

Drummond, William Hamilton. *Bruce's Invasion of Ireland; A Poem*. Dublin: Hodges and McArthur, 1826.

## **BRUCE'S INVASION.**

### **CANTO FIRST.**

#### **THE LANDING AND THE MARCH.**

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

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

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

The silver-mailed salmon, or hunt the red deer  
In their own land of hills, than come here to molest  
Timid maidens, and scare little babes at the breast.

How proudly the chieftains are pacing the strand,  
With a targe on their arm and a glaive on their hand!  
The bold Earl of Moray towers high o'er the throng,  
Well-plumed and well-belted—both stalwart and strong;  
With Sir Philip Mowbray, a high-minded chief,  
Oft the joy of his friends, oft his enemies' grief;  
In sieges and battles inured to contend,  
Once a foe to the Bruce, now his sworn trusty friend;  
And Sir John the Stewart, well known in the field  
As a chivalrous knight. On his broad bossy shield,  
Lo! a bird to her young gives her heart's blood for food,  
And a savage confronts a wild man of the wood.  
There Ouchterhouse Ramsay is stalking in pride;  
With Ellerslie's wight oft he fought side by side:  
On his buckler's round disk a black eagle is spread,  
And a golden-horned unicorn crests his helmed head.  
Sir Fergus comes next, from fair Ardrossan's hill,  
More happy, perchance, if he wandered there still;  
But of glory one day is more dear to his mind  
Than ages of peace, and that day he may find.  
There Sir John De Soulis, with corsletted breast,  
Bears a dark raven wing shedding night on his crest.  
Next Campbell comes in with the youth of Argyle,  
Of Jura, of Mull, and far Colonsay's isle;  
His shield bears a ship with furled sail and spread oar,  
And his crest the couped head of a wild tusky boar.  
No ensigns armorial yon chief need declare,  
So deeply engrailed is his forehead with care—  
Menteith! who, 'tis said did a dark deed of shame,  
For the cursed love of gold, bartered honor and fame;  
To Edward, fell tyrant of England, betrayed  
The worthiest knight that e'er drew battle-blade;  
And now, to allay the dire pangs of remorse,  
Longs to mingle in conflicts of swords, man and horse.  
Beyond him, De Bosco, with well-polished spear  
That he wields like a wand, leads the stout mountaineer;  
With Sir Robert Boyd clad in steel's azure hue,  
To Scotland's crowned king a liege trusty and true.  
And Blisset comes yonder, with hardiment fell,  
To war 'gainst his kindred in Erin who dwell.  
And many a thane, gallant baron, and lord,  
There marshals his clansmen, true sons of the sword:

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

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

In rich burnished mail, midst a forest of spears,  
The Bruce tall and portly his stature uprears;  
O'er the chiefs that around him have formed a dark ring,  
He towers with the look of a hero and king;  
As if instinct with life nods his high ostrich crest,  
Like the fair crescent moon shines the gorge on his breast,  
His broad bossy shield glows with heraldry bright;  
His sword as a beam of the red northern light.  
Such blood of high royalty rolls in his veins,  
To be less than a monarch his proudly disdains.  
He comes, in the land to reap bloody renown,  
And win by the sword Erin's sceptre and crown.  
Thus comes a young leopard, the flower of his race,  
In quest of his prey;—clothed in terrible grace,  
He bounds o'er the lawn, and exults in the pride  
Of his strength, and the gloss of his fair painted hide;  
His spots glow with beauty—fires flash from his eyes,  
And his roar all the beasts of the forest defies.

Now their spoil-freighted fleet they speed back  
through the foam,  
As if they ne'er meant to revisit their home:  
Their home they call Erin; whate'er she affords  
They seize with high hand, as the right of their swords.  
Unfurled is their standard—begun their career—  
In the van sage Earl Thomas, the Bruce in the rear,  
And onward they move, like a fire o'er the heath,  
Red champions of havoc, gaunt blood-hounds of death;  
And they vow ne'er to stop, till they hear the deep roar  
Of the raging Atlantic on Kerry's wild shore.

Well-marked is their track over mountain and dale,  
By the smoke of destruction that floats on the gale,  
By hamlet and cot wrapt in ruin and gloom,  
By the temple despoiled, and the fresh-plundered tomb.  
In vain to their shrines wives and children have fled,  
The flames mount aloft—bursts the roof o'er their head.

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

Erin, where are thy chiefs? At the feast or the dance,  
While the blood of thy sons is empurpling the lance?  
Are they sleeping or dead, while thy foes o'er thee sweep,  
Like a storm from the hills, like the waves of the deep?  
Though awhile may Knockfergus their onset deride,  
And repel,—as her rocks the assault of the tide,  
Yet close is she girded, and near her dark walls,  
By Harper's dread battle-axe Maundeville falls.  
Now see by White-Abbey their banners are spread,  
High o'er them the dark Hill of Caves lifts his head;  
Oh! now were the time from the cliff and the steep,  
From Mac Cart's cloud-girt fort, and the cairn's rocky  
heap,  
As they wend where the limestone's clear rivulet rolls,  
To launch down the bowlders and crush out their souls!

That rough gorge of danger is soon left behind,  
And now, as by Lagan's dense forests they wind,  
On their helmets and shields Duna's warriors ring  
The hail-storm of war from the bow and the sling.  
Nor shun the close conflict—but what may avail  
The kerns' naked breasts 'gainst the knights clad in mail?  
Their way they have hewn over hills of the slain,  
Through the closely plashed ravine of Innermalane;  
Though gallant De Burgo there manfully stood,  
Till his host, man and horse, fell like leaves in the wood.

Lisnagarvy is fired;—fired the Abbey of Saul:  
To Strangford the Ards in dismay loudly call  
O'er the isle-studded gulf—and Slew-Donard has seen,  
From his throne in the clouds, Duna's vallies of green,  
Her round fairy mounts and her thrice-hallowed hill  
Where sleeps Erin's Saint by the good Columb-kill,  
Polluted and trampled by blood-boltered feet.  
While Discord, foul demon, to mischief still fleet,  
Of all Erin's curses the first and the last,  
Through the princes of Connaught her wildfire has cast;  
And kinsmen and brothers pierce each others breasts  
With steel that should ring on the ravagers' crests.  
Roderic falls by the sword, while too high he aspires;  
And Feidhlim is placed on the throne of his sires,  
But, lured by false hopes, maugre every dear claim  
Of country, of honour, of fealty and fame,  
He leagues with the Bruce, who receives his late foes  
With joy as his friends,—gathering strength as he goes.  
De Burgo may chafe till he sicken or bleed.--  
The victor moves on and new treasons succeed;  
To his standards the Thomond O'Briens have flown:  
Thus Erin is conquered by Erin alone.  
But wo to the traitors by land or by flood,  
Who to wreak private wrongs shed their dear country's  
blood!  
Let the axe or the rope be the parricide's doom,  
And the night-shade for ever grow rank on their tomb!

They climb Na-Jur hills, by Slew-Gullen they wend,  
And down upon Louth like a tempest descend:  
Dundalغان is stormed by the slaughtering sword;  
And yet, while her gutters run blood,—at the board  
Grows their revelry loud, as they carve the fat chine,  
And swill the brown ale with the red sparkling wine.  
Whence now their wild shouts and long cheerings? Behold!

The Bruce has encircled his temples with gold.  
In all their rich bravery, lofty and proud,  
Round his throne knights and barons exultingly croud:  
And yet still more highly his triumph to crown,  
King Robert the Bruce comes to share his renown.  
Fond, fond is their meeting, and high is their cheer,  
For each is to each a kind brother and dear,  
Of princes and heroes the pride and the flower,  
In courts or in camps, in the field or the bower.  
But Robert oft fears for the too fiery soul  
Of Edward, impatient of rest or controul;  
Lest by glory spurred on to some desperate deed,  
He may rush on his fate like an unbroken steed.  
Though Erin be awe-struck, and humbled her crest,  
A spirit invincible dwells in her breast;  
Though foemen around her their fetters may bind,  
They ne'er can inthral the high thoughts of her mind,  
That bound forth to freedom, that mount to the sky,  
And the rod and the sword of the tyrant defy.  
Hence much he advises, and shews from what springs  
Flow the strength, peace and glory of subjects and kings;  
Implores him his rashness with prudence to tame,  
And allay in his bosom ambition's fierce flame.  
Hence Edward holds pleas, and to strengthen his cause,  
By semblance of justice, makes judges and laws;  
Some high he exalts near his person and throne,  
To the scaffold sends some for their crimes to atone.  
But soon tired of peace, yearns his soul in the field  
To hear the shrill pibroch,—to clash the dry shield.  
His chiefs and their men burn the game to pursue,  
Boast of what they have done, and of what they will do.  
And well may they triumph, and loud may they boast,  
As they stalk in the spoils of that proud English host  
Whose plumes they sheared down, when with horror and  
dread  
England's monarch turn ed pale, and ingloriously fled,  
Whom, if a true knight, it behoved not to fly,  
But to charge through the foe and with Argentine die.

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

On Albyn their arrows fly rapid and keen.  
"To arms!" cries King Robert—"the foe-men are near,  
"Let each, at his post, grasp his target and spear."  
But a chivalrous knight has those archers o'erta'en,  
And one by his lance lies transfixed on the plain.  
Cheer the ranks—but sage Robert approves not the deed;  
His truncheon has made the knight reel on his steed,  
And taught him to know, that "in science of war,  
Cool order surpasses rude courage by far;  
And he who obeys not the word of his chief,  
On his friends brings dishonour, discomfiture, grief.  
And lo! there the foe-men their standards display,  
All prancing to burst through our broken array.  
From your bows, men of Carrick, their greetings return,  
Then, horse, to the charge!—be the word Bannockburn!"  
'Tis done—twang their bows—showers of arrows are forth,  
Thick and keen as the swift-volleyed sleet from the north.  
The rowel grows red in the steed's smoking flank,  
And onward they rush too the charge, rank on rank;  
The Claymore is flashing—firm-couched is the spear,  
And loud is the clang of the chargers' career.  
Nor tardy is Erin to meet their advance  
With the edge of the sword and the point of the lance.  
Head to head dash the steeds—and with fearful rebound,  
Whole ranks, by the shock, man and horse, bite the ground,  
Whence, freed by the stroke of the dirk or the glaive,  
In crowds are escaping the souls of the brave.  
The red lion triumphs—and spread o'er the turf,  
Erin's warriors lie scattered, like wrecks on the surf.  
Yet not unavenged, Albyn owns, they lie low;  
Not inglorious her triumph, for brave was her foe.  
But with grief to the soul is Sir Edward stung deep,  
That his sword, such a day, in its scabbard should sleep!  
The day is King Robert's—his prudence retrieved  
Edward's error—his valour the triumph achieved.  
But yet he forbears not the error to chide  
That, by a long march, van and rear would divide.  
Through the gap will the foe that is eager to strike,  
As the ocean-swell bursts through the severing dyke,  
Sweep his thousands in arms, till they deluge the plain,  
And the host so divided is ne'er joined again.

Thus by maxims of war, as by curb and by rein,  
Would Robert the wildness of Edward restrain,  
And his nature controul by sage lessons of art—  
Till called by the cares of a throne to depart.

With care not more fond, round her ocean-girt height,  
The eagle her young one directs in his flight,  
Soars with him aloft through the blue depths of space,  
Or o'er the wild heath is his guide in the chace.

Again for more conquests the march is begun.--  
They pass by New-Grange, the old cave of the sun;  
Wives, maidens and children, half-wild with affright,  
Flee far from their paths, as doves flee from the kite.  
E'en while at thy shrines they are bending the knee,  
Fire, rapine, and blood tell thy fate, Atherdee!  
Though strong be its walls, and its fortresses high,  
On Tredagh his banners triumphantly fly.  
To sorrow is Slane with its hermitage doomed,  
And Trim, where the relics of kings are entombed;  
With Kenlis, whose round tower yet tapers sublime  
Deeply clad in the mists and the mantle of time:  
Here Mortimer came with a deer-hearted crew,  
To look Bruce in the face.--Ere a bow-string they drew,  
They turned from his glance--for foul treason had spread  
Through their chieftains; and first were the Lacies who  
fled.  
Such champions well may the Redshankes deride;  
With jest and with laughter their camp echoes wide,  
While the pipers skirl loud, with their hearts full of glee,  
And the heroes extol who so valiantly flee!  
Such easy-earned triumphs Bruce holds in disdain;  
No brightness has glory unpurchased by pain.--  
The Boyne rolls behind him, and onward he goes,  
No walls to retard him,--no arms to oppose;  
His hopes to win wealthy Atheliath aspire;  
Her suburbs are wasted, her temples on fire;  
And now she sits chafing in wrath and despair,  
A lioness pent by a troop in her lair.

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

Ye can hear not the call, though ye spy from afar,  
By Knock's castled walls, the foes ensigns of war:  
There Tirrel, indignant, in chains vents his rage,  
And his fair lady pines, a lorn bird in a cage.



The region all round, like an Eden that bloomed,  
Mourns its harvests down-trodden, its hamlets consumed;  
Through the smoke of black ruins that darken the vale,  
Down the Tolka's stained brook roll the shriek and the wail.

The flocks from the glen, and the beeves from the hill,  
Unsparring in slaughter, they wantonly kill;  
By the blaze of the corn-sheaf the feast they prepare,  
Fire the cottager's roof and carouse in the glare;  
Nor dread lest to-morrow, when prowling for prey,  
They may rue, in deep anguish, the waste of to-day.

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

O'er the beautiful city, all proud as she reigns  
Midst turreted bulwarks, spired temples and fanes,  
Could Bruce but behold the victorious play  
Of his banners—'twere glorious!—But long the delay  
Of siege, or blockade—for her ramparts are steep—  
Her brazen gates massy—her fosse broad and deep—  
Her ruler, De Nottingham, valiant and true,  
Her black-banner warriors not feeble, nor few.  
Thus Mowbray advises—"tis wise to hunt down  
The fear-stricken quarry—Athcliath will crown  
Our toils at the last."—Hence the march of the war,  
They guide by the course of the fair western star.  
On Leixlip they move, in Kildare they encamp,  
Where the daughters of fire trim the ne'er-dying lamp.  
In vain has Le Grace, the high-minded and good,  
Well-belted in iron, their onset withstood;  
O'er Ascul's red plain the dire hurricane past,  
And left it in silence and darkness o'ercast.  
There quiet he lies with his chivalry's pride,  
And Bonneville and Prendergast sleep by his side.  
There also, Sir Fergus, thy pilgrimage ends;  
And a dark dreamless night on Sir Walter descends.  
Leix horror-struck sees her tall belfry and spire  
Burst forth in a blaze of pyramidal fire.  
Castle-Dermont, their hands sacrilegious they lay

On thy tombs, and thy shrines, and thy costly array;  
Of Carlow the corn-covered fields they invade;  
The Barrow's clear waters grow dark with their shade;  
The Suir rolls beneath them, and in his smooth glass  
The Shannon reflects their armed ranks as they pass;  
Now fear and dismay dwell in Limerick's bowers;  
Kilmallock with all her proud temples and towers,  
And Cashel, high-throned on a rock, hear with dread  
The noise, from afar, of their swift-coming tread.

## **BRUCE'S INVASION.**

### CANTO SECOND.

#### THE RISING OF ERIN—AND ALBYN'S RETREAT.

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

Erin, wherefore did nature smile sweet on thy birth,  
When first from dark chaos sprang heaven and earth,  
Airs of Paradise redolent breathe o'er thy breast,  
And form thee a type of that land of the blest  
Which poets once sung, and which poets would choose  
Where to breathe inspiration and rove with the muse?  
What boot thy fair valleys, thy bright-blooming hills,  
Thy corn-covered fields and thy crystalline rills,  
If those valleys and hills but re-echo thy screams,  
While the sword reaps thy crops, and blood purples thy  
streams?  
Vain are nature's best blessings, if discord, more dire  
Than famine and plague and the elements' ire,  
Lets them ne'er be enjoyed;—but with wrath-kindled flame  
Turns thy song to a dirge—and thy glory to shame.  
Oh! didst thou but know thy own bliss and pursue—  
If to thy own cause thou wert loyal and true,  
All nations would hail thee of isles the renowned,  
A queen among queens with prosperity crowned;  
Thy sons gathered round thee, an adamant pale,  
Or a rampart of fire, that no foeman dared scale,  
In accord with thy harp loud their voices would raise  
In pæans of joy—or in anthems of praise.

But by thy own fires thou art wasted and burned—  
Against thy own bosom thy falchion is turned;  
Low, low art thou fallen, heart-stricken and sore,  
Rent, plundered, and bleeding at every pore.  
Breathes a spirit within thee? Oh! better to die,  
Than thus crushed and trampled ingloriously lie.  
Are thy warriors all slain?—Or dispersed far and wide,  
In mountains and caverns their terrors to hide,  
While their wives and their daughters become the sad spoil  
Of the ruthless invaders that widow thy soil?

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

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

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

"Men of Erin arise!

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

"Erin once had a sword never tarnished with rust,  
And men that would trample her foes in the dust,  
And hearts that, to slavery ere they would bow,  
Would bleed—and would burst—but oh! where are they now?  
Weak, heartless, inglorious, of manhood the shame,  
Ye women of Erin, ye men but in name!  
Sit down—fold your arms—bow your necks—and your lives,  
Though worthless, redeem with your children and wives.  
Hew wood and draw water, to please your proud foes;  
Let them dance in your halls—in your chambers repose.  
Ere ye shrink from their lash, and be bound with their  
thongs,  
Let the lance and the sword in their blood wreak your  
wrongs.  
If yet in your bosoms a chord may be found,  
At the dear name of country to trill and rebound,  
If honour, and feeling, and shame have not fled,  
And left you as clods, soulless, torpid, and dead,  
Ere ye hear her last groans, her last agonies see,

Rise, with swords in your hands, still undaunted and free.  
Up! up! grasp your spears, and in martial array,  
Away, men of Erin, to battle away!"

Ha! hear ye the call, and from sleep have ye sprung,  
As if in your ear the last trumpet had rung?  
Yes, Erin has heard—lo! she springs to the field,  
Unsheathed is her sabre, and struck is her shield.  
Loud her harp-strings have rung in their old native tone,  
Loud her priests have declaimed for the altar and throne;  
Loud her orators thundered, as boldly they flung,  
Winged with flashes of thought, the keen bolts of the  
tongue:  
Her lakes, isles, and forests, glens, mountains, and skies,  
Reverberate loud—"Men of Erin arise!"  
Hark! the soul-stirring sound! as it echoes again,  
The aged grow young, and boys start into men.  
The youth are aroused, like a thousand swoln rills  
That commingling rush down to the vale from the hills,  
When the show'ry-winged west, with his dark ocean-  
clouds,  
And torrents of rain, giant Mangerton shrouds.  
Thick-teeming they hasten from city and tower,  
From the sheeling's low roof, from the boolie's green  
bower,  
From the rath and the dun, from the woods and the rocks;  
The hind leaves his furrows, the shepherd his flocks,  
The ploughman his share, and the sailor his oar;  
His corragh the fisher draws up on the shore.  
Boys wage mimic wars—tiny cross-bows they draw;  
The women and children chant "Erin go Brah;"  
With spirit congenial e'en brutes seem to glow,  
And in gesture and look a strange sympathy show.  
The winds as they breathe, and the streams as they roll,  
Seem animate all with the same quickening soul.

Yes—the Genius of Erin is forth in her might,  
Working wonders by day, sending visions by night;—  
Clogher stone, like the statue of Memnon renowned,  
Was heard to give forth an oracular sound.  
From Mithra's rude shrine, where in Callan's dark shade  
"The turbulent, swift-footed Conan" is laid;  
And from the cold couch where King Tuathal lies;  
In Glendaloch's vale came a voice, "Wake, arise!"  
As the breeze o'er the round tower swept down the dell,  
It bore the unwonted sweet sound of a bell,

Of no earthly tone, and by no mortal rung—  
"Erin calls!" wildly chimed its miraculous tongue.  
The rath, and the cromleach, and cairn's rocky cone,  
Giants' graves, and the Druids' rude circle of stone  
Sent warriors forth;—and at even and morn  
The small fairy host paced in arms round the thorn.  
A bard, as he chanced Tarah's hill to pass by,  
When it threw its dark shade on the clear moon-lit sky,  
Saw a glorious scene;—Erin's monarchs of old,  
That were wont on this hill their sage counsels to hold,  
Bards, druids, and brehons, with collars of gold,  
Knights and earls, with their steeds in caparisons fair,  
In solemn convention were all gathered there.  
Awhile in deep counsel they seemed to remain,  
Then sprang to their arms, and rushed down to the plain,  
As if charging a foe: shone their lances afar,  
Like long shafts of light, and each tipped with a star;  
Streamed their crests like the locks of a comet—their shields  
Shone as meteors that wander o'er Allen's moist fields;  
Their steeds were as mists that the north-wind pursues  
O'er Neagh's wide lake, when condensing the dews.  
But soon they returned, as from victory won,  
When the bards swept their harps, and the feast was begun.  
In a thrill of emotion the seer made essay  
To join in the strain, and all melted away.  
But well does he deem that such glittering shows  
Image forth the events coming time will disclose.

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

Now all trim their arms, from the hind to the lord;  
New-ground is the war-axe, new-edged is the sword;  
The ash-tree descends—rings the anvil afar,  
Spades, sickles and scythes turn to weapons of war.  
Soon belted and plumed, clad in yellow and green,  
By the hill's grassy side their armed thousands are seen:  
Each feels a new soul through his frame quickly dart,  
Giving strength to his arm, and fresh life to his heart;  
A warrior by instinct, he lifts his helmed head,

And paces the ground with a warrior's tread.  
At the three-pillared rock, where, as legends have told,  
In the moon's silver light worshipped druids of old,  
Like their Scythian sires, they have drunk a red wine  
More costly and rich than e'er flowed from the vine.  
An arm, upon which baptist's dew never fell,  
Draws a blade that was sheathed in the earth for a spell:  
By this have they sworn, by the sun, moon, and fire,  
To conquer, or ne'er from the field to retire,  
And, panting for glory, the signal demand  
To point the fleet arrow, and wield the keen brand.

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

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

When a nation thus rises united and true,  
What might upon earth can her spirit subdue?  
Every field proves a camp—every hill, and green shade,  
Stream, and rock, grows a rampart, tower, fosse, or  
stockade.  
With the hero's bold thoughts peasant bosoms beat high;  
Hope nerves every breast, courage fires every eye.  
For a season may prosper the power of the strong,

But Freedom and Right, o'er Oppression and Wrong,  
Must go forth rejoicing in triumph at last,  
As the sun, in his strength, when the tempest is past.

Wary Albyn the gathering war-cloud espies:--  
Though loath to relinquish so noble a prize  
As Erin's green fields, that, compared with her own,  
Are as emerald bright to the dark iron stone;  
Reluctant and slow she retraces her ground,  
As a lion, when hunters are closing him round,  
Recedes from the prey. Now advanced to its height,  
Her star must descend in black whirlwinds and night.  
Her own bloody scourges her children must feel,  
Dire famine, disease, and the edge of the steel:  
May the ruthless still feel the fierce pangs they have given,  
And stern retribution pursue them from heaven!

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

In heart less elated now northward they go,  
In battle array, still prepared for the foe;  
For oft on their helms, though no foe-men they meet,  
Like hail from the clouds pelts the sling's rattling sleet.  
Of arms from the dingle they hear the deep clang,  
Spears glance in the copse, sounds the bow-string's shrill  
twang,



On their front and their rear drives the barbed iron shower;  
They chafe, but in vain. An invisible power  
Besets them; and round them, wherever they tread,  
New dangers appal, and new horrors are spread.  
Their numbers are thinned by the galloglass stern,  
And the skean and the bow of the swift-footed kern.  
Through woods, dismal glens, rocky straits is their march;  
The torrent flows wide o'er the new-broken arch.  
By day, they sink deep in the treacherous swamp;  
By night, the cooped river is sluiced on their camp.  
'Tis the fall of the leaf—and a cold wintry blast  
Has the blood in their veins half congealed as it passed,  
As an ice-bolt arrested the courser's warm speed,  
And froze to a statue the knight on his steed.  
While the elements round them are mustered in wrath,  
Howls famine aloud in their desolate path;  
Gaunt famine, that in the lone church-yard has fed,  
And cooked her last meal in the skulls of the dead.  
No welcome now waits them in bower or in hall,  
No sheep from the fold, and no ox from the stall.  
To the once-plenteous board want and hunger have crept,  
The viands have vanished, the tables are swept;  
And the ruins they spread, when they passed in their prime,  
Now seem to upbraid them with folly and crime.  
Of the steeds that erst bore them so gallant and trim,  
They drain the red life, and they carve the lean limb;  
They dig, with their dirks, for the earth-nut and weed,  
And on all noxious things, and forbidden, they feed:  
While the wolf's hungry howl fills their souls with dismay,  
And the vulture wheels round them expecting her prey.  
Oh! now for the sweet highland glen's sunny side,  
For the sheaf-studded vales of the Forth and the Clyde,  
For the cate-covered board and the maiden's fond wiles,  
The prattling of children, the wife's happy smiles! --  
'Twixt them and such joys rolls the dark-swelling flood,  
Stands a proud bannered host—spreads a red field of blood.

Next, ominous sights and sad bodings invade,  
And spread o'er their soul dark and comfortless shade.  
In the cataract's fall, shrieking kelpies they hear;  
In the mists, lonely wraiths and strange phantoms appear.  
By the Flurry's swift stream, a huge altar of stone,  
In the dark stilly night, gave a blood-curdling groan,  
As if knife sacrificial deep-plunged in the side  
Of some human victim, were draining life's tide.  
While the ghosts of the slain, whose heads grimly lower,

With gory locks streaming from rampart and tower,  
O'er their camp came in crowds with a horrible cry,  
And marshalled their battle, and fought in the sky.  
So a dreamer declared.—To a seer's second sight  
Rose a vision terrific; all scattered in flight,  
From a lost battle-field fled his clans like the wind,  
Pale, bloody, and fear-struck; their chief left behind  
Gashed with wounds widely gaping; the head fully torn  
From the trunk, as a gift to a monarch was borne;  
The gibbeted members hung up to the gale,  
In four distant regions, disclosed a sad tale.

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

Thence not far remote a green hill lifts its brow,  
Hight Faughard, where pilgrims were oft wont to bow,  
And move round Saint Brigid's rough circle of flint,  
On their knees, till they marked it with many a dint.  
Sad penance!—but vestals so holily live,  
That, in man, sin or error they seldom forgive.  
More soon might poor pilgrim melt flint by a prayer,  
Than their rock-crystal hearts all so cold and so fair;  
Though rich ones, 'tis said, more persuasive and bland,  
As is meet, e'en the coldest can warm and expand!  
Here of holy Monenna the nunnery stood,  
And near it an abbey conjoined by a wood;  
Such the sympathies still of the pious and good,  
That the monk and the abbot will ever be found  
Where vestals' devotions have hallowed the ground.

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

"And what says De Soulis?" cried Bruce in a flame:  
"My peer counsels well, and I counsel the same,"  
De Soulis replies. Then Bruce, deeply moved,  
"Are counsels so dastard by Mowbray approved?"  
"Though burns," says the Mowbray, "unwearied our fire,  
True wisdom exhorts from this field to retire.  
'Tis madness, not courage, to stand in the path  
Of the torrent that roars from the field in its wrath.  
Though filed upon field be well foughten and won,  
By victory oft is the victor undone;  
While still crowding forward, new columns advance  
To fill up the gap made by broadsword and lance.  
The lion, though fearless to meet the attack  
Of blood-hound and beagle, must yield to the pack.  
Recede then, lest, borne down by numbers, we bleed;  
Or wait for King Robert, he marches with speed,  
And soon will arrive, if the heralds speak truth,  
With some thousands of spears, and the flower of his  
youth."

Bruce hears with disdain, and indignantly cries,  
"Ours all be the danger, ours all be the prize!  
Such maxims of wisdom, such counsels of fear,  
From chivalrous Mowbray we ne'er hoped to hear.  
In our own dauntless breasts and good swords we confide;  
This day's coming glory with none we divide.  
Let the foes crowd around us from mountain to glen,  
Thick as swarms of the small summer flied o'er the fen;  
Oh! ne'er it be said, they who manfully trod

O'er the pride of King Edward, on Bannockburn's sod,  
Fled the wild Irish kern;—no! we'll trample them down;  
The greater their number, more great our renown.  
Let Mortimer come with his Sassanach bows;  
We'll answer his arrows with dirks when we close.  
Let Bermingham's horse urge their rapid career;  
No steed leaps the hedge-row of target and spear.  
How oft have we hewn our red pass through a crowd  
Of foes, round us wrapt like a dark stormy cloud?  
What once we achieved, we again will perform,  
Though the cloud be more dense, and more pelting the  
storm.  
The darker the welkin, more bright is the flash  
Of the levin, and louder its earth-shaking crash.  
Remember the wrongs of your country and king;  
Remember the joys that from victory spring;  
Win Erin—and shake to its base England's throne;  
Be victors to-day and the land is your own.  
Then each to his post, and his clansmen inspire  
With all the proud thoughts that can kindle their fire.  
In the left, thou, De Soulis, as wont, prove thy might;  
Thou, Mowbray, maintain our good cause in the right;  
The main-battle ourselves will to victory lead;  
For here, by the rood, we must conquer or bleed."

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

## **BRUCE'S INVASION.**

### **CANTO THIRD.**

#### **THE ARMIES OF ERIN.**

‘Tis sublime to look forth from the watch-tower or  
steep,  
When the tempest in foam sheets the billowy deep:  
More sublime, from some height, in the young purple day,

To see two armed legions, in bannered array,  
Front to front o'er the champaign advancing in pride,  
For empire or glory their strife to decide;  
All hearts with high hip and strange ecstasy filled;  
With war's stern delight e'en to agony thrilled.  
'Tis a glorious scene in the morn—but at night—  
Oh! hide it in mercy—Oh! blot from the sight  
That scene of atrocity bloody and fell,  
Where the fiends held their revels, and death raged with  
hell.

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

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

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

And each glows with hope soon to find in the field  
New plumes for his helm, and new signs for his shield.

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

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

Next advances Le Poer, a chivalrous lord,  
Proved both in the war of the tongue and the sword;  
By the one on his head church's vengeance he drew,  
In the other the brave Sir John Bonneville he slew.

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

How graceful his warriors their coursers bestride!  
Each comes with a light-footed page by his side.  
He uses no stirrup, yet mounts at full speed,  
And sits on his selle like a part of his steed;  
His legs costly buskins of cordwayne enclose;  
Of the iron-ringed web are his hauberk and hose;  
Streams the hair from his cone like the tresses of night;  
Shines his round dazzling shield like the sun in his height,  
His spear on the winds, in gay frolic, he proves,  
And his iron-sheathed sabre clangs loud as he moves,

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

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

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

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

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

North, South, East, and West, to increase the war-  
flood,  
Send many a chief to Milesian blood;  
The bravest of all the brave princes who shoot  
From the three branchy arms of the great royal root:  
From Heremon, father of monarchs renowned,  
Or Heber, tranfix'd by his steel to the ground,  
Or Ir, o'er whose corse howled the hurricane dark,  
When the Skeligs' wild breakers had deluged his bark.  
There the leopard of Connaught seems couched for a  
spring,  
Here the eagle of Desmond has spread her dark wing.  
As birds to the prey that come rushing from far,  
They speed to enjoy the grand pastime of war;  
Proud Flaiths on whose helmets gemmed coronets shine;  
Proud Tanists with baldrics enriched by the mine.  
And knights who the honours of knighthood had won,  
Ere in years they had measured eight rings of the sun:  
These lead to the field chosen friends and allies,  
By gossipred's sacred, infrangible ties  
Conjoined; or by fosterage, potent to bind  
As the same kindred blood, and mind rivet to mind.

Carty-More, rich and potent in vassals and land,  
And O'Sullivan Beare of the liberal hand,  
Whose cup ever-full, and whose ever-spread board  
Reflection and strength to the pilgrim afford,  
Lead on the armed files of Momonia's rough shore;  
Those who drink of the Suir, or the dark Avonmore;



Of th' alder-fringed Mulla, or castle-crowned Lee;  
Or Bandon, fair-winding by turret and tree;  
Or the silvery eddies of Arragadeen,  
Or of Lean's mountain lakes spread in crystalline sheen,  
Where the Arbutus blooms ever verdant and green:  
Wild haunt of the echoes that sportively play  
Round the cliffs, and the peaks, and each wood-skirted bay,  
Till nature in ecstasy vibrates and thrills,  
As thunders melodious roll round the hills.  
With these come the warriors who dwell where expand  
The fleet-bearing gulfs, mid the mountain-girt land  
Of Bantry and Dingle; or breathe the pure air  
Of the wild and magnificent shores of Kenmare.

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

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

Now he longs to be trussing more generous game,  
And comes from the Bruce wreaths of glory to claim.

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

Next come the Clan-Collas in quest of renown,  
From Ardmacha's heights—and Maginis of Down;  
And Savage, the Spartan, who thinks that men's bones  
Form a bulwark more strong than a rampart of stones.  
With Gronstram, of Innisnabel the rich lord;  
Ne'er did warrior more courteous or kind draw a sword,  
Hence many a maiden had fain be his bride:  
But in scorn Cupid's arrows he wafted aside,  
For, lord of th' ascendant, the stern god of war  
Shone high, at his birth, o'er the fair Paphian star.  
But near him is one who were better I ween,  
In the sweet myrtle grove, with Idalis's soft queen,  
Hight Redmond, the victim of love and despair,  
His eye rolling-wild, his brow clouded with care:  
Here he hopes to forget the false maiden who sold  
Her hand—Redmond had all her heart—for vile gold.  
An aunt with malignity grizzled, and fraught

With the spirit of evil, this misery wrought;  
Forced the maid to embrace, maugre honour and truth,  
For wealth, a crazed dotard, and leave the fond youth.  
But of vengeance and wo is the day speeding fast,  
Her selfish and sordid ambition to blast;  
When the hideous grin and wild laugh shall reveal  
That the horror-struck wretch is at last taught to feel.  
Her cold callous heart shall remorse keenly wring,  
And avenge wounded love by a noose and a swing.

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

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

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

Broad-shouldered, and stately, and shirted in brass,  
With his war-axe and sword comes the stout galloglass.  
His axe double-winged, with each wing shining clear,  
And curved like the moon ere she fills up her sphere.  
More keen than the razor, more rapid its way  
Than the gannet's, or hawk's rushing down to the prey.  
Its shaft seasoned ash, and, when swung in his hand,  
Its terrible dint may nought living withstand.  
Through the warrior's cuished thigh the dread thunderbolt  
glides,  
Or the helmeted head from the shoulder divides.  
Round his casque the green shamrog is gracefully twined,  
And his scarf, of the bright saffron dye, flouts the wind.

Next comes the glibbed kern, with his lion-like face,  
His frieze purple mantle tight-girt with a brace:  
His light nether limbs yellow truisse clasp around;  
In bull's hairy hide close his ancles are bound.  
No target he wields, but to guard him from harm,  
In gauntlets of iron he buckles his arm.  
More swiftly he bounds than the fleet mountain roe,  
Though seldom he joys in the close standing fight,  
But in ambushes oft and in skirmishes light.  
On his foes, when dark forests entangle their course,  
He showers forth his missiles with death-dealing force.  
Oft as some errant knight spurs his steed like the wind,  
Amazed he discerns a strange rider behind.  
The kern on his crupper has sprung with a bound,  
And his arms have the knight closely girdled around;  
In vain the knight labours those arms to unloose,  
The fiercer his struggles more tight grows the noose.  
Some spirit unearthly, he thinks, works his wo;  
Cold sweat-drops of terror his forehead o'erflow.  
The kern has him clasped to his breast like a child,  
And he drives on the courser impetuous and wild,  
Up mountain, down valley;—deep-plunging they cross  
The bog—swim the river and bound o'er the fosse:  
Till, in the far glen, joyous cheerings arise,  
To greet the return of the kern with his prize.  
Two keen-pointed javelins he whirls by a thong,  
With aim so unerring, with impulse so strong,  
As through shield and hauberk to sluice the red tide:  
Hangs a skean, in an ivory sheath, by his side;  
With this, when thick carnage the champaign bespreads,  
From the wounded and dying he severs the heads.

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

Wide unfurled o'er the host Erin's stan dard is raised;  
In its emerald grain the gold harp shines emblazed:  
Gallgrena, the sun-burst, that standard they name,  
For it glitters in flight like the sun's bursting flame  
Through the dark broken clouds.—Seems the harp to be  
strung  
With his beams, and by spirits aerial rung.  
'Tis the prelude of triumph; the bards catch the strain,  
And wild from their harps it re-echoes amain.

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

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

In ages to come, if the must can foretell,  
The souls of those bards in new bodies shall dwell.  
Lo! Reda who sang of the dark Hill of Caves,  
With him who in Suir found sweet Castaly's waves,  
Ardfileas both, skilled with dexterous hand  
To wake the harp's spirit, or wield battle-brand.  
There is Ybod the sage who of heaven sublime  
Has sung—and of hell, and the sin-purging clime.  
And nigh him, inspired, comes the young Duvalcour,  
Loud and bold rings the cruit of that brave troubadour,  
As he wakes the Rosg-catha—impetuous and strong  
The torrent of battle rolls mad in his song.  
But whose is that harp whence such ecstasy floats,  
Those powerful, those magical, heart-thrilling notes?  
To-day may th' Ovoca be proud of her child,  
Sweet bard of the city, the bower, and the wild.  
He seems as if gifted by some sacred spell,  
To inflame to high deeds, the rapt bosom to swell  
With love of his Erin, and vividly start  
The spirit of conflict in each bounding heart.

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

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

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

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

For your dear-loved  
Erin's right,  
Fame, and maiden's love ye  
fight.  
Let your deeds heroic prove

Just your claim to maiden's  
love.

Now for altar, country life,  
Father, mother, children,  
wife,  
Bliss, and glory, nerve each  
heart,  
Edge the steel and point the  
dart.

On them, men of Erin,  
dash!

Greet them with the  
target's clash,  
Lance's dint and sabre's  
flash!

Shaking terrors from  
your crest,  
Spur in steed, and lance in  
rest,  
Warriours' welcome give the  
foe,  
Steel-bolts hissing from the  
bow,  
Lead-sleet rattling from the  
sling,  
Darts that heroes' dirges sing,  
Pike and faulchion, stab and  
thrust,  
Till the foemen bite the dust.

On them, men of Erin,  
dash!

Greet them with the  
target's clash,  
Lance's dint and sabre's  
flash!

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

"Men of Erin advance! like the wild-rushing tide;  
Like the water-spout's burst down the glen's channelled  
side,  
Like the eagle's fell swoop on the birds of the mere;



Like the blood-hound's fierce leap from his leash in the deer;  
Like the volleying bursts of the quick-bolting leven,  
When in thunder it flashes and blazes through heaven.  
O'er the spoils of the foe—o'er their blood-streaming grave,  
To-day let the banner of green proudly wave;  
Rend the jaws of the lion that prowls round your shore,  
And trample the thistle of Albyn in gore."

Thus music and song through the host breathe their fire;  
Religion too comes her warm flame to inspire—  
Blest offspring of heaven, whose dictates prevail,  
When country and fame, song and minstrelsy fail,  
To nerve for the battle by breathings sublime  
Of the hope, love and joy of her bliss-teeming clime.  
See where, on a charger swift-footed and white,  
Rides Jorse, the bold primate, arrayed for the fight.  
He wields not to-day, with mild pastoral grace,  
The shepherd's long crook, but the warrior's short mac e,  
Whose ponderous head glitters bright and afar  
With spikes densely rayed like the fair morning star.  
A casque is his mitre, his sleeve burnished steel;  
In a frock of blue mail, with a spur on his heel,  
In the centre and flank, in the van and the rear,  
He speeds, with his own glowing spirit to cheer,  
And urge to high daring, by all that is given  
To hope or to wish, upon earth or in heaven.  
"Ye fight, men of Erin, from bondage to save  
A land of renown, fat with blood of the brave;  
A land blest of nature in soil, sun and skies;  
Sword ne'er clashed with sword for more noble a prize.  
'Tis yours—heaven's gift—let your prowess retain  
What God has bestowed, nor that gift render vain.  
'Tis the land, from old time, by your fore-fathers trod:  
Speaks a voice from their ashes that hallow the sod,  
And bids you to prove, by your deeds of high name,  
The sons and the heirs of their valour and fame.  
The saints too invoke you to valiantly dare,  
Holy Brigid, the chief, who first breathed vital air  
On Faughard, that hill where she kindles her shrine,  
And where she still dwells, working wonders divine.  
This day who survives, in her love shall rejoice;  
Who falls, falls thrice happy—for, hearken! her voice,  
From above, whispers softly, 'to mansions of rest  
Shall his soul wing her flight with the souls of the blest.'

See the staff of your national saint, that of yore,  
Expelled all things noxious from Erin's green shore—  
To-day shall this staff, like the all-potent wand  
Of Moses, deliverance work for the land.  
Let the Lord God arise, and his foes turn to flight!  
Let the whirlwind roll on, and the hail-tempest smite!  
Till Erin has vanquished, O sun, stand thou still,  
And thou too, O moon, o'er the vale and the hill!  
Go—offer them up from the hot-reeking sward,  
A holocaust savoury and sweet to the Lord,  
For each blood-drop ye shed shall a sin be forgiven,  
Each corse forms a round in your ladder to heaven.  
Then on to the shock! let the proud foemen feel  
What nerve strings your arm, and gives edge to your steel."

## **BRUCE'S INVASION.**

### **CANTO FOURTH.**

#### **THE BATTLE.**

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

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

Wakes the slumbering spirit, and gives to expand  
Each germ in the soul of the good and the grand.

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

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

Close-marshaled, and ready with target and lance,  
The warriors of Albyn wait Erin's advance:  
In the centre, high-waving, her standard is spread,  
And there towers the crest of the Bruce's helmed head.  
From his shield the red lion with life seems to spring,  
Clothed with terror and ire in defence of his king.  
Like azure-winged lightning his good battle-brand  
Seems already to hiss and to blaze in his hand.  
His guards are around him, a giant-limbed brood,  
The flower of his clans, all intrepid and rude:  
But none more devoted e'er moved near a throne—  
The life of their prince they prize more than their own,  
And ere he should feel the light edge of a sword,  
Would bare their own hearts to its point to be gored.  
Mid these Harper lifts his broad shoulders on high,  
With strength in his arm—kindling fires in his eye,  
Prepared for his lord, as bold Fleming, to die.  
He arms like the Bruce—such the shield he assumes,  
The same his device, corslet, helmet and plumes;  
A glorious deceit—when the conflict shall burn,  
That on him, for the Bruce, all its fury may turn.

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

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

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

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

Shrill-booming the stone-hail is showered from the sling,  
The dirge-singing arrows leap swift from the string;  
So thick that full oft in mid air they rebound

From the flint's adverse shock, and drop blunt to the ground,  
Like quills from the wing of the high-soaring swan,  
Or the eagle that swims round the cliffs of Glanaan.

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

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

Dimmed grows the array of the erst glittering scene,  
How marred is its beauty, how tarnished its sheen!  
The rich saffron stole and the plaid's crimson fold,  
And pennon and banner of purple and gold,  
And corslet, and helmet, and hauberk, and shield,  
Shivered lances, and sabres, and darts strew the field.  
Severed limbs and pale corpses are scattered around,  
The blood of the valiant makes slippery the ground;  
And feathery crests, that the moment before  
Made sport with the winds, lie polluted in gore,  
Smote down like the white plummy birds of the deep,  
That a slinger has struck on their foam-girdled steep.  
While one shouts aloud, comes a shaft winged with death,  
And closes for ever the portals of breath.  
Lopped off, like a branch, by the keen trenchant brand,  
With the sword in its grasp, drops a gauntleted hand.  
Here falls a huge Gael, like a statue of lead,  
And there lies a chieftain cut short by the head;  
All ghastly and glaring, and whirling around  
In a current of gore smokes the head on the ground;

Beside him a youth—erst elated and gay,  
He hoped hence to bear some rich trophy away.  
More blest has he sought a fair chaplet of flowers,  
In the still shades of peace, or the Muse's green bowers,  
Nor through tempests of wrath sought the laurel that springs  
Ever-green from the life-blood of heroes and kings.  
The sword of the foe lops his hopes of renown,  
And he drops his plumed crest, like the canna's soft down,  
That waves in its beauty and pride on the moor,  
Till shorn by the severing slane of the boor.

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

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

Ullin's horse to the charge!—hark! the hoarse bugles sound,  
And on, like a whirlwind, they dash o'er the ground.  
Collected in strength—o'er their steeds bending low,  
With the butt of the lance o'er the firm saddle bow,  
An Albyn's wedged ranks they are rushing amain  
Their line to dissever—but on the trenched plain  
Wary Albyn her sharp spiky caltrops has sown,  
By which horse and rider would soon lie o'erthrown.  
The peril they spy, and wheel swift from the foe—  
More swift flies the shower of winged shafts from his bow.  
The galled chargers plunge—loud the clatter and clang  
On the arms of the fallen, and many a pang  
Inflict, as with brain-splattered fetlocks they tread  
On the dying, and trample them down with the dead.  
On the flank of the foe now they urge their career,  
But there meet a rampart of buckler and spear.  
Thick bristled all o'er like the hedge-hog's rough form,  
In a sheltrum he waits the approach of the storm,  
No open he leaves for the swift-rushing force,  
But greets with steel points the fierce charge of the horse.  
The steed feels the dint of the pike's iron strokes,  
In the brain of the rider the barbed arrow smokes;  
He falls a pale corse—springs the charger aloof,  
In agony flinging his blood-dripping hoof,  
Till he drops, with a horrible shriek, on the loam,  
All reeking with gore, bloody sweat, and red foam.

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

On! Bermingham, on!—for with no feeble hands,  
The Bruce and his guards are upon thy brave bands;  
E'en the boldest recoil from the strokes of the Gael  
That ring on their crests with a ear-stunning peal.  
At their head stalwart Harper, with battle-axe fell,  
Smites helmets and shields as a sledge smites a shell.  
But reddened with carnage, lo! Husse is near:  
They meet—each repelling the other's career.  
As a moment they pause, ere the fight they begin,  
O'er each blood-spotted face curls a tortuous grin,  
The lower of defiance—the grim smile of scorn,  
Cries Husse, "proud Scot, thou hast seen thy last morn;  
O'er thy threshold shall the bramble and thorn fix their root,  
While thy bones here are bleaching the cold blast beneath,  
And thy heart's blood is fattening the dark barren heath.  
Insatiate spoiler of altar and tomb!  
Thou slayer of women—here sealed be thy doom."  
"Fell Sassanagh boaster," cries Harper in wrath,  
The sounds through clenched teeth scarcely working a path,  
"Wordy ruffian!—thou vassal of vassals, to dare  
With warrior's of Albyn thine arm to compare!  
From the fate that now waits thee, such upstarts shall learn  
To rein their presumption—thou leader of kern!  
What they force of our arm know from this on thy crown."  
Swift as the winged words speeds the battle-axe down;  
But Husse's quick eye the lanced lightning had spied;  
More swift than its glance has he bounded aside;  
And ere 'tis repoised, has his own trenchant blade  
On the shield of his foe on wild revery played.  
Clashes steel upon steel, and stroke answering stroke  
Dints their mail, as the thunderbolt dints the gnarled oak.  
Thus meet two wild bulls in the season of love  
For the lordship contending of valley and grove.  
They bellow, they foam, spurn the sand, lower in scorn,  
Rush front against front—grapples horn upon horn,  
Gored in shoulder and flank—mad with fury and pain,  
They fight till one falls, or both bleed on the plain.

But who, like a demon of wrath, 'mid the foes  
Is dealing around such a tempest of blows?  
Through the dense ridge of battle he hews a broad pass,  
Sand mows down the soldiers of Albyn like grass.  
Sir Maupus—his steed is transfixed to the ground,  
And now upon foot he deals terror around.  
Loud he roars on the Bruce, if he dares, to come nigh;  
The Bruce's red claymore makes sudden reply.



They meet like two galleys, by wind and by oar  
Urged swift to the shock—dashes prore upon prore;  
Shiver yards—tremble masts—and recoiling they reel,  
With the fearful assault, from the tops to the keel.  
So meet two huge bowlders precipitate sent  
From two adverse hills by the elements rent;  
Each many an acre o'erleaps at a bound,  
And with many a trench deeply furrows the ground,  
Till, with horrid concussion, they strike in the vale—  
The shepherd aloof hears the crash, and turns pale.  
Fierce and dire grows the conflict—in circles of flame  
Their broadswords are playing their desperate game;  
Blow answers to blow—thrust for thrust tells alike;  
For each is less careful to ward than to strike;  
Rings their oft-stricken mail in a death-telling chime,  
Like the anvil with hammer and sledge keeping time.  
The shield of Sir Maupus its fissures may mourn,  
And the crest of the Bruce for its plumes roughly shorn.  
Each chief bears rude marks of the tempest of war,  
Battered helm and stained corslet—the gash and the scar.  
Now the dense cloud of warriors closes them round,  
And hides—but their blows loud and louder resound.  
In that cloud's burning centre all th' elements meet  
Of havoc and carnage, their fire and their sleet,  
The clash of the war-axe—the steel's scorching glance;  
There whirls the mad vortex of claymore and lance.  
There his shield has the galloglass blazoned anew,  
And there dyed his plumes in a fresh crimson dew.  
Like a lion whose mane in the blood of the roe  
Is dappled, the kern makes his spring on the foe.  
Round his visage his locks toss in horrible play,  
Besprent with the dash of the war's purple spray;  
Half-naked his limbs—unincumbered to strike—  
Wives and mothers may curse the fell thrust of his pike.  
Quail the foes at his look, for some spirit of ill,  
They think, has broke loose, or comes chartered to kill.

Uptripped on the slippery sod, in the fold  
Of a kern's nimble arms, a huge Gäel is rolled.  
The claymore and sword they have lost in the strife,  
And with dirk and with skean wage the contest for life.  
The one light, elastic, and supple of limb;  
The other all brawny, and stalwart and grim.  
Now strength is prevailing—the kern lies beneath—  
But his skean in the Gäel's bold heart finds a sheath.  
Like the string of a bow by a knife cut in twain,

In a moment relaxed—he is stretched with the slain;  
While his steed o'er the foe the kern brandishes high,  
And again is prepared a new conflict to try.  
Thus the weasel when trussed by a hawk, closely clings  
To the high-soaring bird—till beneath her spread wings  
He find where the fountains of life warmly play,  
And sluices and drains the red currents away.  
Sick and faint she descends from her height in the skies,  
Drops her quarry unhurt—gives a flutter—and dies.

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

Weep Albyn, and shriek far o'er mountain and flood,  
The faulchion of Erin grows drunk in thy blood.  
All pale with his death-wound and laid on a shield,  
By his clansmen is Mowbray borne far from the field;  
De Soulis has fallen before his brave line,  
And Stewart lies cleft from the head to the chine.

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

The kite and the vulture on Ravenside's peaks,  
And Carlingford's mountains, are whetting their beaks;

Or screaming on Mourne's famished birds to inhale  
The odour of blood, as it floats on the gale.

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

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

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

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

'Tis the part of presumptuous upstarts to tread  
On the fallen—the ass kicks the lion when dead.  
All virtue and all human good they comprise  
In cunning, address, and the talent to rise.  
Up the column of power ever-crawling they wind,  
Now turn—but to hiss on the friends left behind;  
In the specious attire of the generous and brave,  
Mask the soul of the tyrant, and heart of the slave,  
That can smile while they torture—can stab while they kiss,  
And consign to perdition while promising bliss.  
Unloved let them live, and unwept let them die;  
For their loss groans no bosom—no tear dims an eye.  
No friend to their tomb flowery chaplets shall bring,  
No high-minded bard shall their requiem sing,  
No child in his breast their fond memory nurse:  
But the insults they gave shall that memory curse,  
Where they lie shall oblivion brood o'er the spot,  
And their name on the earth, ere their carcasses rot.

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

Now Erin may raise her victorious cheers:  
But still must her joy be commingled with tears;  
As her clime is her life, chequered pleasure and wo,  
Sun and cloud—the dark storm and the bright rainy bow.  
Sad and dear is the joy for a victory won  
By the blood of a husband, a father—a son.  
And yet what is life since at last it must go  
By sickness, affliction, or time's sapping flow?  
Oh! better by far prematurely to fall  
In the conflict of fame, by the lance or the ball,  
Than in sorrow, and shame, and sad servitude live,  
Nor know what to life its true blessings can give.

Long, long, may thy daughters, Edina, deplore  
Their true lovers stay—they shall ne'er see them more,  
For their sons loud may weep the fond mothers of Kyle,  
For their husbands deep sorrow the wives of Argyle;  
For the chiefs and the clans of the sword-stricken Gael  
Let the lone Western Isles raise the dirge and the wail.  
Long and oft o'er the waves may their maids cast an eye,

Oft speed on the winds the fond wish and the sigh,  
Oft think they behold in the far-distant foam,  
Or the sea-bird's white pinion, their sails coming home.  
Never more in their sails heaven's breezes shall blow,  
But one little skiff comes deep-freighted with wo,  
And hope flies for ever—Loud shrieks pierce the air,  
Wives, mothers, and maidens are wrapt in despair;  
Some rend their black tresses—and some for their grief,  
In fast-gushing tears, find a transient relief.  
One feels to the core of the heart bruised so deep,  
She sees not—she hears not—oh! could she but weep!  
One tear-drop would be as a drop of sweet balm  
From heaven her agonized spirit to calm.  
But the shock has absorbed the sweet fountain of tears;  
No life in her chill frozen aspect appears.  
The lustre that beamed in her eye has grown dim,  
Pale, motionless, rigid and hard is each limb,  
As if Gorgon's head had before her been thrown,  
And suddenly stiffened and turned her to stone.