read,
And will not, till we reach our meed,
And in Truth's mansion, be a guest.





BOOK II.



The Thrones of Splendour.



THE ELYSIUM OF ERIN.

Book II.

THE THRONES OF SPLENDOUR.

WHILE thus, the music charms each ear,
The light doth seem to shine more clear ;
And opens up a brilliant view,
Of graceful tone, of dazzling hue ;
It sheds o'er all this mystic scene,
A power, so wonderfully keen,
That its pure radiance doth unroll,
The inner texture of the whole ;
So, not a part, it doth embrace,
But each eye may minutely trace.

Ten zones divide the wondrous hall,
With ample room for one and all ;
Each, wide, expanding, fair, and free,
With its own type of excellency.

The train moves to the central zone,
Where there is seen a glorious throne,
Sparkling with gems, more fine and grand,
Than all the mines of earth command.
On either side, a throne as fair,
Adorned with gems, as rich and rare.
Each throne is canopied with light,
Whose splendour is intensely bright.
And lesser thrones, around there be,
Varying in splendour and degree,
In number, more than tongue can tell,
The least, all earthly thrones excel.
The humblest in this hall so fair,
Sits on a throne, of lustre rare ;
For virtue yields the highest meed,
And glory crowns each noble deed.

But hark ! a trumpet sounds ; then all
Spread divers ways throughout the hall.
And mark, how well, each one can trace,
The path to his appointed place.
There seems to be some occult sign,
By which, each may his throne divine.
But earth-fixed rank, is not known here,
The peasant, may be more than peer.
For kings and peasants now combine ;
Princes and suites both interwine ;

To me, it doth seem somewhat strange,
That peasants, oft, before kings range ;
And side by side, they sometimes meet ;
Yet oft, while kings seek lowest seat,
The man, who never owned a rood,
Takes highest place among the good.
Goodness alone, earns here renown,
And worth it is, wins fairest crown.

But vast and numerous as the train,
Order and ease supremely reign.
One thought, one will, appears to guide ;
One impulse moves the swelling tide.

But who, so vain, as dare to try
To count the mass, before the eye ?
What mortal, wiser than the most,
Could name the grand and glorious host ?
Or paint, more wonderful even still,
A hall, where numbers cannot fill ?
What artist rare, could thus design
A dome, so perfect in each line,
That right before my wondering eyes,
The hall expands, to any size ;
And though, at first, crammed to the door,
It seems no denser than before ?

At length the grand, illustrious race
Have reached their due and well-earned place,

Where virtue, doth true joy attain,
And worth, a higher beauty, gain.
But chiefly those the noble three,
Who Erin's race did raise and free,
Who never spared, nor time, nor toil,
Her peace to prompt, her foes to foil :
For them, the central thrones await,
These, they ascend, in glorious state ;
And then, there bursts from that bright throng,
The ringing voice of noble song ;
And forth, resplendent to the view,
Stand OLLAVE, CORMAC, and BORU !

'Tis OLLAVE, takes the throne on right,
Far famed for wisdom, and for might.
The heir of Erin's noblest line,
A race, oft called, by men divine ;
The race of Dagda, which of yore,
Sprang first from Alba's northern shore,
And spread through Erin, peace and lore,
And golden grain, unknown before ;
While sheep-clad downs, and fertile soil,
Make the whole land with plenty smile.

Ollave renews the Dagda's sway,
And makes the land both blithe and gay ;

Even brighter than his father's reign,
When flowers, and shamrocks, on each plain,
Flowed with the ruby, generous wine,
In richer streams, than yields the vine.
'Tis Ollave's skill doth now restore
The industries, plied long before.
He trains the land to arts of peace,
Bids learning rise, bids war to cease.
He bids brave heroes, rise, and form,
Ready to quash the threatening storm.
He bids fair maids, bright standards weave,
So, that each hero may receive
From beauty's hand, a sign to save,
And rouse assurance, in the brave.
He bids the bards, their harps employ,
And hail all patriots true, with joy ;
And send their deeds, and glory down,
To generations of renown.

'Tis Ollave, who doth first install
A council high, in Tarah Hall,
The hall, which Dagda first had reared,
And made his name o'er earth revered.
Here in full splendour there appear
From every rank, and year by year,
The wise and good, who sit sedate,
And guide the counsels of the State.

These, wisdom, through the realm, inspire,
Both far and wide, o'er town and shire ;
And Ollave places through the land,
Rulers with just and potent hand ;
And gives them strict, yet equal laws,
Swift to redeem the honest cause,
To crush the base, to scourge the vile,
And purify the land from guile.
He rules with firmness, never swerves
From law which right and peace preserves.
Thus, upright, just, kind, and humane,
No people lived a better reign.
His day, the good are more than kings,
With industry, the land wide rings ;
A blooming garden is the isle,
The very stones appear to smile.
Thus Ollave doth full joy command,
And welfare spreads through all the land,
And brings, with skill which cannot wane,
The golden age to earth again.

'Tis CORMAC takes the central throne,
For that of right, is his alone.
The noblest kings of Erin's line,
In him, their son, or sire, combine.

No grander soul, hath Erin born,
No stouter heart, hath body worn ;
His mien august, unmatched his eye,
In splendour, none with him can vie ;
The wisest son of Erin's race,
The truest king who wielded mace.
He came, in ruins Erin lay ;
He went, she's clothed in marble gay.

The land was heaved up to and fro,
And rent, by mad internal throes.
Cruel anarchy, the country tore,
And bathed fair Erin in her gore.
Even Nature gazed in horror dumb,
While grief her faculties struck numb.
The earth itself, doth pine and mourn,
To see the land all ravished torn ;
The genial sun, forbears to shine,
The elements, their aid decline ;
The soil, doth grudge its fruits to yield,
And barrenness o'erspreads the field ;
The oaks, one acorn scarce sustain,
The corn-stalk, yieldeth but one grain ;
No milk flows from the silent kine ;
The very streams begin to pine,
The fish forsake them all, or die ;
And even the harbours now are dry ;

Disease and famine rampant grow,
The pest, doth lay its victims low,
While Death gluts jubilant on high,
And dances to despair's long cry.

Then Cormac came, a hero bold,
And back the tide of ruin rolled.
He stretched his arm, confusion fled,
And anarchy doth hide its head.
His word is firm, his hand is just,
Disorder flees, because it must.
Prosperity and peace he gave ;
And soon the golden harvests wave ;
The granaries fill, the cattle low,
The mines enrich, the red wines flow,
Trees drop with honey, rivers teem,
And bridges span the flowing stream.
No idlers roam throughout the isle,
To fan disorder, strife, and guile ;
Landlords and tenants, too, as well,
In harmony and comfort dwell.
Labour and work go hand in hand,
To spread contentment through the land.
As men, in numbers, ever grow,
So work expands, and wages flow.
The citizens, form but one guild,
One brotherhood, the people build.

And men are noble, for their worth,
Not for their riches, or their birth.
The people are all knit in one ;
The prince's heir, the peasant's son,
Vie on same stage, to lead the van,
And honour crowns the better man.

The land with happiness o'erflows,
And knowledge wide, and wider grows.
Three noble schools, doth Cormac raise,
The wide world's wonder and its praise ;
Where wisdom doth with skill impart
The principles of every art.

But chief of all great Cormac's fame,
What brightens most, his noble name,
'Twas he, the first, both leal and true,
Of Erin's warm-souled race, who knew,
And hailed with joy, the light divine,
Which shed o'er earth its rays benign ;
Turning its gloomy night to day,
And spreading peace o'er life's pathway ;
Those glorious rays which nations heal,
And dower earth with eternal weal,
Shed first afar, from Salem's hill,
Till every land with grace they fill ;
But now, they flow from Alba's isle,
And bid fair Erin rise and smile.

When Erin doth this hest obey,
Glory for centuries gilds her way.

Now Cormac welcomes with delight,
The great Apostle of the light,
The seer from Alba, who now came,
To cast renown o'er Erin's name.
Cormac, no zeal nor pains doth spare,
Till Erin the true light doth share.
And with a wise and liberal hand,
He spreads the truth, throughout the land ;
And noble buildings soon arise,
Pointing the people to the skies.
Schools vie with schools, to shed their lore ;
Temples uprise, where heath before ;
Till Erin light of nations grows,
As piety, with true learning flows.
Thus every home, in Erin's blest,
And every mind, knows calm and rest ;
To every heart, pure hope is given,
And every soul aspires to heaven.

No wonder, Erin is the pride
Of every land, both far and wide ;
For orient pomp can scarce compare,
With Cormac's Court for splendour rare.
Thus famous in the days of old,
Men press its glory to behold.

From Alba, Loegria, Cumria too
They crowd, his lustrous Court to view.
From Gaul, from Lochlan far, they pour,
Iberia dark, Ausonia's shore,
The isles of Hellas, and the main,
From the Black Wold, and Goth's great plain,
Nor last from Khem, and Shinar's strand,
Which Erin claims as her birthland ;
From every land, and race, they come,
And wonder strikes all strangers dumb.
Heroes and statesmen, queens and kings,
Sages, philosophers, fame brings ;
Till thus, in Cormac's Court appear,
The wise and good, from far and near.
With flowing hand, with open hall,
Both poor and rich, he welcomes all ;
Both high and low, both bond and free,
Till Erin's sons, with joy thus see,
The worth and wisdom of the age,
All centre round this royal sage,
And usher in a radiant time,
An era, glorious, yea, sublime,
An era, lasting ages long,
Which poets have sung in many a song.

Search through the earth, so wide and vast ;
Search all the ages of the past ;

Search though you may, you scarce will view
A hero grander, or more true,
Than Cormac, just, and wise, and good,
Fervent of soul, of generous mood ;
No prince, has earned more true renown,
No king, more fitly, graced a crown.

Upon the left, sits great BORU,
He was a hero, bold and true.
His lot, in evil times was cast,
But he stood firm, until the last.
Ten centuries passed since Cormac's reign
And chaos tears the isle again.
Disunion hurls its fatal brand,
And ruin rends the wretched land.
Discords and wars, dissensions, foes,
Spread o'er the isle their dismal woes.
Death glutteth wholly at his ease,
Nor needs he roam, his prey to seize.
Erin's own sons, now cruelly pressed
The traitor's dagger, to her breast.
Prince fought with prince, and man slew man,
Tribe slaughtered tribe, and clan killed clan ;
Friends, families, all each other tore,
And streams ran red, with brothers' gore.

The land, thus bleeding, and forlorn,
Of her best sons is reft and torn.
Then foreign foes and pirates rush,
With cruel hate, and Erin crush.
With fatal force, they swept away
The wretched remnant, as their prey.
The land to fire and sword they gave,
And kings looked on, nor tried to save.

Fair Erin's neck, for years had lain,
Beneath the heel of cruel Dane,
Until Boru arose and freed,
By skilful arm, and daring deed,
His countrymen, who tamely lie
In dread and dire captivity.
Boru, invincible by right,
Came swift to save, and strong to smite,
And crushed the Vikings like a reed,
And chased them over hill and mead,
And swept them all, from sea to sea,
Till the whole isle, from foes is free.

And then, with firm and potent hand,
The people's welfare, next he planned.
He first expels, furth from the isle,
All those who foster feud and guile,
All demagogues who hope to climb
On deeds of rapine, blood, and crime ;

He doth rewards and honours deal
To those, who strive all wounds to heal,
And in the scale of nations raise
Their land, till it excels in praise.

Firm order next he doth restore,
And union, as in days of yore.
The laws of old he doth renew,
Which swiftly mete to all their due ;
Laws fair, though firm, just, though severe,
Which make faith sure and banish fear :
So, o'er the land, to farthest shore,
The traveller bearing golden store
May sing, as he pursues his way,
As safe by night, as in full day.

Rich harvests soon adorn the fields,
The ruined churches, he rebuilds,
And forts and castles rise amain ;
Streams are new bridged, the roads made plain ;
Schools rise, and learning once more flows,
And trade increases, commerce grows ;
Nor least of all, Boru did raise
A powerful fleet, beyond all praise,
Whose first essay, did victory gain,
Shattering the ships of haughty Dane,
And promise gave, Erin might be,
In after-time, queen of the sea,

If but her sons used hand and will,
This splendid destiny to fulfil.

Boru thus reigned a noble king,
Whom bards all praise, and harps all sing.
The soldier's soul, the people's voice,
He bade the land, rise and rejoice ;
And while he lived, all men maintain,
The golden age returned again.
Heroes, this age may boast, but who
Can vie in glory, with Boru ?

Beneath the firm yet gentle sway
Of these grand kings, wrongs fled away.
Strife spreads its wings, with ruin, dearth,
To leave for aye, this spot of earth.
And Peace and Plenty, men descry,
No longer Erin's soil pass by ;
Hovering, they fold their wings to rest
For ever on her generous breast.
But demagogues, fair Erin's bane,
Put them, alas ! to flight again.

A thousand years, between each king,
Ages of change, and sorrow bring.
Three times, in glory Erin rose,
Three times, she fell, to rise again.

Once more, she's fallen by native foes,
 Who rack, and ruin heart and brain.
But who that sees her, thus spell-bound,
May hope, her rise, can now be found ?
Nay, who that loves her does not know,
Erin will rise, shake off the foe,
Sprung from her sons, who've sucked her breast,
Who've harmed her more than all the rest,
Who fawn on her, whose love is death,
Whose victory, Erin's shroud would swathe ?

 But Fate is kinder, and, though low,
The hour will come, and hope will grow ;
Erin will shine, yet more and more,
In wedded lustre than before.

 The mystic harp hath ceased its strain,
Just as the Kings, their thrones attain.
And now they bow with noble grace,
To all, whom these bright zones embrace ;
All take their seats, a moment wait,
While wisdom rests on small and great.
A trumpet sounds, a thrill remains,
Each mind gives ear, and silence reigns.



BOOK III.



The Fence of Light.



THE ELYSIUM OF ERIN.

Book III.

THE FENCE OF LIGHT.

O H ! would I'd lived in other days !
When epic bloomed, not simple lays ;
That I'd been reared in Muse's bower,
Got Kalliop's kiss, in natal hour,
So now, I might have had the power,
To portray with a living pen,
The noble deeds, of noble men ;
And might, with touch of Homer's art,
To shadowy scenes, some bone impart,
And paint, with vivid force and skill,
The occult acts of spirit-will :
But with my duller pencil now,
I'll do my best, and that, I trow,
Is all that mortal men require,
To soothe their soul, and hope inspire.

The harp's tones now swell forth again,
At first in low and gentle strain ;
A pause comes o'er the wondrous scene,
While deeper glows the beauteous sheen.
The noble chiefs look on awhile,
Gazing on all, from roof to aisle ;
Proud of their land, and of the worth,
Thus gathered from their native earth.
The gorgeous view seems to inspire
Each heart with zeal, each soul with fire ;
The harp's tones loud and louder rose,
While more and more, the fervour grows.

But hark ! what sudden noise doth rise,
To fill each mind with swift surprise ?
On every ear, there now doth grate,
A dolesome sound, with horror sate.
A trumpet, ominous, doth blare,
Like the dread trumpet of despair.
The building shakes as if to fall ;
A solemn thrill doth pass o'er all
As a dark shadow, like a pall,
Floats o'er the air, above the host,
And a weird knell bursts through the hall,
Such as may sound, when all hope's lost.
When ceased the trumpet-notes so dread,
A dismal voice, unseen, thus said :

“ Who meet in this vale, at dead midnight ?
What spirits dare shed, here, mystic light ?
Why mar my realm, why invade my sphere ?
Is not mine the darkness weird and drear ?
Is not this the hour my subjects roam,
The elf, the sprite, the goblin, the gnome ?
Is not this, the favourite hunting-ground,
Where the spirits of evil, dense, abound ?
Where an hour may yield far more of spoil,
Than other lands may, in moons of moil ?
Why, then, does your light, like open day,
Sweep all the powers of night away ?
Why beams it thus pure, o’er this land wide,
And why must my agents in terror hide ?
Think you your skill, one jot can abate,
Of hours that are fraught with the mysteries of fate ?
This hour it is mine. I no rival brook here.
My realm is the darkness, the occult my sphere.
Remove then, your presence, to regions of day,
For the pure light here, no longer can play ;
For the shadow of evil, must o’er this land rest,
Till her sons have been sifted, and put to the test ;
Till they learn, that their folly breeds pangs dread and dire,
And that ages of weeds, can be purged but by fire.
Leave, then, to my agents, to work this land’s fate,
Let the spirits of sham, faction, murder, and hate,

“Wreak out their dire will, till the whole land is driven,
From all portion in hope, peace, and favour of
Heaven!”

Thus said the voice, but still unseen ;
More brilliant glowed the dazzling sheen.
Unmoved, the glorious host appear ;
The BARD now speaks in accents clear,
And bold, and firm, so all may hear :

“Dread Spirit of Darkness, think ye that we
From powers of evil, ever flee ?
Nay, then ! ye may believe as well,
The stars can fall, by your dire spell.
'Tis ours to rule, 'tis ours to reign,
And where we come, pure light maintain.
'Tis ours to scatter darkness far,
And all its powers, and projects mar,
Reflecting, as we do sedate,
The higher purposes of Fate.
We wield pure light, though not our own,
To wreck your realm, o'erthrow your throne ;
For these exist by sufferance free,
Merely to serve Heaven's high decree.
And though fate works by your dark hand,
Your labours, but a season stand ;
Ye skim the scum, and burn the dross,
But we redeem the gold from loss.

“ But deem not fate’s true end ye gain,
By gloomy fear or cruel pain.
These are but means, they are not ends.
The issue, aye, to pure light tends.
The good claim night, as well as day,
And over ill, they reign alway.
When Fate resumes her milder sway,
Then your dire powers must aye give way.
This hour is ours, this land to test,
Hence, then ! and bow to Fate’s behest.”

Thus spake the Bard in accents plain,
And then there pealed a lofty strain,
Which makes each heart with gladness bound,
As if, throughout this spacious hall,
The trumpet of pure joy doth sound.

A voice then utters this dread call :

“ Avaunt ! ye powers of darkness, flee !
Ye powers of good ! all gathered be ! ”

The Spirit of Darkness, weird and dread,
In terror heard, in hurry fled ;
Nor durst his agents, dark as night,
Longer abide the dazzling light,
Or shed their shadow, o’er a scene,
So pure, so bright, and so serene.

And now, the harp exerts at will,
Its wonderful and potent skill ;

And a soft air doth now arise,
 When, suddenly, before all eyes,
 There bursts a grand and glorious ray,
 Which round the ample hall doth play ;
 In beauty pure, as is the moon ;
 Tenfold more brilliant than the noon.

It is a silver fringe most pure,

 And the whole mansion, it doth skirt ;
 It guards the hall, both firm and sure,

 And the whole host is now light-girt.
 The fringe thus forms a perfect shield,
 And power most wonderful doth wield.
 Its sway, though modest it doth shine,
 Is little short, if not divine.

'Tis sensitive, to the slightest touch

 Of evil, or whate'er may mar ;
 And its pure ray repels all such,

 And keeps them from the scene afar.
 Thus forms a fence of gladsome light,
 And wards off powers of ill and night ;
 And none dare enter, save at peril,
 The gate, which brilliant shines like beryl ;
 And over which, though open wide,
 A motto seen, doth warn and guide :

 " Go in ! ye pure and true !

 Fly hence ! ye base, or rue ! "

'Tis said, that in a far-off time,
A fence of light, pure and sublime,
Once guarded man, and kept him free,
From all the powers of ill that be.
But now, that fence is broken down,
And evil constantly doth frown,
O'er every step of man's earth-way,
Save morn of life, and break of day.
For, it is said, that, even still,
The fence, that wards off every ill,
Doth shine around us in our youth,
Mid childhood's innocence and truth,
And only vanishes when life
Doth nurture self, and sin, and strife.
Yet ever at the break of day,
When morning sheds its first pure ray,
So holy is the influence thén,
That any of the sons of men,
May form this fence of light anew,
To keep him safe, the whole day through :
For if man seek, he then may find
A mystic power, which even may bind
The broken links of this fence-line,
To shield him with a power divine.

Be this the case, or what it may,
'Tis certain now, this silver ray

Doth shield this hall, in every part,
And gladdens every genuine heart.
And through the whole of this great scene
 It shines forth as a glorious fence ;
And ever guards, with sway most keen,
 Even when its power seems in suspense.

 O'er all the scene, now falls a calm.
A gentle zephyr sheds pure balm.
Once more, the noble Bard appears,
Stately in mien, and graced with years.
But not alone ; beside him stand
A myriad more, with harp in hand,
All on a bench of curious art,
Arranged with care for every part,
Set right behind the central throne,
And on the verge of inmost zone.
These are the bards of Erin fair,
The choice of those long nurtured there ;
And for their worth, they lead the rest,
With thrones now placed among the best.
 The bards, their harps anon prepare,
To sing some grand and noble air.
The mystic harp is never known
To lose its true and thrilling tone :

Its notes to-day remain as clear,
 As when it first burst on the ear,
 Full-toned, all perfect, and sublime,
 Ere yet was heard, the voice of time.

But now the choir begin to sing,
 With melody the courts all ring ;
 The harps pour forth their tones so grand,
 And joy, doth every heart expand.

But hark ! the music now so rare,
 Doth change into a vocal air,
 A deep, full, clear, and silvery voice,
 Leads forth with wondrous power and choice ;
 Then answer him the full-toned choir,
 And thus the two, this lay inspire :—

I.

The Voice. O ! tell me the ruler of time to-day,
 If you that ruler know.
 What Spirit doth o'er the earth now play ?
 What Spirit o'er man doth hold its sway,
 And mould his life below ?

2.

The Choir. Nay ! have ye no mind, or eyes to see,
 What even a child may tell ?

THE FENCE OF LIGHT.

'Tis the Spirit of Progress, rules o'er man,
 'Tis this, which develops the world's grand
 plan,
 And moulds it by its spell.

3.

The Voice. But what, then, is progress, can you say?
 Is it more than a parrot-cry?
 Is it more than the breath of the passing hour,
 Or the pride, man boasts in his fleeting power,
 Or the selfishness of the "I"?

4.

Does it make man wiser and nobler too,
 And lead him to his goal?
 Does it give him new mind, new spirit, new
 sense,
 Does it fill his heart, with love more intense,
 Or beautify his soul?

5.

The Choir. Yes! Progress does all, and even more,
 It places man in the van;
 And gives him swift wings, so he may rise,
 And soar like the sun, to effulgent skies,
 And secrets of ages scan.

6.

It trains his eye, and it gifts his hand,
So he can both see and do ;
And can trace each effect, up to its cause,
Can unfold the most complex of nature's laws,
And use them for his ends too.

7.

The Voice. All this may be true, yet of no more worth,
Than the ripple of evening tide.
For what is its goal, or where does it lead ?
When perfect, will man from all ill be freed,
And full knowledge gain beside ?

8.

Does man know more of his end to-day,
Than when he first sprang from dust ?
Has he solved one problem with all his skill,
Can he read the Unseen, or ever will,
Or is wisdom still but trust ?

9.

The Choir. What more can you wish, if progress hold,
O'er nature, the curb and the rein ?

If knowledge, and science, and commerce spread,
 If comfort and wealth, it everywhere shed,
 And the people's rights maintain ?

10.

Its goal is perfection, though not to reach,
 No hope of this in time ;
 For suffering and ill, must ever be rife,
 When man is engaged in the struggle for life,
 For man's destiny is to climb.

11.

And though man may never expect to solve,
 The problems of the Unseen ;
 Yet, with "Forward" as motto, he aye can gain,
 The hope to cheer, and the light to make plain,
 And life's pathway keep serene.

12.

The Voice. Your progress is barren, it never can yield,
 More light than the glowworm hath.
 All man's knowledge and science cannot show,
 The issue, to which all his actions flow,
 Or more than one step of life's path.

13.

What Nature doth teach, that man may read,
But not one syllable more.
Her secret thoughts, he never can scan,
Much less evolve her wonderful plan,
Or her infinite Heart explore.

14.

'Tis progress of eye, and ear, and hand,
Or of one and all combined :
The progress of skill, but not of right,
Of sordid sense, not soul so bright,
Of matter, not of mind.

15.

True progress consists in living now,
For more than life's little hour ;
In training the mind, and soul, and heart,
To grow to some lofty and noble part,
And bloom to immortal flower.

16.

'Tis upward, and onward, man must soar,
Above the world's weary round,
Far above, the orbit of self, so small,
Away, to the bosom of the Perfect All,
Where man's true goal is found.

17.

And the power that should rule all time to-day,
If you that power would know,
Is the Love, that from heaven bears infinite sway,
And would clothe man with its all-glorious ray,
While ages eternal flow.

The vocal strain now dies away,
And silence holds each heart in sway,
When noble OLLAVE, calmly rose,
And warm applause, at once then flows.
Three rounds of joy, the echoes fill,
But at a sign, all soon is still.
Then in a voice, deep-toned, yet clear,
These words, he sends, to every ear.

“O! ye sons, good and true, of Erin the fair,
Who are gathered in Tara Hall so rare!
We have come, from the Island of Youth, far away,
From the Lone Green Isle, where the sunsets play.
We have come, from the land, where there never is night,
Where the best of all ages, all walk in the light;
We come, as the years, and the ages pass by
The shades of our kinsmen, to sift and to try;
To assign them a place, in the home of true fame,
Where their worth and their merit have earned them a
name.

“ We have come, under favour of Fate’s kind decree,
The past to rehearse, and the present to see,
Yea, the future to scan ; all their scenes to unfold,
And over their issues, some skill to remould ;
And to call on the powers of good and of ill,
The first to our aid, and the others to spill.
Yet o’er time and results, but small is our sway,
If Erin’s not true, nor good councils obey,
If she loves not her honour, her freedom, her life,
If she hugs in her bosom, both hatred and strife ;
If she closes her ear, to worth and to good,
And lists the dark whispers, of vile men, and rude,
Then our influence will cease, we only can mourn,
Through the ages to come, over Erin forlorn.

And though, our power in the past, has far been from
small,

We cannot aye check fair Erin’s downfall ;
Since her sons have for ages, wrought misery and woe,
Torn her once generous breast, let her warm blood flow,
Let loose the wild furies, of faction and hate,
Of creed and of rapine, more cruel than fate.

But we come, yet once more, to exert our mild sway,
Through the memories of worth, that can ne’er pass
away.

For the land that ignores present worth and past fame,
Will sink to dishonour, and be covered with shame.

“ And the people are doomed, who their own welfare
betray,

And whose sons ever sow seeds of ruin, decay.

Thus our land's present prospects, are filling with gloom,
As if nation, and people, were hastening their doom.

But the present is but a small part of our theme,
And its shadow to-day, may yet pass as a dream.

For our land has a past, and a future as well,
And their issues in value, must the present excel.

For the present, with its crimes, and its wrongs can
but be,

A mere ripple, or wavelet, upon the broad sea
Of its destiny, fraught now with glory or shame,
And not one age, but all, must determine its fame.

The past shows its worth in the balance of fate,
And the future must fix its permanent state.

And 'tis justice and right, 'tis truth, virtue, and worth,
Which can make our land prosperous, as any on earth.

But if Erin continues her past wild career,
With scarce one true impulse, to encourage or cheer,
Then fate will no longer have patience, but must,
Let her name, land, and people, all perish in dust.

And never was ruin, more fatally near,
Not to Erin alone, the land to us so dear,

But to Britain, the champion of justice always,
Now the sport of the lawless, and the demagogue's prey ;

“ When men will for party, abandon even truth,
When statesmen, for office, league with riot and ruth ;
When they rouse the worst passions of an ignorant mass,
And to fan selfish ends, set class against class ;
When reason, and honour, and justice, and faith,
They blow to the winds, for the popular breath.

But if Britain's not careful, her career yet may tend
To unsteady her brain, and in downfall may end :
Though Britain's loss to the world, would be scarce
worth a tear,

If she sacrifice truth, to a base selfish fear.
For in the balance of fate, man's weal weighs but light,
Compared to the issues, of truth, purity, right :
The loss of race, or of world, would be but a speck,
To the thwarting of truth, which might the universe
wreck.

But 'tis ours now to test all the past, and to seal,
To the ages, their measure of woe or of weal.
We have come, the old land, for ourselves to survey,
To measure its progress, and its virtue to weigh,
And in the balance of truth, and of righteousness try,
If her merits increase, as the ages go by ;
And if her worth and her zeal, her skill and her hand,
Have developed, as years and as ages expand.

For in lapse of the ages, each race must advance,
And each age must the lustre of all former enhance.

" If a race, would its place 'mong the nations retain,
 Then the tide of its honour, must flow like the main ;
 Never tossed by proud passions, or by fancy's false flight,
 Never drifting, the sport of dark powers of the night ;
 But on the calm wave of right, by true principle sped,
 Or, borne on the billows of trial so dread,
 Its zeal must not waver, nor its progress e'er cease,
 Till it reaches the haven of glory and peace.

Has Erin her place 'mong the nations sustained ?
 Has she her old glory, and honour maintained ?
 Has her welfare increased ? Is her lustre enhanced ?
 Has her virtue flowed full, as the ages advanced ?
 Is the promise she once gave, so noble and grand,
 That she, of all nations, would soonest expand,
 And reach the full heights both of beauty and fame,
 And the first rank in learning, and art yet might claim ;
 Is this promise fulfilled ? Are her people all just,
 Good, honest, and loyal, and worthy of trust ?
 Is her promise a blossom, nipped by self's searing frost,
 And all blighted its bud, or barren at most ?

This soon we shall learn, for the trumpet will call,
 The Shades of the Ages, now past, to this hall.
 Their worth will be tested, and their virtue appear,
 And Erin's true place 'mong the nations made clear.

'Tis true ye immortals, know all the long past,
 And what lot for herself fair Erin has cast.

“But this hour we must judge, and impartially weigh,
The ages now gone, and their issues to-day ;
And assign to the worthy, a seat in this hall,
Whilst the light must the worthless, for ever enthrall.
And then ’twill be ours, to take counsel sedate,
Of all, who are weaving the web planned by fate ;
So that these, may the means, and the measures reveal,
Which make, or which mar, fair Erin’s true weal.

But for ages, our land has been favoured by fate,
Whose aim, has aye been, to ennoble her state.
And in the cycle, which soon will before us appear,
Fate gave her welfare, an impetus forward and clear ;
For it bound her by ties, both honourable, fair,
To a land whose full glories, she thereafter might share.
For ’twas fate’s lofty aim, and unwearied design,
That these islands three, in one should combine ;
And a great people form, of magnanimous soul,
Whose progress might hasten, while ages still roll ;
Who should build up an empire, as wide as the sun,
With triumphs the noblest, earth ever has won ;
And when these islands three, were blent under one crown,
Fate showed them the path, to eternal renown.

But, as the sun, ere it reaches the noon’s perfect day,
Must oft shine through dark clouds, and clear them away,
So, through trial and conquest, the right rises supreme,
And progress and peace, must through warfare, oft beam.

“There are forces, retarding the weal of this land,
Which grind its honour to atoms, and its virtue to sand ;
Fair Erin has hugged them, with self-ruinous zest,
With embrace far more fatal, than if hugged by the pest.

But the time will soon come, when the right shall
prevail,

And fair Erin no longer, her lost honour bewail,
But with her two sister isles, and with soul knit to soul,
They will press on with vigour, till they reach their great
goal,

The apex of progress, which this kingdom shall see,
When Britain, the glory of nations will be ;
When her word, to the world, shall give law and sure peace,
For while earth lasts, her lustre shall grow and increase.
And Erin, no longer shall grow in decline,
Her hand will not wither, nor her industries dwine ;
But from the throes of past folly, she will gain sure release,
For hope will yet bring prosperity and peace,
And redeem, too, the land from all its dark past,
And brighten the future, with joy that will last.
Let her only arise, from her place in the dust,
Let her shake herself free, and the powers of good trust ;
Let her only arise, to her worth, and her fame ;
Let her shake off the sons, who are working her shame ;
Let her open her heart, to love and to truth,
And her might will revive, as in days of her youth ;

“ Her beauty will wax as the ages expand,
And her glory will flow over sea and land ;
Her fame will shine forth, as a gem of renown,
The fairest and brightest in Britain’s proud crown.”

Thus Ollave spake, and then amain,
The hall doth ring with shouts again.
But soon is hushed, when forth to view,
There rose and spoke the great BORU :

“ My countrymen, kinsmen, and patriots all,
I know that one thought, doth enkindle your breast ;
For ye fain, would our country to true honour recall,
And inspire it with love, for the true and the best.
But, as one of the last, who have reached this high
sphere,
I feel that our hopes, must be woven with fear.
For disunion for ages, hath continued to flow,
And brought our land, once and oft, to the brink of
o’erthrow ;
And long ere this time, it had crumbled to dust,
Had its own motherland, not come to its aid ;
And when Erin proved loyal, and made her its trust,
The progress of ruin, for ages was stayed.
Yet for many years past, our land is the prey,
Of mongers of treason, who reave it away ;
And who feed selfish ends, by passion and throe,
And pile by their treachery, disaster and woe.

“ Look o’er our land’s history, and read its sad tale,
It is bloated with shame, and a long weary wail.
If Britain’s a tyrant, why don’t Erin’s sons rise,
And fight for their freedom, till the last sword dies?
Has man, or has earth, better soldiers e’er seen,
Than Erin’s leal sons, have aye proved to have been?
Has the sun looked on bolder, or braver deeds too,
Than they, in each age, have aye done, and can do?
Why then, in each plot, that Erin hath planned,
To rise ’gainst the rule of her own motherland;
When she gathered her armies, to stand the full test,
And outnumbered her foes, three times at their best,
Yet her arms aye proved craven, and her sons could not
fight,

And oft, ere they fought, they prepared for full flight?
And why, have her sons, so oft left their own land
In armies, that might every danger withstand?
And preferred to court exile, dishonour, disgrace
Than in right, and in justice, their full trust to place?
Was theirs, not the duty, to work their land’s weal,
Not basely desert her, and spurn with their heel?

’Tis conscience makes cowards of brave men and
strong!

And no man proves a hero, whose cause is the wrong.
Erin’s sons knew their cause, was oftentimes unjust,
’Gainst their own motherland, and lost all their trust;

“ And though spurred to the combat, by spiritual ban,
Neither priests nor the mass, can give conscience to
man.

Erin knew, 'tis as true, as if fate had decreed,
Her arms 'gainst her motherland can never succeed.
'Tis a cause most unholy ; as well take the knife,
And plunge in her bosom, and take her own life.
But we cannot believe that Erin hath planned,
To be traitor and rebel to her own motherland ;
That she will not arise, and shake off with deep scorn,
The bonds of faction, and sham, she hath so long worn ;
That she will not yet show her heart's true to the core,
And the rousers of hate, she doth scout and abhor.

Is not Erin a part of this wonderful State ?
Have her arms not assisted to make it so great ?
And does not blood drawn from her own generous breast,
Flow in veins of this empire, its noblest and best ?
Has not Heaven, these three isles, formed for ages to be,
The realm queen of ocean, gem of earth and of sea ?
As Britain's foe Erin, in no age could succeed,
Though brave as a lion, her sword aye proved a reed.
When they fought side by side, 'neath the same banner
unfurled,
Great Britain and Erin, have defied the whole world.
By her aid Britain's glory has flourished and grown,
And the glory of Britain, she can claim as her own.

“ Will she tarnish its lustre, and cast it away,
 To be sport of all knaves, and destruction’s sure prey?
 Like the ostrich which buries its head in the sand,
 Will she blind herself still, and fall by her own hand?

Nay! the day is now near and soon will arrive,
 When Erin no longer, ’gainst true welfare shall strive;
 But joining hands with Great Britain, the two yet will
 be one,

And no realm shall be fairer beneath the bright sun.
 With heart knit to heart, and with hand clasped in hand,
 Peace, joy, and prosperity, shall bless the whole land.
 Fearing nothing save Heaven all foes they’ll defy,
 And no nation, in splendour, will with them then vie;
 Shedding peace o’er the world, their glory never shall
 wane,

And they shall bring back to earth the golden age again.”

Thus spake Boru, and when he ceased,
 Applause burst forth, and loud increased,
 Then silence falls, as once again,
 Is heard a grand inspiring strain.

But who is he, who now doth rise,
 On whom at once is bent all eyes?
 A man, both venerable, and grand,
 Of genial look, of visage bland;
 With mild cast brow, grey locks of hair,
 A snow-white beard, of length most rare;

None in the hall so aged appears,
And yet not bent, 'neath weight of years.
For though the Bard is old, yet still,
Youth flashes from his eye at will.

This aged sire, all plainly know,
And warmest welcome soon doth flow.
For he who now so calmly rose,
Is one, to whom fair Erin owes,
The fame, which gilds her early prime,
And lustre, shed through after time.

He was the first of men, to place,
His foot, upon fair Erin's shore,
And its rich soil, he did embrace

As his home, in the days of yore ;
Before the flood, he hither came,
Lived ages after, aye the same.
He lived retired, from scenes of strife,
Yet trained his sons to noble life.

But often he appeared in view,
To patriots loyal, just and true.

It is great FIONTAIN, wondrous sage,
Who lived even to the Apostle's age,
Yea later, and for aught he may
Come forth alive even in our day.

But none, more famous in the past,
And few have purer lustre cast,

Than Fiontain, even though he be
A strange, unsolved mystery ;
Though nations, oftentimes, may plan
The type, of some grand, noble man,
As if a model, just to show,
How little of his worth they know.

This sage, with wisdom rare, did guide,
The ebbing and the flowing tide,
Of Erin's welfare, till she rose
To splendour, fairer than now glows
In many lands, both far and wide ;
For she was then of earth the pride.

'Twas Fiontain, who for centuries wore
The palm of wisdom, from of yore :
Of whom men spake the proverb plain,
Which doth even to this day remain,

“ O had I lived half Fiontain's days,
The wide world would my wisdom praise.”
And often did past ages sigh,
And utter forth the longing cry,
That Fiontain might once more appear,
As if his voice all hearts could cheer,
Or might foretell a better age,
For he was seer, as well as sage ;

“ O that great Fiontain, good and wise,
Might only in our day arise !

“ He would redeem the land from wrong,
And make it prosper ages long.”

Noble in heart, and soul, and mind,
A grander statesman you can't find,
Than Fiontain, even though you may
Search the wide world throughout to-day.

O ! for a Fiontain now to rise,
To Erin's sons, both calm and wise ;
To teach his fervid brothers all,
That passion works the land's downfall ;
That sham, and plunder, blood, and guile,
Will desolate the fairest soil,
And make the land an easy prey,
To misery, ruin, and decay ;
But honesty, and truth, and right,
Will gird the land with lasting might ;
With power to beat all evils down,
And gain a bright and firm renown.

'Tis Fiontain who doth now appear,
And speaks, while all lend earnest ear :

“ O Shades of Erin ! whom I may call
My sons, or my descendants all ;
It is a grand and wondrous sight,
To see thus gathered in the light,
A host, whose numbers still expand,
All sprung from our aye honoured land.

“ How little could I dream, when I
 First placed my foot, on its lone strand,
Ages would come, flow on, pass by,
 Pregnant with worth, and beauty grand ?
Erin was then a seed, unsown,
A barren land, an isle unknown ;
Here, she appears a glorious flower,
Rejoicing in immortal dower.
If such flower in the germ lay then,
To what might Erin now attain ?
Yet all the glory of this scene,
Is small to what it might have been.
For every age I’ve known almost,
Grand opportunities hath lost.
I’ve seen the age of birch and pine,
The oak, the alder, grow and dwine,
And had each age, reached its full height,
The sun would envy earth its light.

 I passed through Uladh’s plain one day,
Where on the ground there withering lay,
A berry red, which I could see,
Was blown by the wind from some yew-tree.
I planted it, it grew at length,
A noble tree, in full ripe strength,
And cast a myriad seeds around ;
A forest sprang forth from the ground ;

“ And Uladh’s sons, of these trees, form
Proud vessels, to defy the storm,
On which a hundred heroes stood,
Strong to maintain their country’s good.
I’ve seen these heroes pass away,
The ships, the forest, both decay,
And once more barren, Uladh’s plain,
And oak reclothe its soil again ;
I’ve seen the oak-wold even to fade ;
The ocean roll, where once was glade ;
The land re-emerge both bold and free,
And cities spring where erst was sea.
But through these centuries, I have seen
Virtue and worth, aye fresh, and green,
Adorn the land, and glad the isle,
And make it like a garden smile ;
Although to me it aye did seem,
It might with tenfold virtue beam.
Yet why should I these years repine,
When I now see the land’s decline ?
For these late ages seem to be,
Barren of worth and energy.
And every age seems now to grow,
Less rich in good, less worth to know.
For Erin’s sons in days of old,
Proved every man a hero bold :

“ But now the heroes seem but few,
Still fewer, honest men and true.

Our land once flowed both full and fair,
With hopes most capable and rare ;
Yet evil powers have changed at length,

The healthy current of its stream,
And blasted all its growing strength,
And made it with foul humours teem.

Our sons, like tyrants, crush our State,

And gripe it to one general groan,
The groan of those who find too late,

They've lost their moral nerve and tone ;
And rest at last of every care,
Yield to dark deeds of dire despair.

We well may ask, Is this our land ?

Which once was noble, generous, grand ?

Are these our sons ? Is this our race ?

So seared by guile, so void of grace ?

And we might well reject their claim,

And clear our soul of all their shame,

And wipe our land from off our heart,

And leave it to its froward art.

But no ! hope may from earth far fly,
But in breasts pure it cannot die.

We still have hope our land may see

Its folly past, and yet may be,

“ Roused to new energy and nerve ;
 And the last relics of its worth,
May it in vigour yet preserve,
 Ere it be swept for aye from earth.
We never can believe our land,
 So barren of good men and true,
That there is none, whose potent hand,
 May its past glory yet renew.
 But we believe there yet will spring,
A hero, whose fame wide will ring ;
One who, like Hercules, may rise,
 And quash all sham, hate, blood, and crime ;
Cleanse from hypocrisy and lies,
 More vile even than Augean slime.
Yes ! noble Shades ! there will arise,
A hero powerful, good and wise,
Who Erin’s wrongs will soothe and heal,
And to her foes destruction deal.
 Yes ! we have hope a firm strong hand,
May yet redeem our wretched land,
With no respect to man or creed,
Who our land’s woes so foully breed,
But make the best of them to quail,
 And tremble in their blood-stained path,
And learn the vengeance without fail,
 That lies in roused and righteous wrath.

“That punishment is not in vain,
That they, its bitter dregs must drain,
That those who brewed, must drink the bane,
And wring the utmost drop of pain,
Until at length, by wholesome awe,
They learn obedience to the law.

Mildness for many years has failed ;
Even partial laws have not availed ;
Laws which bestow reward and meed,
On doers of disgraceful deed ;
These have availed merely to prove,
That Erin’s shame runs in fixed groove ;
Destroy the groove, if ye would see,
The land once more, both prosperous, free.

All honour to the hand which now,
Doth wield the sceptre wise and strong ;

The laurel yet shall deck his brow,
Though contumely, now do him wrong.
And though the worthless, him despise,
And cast on him their scurrilous lies,
Yet he is working Erin’s weal,
Which steady firmness yet will seal.

For a new era, prosperous, fair,

He hath inspired throughout the land ;
And roused it, from its dark despair,
And bid it once more rise, expand.

“And he hath won high present fame,
And ages yet, will gild his name.

But not far distant is the day,
If right and firmness hold their sway,
When cleansed from sham, and crime, and guile,

And every form of cruel wrong,
Prosperity and peace will smile,

And bless the land, for ages long.
And bound to Britain, heart and hand,

And ever faithful, true and leal,
A glorious future, will command

The fulness of its worth and weal.”
Thus Fiontain spake, and shouts arise
In swelling tones which rend the skies.
With grateful hearts and loud acclaim,
All honour Fiontain’s ancient name.

With harp in hand, once more the choir,
With their pure tones all hearts inspire.
Now for a time, as one may see,
The host so glorious, grand and free,
Converse in glad, yet earnest tone,
While brighter still the hall now shone.



BOOK IV.

The Roll of Fame.



THE ELYSIUM OF ERIN.

Book III.

THE ROLL OF FAME.

THE hall shines bright, and breathes of calm ;
While sweet aromas, rich and rare,
From every plant, from rose to palm,
Distilled now, on the midnight air,
Shed by the flowers, and shrubs, and trees,
That bloom fresh in the garden fair,
And aptly mingled by the breeze,
To all, the sweetest fragrance bear.—
The harps at length, all cease to play ;
The host, their earnest converse stay ;
When to all eyes, there next is seen,
With noble and majestic mien,
The SON of ART, who now arose,
While welcome, even to ardour grows.

The monarch hears, and raises hand,
And silence falls, at this command.

His voice, melodious, fills the hall,
Each tone is heard, by one and all ;

“ O noble Shades ! it cheers one’s breast
To see this bright and brilliant hall ;

To see so many of the best,
On whom its glorious light doth fall ;
Whose brilliance makes our hope increase,
While we enjoy its calm and peace.

’Tis but the reflex, rich and rare,
Of purer light, in realm more fair ;
And of the joy, which we well know,
From worth, doth ever, fully flow.

But yet our joy, though full it be,
Is aye enlarged by sympathy.
And even in our lofty sphere,
No virtue is to us more dear.

Have we not learned a nobler theme,
Than those on earth do ever dream ?

That the grand fulness of true joy,

Lies in diffusing it around ;

That it aye grows, while we employ,

The means, to make its range abound ;

That those, who shed it everywhere,

Will gain themselves, the larger share ?

“ Have we not learned, joy is a fruit,
That blossoms only from the root,
That the ripe fruit, you can't command,
Till every atom, grow, expand.

As the whole plant must have its share,
Of soil, space, sun, and rain, and air ;
And vital force, must use its power,

To make each atom, equal grow ;
And through the plant, from seed to flower,
One impulse, must aye, constant, flow ;
The flower full beauty, gains at length,
And ripens to rare fruit, and strength.

So, in the far-off clime, where we,
Roam in the light, for ever free.
What is the joy, that we there know ?
Is it round self, for aye to grow ?
Is it to concentrate our force,
Make it our aim, use each resource,
To cause light's pleasures, aye to roll,
Around our own, one atom soul,
To heap our own bliss, yet not care,
How small the portion others share ?
Nay ! that would for ever blight our joy,
And mar our peace, our weal destroy.
But every member of our State,
The commonwealth of fame so great,

“ Strives with full power of mind and heart,
To do his own true noble part,
In shedding bright sunshine always,
Around each other's upward way.
Each vies with each, how best he may,
A wider good and hope display ;
And round each other's light-girt name,
 Weave yet more gladness and renown ;
Lend still more lustre, to his fame,
 And add more beauty to his crown.
'Tis thus for one, a thousand lend
Their impulse, to one common end ;
The joy of all thus perfect grows,
Till infinite, at length it flows.

 This, is the brotherhood of man ;
This is the principle, which can,
Even on the earth, if it were grown,
Yield the perfection, yet unknown.

 All men are brothers, Heaven hath said,
Both of the living, and the dead :
And thus a unity sublime,
Runs through all space, and worlds, and time.
We, quickened from the earth's dull grave
May our world-kin, aye help to save :
And in our higher realm, we can
Do much, to aid, our brother man.

“ Even while he treads life’s burdened way,
While thorns and thistles his soul fray,
We can such sympathy, aye lend,
As will inspire to noble end.
We, even to nations, may apply,
Such impulse, as will raise them high ;
Thus, while, in our high sphere of light,
Our bliss is pure, and ever bright,
Yet even the highest bliss may be,
Gilded by kindly sympathy.

’Tis for this end, that one and all,
Have gathered in this glorious hall,
Whose brilliance still is scarce one ray,
Of what our loftier realms display.

But yet, as one and all here know,
This glory, doth from past deeds flow.
It is the worth of ancient time,
Which makes this scene, now so sublime.
We share its beauty, and its joy,

That we our skill may ever lend,
And all our energies employ,

To forward one great common end.
And by the memories of past worth,
And by the noblest deeds of earth,
And by the hopes of life on high,
And by the glory which can’t die,

“ To spur man to the good and true,
And point him to his lofty goal ;
Eternal worth, let him pursue
Steadfast as needle to the pole.
But chiefly it is ours to shed,
The unseen influence of our grace,
Around the isle, where we were bred,
And o'er our land and common race ;
And by our merit past, though small,
To higher worth, our brothers call ;
And by the deeds, which gild our name,
To inspire our sons, to nobler fame.

Let, then, our kindred on the earth,
Recall the deeds of noble worth,
Wrought by their sires, through ages past,
Whose lustre, will even earth outlast ;
Deeds honest, pure, just, and upright,
Good, virtuous, loyal, noble, bright :
Such deeds alone, let them well know,
Can lustre o'er a nation throw.
'Tis virtue makes a people great :
Worth is the glory of a State.
The people's doomed, who foster crime,
To be the castaways of time.

If Erin doth with wrongs o'erflow,
She sowed the seeds, of all her woe ;

“ A people brave, good, just, and true,
Will never cringe to evil fate ;
But will unflinchingly pursue
The steady worth, which makes them great.
Let Erin then, even now arise,
And prove by noble deeds and wise,
That she has yet, the force and skill,
To rise to greatness if she will ;
That she has still the moral nerve,
No longer, to play fast and loose
With virtue ; that she doth preserve
Some nobler instincts for high use.
Then may she earn an honoured place,
Among the foremost of the race,
'Mong nations who are pressing on,
With energy before unknown,
In progress, which must still increase,
Till earth is filled, with joy and peace.
For good must triumph, and reveal,
The one grand Commonwealth of Weal.
And we have hope, our land may yet
Gain lustre, which will never set ;
We hope our land has yet some son,
Born, or gestating in her womb,
By whom her welfare, may be won,
Who may her shame yet all entomb :

“ One touched by truth’s all-living fire,
To rouse all hearts, all souls inspire
With energy, and fearless might,
To strike for goodness, truth, and right,
For the great freedom, which doth lie,
In weaving noble destiny ;
In working out the purpose given,
To every land, by grace of Heaven,
To seek and find its highest weal,
In truth to which Heaven set its seal.
No people gains true liberty,
Till conscience first of all is free.

Our land may yet redeem its past,
And this true freedom gain at last.
Its virtue, may unceasing grow,
Prosperity, the land o’erflow ;
Kindness and sympathy will spread,
True brotherhood will thus prevail ;
Honour will crown then every head,
And peace and joy will never fail.
And then, will many a noble name,
Be inscribed upon the Roll of Fame ;
Our isle, true worth, will soon attain,
Its glory, thus will never wane.”

Thus Cormac spake, both calm and wise,
With glad applause, the hall replies.

And now there fall upon the ear,
 Melodious notes, both loud and long.
 The Voice and Choir in tones most clear,
 Alternate in this simple song :

1.

The Voice. O say ! have you heard of Tara Hall,
 Its beauty rare, its nobles all ?
 Have you ever heard of its wondrous light,
 Surpassing the day, so clear and bright ?
 Have you ever heard, of the joy of all,
 Who walk in the light of Tara Hall ?

2.

The Choir. Is not this then Tara Hall so bright ?
 Are we not those, who walk in the light ?
 Can joy be found like this more keen ?
 Has radiance purer e'er been seen ?
 Is not this the splendour surpassing all ?
 Is not this the glory of Tara Hall ?

3.

The Voice. O no ! O no ! it cannot be so ;
 For Tara Hall doth sweeter glow.
 This is not the joy, that knows no pain,
 This is not the glory, that cannot wane,
 This is not the light, that ne'er can pall,
 Nor even the shadow of Tara Hall.

4.

The Choir. O where! then is Tara Hall to be found,
Above, beneath, or under the ground?
In heaven on high, or on earth so low,
Or in deepest shades of night below?
Yet, why should we seek for Tara Hall,
Or care to walk, in its light, at all?

5.

The Voice. For Tara Hall, you will vainly go,
To heaven, or earth, or the shades below.
Where the ocean kisses the lips of day,
In the golden meads, where the sunsets
play;
Where the spirits roam free, of this earthly
ball,
It is there, you must look, for Tara Hall.

6.

It is there, in the land of eternal day,
Where truth is the sunbeam, and love bears
sway;
Where all that is purest, of earthly fame,
Is dowered with the bliss of a fadeless name;
Where no breath of envy, or malice, can fall,
It is there, you must look, for Tara Hall.

7.

'Tis where good deeds of earth, have an after-glow,
Which their brightest noon here, can never know ;
Where in lustre sincere, and unvarnished they shine,
And their beauty is deepened, by glory divine.
For every pure thought, and kind word, great or
 small,
Go to brighten the light of Tara Hall.

8.

But each land hath its Tara Hall, I ween,
Where its worth, and its fame, and its beauty are seen ;
Where the brave, and the pure, and the honest, and
 true,
Who on country, and mankind, rich blessings did
 strew,
Will reach to high honours, earth cannot forestall,
And walk in the light of Tara Hall.

9.

And if life's highest purpose you therefore would gain,
And the welfare, that's purest, hereafter attain ;
If the peace that's perennial, you hope to secure,
With the bliss, that far longer than earth, can endure ;
Or if glory, or joy, you care for at all,
You must walk, in the light of Tara Hall ?

10.

The Choir. And who then will sit in Tara Hall?
 On whom, will its mantle of light e'er fall?
 Will king, or queen, be welcome there?
 Will peasant, or beggar, its happiness share?
 Will there be room for these, for great and
 small,
 To walk, in the light of Tara Hall?

11.

The Voice. O yes! there is room in Tara Hall,
 But not for these, or not for all.
 But for him, whose heart is pure and white,
 Who hath passed through the fire, and can
 bear the light;
 Whose soul hath been cleansed, and its stains
 washed all,
 For him, there is room, in Tara Hall.

12.

The Choir. But why, by this noble name do you call
 This place, if it be not true Tara Hall?
 What interest have we now assembled here,
 In this higher, and nobler, and far-off sphere?
 And what is this splendour, which rests on
 us all,
 If it be not the light of Tara Hall?

13.

The Voice. Know that earth, even the shadow of heaven
cannot be,
Till from self, and from sin, and from strife,
it is free ;
And the pure light must break, o'er this
earthly scene,
And sift out the true, from the base, and the
mean ;
And the light, in its beauty, and grace, will
then fall,
This will then, be the shadow of TARA HALL.

The song has ceased, and silence now,
Doth sit serene, on every brow.
Then trumpets flourish, and their sound,
Makes every heart, with joy rebound.
Soon all is still ; one moment more,
The host, an eager presence, wore,
As now there flows a tender air,
Which soothes each breast, with peace most rare ;
And then anon, doth all inspire,
With ardent hope, and fond desire.
For even the humblest now doth know,
Past deeds, their worth, will clearly show.

Yet all expect, their deeds will shine,
In letters writ, by art divine.

For every deed of noble mind,
Made pure by faith, by love refined,
Is written on the page of fame,
In lustre, which outlasts all time,
To dower man with a glorious name,
Eternal, pure, and even sublime.

Meantime four heralds next are seen,
Bearing a Volume, rayed with sheen,
Of gorgeous hue, of ample size,
Which calls deep wonder, in all eyes.
'Tis bound in silver, chased most rare ;
Its clasp, a diamond, flashing fair ;
Its page is made of purest gold ;
Truth's pen, its mysteries, doth enfold.

The heralds move with stately ease,
And their whole aspect seems to please.
At length they reach the central zone,
Where stands a lofty vacant throne,
Of purest quartz, like crystallised light,
Clear, and transparent, to the sight ;
And every eye may it command.

Near this is fixed a noble stand,

Of rarest form, of chaste design,
With gems, which might enrich a mine.
On this, and with most charming grace,
The heralds now, the Volume place.

What is this Volume, which all see?
What may its hidden wonders be?

It is fair Erin's ROLL OF FAME; |
Here is inscribed, each noble name,
Who by their worth, or great, or small,
Have earned a place in Tara Hall.

But mark the Volume, here so rare,
With which none earthly can compare.
'Tis not the Roll of Fame alone,
But symbol, to be read and known;
For what in sign, all here may see,
The man of worth, must ever be.

The silver, bright and chasteful hue,
Denotes worth, modest, genuine, true.
The diamond, hard, yet flashing keen,
Moves not to touch, or base, or mean.
Its light destroys the vile, most sure,
The roll, it opens to the pure.

So guarded by a conscience clear,
The man of worth, need never fear;
The light of truth, destroys all sin,
And aye keeps pure, the heart within.

But note the inner page of gold,
On which truth has all worth enrolled.
The page is hid, so it must be,
The gauge of worth, we never see.
Its deep rich mine, still lies concealed,
And but a part, can be revealed.
For worth doth aye expand, and grow,
And its full beauty, none can know.
Earth measures by a different gauge,
And fashion dominates each age.
So that, on worthless men, and vile,
Mere worldly fame, oft sheds its smile.
The base and mean however high,
In wealth, and power, and dignity,
Are but the tinsel of the earth,
And barren of all real worth ;
Their outer, is their better side,
Their goodness is but surface wide ;
'Tis not a colour in the pan,
And 'tis mere dress, that forms the man.

But see, the glorious sheen appear,
Around the Volume, bright and clear ;
These rays ineffable, now flow,
From the good deeds, which inward glow.

So from each good man, there doth spread,
Pure influences, which may shed,

Rays of such splendour, as even may,
Lend light, to form eternal day.

The harp hath ceased its joyous strain,
When Cormac's voice, is heard again :

“O Sons of Erin ! here behold,
The roll of those refined as gold ;
Who passed through fire, and stood the test,
Whose worth now ranks them with the best.
Their faults though great, and not a few,
Can rise no longer to the view ;
They have been purged, so that all now,
May stand forth, with no shameful brow.

But Sons of Erin ! now may we,
In part, unloose this Roll, and see,
All those inscribed, who have the right,
To walk in Tara's brilliant light.
Then BARD august ! arise, and read,
Each lustrous name, each worthy deed ;
Declare the ROLL OF FAME ; recall
The glorious past, in Tara Hall.”

Thus Cormac spake, mid deep repose.
Calm and sedate, the Bard arose,
And walked, with mien, majestic, grand,
Which admiration doth command,

Led by the heralds, to the throne,
Before the stand, which brightly shone.
This throne of splendour, he ascends,
And ardent joy the welkin rends,
Then in full melody the choir,
Burst into strains, which all inspire ;
These died away, in vocal song,
Whose rich sweet notes now swell along.
These words then fall upon the ear,
In tones, melodious, calm, and clear.

1.

O say ! what is fame in the annals of time ?
Is it worthy a thought or a sigh ?
Can it lend to our spirits, wings pure and sublime,
When we have lain down to die ?

2.

Can it dower our mind with a vision so keen,
That we may the future see,
And know with bright hope, and with trust serene,
What we shall hereafter be ?

3.

Can it give to our being, an impulse so true,
When we leave this lower sphere,
That our spirits will soar in vigour aye new,
Till the fulness of glory appear ?

4.

Can it gift our soul with a limitless scope,
To roam with the Spirits on high,
To converse on the themes of immortal hope,
So life's mysteries may open lie ?

5.

Can it draw us more near, to Him who is pure,
Till our souls are made fair by His grace,
And grow to the beauty, that aye will endure,
And we see Him then face to face ?

6.

Nay ! fame is of earth, and its lustre must die,
Like the sound of the passing bell ;
But the glory that's fadeless, and raises us high,
Is the glory of doing well.

When ceased at length the vocal strain,
The trumpets flourish once again.
On this, arose the noble SAGE,
And now unclasped the glorious page,
And spread out wide before the view
The Roll of all, the good and true ;
Those who have won fair Erin fame,
And earned themselves immortal name.

The act inspires in all new nerve,
And fills them with a lofty verve.
The rapture once more freely flows ;
The fervour for one moment grows ;
'Tis but a moment, for at length,
When it had reached its utmost strength,
The mystic harp emits one sound,
And silence falls on all profound !

And then in clear, mellifluous voice,
In mellow tones, in accents choice,
The noble BARD, began to read,
The illustrious Roll of genuine deed,
Which gilds the heroes of the past,
With glory, which will time outlast.

Age after age, have their full due,
Of men renowned, both good, and true :
Of women too, as fair as day,
Faithful and chaste, as light's pure ray ;
Who did unbounded influence wield,
In forming men, who never yield,
Whom fire and sword, can never shake,
When truth, right, virtue, lie at stake.

But not for mortal tongue or pen,
To sing of those, beyond earth's ken ;
To tell a tithe, of deeds which claim,
A place on Erin's Roll of Fame.

Ages glide down time's flowing stream,
Yet none in which worth does not gleam.
For even the years, which teem with wrong,
Yield heroes, honest, brave, and strong,
And loyal hearts, who loving right,
For conscience die, for freedom fight.
A glorious galaxy these be,
And countless as the sand by sea,
From the first age which Erin knew,
Down to the day of great Boru,
Here represented one and all,
The heirs of light, in Tara Hall.

The Roll is ample and complete ;
To all, it doth full honours mete,
Even from the humblest to the chief,
Though numberless beyond belief.

And yet methought, the wondrous page, /
Missed many names, from every age ;
Men who were first in their own day,
For fame, the world loves to display,
And to hand down to after-time,
In thrilling tale, or ready rhyme ;
Such fame, as springs from war and spoil,
From wrong, and crime, which states embroil ;
From selfish ends, from fraud, and guile,
On which the world doth often smile,

And on the men its lustre shed,
Around their names, and dust-lined bed :
 These men, all here forgotten are,
Their place from Tara, lies afar.

 But there are those who here arise,
Whose names on earth, might cause surprise ;
Men who were honest, just, sincere,
For truth and right, aye void of fear ;
Men poor, yet wise ; though humble, brave ;
Whose arm rose swift, their land to save :
These men, their country's muscle, nerve,
Its brain, and blood, to guide and serve ;
These men, whom self could never swerve ;
Whose names, Time, well, might long preserve,
But in its haste forgot to call,
These are the pride of Tara Hall :
Those for whom earth, found no renown,
Yet here have gained the noblest crown.

 For good deeds in the balance weigh,
By virtue, not by mere display :
By power to save, not to destroy,
Not to spread pain, but peace and joy ;
By power to free men from despair,
To give them hope, their griefs to share,

To touch with sympathy their heart,
Rouse it for some immortal part ;
Such power doth raise to rank divine,
Such good for ages long will shine.

The noble Bard at length hath read
The last name on the illustrious Roll ;
New lustre beams on every head,
New beauty flows o'er every soul ;
The harps bold melodies employ,
And these inspire the glorious throng,
Whilst every heart o'erflows with joy,
A voice melodious, breaks to song.

I.

O happy are they ! from earth set free !
Whose deeds have been laid bare ;
Whose life in the balance of truth has been weighed,
Nor found to be wanting, for grace o'er them has laid,
Her mantle of beauty fair.

2.

O happy are they ! time's work is done !
Their troubles are all now past,
Their warfare is over, their race is run,
A career of perfection they have begun,
Faith's energy blossoms at last.

3.

O happy are they ! they are framed anew,
And moulded to form divine !
Their garments of dust have been purged by fire,
They are clothed with the beauty of pure desire,
And in robes immortal shine.

4.

O happy are they ! they roam on high,
And to light ineffable soar !
They pass on to regions beyond the sun,
And the power of eternal rise have won,
And the glory for evermore.





BOOK V.

The Call of the Ages.



THE ELYSIUM OF ERIN.

Book V.

THE CALL OF THE AGES.

DEEP wonder now doth rest on all,
Assembled in this glorious hall,
As they, in rapture, gaze around,
Mid silence sudden and profound ;
As they behold with doubting eyes,
The mighty hosts, before them rise ;
Those who have earned an honoured name,
Inscribed upon the Roll of Fame.

Can Erin in her generous womb,
Find for real worth such ample room ?
Can her fair lustre in the past,
Shine forth, in multitudes so vast ?
If ages past, such glory build,
What must the present cycle yield !

Such thoughts may well engage the mind,
Of those who here, all sit refined ;
Who wait till ages hold to view,
How Erin's honours still accrue.
But only for a moment brief,
Can thought, in dreams, find fond relief.
For now, amid enraptured cheers,
CORMAC, with beaming eye, appears ;
And speaks, when all is quiet again,
In words though eloquent, yet plain :

“ O noble Shades ! we meet now here,
All gathered from our higher sphere,
And for your deeds, by fame now owned,
And by your virtue here enthroned ;
We meet, our native land to weigh,
And its last cycle, to survey ;
And by the light, its worth to test,
Reject the base, co-mate the best.

Three cycles here, we may behold,
Our land's real worth, from days of old,
Even from the days of Erin's prime,
Until Boru's renascent time,
When Erin sprang to life anew,
And promise gave of glory true.
May we not hope this promise now,
Will splendour add, to Erin's brow ;

“ And that this cycle, though the last,
Will far excel all cycles past ?
Our land doth now beam forth full bright,
By splendour, shed by your pure light ;
What must its glory be when we,
The worth of the last ages see !

For well ye know, as ages pass,
They rise, through stone, and iron and brass,
To bronze, and silver, yea pure gold ;
For virtue grows, as time’s unrolled.
This is a Heaven-set law, and clear,
And reigns supreme, in our high sphere ;
And though on earth its force is slow,
Kept back by powers both dark and low,
Yet, ’tis the essence of real good,
Its onward force, can’t be withstood :
For virtue never knows decline,
Through ages it must brighter shine.

As doth the sun, at morning ray,
Drive even the darkest night away,
And at full noon, it doth as well,
The densest storms, and clouds, dispel ;
So right, if firm, most surely will,
Grow to full triumph over ill :
For virtue, must its issue see,
In the perfection yet to be.

“ Thus men and states must ever grow,
In moral pith, as ages flow.
The noble, must dispel the rude,
And weight of years, yield weight of good.
’Tis true that men and nations too,
Ere this grand law, can have its due,
Must aye be trained, yea trials share,
As trees are pruned, ere fruit they bear.
And thus each nation, tribe, and race,
Must oft cruel wrongs, and dangers face :
Must battle with disasters dire,
Be tossed on floods, be scorched with fire,
Ere they, the path of virtue, gain,
Ere they, the heights of good, attain.

For virtue’s never reached through ease,
And good’s not shed by every breeze :
Worth waits not weather ; yet best doth grow,
When rough storms rage and tempests blow.
The richest ore, to be made pure,
Must aye the fiercest heat endure ;
So gold is aye refined from dross,
The scum alone doth suffer loss.

Can we expect or even desire,
That our land should escape the fire,
Or that the cycle past, hath been,
The smoothest she has ever seen ?

“Nay! for our love is far too strong,
To wish her such a cruel wrong.
The ore, that is not worth the flame,
Is mullock vile, the mine’s sad shame.
The soil, that will not stand the plough,
Can never teeming granaries stow ;
But noxious weeds, ’twill surely bear,
To poison heaven’s salubrious air.
The race, that never knows the test,
Of throes and pangs, that rack the breast,
And rend the heart, and wring the soul,
Can never reach to virtue’s goal ;
Whose short paths aye are grief and pain,
Which yet real worth and glory gain.

But in the cycle that is past,
Our land was in the furnace cast,
And hath brought forth as genuine ore,
As even the ages from of yore.
And we are glad, for thus she’s shown,
Her virtue tested, is made known.
And yet we fear a fiercer heat
Were needed, her full worth to mete.
So, if this cycle lacks pure hue,
To this, its dimness must be due.

But be the issue what it may,
Or murksome night, or fairer day,

“ Yet this fourth cycle cannot be,
The last our native land will see ;
Though since her dawn, shed its first ray,
Empires have come, and passed away.
But be assured, not even yet,
Has Erin’s sun declined or set.
It may be at this present hour,
That it has lost its pristine power.
But we have met, to judge and try,
What radiance it has lost, and why,
And when the ages have been weighed,
To call on higher powers to aid,
So purer aims, and firmer hand,
May yet ennoble our dear land ;
And its fair splendour spread afar,
On wider course like morning star,
To herald in a brighter day,
Of peace and truth, to last away.”

So spake the Son of Art, and then
The glorious harp renewed its strain ;
So sweet, so tender, and so rare,
Are now the tones of its short air,
It seems to charm all listening ears,
With music of the heavenly spheres.

When it has ceased, then next the choir,
Send forth a strain, which all admire ;

Yet linger not, on its tones long,
For soon they burst into this song :

I.

O ! what say the cycles as onward they roll,
And the years, as they flow by ?
Is life but a beat, and is time but a breath ?
Is being, no more than the shadow of death ?
And is man only born to die ?

2.

And what is Humanity ? Hath it no end,
Or purpose, which it can display ?
Must it wither and fade, as the grass on the lea ?
Or vanish, as foam on the tempest-tossed sea ?
Or grow and develope alway ?

3.

And what is the Universe ? Whence hath it come ?
And what will its destiny be ?
Hath it sprung from the mist, will it waste into fire ?
Will it grow to such beauty, as Heaven may admire ?
Or in barren whirls riot free ?

4.

The cycles they chant, as onward they fly,
And the ages, in clear tone tell,
That Time is the dawn of eternal day,
That Life is but Heaven's first morning ray,
And Being its sunshine as well.

5.

That man has been dowered with a noble soul,
 To soar up to realms on high ;
And in the light of Heaven's love, he eye may shine,
And be moulded at last to beauty divine,
 And be robed in immortality.

6.

And Humanity is no tempest-tossed foam,
 Unsteered by a compass or chart ;
But 'tis instinct, with the life, and the sympathy,
Which is high as the heavens, and broad as the sea,
 And is kin to the Eternal Heart :

7.

The Heart, which throughout the wide Universe throbs,
 And beams, on all from above ;
And makes being seraphic, or human aspire,
To be clothed with true beauty, and worth's living fire,
 And o'erflow, with His perfect love.

8.

And Humanity, hath a grand part to play,
 As well as one noble and pure ;
In the plan of the Universe Heaven hath designed,
In the progress of spirit, of soul, and of mind,
 And the love that must ever endure.

9.

As the cycles flow on, and the years pass by,
Heaven's purposes ripen and grow ;
And the ages bring with them a widening scope,
And man is new formed, and new paths given to hope,
And man's sympathies deeper flow.

10.

As Humanity rises thus age by age,
Its aims grow more lofty and grand ;
And each age forms a step, in that infinite Weal,
Which Heaven has ordained, and for man yet will seal,
And eternity yet will expand.

11.

But cycles must pass and mankind will still,
In beauty, and worth, ever grow ;
Nor yet until thought can wide space fully span,
Can ye reach to the ultimate glory of man,
And the end of Humanity know.

The song has ceased, and all is still,
And anxious thought doth each mind fill.
But hark ! what sudden sound doth break,
O'er all the scene, both deep and drear ;
Which makes the vaults and arches shake,
And well might spread dismay and fear,

And cause mere mortals shrink aghast,
So weird and awesome is the blast ;
While now the trumpets, loud do peal,
The very hall begins to reel,
As if the depths of space were laid,
Wide open, by some power most dread.
Yet here all sit, unmoved, at ease,
Less ruffled, than by summer breeze.
For scarce a moment peals the blast,
Yet rolls with mighty impulse vast,
Bearing through space an urgent hest,
O'er north, and south, and east, and west,
To the wide regions where the sun,
Had first his stately course begun,
Even to the realms where now afar,
Doth glimmer faint the farthest star.
The hest doth full assurance gain
From those concerned, by words most plain,
As in clear voice, the Bard doth call,
The AGES past to Tara Hall :

“ Come forth ! ye AGES, since Boru !
Ye good men all, ye brave and true,
Ye who have won fair Erin fame,
And added lustre to her name ;
Ye brave, and fair, ye great, and small,
Come take your place in Tara Hall ! ”

The trumpets then blare forth once more,

Fast open flew, the spacious door ;
And then march in with stately gait,
Princes and peasants, small and great,
Merchants and farmers, statesmen too,
Soldiers and tradesmen, not a few,
Matrons and maids, surpassing fair,
Yea, every rank, and class, are there :
They move along, in grand array ;
Before them, opens up a way,
Which leads them to the central zone,
In front of fame's majestic throne,
Where now is seen, an ample space,
Which ten wide areas doth embrace ;
One area, for each age is meant,
And thither each, their footsteps bent ;
In front the latest age appears,
The rest behind, ranged by their years ;
In numbers countless, yet all are,
Marshalled with ease, without one jar.

When all have reached their destined place,
The several ages we may trace.
Eight areas seem to be complete ;
The foremost, has not filled its leet,
But lacketh still, its perfect strength ;
While wholly vacant, is the tenth.
The ninth age, hath not yet quite gone,
This generation still runs on.

The tenth, lies hid in time's great womb,
 To shed more lustre, or more gloom.
 But in these ages ten are seen,
 The Fourth Great Cycle, with its sheen,
 The fourth since Erin nurtured worth,
 The sixth since mankind sprang to birth ;
 Although ten cycles, some now say,
 Have passed since man first saw the day.

The trumpets now a third time blare,
 And solemn thoughts these ages wear.
 The door is closed, and none can leave,
 Till all their due desert receive.

But hark ! the Bard ! as calm, serene,
 He scans each age with vision keen,
 And then at length, with accents bland,
 Doth issue forth this strange command :

“ Why are the Ages, not here all now told ?
 Why is this Cycle not fully unrolled ?
 Have we not the power o'er its ages to see,
 The Living of earth, the Unborn yet to be ?
 Have we not the vision of truth now to know,
 To what, its full worth, and its splendour may grow ?
 Let the remnant of worth, in these ages appear ;
 Let this land's loyal sons, let her friends all be here,
 Bring those who will work, her dark wounds soon to heal.
 Who will raise her to honour, who will widen her weal ;

“ Bring forth all the noble, the honest, and true,
That we their full lustre, and beauty, may view.

Go forth then, ye heralds! go forth, and now call,
The UNBORN, and the LIVING, to fair Tara Hall ! ”

The heralds went ; the heralds came ;
Now oped, now closed, the door’s wide frame ;
The Living stand, the Unborn appear,
In forms not flesh, yet calm, and clear !

Once more, the Bard doth gaze around,
Mid silence, like far space, profound.
His eye doth pierce the ages clear,
Now beaming glad, now sad, severe.
None know what his deep thoughts may mean,
He speaks, yet still remains serene :

“ ’TIS DONE ! the cycle is complete !
Justice, to all, their due will mete.
But ere the light doth fix its seal,
Lay bare each deed, the true reveal,
Let any, conscious of such shame,
As shuts them from this hall of fame,
Take now the grace, we give once more,
And flee by the wide-open door.
Lest guilt in bitterness now drain
The dregs of shame, remorse and pain ! ”

The Bard thus spake, and then all saw,
The ages ten, were filled with awe ;

And when the door is opened wide,
It seems that few will now abide,
For with one impulse, one can see,
That many are inclined to flee,
As if their safety lies in flight,
And they durst not abide the light.
But when they move, a gentle strain,
Compels them calmly, to remain.
It clears their mind, it soothes their breast,
And makes them bold, to stand their test.
And these, were those, the good and true,
Whose modesty, their worth, scarce knew ;
Who strove their country's wounds to cure,
And peace and liberty secure.

But there are those, who now appear,
Quite unconcerned, and void of fear ;
Who never think they need to flee,
Though wide the door, and they are free,
But gaze around, as if their place,
Were 'mong the noblest of their race.
'Twas these all afterwards could learn,
Who rushed on doom, most dread and stern ;
Who false at heart, too soon will know,
What dire remorse from guilt doth flow.

These things are hid, for none can now
Trace modest, from the brazen brow,
Save those, purged by pure light who see,

What is, and not, what seems to be.
Yet even here, there are but few,
Who now enjoy this lofty view ;
Thus guilt and innocence are seen,
Meantime, to show a similar mien ;
So justice, good and bad may try,
With equal, and impartial eye,
Till deeds themselves reveal their hue,
And manifest the false from true.

As yet, the light doth softly glow,
But with a fuller beam 'twill flow ;
For even the light hath varying grades,
'Tis truth, alone, that knows no shades.
But light's full power, all soon will feel,
And good from base, it will reveal.

At length, doth cease the gentle strain,
But all, within the hall remain :
For the whole mass, is still uncleft,
And it is plain, that none have left.
Thus two wide principles, are shown,
And early make the mass well known.
For even the Bard's behest made clear,
There entered those with no right here.

The Bard now spake in accents grave,
Which anxious thought, to most minds gave :

"Tis so! Be now the cycle sealed!

"Let worth and virtue be revealed!"

At once, a lambent flame doth fly,
Around the cycle, and doth ply,
A threefold marge of diverse hue,
Of orange, violet, purple too,
Which knits, by some mysterious spell,
The living, and the unborn, as well,
To the nine ages of the past,
And thus completes the cycle vast.
The marge forms thus a neutral tone,
To show, that fate remains unknown,
That guilt and innocence must be,
First weighed, and judged by every plea;
By mercy, right, and goodness too,
So none may lose their full-earned due.

'Tis thus that all assembled here,

By their own choice are now arraigned.

Yet while the light shines bright and clear,

Full confidence is still maintained;

Within the marge all eager wait,

The unveiling of their future fate.



BOOK VI.



The Bar of Truth.



THE ELYSIUM OF ERIN.

Book VI.

THE BAR OF TRUTH.

BUT hark ! once more a trumpet blows !
The open door doth silent close ;
Silence more stern, and far more dread,
Than thunders, rolling overhead.
It tells of doom, none can eschew,
And gives no hope, for mis-timed rue.
Escape once safe, is now too late,
Calm opportunity has fled ;
For guilt is held in grasp of fate ;
Even innocence is filled with dread ;
Dire retribution comes at last,
Though ages, since the sin, have passed.

O ! what an hour must this appear,
To all whose conscience is not clear !

What refuge, can sin now embrace ?
 Judgment and guilt, stand face to face !
 The arm of justice is laid bare,
 What plea, can guilt expect will spare ?
 What can redeem from deathless woe ?
 What arm arrest the fatal blow ?

There is no power, in earth or heaven,
 To whom authority is given,
 When justice, has begun to smite,
 To stay the blow, or blunt its might.
 Even mercy, must look on in grief,
 Powerless to save, or send relief :
 One Power can bear, yea ward the blow,
 Could guilt in time, that Power but know.

And now the mystic harp again,
 Sounds forth a solemn weirdsome strain :
 And for a time, it pensive flows,
 Then deeper, and more pensive grows,
 Till sudden, bursts to strain more bold :
 At once, the cycle, all behold,
 Encircled by a bar of light,
 In lustre, like the sun so bright :
 The BAR OF TRUTH, so chaste and pure,
 Whose doom, once said, must aye endure.

This bar doth not the whole entwine,
 Of those within the lambent line :

But only those, who've lost the sun,
Whose thread of life is fully spun :
For living and unborn all stand,
Without the Bar of Truth so grand.
Their hour to enter hath not come,
Their doom, though weaving, still is dumb.

The Bar of Truth ! Can there then be
A dread tribunal for all men ?

Where time will all its secrets see,
Pierced by the eye of infinite ken ?

Where every heart, will be laid bare,
And every mind will be revealed ;

Where not a deed, or foul, or fair,
And not a thought can be concealed ?

The Bar of Truth ! so pure and clear,
Must all before it yet appear ?

Must all the ages of the past,
With all their deeds, and thoughts so vast,
Be sifted at this bar so dread,

And by its brilliant light be weighed ?

Must every man and every thought,
Before its scrutiny be brought ;

And must man's vile within, be seared,
Ere Being pure, can say he's cleared ?

The Bar of Truth ! who can believe,
The universe boasts such a sieve ?

Where is the power can sift and try,
When all life is a living lie?
When man is false, in every pore,
And his heart rotten at the core?
Where is the record can contain,
Where is the mind which can explain,
One atom of the deeds all done,
In one tithe of the ages gone?
Where is the power, which yet can raise
The mortals of all by-past days?
Where is the scene can offer room
To hear, and to pronounce the doom?

 The Bar of Truth! O simple man!
You deem, you can creation scan,
And yet you stumble, yea you fall,
Even at the threshold of the All.
You search, yet your eyes wander wide,
For what is ever, at your side.
But doubt not, puny mortal mind,
The Bar of Truth, in time you'll find.
'Tis infinite! 'tis also terse!

 'Tis in each part of the Grand Whole;
'Tis boundless as the Universe,
 And yet set up in every soul.
The soul, once free from earth, ne'er dies,
And needs no power, to bid it rise.

Where'er it be, it there can hear,
The doom, its deeds declare, most clear.
Shed, if you please, off every fear,

 Tear all religion from your heart,
Count everything that's vile, most dear,
 And strengthen every impious art ;
But yet you'll find, the truth is near,
 One day to pierce you with its dart ;
That not a tittle, not one jot,
Of all time's deeds, can be forgot.

 No atom through wide space can die ;
No deed can lose its energy.
Each deed keeps its own record sure,
Each deed does its own doom secure.
Think you the light its path can trace,
Even to the verge of utmost space,
And yet the deeds of man can't find,
Their way to the Eternal Mind ?
Abjure your reason ! Sell it soon !
It makes you stumble at full noon !

 The harp its bolder tone retains,
Anon swells forth, in varying strains,
And doth each changing key aye find,
In the emotions of the mind.
Now anxious, pensive, grave and sad ;
Now cheerful, full of hope, and glad ;

While true, responsive to its sway,
The host their varied thoughts display ;
And one may clearly read in part,
The deeper workings of the heart,
In those soft touches of the mien,
Which oft unveil what lies unseen.

Here sit in majesty most bright,
The noble freemen of the light ;
Those who have passed its searching test,
And are enthroned now, 'mong the best.
They look, with grave and wistful eye,
On those, whom soon the light will try.
Not strangers these, but their own race,
Whose generations they can trace,
And may 'mong those, not yet made free,
Their sons and their descendants see.
But to all these, meantime they're blind,
And the one thought, which fills their mind,
As now they view with vision keen,
The general aspect of the scene,
Is how much worth their land doth wield,
And how much virtue it doth yield.
Can all those ages bear renown,
And splendour add to their land's crown ?

But who can now, the thoughts divine,
Of those within the lambent line ?

Especially those, within Truth's bar,
Whose bodeful breasts, all anxious are ;
Though some appear unruffled, calm,
Yet none can gaze without a qualm,
And as the light doth search each flaw,
Each heart is filled with growing awe.

For even earth's purest souls may fear,
The test of light, surpassing clear ;
While guilt will boldly lift its head,
When conscience lies both seared and dead ;
But when it wakes as once it will,
How dread its agonising thrill !

The Living and the Unborn appear,
In aspect calm, with scarce a fear.
They stand without Truth's brilliant bar,
Conscious of strength which nought can mar.
For they whose course has yet to run,
Have nerve, by which life's prize is won ;
Know they have vigour to be great,
And means and skill to conquer fate :
While those, whose race is run, may find,
Their deeds reach not the aim designed,
But when their life is in the scale,
The goal they win not, but may fail.

For life, alas ! too oft doth prove,
A mask, to hide the truth away ;

Or runs in selfish, sensual groove,
 And clogs the path to eternal day.
 But where there's hope, there may be fear,
 And hope doth seem ascendant here ;
 So that for aught one yet can tell,
 This cycle may all past excel.

The choir their harps, now deftly play,
 All join, and sing this simple lay ;

1.

Rise ! fair Isle, arise !
 Thy trial hour hath come !
 The powers of good now meet,
 The powers of light in this bright seat,
 The powers of ill are dumb !

2.

Rise ! fair Isle, arise !
 Thy hour of test is near !
 The light thy sons will sift,
 The bad out cast, the good uplift,
 None vile can enter here !

3.

Rise ! fair Isle, arise !
 Thy midnight hath quite run !

The night of gloom flies fast,
The morning fair will dawn at last,
And bright will beam thy sun !

The last notes of this simple lay,
Have scarcely time to die away,
When lo ! the Bard from his high throne,
Gives to the scene another tone.
He strikes his harp, with quiet ease,
The strings seem kissed by summer breeze,
A simple melody they pour,
Scarce heard by mortal ear before,
Save only those who stood the test,
Which now doth rank them with the best.

Tender and touching is the air,
Yet searches all with power most rare.
The mist is wiped from every brow,
The mind grows clear and keener now.
And see ! the light sheds brighter beam,
And flows now in a fuller stream ;
Each note seems to yield purer ray,
And doth most singular power display,
O'er the bright host, enthroned on high,
Beholding all with anxious eye.
For as the light sheds fuller rays,
And with desire they fondly gaze,

A flash of disappointment keen,
Flows o'er each face, erstwhile serene,
And deeper grows, and ends in grief.
But why? It well might pass belief!
For strange! o'er all those here arraigned,
A deeper calmness, seems maintained.
No shadow darkens their fair mien;
Whate'er their thoughts, they flow unseen;
Unseen at least to my dull eye,
For scarce a change can I espy.

But all have not the same keen sight,
Nor sensive are to equal light.
Some walk at midnight as in day,
Some even at high noon walk astray.

For in the dark depths of the sea,
Where the sun's rays can never fall,
There, creatures roam, both wide and free,
Who have no eyes to see at all;
But there are others, which have eyes,
And will not even one ray despise,
But treasure up each single beam,
Till at their will they can display,
And send it forth, a shining stream,
To seize their blind unwary prey.

And there are those among mankind,
Who deem all, save themselves are blind,

Yet close their eyes to life's grand aim,
Move 'mid the lower depths of earth ;
Their mind they blunt, their soul they maim,
And never win eternal worth.

They wait more light, but miss each ray,
And kindle their rush, to catch noon-day.
But there are those who nurse each gleam,
That heaven hath shed till it doth seem,
To grow in beauty, more and more,
And yields at length an ample store,
'Till all life's path it doth illumine,
And worth and hope, like flowers aye bloom.

And in this weird and dreadful hour,
The light grows with this twofold power ;
It gives to those who use it, strength,
To see things as they are at length :
While those, who close their eyes can't see,
What they are, less what they should be.

'Tis thus, all those arraigned appear,
Blind to the light, which grows more clear,
While all the sons of light now seem,
Awakening to some mournful theme, -
As if some mighty loss doth rise,
With sudden strength, before their eyes.
But still their grief with doubt doth flow,
As if even yet, they cannot know,

Assurance full, until the light
Shines in a wave, more deeply bright.

The harp's tones soon to silence fade,
The light's advance is thus now stayed.
The fatal moment tarries still,
Ere light can show its mystic skill.

A pause comes o'er the wondrous scene,
Nor silence could be more serene.
The sons of light all now appear,
With visage solemn, yea severe ;
While those within Truth's bar await,
The stern unfolding of their fate.

Then mid the impassioned, grave repose,
At length the noble OLLAVE rose,
And thus the deep chagrin expressed
Which seemed to grieve each light-purged breast ;

“ Why is the light in Tara dim ?
Has Erin's race no brighter glim ?
Is this the climax of her sheen ?
Is this the lustre ages glean ?
Is this the promise once inspired ?
Is this the splendour hope desired ?
In tenfold, brighter splendour shone,
This hall, a thousand years ago ;

“But with that splendour tenfold more,
It now should shine, than e'er before.

As ages pass, doth glory wane?
Can sons, their sires' proud lustre, stain?
Can dawn be robbed of its fair light?
Can day be turned back into night?
Some evil spell this land hath torn,
Ere dawn, of day, could thus be shorn;
Some spirit vile, runs riot here,
Ere Erin's fame, it thus could smear.
Why is the mind of Erin bleared?
Why is her conscience dead and seared?
Why is her heart now cold and chill?
Why lost her once right honest will?
Why is her hand now red with crime?
Why does she wallow in shame's slime?

Is Erin's isle a desert lea,
Or for its crimes whelmed in the sea?
And what is now before our view,
Naught but illusion and untrue?
Some such catastrophe, or doom,
Could scarcely yield a denser gloom.

A cloud hangs o'er the ages all,
And dark and louring, like a pall!
The darkness varies in degree,
The present age, the worst we see,

“ For it hath lost its moral tone,
Truth, honesty, are scarcely known ;
Kindness and sympathy have fled ;
The better feelings seem all dead !
See ! how the lurid light there plays !
Flickering, as if it shone through haze.
See ! every flicker, tells most sure,
Of worthless souls, vile, and impure !

 Ten ages now have passed away,
Since Erin’s gold was purged from clay ;
Ten ages here, must stand the test,
Which sifts the base, refines the best,
Ere Tara Hall, shine clear and bright,
And Erin’s sons can walk in light ! ”

 Thus Ollave spake ; his words did seem
To me, the wildness of a dream.

I looked around the dazzling scene,
And wondered what the sage could mean.
It seemed to me, the sun could scarce,
Give fainter cause, for one to asperse.
Naught could be clearer to my eye,
Nor smallest speck could I descry :
Of clouds or haze, the sense vouched none,
The hall shone brighter than the sun.

 I asked the fairy Nymph my guide,
Who hovered still by my right side ;

“O say, fair Nymph, and kindly deign,
To make the sage’s meaning plain !
Speaks he in figure ? Is there flare ?
Or are my eyes now dazed with glare ?”

“Nay !” said the Maid. “Cease your surprise !
Deem not the glare hath dazed your eyes !
'Tis not the light ; it is thy soul,
Which sees a part, but not the whole.
The light sufficeth for the pure ;
The earth-girt must fire’s test endure,
Ere they can see with vision keen,
The real, as they themselves are seen.
Yea ! till the light did deeper flow,
Not even this brilliant host could know,
The general aspect of the mass,
Who soon the fire’s sure test must pass.
But none can read the inner heart,
For even the best see but in part.

A dark cloud hath this hall o’erlaid,
A haze obscure hath it o’erspread,
The effluence of vile souls who here,
Have entered brazed, where they should fear ;
Invisible these to your eyes,
For they are masked in fair disguise ;
But never can the light shine clear,
Where souls impure, and base appear :

“ You might expect to see as soon,
The midnight brighter than the noon.
Thus to the pure, the base are seen,
In all their nakedness unclean,
Darkening the site whereon they stand,
As their dark deeds, still sear their land.
But wicked men are always blind,
And forge the chains, themselves to bind.
Thus here the vile, masked in false glare,
Deem yet their garb is wondrous fair,
And think to pass, unseen, the test,
Which will unbare each worthless breast ;
They deem themselves even yet secure,
Thus self-deceived are souls impure ;
But borrowed light cannot endure :
Self-blindness doth self-doom ensure.

But from the pure, enthroned mid light,
No mask conceals the race of night.
But thou, purblind and sense-bound still,
Can'st not behold how base is ill ;
Thy soul is earth-girt, and to you
The base oft shine, with glittering hue.
A surer touchstone, than finite mind,
Needs falsehood test, and truth must find !
Would'st thou to higher things aspire ?
Thy soul must first pass through the fire !

“Yea ! would’st thou even this issue see,
Thy soul enwrapped in flame must be,
Ere, can be purged, thy inward sight,
To see the secrets of the light !
Truth shines not clear, till doubt doth fade ;
Glory lies hid, till guilt hath fled.
Wait the unfolding of the scene !
Wait till you see as ye are seen !”

Thus spake the Maid, while I half dread
The ordeal, which my soul must tread,
Ere I, a novice, thus can be,
Initiate, in this mystery.

A pause then followed which did seem,
More like a dread and dismal dream.
None for a time inclined to rise,
For task, distasteful in all eyes.
But who can shrink if duty lead,
Though sympathy and pity bleed ?
Hence rose BORU, with footstep slow,
And spake in words, though firm, yet low ;
More like a monody, than speech,
Though none his words can fail to reach :

“Can I believe what here I see?
Is it some fitful phantasy,
That soon will vanish to thin air,
And leave a splendour, rich and rare,

“ Such as we dreamt, our land had won,
Ere half these centuries, had yet run ?
In our own time, we surely gave
The impetus, which like a wave
Should onward swell, with growing might,
To bear our race to glory’s height !

Has Erin’s blood then flowed in vain ?
Has all her virtue failed to gain
The place, fame set before her view,
Had all her sons proved just and true ?
Yet why at Erin’s lot repine,
Did she not, ere our time, decline ?
Has she not striven her best to be,
The motherland of misery ?

Then, let her reap what she hath sown !
Let glory other nations own !
As for this cycle, be it cast
Into the furnace, where at last,
Purged from its dross, we welcome may,
Those, who pass scathless, through light’s ray !”

Boru then ceased, and all did hear,
His words with an unquiet ear.
For he with clearness had expressed,
The thoughts, now rankling in their breast ;
Thoughts, which they half hoped even yet,
Might err, as much increased by fear,

As hurried fancies often fret,
 But vanish when light shines more clear.
But the few words of great Boru,
Confirm their first, though hurried view.
'Tis thus with anxious, troubled mien,
Yet with a dignity serene,
That they await with gloomy soul,
Till time the full scene doth unroll.

 The SON OF ART then, calm arose,
His voice appears to lend repose ;
 “The light is dim in Tara Hall !
The spirits sad of one and all !
Our people foremost once in power,
Are laggards at this present hour !
In progress, once they led the van,
Now progress, they place under ban !
A winning race they had begun,
Yet stopped, ere half the course was run
Better they'd run a steadier pace,
Than honour leave them in the race
 It is enough ; we cannot turn
The wheel of time ; but we may mourn,
O'er opportunities now lost,
Such as no other land can boast.
Yes ! we may mourn ! but not repine,
Our land is fertile in decline ;

“ That it has raised more chaff than wheat,
And trod her pearls beneath her feet.

But if we mourn, let us be just ;
This cycle may, and is, we trust,
More full of worth, than one glimpse shows :
For see ! even now its lustre grows !
And we may find, though splendour fail,
More to be glad of, than bewail ;
Let us the final issue wait,
Ere we pronounce this cycle's fate.”

The words of Cormac soon allay,
The sudden grief the host display ;
Judicial calm flows o'er the scene,
And patience rests on all serene,
Till time reveals the final test,
Which separates the base from best.

Meanwhile, the host, so pure and bright,
Await the fulness of the light ;
For even this brilliant host may know,
No more, than the pure light doth show ;
A revelation, wide, and full,
Is never truth's unvarying rule.
For truth is infinite, and may
Shine only with a partial ray ;
It is eternal, and may pause,
While it unfolds eternal laws ;

Laws whose real aim, naught can reverse—
 The welfare of the Universe !
 For well we know the faintest ray,
 Is harbinger of perfect day.
 But not till light in full displays,
 The texture of the pure, and base,
 Can even the wisest here behold,
 The value of the alloyed gold.

Meantime, while feeling is kept tense,
 The interest deepens with suspense.
 The harps are dumb ; hushed every sound ;
 The silence painful, yea profound ;
 Each second seems an age or more ;
 Each visage grave forebodings wore.

But hark ! upon the ear doth fall,
 A deep-toned Voice, which thrilleth all :

“ Who have thus dared, to pass the gate,
 And scorn the words so full of fate !

‘ Go in ! ye pure and true !

Fly hence ! ye base, or rue !’

One touch of light’s all-subtle ray,
 Would cause remorse to sting for aye !

Patience is godlike ! and is free
 To weigh each just, yea, generous plea !

Let then the deeds of those arraigned,
 The good and ill be now explained ;

“ Search out the good, on Roll of Fame ;
 Search out the ill, on Book of Shame ;
 The one, against the other, weigh !
 Doom ill to night ! dower good like day !

But first, bring here the Book of Shame,
 From the dark den, where girt with flame,
 It stares the eternal Nemesis,
 Of all now plunged in the abyss !
 Call forth the branded page amain !
 Gird it with light to banish bane !”

On this, a trumpet grating blows,
 Its blast doth to the sight disclose
 A view, both weird and full of gloom,
 As if, the darkness of the tomb
 Were now to cast a ghastly spell,
 O'er every heart, and sound its knell ;
 For on the left of the Bard's throne,

The earth itself, seems to give way ;
 A dark abyss doth yawn and groan,
 As if impatient for more prey ;
 Thence noxious vapours now arise,
 Mid sounds of distant yells and cries,
 A shadow huge, and grim, is seen,
 Deformed in shape, impure, and mean,
 Emerging from the abyss to light,
 Whose power doth quench its malign blight.

It is OBLIVION ! dark and foul !
An evil-eyed, and fatal ghoul,
Whose wings outstretched now fan with flame,
The deeds writ on the Book of Shame,
Which it now bears, with scowl and leer,
Whose baneful glance might mortals sear.

But ere, I could the issue learn,
Thus spake the Voice, both cold and stern :
“ Draw a dense veil across the scene !

For mortal eye, must not behold
The page of Shame, whose blight if seen,
Would wither souls, through time untold ! ”

At once, there bursts before the sight,
A haze obscure, and deep as night ;
The glorious host appeared to fade,
And darkness deep, o'er all to spread ;
The view had vanished ; but I hear
My fairy Nymph speak soft and clear :

“ Mortal ! the Vision now is sealed !
Patience thus for a time must wait,
Ere the full issue be revealed,
And the high purposes of fate !

Once more, the veil will be withdrawn,
And to the view will be unrolled,

Scenes, even more strange, which thou may'st scan
If thou hast courage to behold.

“ But while the vision tarries still,
Here is a theme o'er which to brood ;
Think on the subtlety of ill !
And THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOOD ! ”

THE END.



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