

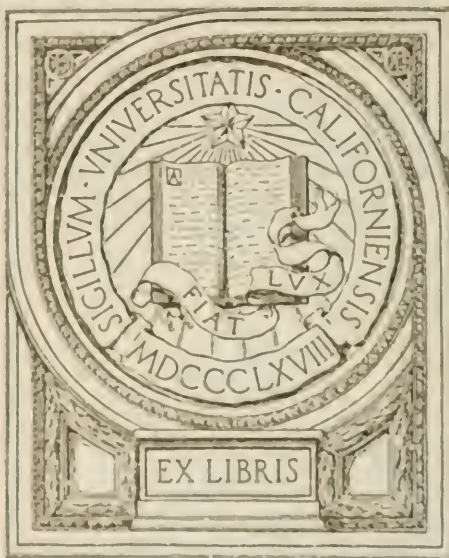
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FAND AND OTHER POEMS.



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FAND
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY
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NOTE.

It is perhaps advisable that I should here, though in the briefest manner, call attention to the fact that in this volume I have frequently, and in various forms, regular and irregular, employed assonance instead of rhyme. It ought hardly to be necessary, in these days of metrical experiment, to apologize for an attempt to introduce into English poetry a style of versification which, in the hands of Irish Gaelic bards, both ancient and modern, has shown itself to be in no way inferior to rhyme. But I must explain that only in one instance have I attempted to reproduce an actual Irish form; and that irregular forms both were and are unknown to Gaelic poetry.

FAND.

“TELL me that tale of Cuhoolin, Emer, reveal it to me,
As once was thy promise : 'tis thou that alone canst
relate it aright :

How, from the wiles of the beautiful Fand, the immortal,
the goddess, thou settest him free,
Leading him back, by the lure of thy love, to be chief
of the heroes of Eirë for ever.”

Thus spake the Bard of Cootalni, agèd and grey, to the
lady,

The fair-browed Emer, agèd and grey :

Who answered him : “ Yea, it is meet that I tell it,

And thou shalt record it,

That a mem'ry to all generations the tale of his tempt-
ing be.”

This was the tale the fair-browed Emer told.

Midsummer's fairest day was near its end,

The hot land panting for the cool of night,

When from the doon Cuhoolin wandered forth,

And I beside him, tow'rds the evening star.

We came to the lake's brink and ling'ring stood

Watching the marvel of the sunset sky :
Field beyond field of radiance delicate
High in the upper heaven and nearer earth
The jewelled dust from the sun's chariot wheels
O'er him an arch of triumph : suddenly
It seemed that, from the glow, two brightest clouds
Took swiftest motion tow'rds us, as they came
Into the glooming east, where the sun's day
Was failing, scattering dazzling day renewed :
But nearer seen they were not clouds, but birds,
That slowly sinking earthwards on the lake
Alighted, sending through the quivering wave
Pulses of golden joy.

Cuhoolin said :

"Thine are these birds, O Emer."

Moored close by

His boat was ready, and on the head of day
Grey not one gold hair grew, ere with skilled stroke
Of oar he paddled towards them : motionless
Seemed they to wait him, uttering low sweet notes
Of broken magic music ; but when he
Should have been nigh them, they were again afar
With motion unapparent : he pursued,—
The gloom behind,—the light in front of him,
Intense towards the clear west :—his shadow lying
Giant-like on the water,—and the birds
Gliding before him, ever lured him on,
Over the broad expanse, until the light
Sank on the falling sun, and purple mist

Rose round him, and mine eyes could see no more.
Only, far off and faint, I heard the cry
Of the birds' music circling round the shores
Enchanted : other noise the night had none :
The air no breath, the lake no ripple had,
But glimmerings faint, mingled with shadows deep,
By forest margin. There in vain I stood,
Waiting the plash of his returning oars,
That still refused to break the spells of night :
Myself half-held in chains of some sweet spell,
That kept fear far from me. Wearied at last
Homeward I took my way, and lingered not
To find repose : but, when I waked with day,
The flood of fear restrained rushed on my soul
At once remembering : messengers I sent
In eager haste impetuous ; o'er the lake
They rowed : they searched the shores : for many a mile,
On all sides round, they roamed and left no nook
Of forest or hill or cave or rushy shore
Unsearched, but tidingless returned : days fled :
At noon I said, " evening his face will see : "
At midnight, " morning surely bringeth him : "
But with despairing glance went evenings by,
And empty of my gift came many a morn.
So then for help I sought the druids wise,
Who, practising their arts, thus answered me.
" Cuhoolin lives : he has been lured from thee
By wiles of the bright goddess beautiful,
Fand, wife of Mananaun Mac Lir, who now

Estranged, take pleasure in divided lives,
Plucking the fruits of bliss from varied boughs.
But she, ere quite she may thy husband win,
Must spells perform of slow accomplishment.
They are not all yet wrought : therefore, if thou
Canst quickly follow and find him, ere they be,—
And long the way which thou must wend alone,
And all unhelped thou must the task achieve,
Haply thou may'st regain him."

Then they added
Way-guiding words, showing me how to reach
The place : and, having heard them, I set forth
With trembling hopes, alone : for many days
Southward I journeyed over waste and wild ;
Through woods : o'er many a mead ; past many a doon,
By Tara's regal mansions, and beyond
The fords of Liffey : over flattest plains
With hills to left ;—over the esker ridge
Dividing Eirë midwards : onwards still
Beneath Slieve Blahma, and the lofty peaks,
Whereon Bove Derg is throned : o'er plains again,
Among the sons of Eber ; till the long swell
Of southward mountains rose against the sky ;
And there, beneath the highest summits, I knew
The goddess on Cuhoolin worked her charms.

Into a land of wonder I was come :
The year in the north was autumn's : here not so ;
Young summer by the charm of leafier woods,

And greener meads, and sweeter flowers detained.
Yet did I see but little till I reached
The long-sought shores, and the fair water lay,
Circling its isles before me ; round it rose
Mountains, that were but banks of woods and flowers,
Some, with a sudden spring, upheaving high
Their breasts, bright-plumed, like unto gorgeous birds
Exulting in rich beauty, richly robed.
Others, in wider spaces more removed,
Rolled up in endless terraces to heaven
Broad fields dark green with forests of the pine.
The slopes, that touched the lake, ran down below
So clear, it seemed the underwater sky
Revealed the palaces of fairyland ;
And in the upper bowers of oak and beech,
Glossy as in mid May, the sunlight revelled
Like some fair half-tamed creature, new set free :
Above, the naked peaks nearer the sun
Burned, like the golden dwellings of the gods.

Rapt from my purpose by that beauty awhile,
Marvelling, I gazed, till startled by a voice,—
“ What seeketh Emer on the shores of Leane ? ”
I turned and saw a man of rudest garb,
Wild-haired and shaggy—a herd or fisherman—
But keenest-eyed—and asked him, fearing not,
“ How know’st my name ? ”

“ I answer not,” he said,
“ Yet may I serve thee, for I know thy quest ;

Fand and Cuhoolin are in yonder isle."
My heart leaped strangely, and I could not speak.
Continued he, "if thou would'st reach the isle,
A boat is here: hasten, lest from thy lips
Delay should wring a lamentable 'too late.'"
"Oh! never name the word." I cried: "thy boat—
Where is it? take me: greatly will I reward thee."
"I ask for no reward," he said: "but come."
He led me to a little rocky cove
Close by: there lay the boat: he helped me in,
Followed, and rowed: soon we were in mid lake.
There paused he: "ere we reach the isle," he said.
"Hear thou my counsel: in a bower in the isle
Lies thy Cuhoolin; on this very day
Fand works her last enchantments: when thou reachest
The place, and hear'st her singing, linger thou
Till the last note has died:—then quickly in,
And thou wilt find thy hero lying asleep
Alone; rouse him, and ere the goddess return
Hasten him from the bower."

We touched the shore.

The wave lay lucid, golden-clear and green
As ocean's round a reef in the mid-deep:
And out of it with arch fantastical,
And many a fair vault hollowed, rose the grey
Of the low rocky shore, over whose brim
O'erflowed the emerald herb: and in the clefts
The holly's gloss with darker ivy vied.
Yew mingled with arbutus, that still kept

Its bloom of crimson fruit ; and over these
Waved ash-trees tall, letting a netted shade
Dance on the shrubs and flowers.

I stept ashore
And made for the mid-isle, threading my path
Through the green tangle to what seemed a light :
And, coming to an open space of grass,
Beheld before me, in the midst thereof
A wall of reddest roses front my way :
I heard within the wall a voice that sang.

Bright above us hangs the golden noon,
While the ash-tree shades thy slumber ;
Sleep, O mortal lover,
And dream of me !

Sleep, Cuhoolin !
Twice already to my song's enchantment
Hast thou slumbered :
In each dream I give thee losing
Something of a past that fades ;
Only one memory unshaken
Still within thy mind remains :
By its virtue, child and country
Lingering, but as shadows, still.

All shall fade, when my full charm from Emer
Sets thy memory free :
Slumber, happy dreamer ;
Thou shalt dream of me.

The music of her last triumphant words
Floated in golden eddies round the bower,
And choral echoes answered and singing birds ;
Such was its sweetness, but for the goad of fear
Myself had swooned into forgetfulness.
But when the last was heard, with hasty steps,
Stealthy, I crept around and found a way
Between the branches : there on a golden couch,
Strewn with soft cushions and rich coverlets,
In gently smiling sleep Cuhoolin lay
Alone : I took his hand and kissed his brow,
Saying " awake, O husband ! it is day,—
Mid-day, when none but sluggards take their ease :
And art thou drowsy, who wert wont to chide
The laggard footsteps of the summer morn ? "
He woke, and stared at me amazedly.
" What does this mean ? " he asked : " when last I waked
I talked with Fand : can Fand to Emer fade ?
The roses lose no blush : I am perplexed."
" Oh ! come," said I, " this air is oversweet,
Laden with languid dreams and drowsiness ;
Beside the lake there moves a clearer air,
Come, and thou soon wilt understand."

He rose

Bewildered but compliant : a moment more
I had snatched him from the goddess easily ;
When lo ! there was a parting of the boughs,
And all the bower was filled with sudden light,
Richer than sunshine, as she came before us,

Fand, the most marvellous : ask me not to give thee
The measure of her beauty : there is none
That mortal women yield, and should I speak,
Striving to recreate her to thine eyes,
Faint is the image I should conjure up,
To wrong my tempted hero : this I know,
The uttermost perfection of her shape
Was steeped in colour, lovelier than eve's or morn's ;
There is something of mere childhood in the morn,
And all the hues of sunset hint of death :
She had them all, but lit by noon's white light
Intense, the goddess life that glowed in her.

Then to Cuhooin said she " how I grieve
For thy sweet slumber being broken,
Wherein thy soul's eyes had been closed for ever
To all the world of men,
And to the gods' thrown open.
Yet is it not too late ; give me thy hand ;
And, troubled though thy vision be
With mingled gleams of either land,
I will steady thee, I will guide thee
Safely over the stepping stones :
And, when thy feet are firm on the further shore,
There will I unravel
The web of light and shadow,
That now imprisons thy spirit ;
From thy vision will I pluck the threads of darkness,
And the raiment of thy soul reweave in light."

But I, with sudden movement of quick fear,
Sprang to his side and came between them,
Clasped his hands and shielded from her touch :

"Hasten, O Cuhoolin, hasten,
Ere the spell-cloud, I have broken
Close again around thy soul."

Yet moved he not, and with dismay I saw
Trouble in his eyes, and anger on his brow ;
And petulant his words were, as a child's
Suddenly roused from sleep, not like a man's.
Much less the chief of heroes :

"What hast thou done ?

Why wakened me ? The dreams I had were filled
With richer happiness, by far, than all
The joys of all my waking hours : thou art like
A creature spiteful, mischievous, who breaks
Some lovely thing, rare art has wrought, that ne'er
Delights the eyes again, when once destroyed.
Oh ! wert thou not a woman I could strike thee."

"Heed her not !"

Interposed the temptress softly,
"Know'st thou not the skill of hand,
That made thy bliss, abides with Fand ?
I can restore thy broken jewel of joy
To rarer lustre."

Still was he perplexed :
Her chain seemed broken : mine he would not have.
Then, from the mountains of his spirit, suddenly

Came there a gust, like that, which from a hill
Swoops on a lake and scoops the water up,
Whirling the wave in the misplacèd air,
And flattening to the water sails surprised,
As thus he cried "evil be on you both,
Spoilers of what you never may renew :
With Fand it had been sweet to dream,
Should I not hear sharp wailings of reproach,
And see a cloud-like shadow float between
Myself and my bright sun.
Fair too the ancient strenuous life had been,
Had I the new not known :
Now are both horrible : I am torn in twain :
Each of you has a half : are you content ?
A bleeding half :—oh ! that my veins would yield
A flood to gulf you in ! oh ! woe ! my woe !"

Silent, in uttermost grief, I gazed on him.
Amazed stood also Fand : at length I cried,
"Thou hast done this : away, thou evil thing !
Desperate beauty take thy light away,
That makes me pale, and he will come to me.
Truly has it been said of thee
"Hosts to madness leadeth she,"
Since Cuhoolin thou hast led.
I pray thee go and work no further ill.
He has cursed us both. Leave him to me to cure.
Though here thy voice be potent, matched with mine,
To hold and trouble him, let him once return

Among the old things, and a thousand voices
Will sing with gathering murmur, as the leaves
Of forest boughs innumerable,—will sing
The old sweet peace into his breast again.
I am but one leaf,—nothing ; thou a tree :
Yet is the tree but little to the forest
Of friends, loves, occupations will surround him
In his own home, Coalni. Have compassion :
Return, O Fand, to thine immortal spouse,
And leave to me my mortal."

"Nay," she said ;

"If he is troubled, whose the blame but thine,
Who hast cut the tendrils, that had clasp'd with strength
The life of fuller joy ;—rashly, unheedingly :
Caring for nothing but to get him back,
Yet not for that so much as get from me ?
Loving him truly thou had'st left him to me.
Yet, be thou not unwarned : take him from me,
If such thy power, I leave a sting behind,
The sting of my remembrance, a quick pain
No skill of thine can e'er pluck out of him.
With me 'tis different : I can pluck thee out,
And with immortal kisses heal the wound."

Strange was the thought her words aroused.
What if 'twere better that he went with her ?
I could not yet endure it : "why," I sobbed,
"Why do you envy us our best,
Why pluck from us our hero-flowers,

To make more rich the airs of heaven,
Leaving our scentless gardens desolate ?
Nay, and this too may be,
The flower, that men the sweetest deem,
May, in that rarer atmosphere
The gods inhale, prove odourless :
What need of hero's strength have they,
What care for man's achievement ? ”

“ Nay,” said Fand,
Well the gods know, they know full well
The difference in the deeds of men.”
“ Ay, do they so ? ” I said : have I not heard
Wise druids say mankind was but a field
Of plants, wherein the gods their trials made,—
Plucking the rarest,—making thus new gods,
Enriching heaven, leaving the weeds to earth ? ”
“ It may be so,” she answered, “ or, perchance,
Lest men should grow too mighty ; howbeit
With thee I wrangle not : Cuhoodlin, hear !
From the land, where I would lead thee,
Have my birds, the golden-throated,
Brought for thee the dews of healing :
They shall pour them in thine ear :

Hear ! ”

Then from a bird among the boughs unseen
Burst forth a long note, sweet,—sweet and clear :


“ Spring without its frosts and chills,
Summer, but no scorching heat,

Autumn's gold without decay :
Winter shall not freeze our rills,
Save an hour we dream of it,
Waking find it fled away."

It ceased, and he upraised his head,
Calmly, all his passion gone,
And urged me this strange plea :—
"Tell me, why should I not
Linger awhile with her?
How beautiful she is thou seest ;
And what accomplishments are hers, what powers,
Thou also may'st behold.
Here, when we came, the hills were bare,
Slimy the lake, and cold :
She sat and sang and all things quickly changed :
The dark cloud-roof upon the mountains broke,
And all the upper azure lights of heaven
Softly down the hill sides stole,
Clothing them in hazy gold.
The lake below grew limpid clear ;
And from the wonder-breeding shores
Came forth a living host,
The verdurous multitude of woods :
The hollows of the hills they peopled,
Like a flood they overbrimmed them ;
And the crags they scaled,
Round them flinging arms of shade.
Then also came the flowers, I knew not whence :

Then came the birds ;
O Emer, great though thine accomplishments
They are not skilled like hers.
Then leave me in this region of delight,
And love of thee will linger in my heart :
Better be loved far off than hated near ;
And loving thee, perchance I shall return,
Wearied of this sweet world,
With willing footsteps to thine arms again."

Oh ! how my soul was troubled !
There was a strange persuasion in his voice,
That all but conquered me ; yet felt I, too,
It was the goddess spake through it, not he :
And thus I cried, " hating or loving me,
Come now, or thou returnest nevermore."



Again came in the voice of Fand,
Rich with its sweet temptation,
Subtly-pleading, dangerous :—
" Return not to that pale imperfect world,
Where all things seem to be, but nothing is.
This woman, thy wife, she is a type of it.
Fair she may be, as mortal women are fair,—
Fairer than most ;—look at her : then at me ;
So, ev'n in all things, differ our separate worlds."
She spoke and all my heart within me sank
And my poor cheeks grew paler,—brighter hers
Glowed in her exultation, as the rose

Of summer against the fading, pale spring flowers,
That men admire, ere richer blooms appear.
Cuhoolin wavered, and I marvelled not ;
And once again the music of her voice
Was heard, and it was sweeter than the choirs
Of all the woodlands singing, for every word
Came floating in a mist of melody :

“ Come to the summer of my beauty, come !
Leave thou the cold pale spring ;
Winter is in its heart ;
And, born of chill, to chill will it return :
But I am summer eternal,
That have not ripened, being perfect ever,
And shall not thence decline.”

“ And shall not thence decline,”
The birds upon the branches chaunted after,
And passed the words to minstrels more removed,
Till all the hollows of the mountains habbled
Soft-voiced the confirmation of her words.

“ The raw weak years of youth I have not known ;
Therefore there is no part of me,
Whereby can ever age take hold,
To draw me down to death :
With steps reluctant down the deep'ning chill,
To where in ever-during gloom he sits,
And frost, that ne'er is frightened of the sun.”

“ And frost that ne’er is frightened of the sun,”
Her choirs began, but soon the dismal words
Died in the throats of her bright-plumaged birds.

“ On full-grown pinions I have for ever soared,
And ne’er have lain unfledged,
Helpless within the nest,
Nor learnt by feeble flutterings to rise :
In the mid heights of air I have been born :
My jewelled wings shall never lose their treasures,
Never to earth descend.”

“ Never to earth descend,”
Her choirs rechaunted and the silver strain
Through all the flower-lit forests found no end.
Then she resumed again :
“ I am the moon, that having ne’er been crescent,
From fullness ne’er shall wane :
Vainly thou shalt not search for me in heaven :
But over thee the river of my beauty
Shall roll in floods, unstinted and unceasing,
Shedding delight and bliss upon thy being,
As the full moon pours light upon the sea.”

“ As the full moon pours light upon the sea,”
The birds rechaunted, and the minstrel mountains
Rolled back the reflux wave of melody.

“ Come to me, come, Cuhoolin !
Open wide have I flung to thee

The gates of the golden land, whose air giveth life that
dies not :

Feelest thou not upon thy cheek the breezes,
Fanning thy flame of mortal to divine ?

Feel'st thou not that its bliss floweth round thee, soft as
the waters,

Into thy soul's mid core to the likeness of gods trans-
forming ?

Surely into thy being already so deeply the glow divine
hath entered,

Never could'st thou endure the dull sad world again :

The cold dark world of men and death ;

Turn from it, once and for ever,

And choose thou immortality and Fand."

She ceased ; he must have gone,

If grief the chords of my faint spirit had struck not

And waked one feeble wail. " Woe, woe ! " I cried :

" How weak and pale am I !

Ah ! by what beauty shall I win thee back,

Made weaker by my sorrows and my fears ?

My words dissolve in sighs,

That should persuade thine ears ;

I have only tears

To make mine eyes more beautiful."

Again he wavered tow'ards me,

For pity swayed his soul,

And that approach of his gave force to me,

And I arose with strength for pleading :
“ Heed her not, O Cuhoolin, husband mine ;
Delusive is the bliss she offers thee,
Bliss that will to torment turn,
Like one bright colour for ever before thine eyes,
Since of mortal race thou art.
Man is the shadow of a changing world ;
As the image of a tree,
By the breeze swayed to and fro,
On the grass, so changeth he ;
Night and day are in his breast ;
Winter and summer, all the change
Of light and darkness and the season’s marching ;—
Flowers that bud and fade,
Tides that rise and fall.
Even with the waxing and the waning moon
His being beats in tune ;
The air that is his life
Inhales he with alternate heaving breath ;
Joyous to him is effort, sweet is rest ;
Life he hath and death.

Then seek not thou too soon that permanence
Of changeless joy that suits unchanging gods,
In whom no tides of being ebb and flow.
Out of the flux and reflux of the world
Slowly man’s soul doth gather to itself,
Atom by atom, the hard elements
Firm, incorruptible, indestructible,

Whereof when all his being is compact,
No more it wastes nor hungers, but endures,
Needing not any food of changing things,
But fit among like-natured gods to live,
Amongst whom, entering too soon, he perishes,
Unable to endure their fervid gaze.
Though now thy young, heroic soul
Be mate for her immortal might,
Yet think, thy being is still but as a lake,
That, by the help of friendly streams unfed,
Full soon the sun drinks up.
Wait till thou hast sea-depths :—
Till all the tides of life and deed,
Of action and of meditation ;—
Of service unto others and their love,
Shall pour into the caverns of thy being
The might of their unconquerable floods :
Then canst thou bear the glow of eyes divine ;
And like the sea, beneath the sun at noon,
Shalt shine in splendour inexhaustible.

Therefore no more be tempted by her lures.
Not that way lies thine immortality :
But thou shalt find it in the ways of men,
Where many a task remains for thee to do,
And shall remain for many after thee,
Till all the storm-winds of the world be bound.
Thy glory lies with me."

But there brake from the lips of Fand sweet scorn of
the softest laughter,
Nearer as she moved to him :
“ Let not that cold breath of hers .
Chill thee back in fancy to her side :
Hear at last the truth that she would hide :
Thou no weakling mortal art :
Surely of all the beings bright,
Who bear the name divine De Danann,
Lives not one, in whom a soul
Burns more radiant than thine :
Call to mind Lu’s bright-faced glory,
Which thou, who art his son, inheritest,
From no mortal father sprung :
And since, although a god, thou wanderest
Dark in this exile of a mortal world,
I would recall thee to thine own true home
And lead thee back to the joys, that should be thine :
Leaving the spectral glances and pale-lipped kisses of
women,
Come thou, Cuhoolin, to mine.”

Softly she moved to his side and her arms threw around
him and kissed him,
And bare him away, as a billow, that rolls on the surface
of summer seas,
Strong with the pulse of the storm, that has ceased,
irresistibly lifteth the swimmer,—

So gently the strength of her charm upraised him and
bare him away from me :
And around him a rosy light from her radiant shape
enwrapped him,
Till beside her his god-like strength seemed even as a
green oak tree's,
Overgrown by the bloom of a rose, that spreads the hues
of her rapture,
Till more is the glow of the blossom than the green rich
gloss of the leaves.
And I, for my soul was still half-thralled of her song's
enchantment,
Half by the chill of my fear made numb, stood silent and
watched him go :
Child and the land he had loved so well, and I, though
the last, abandoned,
And the strength of the mightiest soul of men by a
shameful craft brought low :
“ Yet does it matter ? ” within me I said, “ when he goes
and with soul so willing ;
Leaps the high sun from the midst of heaven, when his
feet to the noon were nigh : ”
But, as out of my sight, he passed from the bower, and
she to his side close-clinging
I flung myself to the earth with a bitter cry,
And, burying my face in the grass, shaken with sobs I lay.

It could not have been long that I thus lay :
It might have been a moment, month, or year.

For all I knew : the suffering one, whose brain
Lies boiling on the fever furnace, knows not
The count of hours or days : no more knew I,
Stunned, smitten, and torn ; the heart of all my life
Plucked from my bleeding breast, and I alive.

Suddenly over me I heard a voice,
That seemed to reach to me from some clear star,
Speaking dearest consolation :—
“Thou hast pierced to my heart with the dart of thy
weeping,
Grievest thou, Emer, for me ?”
And the voice was Cuhoolin’s, and the dear consoler
was he ;
And he lifted me up to his lips, and I clung to his breast
still weeping,
“For whom should I sorrow but thee ?”

Here paused a moment Emer in her speech ;
From the deep fountains of her memory
Bringing up mingled waters bitter-sweet
Of joy and sorrow ; and her voice sank low,
Caught by the ancient sob : her listener then
Softly, “so hadst thou thy Cohoolin won !”
“Yea, I had won,” she answered, “yet not won ;
Things strange to be recounted yet remain :
Quickly they passed, like lightning, dazzling-swift,
Then the loud thunder and long storm behind.
Parting from that embrace we heard a sob.

I looked, and there stood the defeated one,
Pale, broken, blank, despairing ;—the bright eyes
Like unto withered flowers : I pitied her,
As, with hands clasped in front of her, she stood.
Yet hardly, ev'n for pity was there time,
When, with loud cries, there burst into the bower
A score of Ulster women ; friends of mine
They were, yet now they served me not, I deem :
Purposing help they followed in my track,
And now, beholding Fand, tow'rds her they ran
With vengeful screams.

“ Ha ! goddess though she be,
Now shall she learn that Ulster women are strong,
Her beauty shall our husbands tempt no more.”
She moved not : if they had laid hands on her,
Too dreadful were the deed that had been done.
But, from the woods, or from the cleavèd earth,—
I knew not whence, suddenly stood between them,
A shape majestic, radiant, beautiful,—
A man, yet more than man, with shining eyes :
He was superb as is a summer surge,
Rolling to shorewards on such reefs as lie
Beneath the cliffs of Irros or Malinmore :
Dazzling it rolleth from the sapphire deeps,
Curling to emerald and snow : he towered o'er us :
The women were wash'd back, and from the lips
Of Fand came faintly the revealing name,
“ Mananaun ! ” It was the sea-god and her spouse.
“ Alas ! ” she cried, “ how poor a sight for thee !

How pitiable the state of me, thy wife,
Rejected by a mortal !”

“ Be consoled,”

Gravely he answered : “ I have wronged thee much ;
Yet will I now atone and give thee peace :
Depart ! and I will shake my cloak between you,
And then thou wilt remember him no more.”
Silent and shamed she went : he, from his shoulders
Took off the cloak wonderful, crystalline,
Green as the vivid sea, broidered with foam,
And flaked with mother o’ pearl : he shook it thrice,
And from the folds burst forth a storm of sound,
Of murmurous music, as of all the waves
On all the shores of Eirë : when it ceased,
Unto Cuhoolin pointing, thus he spake
“ She will forget thee, thou shalt not forget ;”—
Turned and was gone. Like unto shipwrecked folk,
Stunned, drenched, and scarce escaped with life were we.

Thus for a time it was. The lightest leaf
Is easiest ’stirred, and the first words were mine,
“ Cuhoolin, let us go !” For answer came
A thunder peal of groans.

“ Ay, let us go,

Since Fand and joy are gone from me for ever.
And thou wert glad to see that marvel vanish !
Thinkest thou now to keep me, wretched one ?
Away, for I will find her, though the god
Hide her beneath all oceans ” He was gone.

Then came the women near to comfort me.
"Fear not," they said, "since he can never find her;
He will outwear his madness in the search,
Then seek thy face again." They brought me home,
Here to Cooalni. After months had passed,
Tidings were heard of him : he had been seen
Wandering throughout the woods and wilds of Eirë ;
Taking mad leaps among the craggy hills ;
By stony brink of the dim mountain meres ;
On ocean shores unpeopled, when the storm
Drave the tossed waters on the torturing crags :
In calm of mystic evenings, when the lone sea-bird
Silent stalked on crimson sands, that mirrored
The Atlantic sunset : seeking, ever seeking
The glory of the lost immortal eyes.
Thus for a year the fruitless search he urged ;
Then, by some chance, finding himself near home,
He came and stayed. Haggard he was and worn.
Haunted and troubled still. Our druids then
Took counsel for his healing ; this they did.
They made him waters of forgetfulness :
He drank them, and perchance he did forget ;
Till, on the scorched ground of his memory,
Fand's fires had burned, the verdure bloomed again.
Yet this I know that 'mid the growth renewed
Grew also her remembrance,—a slight shoot.
With flowers faint-tinted by the rose of Fand.
I found it in a bunch he gave to me,
These words, the last he spoke concerning her :

I may repeat them, though they laud myself :
Such virtue have the praises of such lips,
It were false shame in those whom they commend
To deem them undeserved. The words are these.

“ Emer, be proud : what woman e’er
Shall praised above thy glory be,
Since hands immortal could not tear
The prize they grasped away from thee.
Welcome the old dear love again ;
The heart of calm in tempest stress,
No see-saw joy that dips to pain,
And bliss that is not blessedness.”

She ceased ; and after silence, thus the bard.
“ Oh ! well for him, whom love to duty draws :
Whose spirit is not torn in sunder
By direful conflict of the primal laws :
His shall be th’ achievement high,
Whereat the after ages wonder ;
The clear peak shining in the upper sky,
The heart of rock that lies the mountains under.”

EPILOGUE.

Is there one desires to hear
If, within the shores of Eirë,
Eyes may still behold the scene
Fair from Fand's enticements ?

Let him seek the southern hills,
And those lakes of loveliest water,
Where the richest bloom of spring's
Burns to reddest autumn :
And the clearest echo sings
Notes a goddess taught her.

Ah ! 'twas very long ago,
And the words are now denied her :
But the purple hillsides know
Still the tones delightful :
And their breasts impassioned glow
As were Fand beside them.

And though many an isle be fair,
Fairer still is Inisfallen,
Since the hour Cuhoolin lay,
In the bower enchanted :
See ! the ash, that waves to-day,
Fand its grandsire planted.

When from wave to mountain top
All delight thy sense bewilders,
Thou shalt own the wonder wrought
Once by her skill'd fingers,
Still, though many an age be gone,
Round Killarney lingers.

CONSOLATION.

YES, let us speak ; with lips confirming
The inner pledge that eyes reveal ;—
Bright eyes that death shall dim for ever,
And lips that silence soon shall seal.

Yes, let us make our claim recorded
Against the powers of earth and sky,
And that cold boon their laws award us—
Just once to live, and once to die.

Thou say'st that fate is frosty nothing,
But love the flame of souls that are :—
“ Two spirits approach and at their touching
Behold an everlasting star ! ”

High thoughts, O love ; well !—let us speak them !
Yet bravely face at least this fate,—
To know the dreams of us that dream them
On blind unknowing things await.

If years from winters' chill recover,
If fields are green and rivers run ;
If thou and I behold each other,
Hangs it not all on yonder sun ?

So, while that mighty lord is gracious
With prodigal beam to flood the skies,
Let us be glad that he can spare us
The light to kindle lovers' eyes,

And die assured should life's new wonder,
In any world our slumbers break,
These the first words that each will utter,
" Belovèd, art thou too awake ? "

UNEXPECTED.

THROUGH the emerald-golden dimness
Of the sea by summer lighted,
In pride of purple and silver,
The fish swims glad and gay ;
The ocean forests under,
To the wave's embrace abandoned,
In gloomy tangle sway :
And he rises, ever rises
Nearer the glow of the day ;—

Where the wave grows brighter and clearer,
As it pouts its ripples of crystal,
Catching the beams and feeding
On the jewel food of the sun ;—
And the fish has joy in the splendour,
That shines for ever intenser,
By the brink of the upper world ;—
Where never a shadow affrights him,
Save death's,—in the pounce of the gull.

THE DYING SEA-GULL.

WHAT change is this that falls on me,
Filling my heart with darkness,
Binding my wings with weariness,
Closely around me presses it,
As night on every hollow of the sea?

Will it go by like night?
I deem not so. Night tameth not the waves;
Their strength she lessens not, nor quells their rage,
As this change takes my strength:—
She puts her terror in hearts of beasts and men:
Have I not feared her too?
She passed, and all my heart was as the morn;
But now there falls on me a deeper shade
I strive in vain to scorn.

Perchance no weaker than before am I,
But stronger are the seas and winds.
But this thought also fails.

I see my kindred fly as I once flew ;
O'er me they scream and wheel in the flashing air,
The sunlight dazzling through the creamy hue
Of shell-like wings wide-stretched.
What creatures are more wonderful than we ?
Born of the joy of purest elements,
Where the insistent winds break up the deep,
Where light meets light we are begotten,
Children of azure air and taintless wave ;
We toil not on the gross and sullen land,
Nor take our sustenance thence ;
Being, as the wise old prophet sea-bird sang,
The living spray of the sea.

Behold the clear surge rolling to the cliff !
It heaves, and from its crest the shower upsprings,
Hov'ring an instant in the whitened air :
Deepward the drops then sink,
And bubbling faint expire :
A moment longer and a wing's breadth higher
Our flight, the end the same.

THE NAMELESS DOON.

WHO were the builders? Question not the silence
That settles on the lake for evermore,
Save when the sea-bird screams and to the islands
The echo answers from the steep-cliffed shore.
O half-remaining ruin, in the lore
Of human life a gap shall all deplore
Beholding thee ; since thou art like the dead
Found slain, no token to reveal the why,
The name, the story. Some one murderèd
We know, we guess ; and gazing upon thee,
And, filled by thy long silence of reply,
We guess some garnered sheaf of tragedy ;—
Of tribe or nation slain so utterly
That even their ghosts are dead, and on their grave
Springeth no bloom of legend in its wildness ;
And age by age weak washing round the islands
No faintest sigh of story lisps the wave.

SILENCE.

COME let us wander these wild shores along,
For the moon gives us light and the sea gives us song.
I will speak not of love, only trust that the hour
Will melt me thy heart,—that the mystical power
Of the full moon above from the darkness below
Our souls may uplift till their bounds they o'erflow,
Till they meet and they mingle, and sundering again,
Shall know not hereafter if one soul or twain,
Being each half the other.

Come, let us wander awhile into heaven,
Forestalling the bliss of the spirits forgiven ;
For whoso inhales of that love-laden air,
But a breath, is for ever with all, who dwell there,
As one soul united ; and so shall it be
With us, though but mortal intruders we.
And by gulfs as of worlds, wide-sundered before
Having there loved a moment, we love evermore,
Though to earth we are banished.

MORNING.

O LOVE ! I met thee in the morn
As pure and fresh as morning's ray,
Through summer's day my guide to be ;
And morning grew to stainless noon,
In summer's noon how sweet the shade !
Yet if the airs were fierce or cool,
I asked not ; thou wert morn to me.

The hours go by and daylight flies,
And dreary night soon comes, they say ;
For some there is a sunset bright :
But who at night remembers noon,
Whose fervid touch made ripe the corn ?
How much more shall the hurrying flight
Of eager hours forget the morn !

Though noon for others lead to night,
And age of many a night is born,
From that grey yoke my head is free :
Never for me the night arrives :
The fervid noon is as the morn ;
And youth with morning still abides,
The morning thou dost make for me.

“ ART thou not sad, O sea,
That o’er thee rest the cloud-banks of the night
Shot through by no moon-beams?—
That vainly foam thy waves?
The darkness knows not they are crested white :
The darkness heeds not and against its might,
Striveth thy heart in vain?”

The sea made answer : “ vast the darkness is,
But I am greater, and my waves afar
Stretch on into the brightness of the day :
Consoled thereby
Here I endure the night ;
Though on my lidless eye
Ever the darkness presses with a weight,
Slumbering I may not ’scape.
I may not dream like men, and let it by.”

’Tis thus God works in gladness and in gloom,
Both equal and immeasurable both :
He bears the gloom by strength the gladness lends.
No joy, because it is a joy, refused,
No pain eluded though ’tis infinite.

Therefore, O human soul,
These are my words to thee,
Take thou thy part with Him
And be thy work like His :
Would'st thou have joy? endurance is the price :
Murmur not, since He also pays the like :
Thou dost but drink the cup the mighty drinks.

II.

So ask thou not for happiness :
Waste not hope in vain :
The greater boon thy soul shall bless, —
Strength to bear thy pain ;
Being thus more like to him,
Who lives withdrawn behind the veil,
Labouring and suffering
Till all his plan prevail,
And conquer the pervading curse ;
For happy who could deem him well,
Who is the spirit of an univers e,
That hath within it the disease of hell ?
That surely shall be cured at last :
There is no ill eternal, none ;
The shadow from the morning cast
Creeps eastward from the evening sun :
It vanished wholly at the noon.
Therefore we trust that light shall be
Given to us eternally :—

That all the universe shall have this boon,
When to His zenith, never to descend,
God climbs at length in majesty ;—
His labour in the dark places at an end :
Hell cleansed and closed, the prisoners all set free,
Healed of ancient malady ;
Yea, and not even a scar
Will He upon His universe endure
But He will cure.
Fair was the word the prophet spake of old,
“ The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”
A brighter vision now doth greet
The eye that pierces far,—
Hell’s fiery floor a pasture cool and sweet,
Pleasant for wearied feet :
The torture chambers turned
To flowery arbours sweet ;
Where devils shrieked and souls distracted mourned,
Laughter of the happy blest,
Songs of souls at rest.

GHOSTS.

“ For in that sleep of death what dreams may come.”

GHOSTS of day's thoughts are dreams,
Beautiful shapes benign,
Or hateful, hideous, and vile :
Phantom growth of the seeds
That are sown in the hours of our waking ;—
Blossoms of brightest hue and scent most sweet
Or evil-odorous, poison-laden.
Therefore if death be night and life be day,
Take heed unto day's thoughts that they be fair,
And fair shall be the shapes that haunt thy sleep :
A garden of sweet flowers thy soul shall be :
Let the dreams come !
Thou shalt have fear of none.

DROPS OF ETERNITY.

Out of eternity's ocean
The days fall steadily, slowly :
Drop by drop do they ooze through thee,
As through the rock roof of the cave
Falls the slow water :
What will they leave behind them
Having absorbed it of thee,
Ere they sink to forgotten abysses ?
Slime to be foul in darkness or light ?
Or deeds, that, as clear rock-crystal,
Seen or unseen shall be strong to abide,
And to shine, whensoever upon them
Light of remembrance shall fall ?

SUNSET AT MALINMORE.

QUIET are the treeless hills
Clad with short coarse grass and heather ;
Around them the sky's wide circle
And beneath them the silent sea.

And around the sky's wide circle are clouds of fire,
Towers of flaming snow :
And the plain of the gleaming sea reflects the glitter
In lonely patches of calm.

Wild, fiery-splendid sky !
Silent protest of day against night's dark domination,
Over thy splendour already hangeth the omen of gloom.
And the sea inscrutable rests, vast level of flickering
darkness,
Watching the sunset go :
All day to the sky it has spoken and in brightness
answered to brightness,
Now will it speak to the night.

If there is gloom in the heaven
Shall not the gloom of hell be twice intense?
Therefore ye faces rise!
Ye that within the sunless depths have dwellings,
And by the deeper terror of your eyes
Smite the night's heart with trembling.

LONDON.

A SONG of the typical city,
A song and a wail !

Let not the Londoner chancing to read
Deem that I purpose him evil
In choosing his city for type of the world's great bane !—
His city earth's mightiest, and to me best known :
For the like would I say, some difference granted,
Of Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, New York, Phila-
delphia, Chicago,
And of such imitations as here we have built us, the
nearest we may,
By the banks of the Liffey and Lagan.

Far though I am from thee now,
London, still do I hear
In the chambers of memory's shell,
The buzz and the hum and the cries,
The surges and sighs of the streets,
And all thy multitudinous movement of men :

Let them once on the heart take hold,
And, surely, it never will wholly escape their enchant-
ment again.

Yet what but an idle excitement is it, a drunkard's dram?
Vain and pernicious;—for what profit is it for ever to
gaze on the outward eyes of the man,
As he passes masked and the springs of his being are
hidden?

Small and poor is the wisdom that this can give;
But the shadows of thought it raises, the pulse it quickens,
And makes us dream that we live.

How shall I begin my wail,
This November's morning frosty-fair?
In glittering crystal air;—
The sun uprising in a sky unclouded?
The mere repeats the rugged mountain,
Ev'n to its smallest stone;
And the clear peak, pointing downward,
Completes, with phantom underworld
More fair, the world that is.

Thus for me begins the day,
That for many an hour shall lead me
On by many a shining bay
And curving sand:
And my thought takes a sudden start,—
Leaps, from this world of beauty,
To the city, that lies a-choking,

In coils of the grimy cold :
For I know that the fog has its grip
This morn on the throat of London.

Here, where the air is pure and sweet,
Few there are to breathe it :
Here where earth is jewel-bright,
Rare the eyes to heed it.
And I hear the mighty voice of the cities cry
“ What doom upon the race is this,
That myriad lungs are stifling,
And countless eyes are blinded,
While the wide sky its azure space unfolds,
And the broad winds blow free ? ”
Yea, and I hear the winds and hear the sea
Singing to men,
“ Ah ! by what doom impell’d,
Hapless ones, do ye forget us,
Who sang your cradle-song for many an age ;—
Who roughly-kind your weakness trained to strength,
And gave your cheeks the rose :—
Torn from our arms your might decays,
Pale grows your bloom :
We only can restore your strength and beauty :
Come back to us, for we still love you well.”

But vain the loud call of the woods and waves,
The fields’ low voices vain :
For over each city, behold !

A demon, that men have evoked,
But no longer control,
And now their despot imperious,—
The ghost of the sunlight that died long ago,
They have summoned to toil again,
Monstrous and mightier growing,
Faster and faster makes the huge engine fly,
That sucks to the whirling centre,
The multitudes helpless,
Engulfing the lives of them,
Not for his pain unavenged !

London, by thy most giant demon ruled,
Have I escaped from thee,
His power rejected, defied ?
Vocal I make the wail of the wind and sea,
In protest against thee, his work.

Though thou callest thyself the chief city of earth
And the centre of men,
So proud is thy boasting,
And rival hast none in thy vastness or wealth,
Let us look to thee closely,
Let us ask if thou art a delight unto men,
Or a joy to the race that has made thee !

And first, let us ask what is best that is in thee,
That wealth can create, or the poor may enjoy :—
Rich houses luxurious,

Theatres, pictures, and music,
Museums of things that are curious and rare ;—
Miscellaneous shows,
Intellectual converse,
The crowds in the streets.

Who that loves things that are fair to the sight,
Can delight in thee, London ?
What are thy houses so dingy without,
Though within they be furnished superbly ?
What are thy treasures, gems, sculptures, or painting,
Though counted among them,
Those walls where ten square yards or so
With Turner's mimic summers glow :—
Galleries, where lie the fragments fair
Still sighing for the golden air
Of Greece, where they were shaped to be
Beautiful immortally ;
Undreaming of their last sad goal
Of exile to the land of coal,
Far from the marble-mountain land ?
Though these supremest treasures thine,
And many another, what are all
But jewels hidden, buried in some huge mine,
With endless tunnels of gloom ?
So dreadful, so vast is the ugliness-ocean,
Wherein thou art sunken.
Vainly thou strivest to make thyself beautiful,

Vainly dost labour with arch and ogee,
With portal and column enwreathed and entwisted,
To build a few streets of thee fairer.
For the breath of thine own darkness descends upon
 thee dreadfully ;
Thy pit's breath shut down on thee by the indignant
 heaven :
And smothers in pungent stinging blackness,
Now oozy and moist, now rasping and dry ;—
Now steadfast, unmoving ;—
Now restless and rolling from quarter to quarter
A dismal inferno of tawny horror :—
Worlds of aerial hideousness,
The clouds of the darkness of heaven, dragged down
 and impregnate of hell :—
Drowned in that flood,
How vain are the poor little cressets of beauty
Thou seekest to light on thy housefronts ;
Yea, and they perish as surely,
As dieth among them the rose,
In thy cankering air.

(Sad flow'rs of the city, ye roses æsthetic, as pallid and
 bloomless
As plants that have grown without sun ;—
Fit blossoms are ye for the living? Nay, surely,
Such rather as grow in the gardens of Hades,
With scents that are sweet for the mummy, and colours
 that dazzle the dead.)

Yet, when spring lifts up the curtain of the darkness for
a while,
Ere the summer lays its burden on the pavement and
the tile ;—
Ere the white-faced, perspiring crowd
Pants beneath the thunder-cloud,
Bright are thy fashionable streets in mid-May,
Where the wave of life beats brick shores all day,
And the best-dress'd men and women,
And the carriages and horses,
Make the Row and Bond Street gay ;
Yet 'tis strange, if town and street
Have delights that are so sweet,
How the pride of life luxurious ever loves to take its play
By the fragments of the country that still linger in thy
midst,
Under boughs that keep the beauty of the May :
Wealth must have the country in the town,
And chooses well ;
So this we grant thee, London,
By the borders of thy parks there are streets, some half-
a-dozen,
Where life may seem a pleasure for an hour,
For a day :—
A day, that hardly shall make bright a year
With all its dusty splendour : ah ! to be
In lonely nook, wherein the sea
Whispers its love-plaint secretly,
For the sea-birds heed not though they hear !

And oh ! as the price of a perch of brightness what dreariest leagues !

For one little drop of a doubtful elixir what millions of souls are squeezed !

Here are the park and palace, the wealthy street and the square ;

And culture is here at her highest :—

But the pendent of gay Piccadilly's the dismal East London lane ;

And the ball-room that glitters with flowers and jewels,
And dresses of brilliantest tissue, the radiant ladies wear ;—

Let whoso exults in the splendour fail not to think of the cost,—

The human existence a-rot in the loathsome Whitechapel lair !

Great is the toil that is in thee,
And many the thoughts thou breedest :

Whereto tendeth thy labour ?

Thy thought—is it great ?

Morning and evening, evening and morning,

From suburb to city, from city to suburb,

Thou shovellest thy heaps of humanity.

And when they sink into quiet, older and wearied at evening,

What the result of their toil, and dreary routine of the day ?

Entries in ledgers mostly, and goods sold over the counter.

And many there are whose work is to write,
Or to print the work of the writer,
And their toil most of it vain.
And many there are whose work is only to play,
And the play is mainly idle distraction and chatter,
And gazing at useless sights :
But these, being rich, gather round them
To feed, and clothe and serve them and make them sport,
A multitude vast, miscellaneous : and on these
Others depend, and more again upon these,
Like bee upon bee in the cluster :
So year after year the lines of the weary streets
Grow, grow endlessly.
And mighty the sprouting of chimneys and flagging of
soft green acres :
And ever higher and broader towers the dome,
That hangs like a vast extinguisher o'er thee, London !

Home of horror ! sunless heart of an empire, whose feet
melt in the fervid orient :
Whose face is mirror'd back to it, magnified many times
from the convex world,
From the dry, hot southern island, while its arm
Around the northern continent stretches frozen :—
Into thee, lo ! the east and the south and the north
Pour their treasures in vain !
The life and the wholesome strength of the comely
England round thee,
Of glowing India, of scorch'd Australia, of Canada's
bracing frosts ;

Yea, and the life of the great wild waves of the sea,
In every climate rolling ;—
All are into thee drawn,
All by thee are transmuted,
Not into wholesome vigour of muscle and mind,
To guide with skilful strength the team of the plunging
 empire :
But part into nerveless tissue of vanity turned,
And the rest into mountainous, dark-hued corpulence.
Half poison and half disease.

So many have passed along this street to-day,
So many will pass to-morrow :
Throw out a net and catch thee a dozen to-day,
And twelve to-morrow ;
And the dozen will be not all too like to the twelve :
But make the number thou catchest a score of hundreds,
And quickly grows the average likeness closer ;
Till, sampling, knowest the million, that hurrieth by thee,
Exactly like the million that went before :
And dear to the statistician are similar millions,
Though individual being be nothing at all.

And the millions clash and grind each other to slime,
Soft and smooth :
And the atoms lie closely packed, as drops in a pool,
And though each be a human miracle, each is alike
In outward seeming :
Like garments out of the factory at one price :

In decent meanness, ugly neatness,
Not at all an inspiring sight.

Man needs space,
Like the great tree to spread his boughs ;—
Space and light.
Where hath he grown most strong but in the wilds,
In the northern forest lonely,
By the fjord and icy mountain ?
Where most fair and wise ?
But by southern cape and islet,
Where the dainty fertile earth
Gave him delicate wholesome fare ;
And the sea with arms enwinding,
And the mountains' barren beauty,
Held him apart with space to breathe and grow ?
Not in Pekin, nor in Babylon
Shalt thou seek for man at greatest ;
Nor hath London with her teeming numbers
Art his like to breed :
Though perchance she may import him ;
Not on soil like hers, but far far other,
Thrives the giant seed.

Bees are many in the hive :
Who hath taken census of the ant-hill ?
Though earth might feed more ants than men,
Man is the lord of earth and not the ant.
Let him beware of dwindling to the insect,

While his swarms increase :
Let him remember this,—
That England surely were a greater land,
Peopled by a million giants,
Than by a hundred million dwarfs.

How can the soul be little that loves great things ?
Or mighty the spirit, the bounds of whose flight are small ?
Has the sparrow that hops on the house-roof eagle's
wings ?
Can the lion into the rat-trap fall ?

Yet let me not forget :
One thing thou hast, O London, that is great ;
Even thy wretchedness :
Yea and from this springs thy one flower most fair ; —
The souls devoted, who labour,
Some for the moment, and some with the larger scope,
To cure the ill that is in thee !

Surely, O city, thou shalt not exist in vain !
Nor fruitless thy sufferings be !
For the task appointed thee this and no other,
The humanization of man.
Out of the wilds it was thine to pluck him,
To tame the strength over fierce ;
To destroy the individual sufficiency,—
To make him dependent on others,—
To teach him the arts and inventions that crown him the
lord of the earth.

Yet these things although thou doëst,
Heed let us take thou dost not o'erdo them,
Corrupting by pleasure, degrading by meanness, blinding
 and breaking by pain.
Still, though for many a year thy might shall increase,
I praise thee but little ;
Seeing thee mainly a palace of pleasure and pride,
Built on a dungeon of woe.
Storehouse of trifles and toys,—
Of ornaments, gawds,
Of things manufactured,
Whose world of the dead artificial o'erwhelmeth the
 world of the living ;—
Congress of horrors and sorrows,
Meeting of terrible waters,
What med'cinal plant for the ills of the future is seen by
 the banks of thee springing ?
Valley of the shadow of death !
Wherethrough men march by millions,
Art thou humanity's only road
To the land of light beyond ?

NIGHT IN JUNE.

WHEN the northern summer unfolds
Her gates, at the bidding of June,
Then is night but the spirit of day ;
On her brow is the crescent moon :
In her right hand low she holds
The vanished sunset's ray ;
In her left she lifts the boon
Of the dawning, rose and gray.

SCIENCE AND PREDICTION.

Two angels are there who feed the being of man,
And give him of their sustenance turn by turn,
One from an iron, one from a golden urn :
Their growth is equal-paced, but by a span
The first is older, and with mien more stern
Doth proffer of a bitter-flavoured food ;
The other, with bright smile and eyes that burn,
A sparkling draught, whereby the joyous mood
Is, in the labour-saddened heart renewed.

So doth man's soul grow strong new toil to bear ;
So hath his eye clear vision to foresee ;
Then stint not of thine iron-flavoured fare
To feed that growth, O knowledge ; nor do *thou* spare,
That equal to the might the light may be,
Thy nectar-golden draughts, O Prophecy.

MOYTURA.

FROM THE VISIONS OF FINTAN.

FINTAN, the witness, am I.
I have lived for age upon age :
But the hour I began by a veil is hidden.
My sense has grown bright by degrees
Like a day from the dawn to the noon,
As life's ascent I have climbed,
From the humblest stage to the highest.
I have roamed as a fish in the water,
Have crouched as a beast in the forest ;
Dumb was I then and blind ;
Now I have speech and I see.
The past recalling, the future opening,
My soul receiving, I talked with gods.

Here I record the things that I saw
Of Moytura's war, of the mystic battle,
Fought by the uttermost verge of the west,
On the slopes of hills, that behold the sunset

Fade on the limitless waters, the bounds of the dwelling
of men ;—

Here by the gods De Danann were scattered the Fohmor
armies,

Here was the strength of the darkness quelled.

The things I beheld and heard ;—

*A vision of bright gods on the hill top
Hereafter Knocnarea :—far-reaching LU,
The hoary-bearded DAGDA with his harp ;
The warrior OGMAI with his spear ;—the king
NUADU argat-lawm ;—the Healer sage
DIANKET and his daughter, equal-skilled,
ARMEDDA ; also those three sisters fair,
FOHLA, BANBA, and EIRE. Walls of light
Around them, light their roof. The plains below
Camped with their hosts gleam westwards many a league
To Connaught's utmost capes ; but far to north
The Fohmor darkness held both earth and sky.*

This was the vision ; here the words I heard.

LU.

Presences mighty, radiant deities,
Powers, whose resplendent empire is the light,
Now is the hour of final victory nigh
Over our long-fought foes with all it brings
Of peace and joy unto a happy world ;

Or else, defeat :—shudder ye at that word,
As well ye might ?—seeing it means the loss
Of age-long toil ;—ruin of all fair things,
Now in the bud to burst in loveliness,
But then to flower in horror to such fruit
As loathes the sun. But these are empty fears.
We have conquered in the nether elements ;
We have triumphed in the dumb brute shapes of life.
Forcing our foes to this last battle-ground,
Chos'n of ourselves, the godlike shape of man.
Therein must they contend, dispirited
By past defeat not only, but with strength
Inferior, seeing they can but copy us
In monstrous imitations horrible,
Giant indeed, with frightful strength endued,
But awkward, ill-compact and disarrayed,
Not ordered unto beauty. Therefore we,
Though knowing that prolonged and terrible
The conflict that ensues, shall enter it
With hearts that do not quail. This is the eve
Of battle : our preparations all complete ;
But, that our courage on highest wing may soar,
'Twere well, O Dagda, thou should'st chaunt to us
Of our performed achievements. Let the sound
Float with dismay upon the enemy,
Since harmony to Fohmor ears is grief,
The more when mixed with meaning, such as now
They cannot choose but understand. Therefore,
Mightiest Dagda, take thy harp and sing.

THE DAGDA.

In the misty beginning it was.

There was only darkness and evil.

Nothing besides was in being,

Or seemed ; and the anarch spirits were over the darkness lords.

Thus long time it endured,

Till by schism of a sudden disunited

Their empire in twain was divided,

And out of the ruin of ruin sprang forth the light that was good.

Then to our power new-born

Did each of the factions of darkness

Make offer of kingdoms anarchic,

As price of our aid. Both, spurned, reunited against us in war.

Thus the long struggle began.

But we in our hearts still keeping

Courage and thought that foreseeth

Took measure and scale of the world, and in wisdom we laid our plan.

And we buried ourselves in the heart of matter embroiled,

In vapour and fire, in hurtling hurricane,

In whirlpool vortex boiling, in wavy flame,

Pervading all things, each to the other outstretching a
hand,
Till around in a vasty circle we wove a chain,
And within it we gathered the world.

But against us ever our enemies evil laboured,
Baffling, breaking the framework, into the void
Letting loose the pent-up deluges, into the depths
Treading down the wreck of the work of our hands
despairing,
Till wilder ever and fiercer the turmoil grew,
And the rage of the demons more deadly.

For weapons out of our broken work they made ;
One half of the earth on the other was hurled ;
But we to our purpose held with courage unbroken ;
In great and in little, in atom or world, from age to age
Close-gripp'd the struggle ran on, nor ever we failed
To win the advantage, though slowly.

And thicker and harder we laid the foundations deep,
And the chain of the rocks forged tougher and stronger ;
And though they shattered and flung to the gulfs of fire
The fragments, mighty as mountains, fusing and hurling
the mass
In flame-flood over us, wrought we, in scorn, from the
same
Fire-tempered work more adamantine.

Nothing we did was lost, and within the shell,
As if of a bird's egg, little by little,
Mile-thick the earth's bones grew to be shattered no
more,
'Though oft, in the stress of the struggle, disjointed,
fractured and crushed,
In the conflict of us with the demons twisted and riven,
As men shall yet witness in wonder.

And down were the fires battened to warm earth's heart,
The strength of the foe, part tamed to our purposes,
Serving us evermore in the inward gloom ;
In fierce reluctance, revolt, rebellion—they shook the
frame,
They vomited fire ; yet served they still to the end,
Nor left unaccomplished their work.

They lifted the land, as we bade, from the clinging sea,
To the kiss of the wind, to the wasting fingers
Of rain and river, that busily downward bore
To the wave, that again gave welcome and sank her
floors to receive it,
So layer was laid upon layer, and the land thus built
To the sunlight again was uplifted.

Wasted, and sunk again, and again upraised ;
Course upon course of the vast earth masonry
From ruins of older wrought into natures new,
Varied in tint and texture, each the work of an age

To be named thereafter, each, as it passed, a gift
Laying by for the use of the future.

Meantime a wonderful thought there had come to us :
Lifeless as yet was the earth,
Grey gleaming a granite waste,
Or piled with grim volcanic cinders.
Forth went our spirits mild,
Through the barren world persuasive, —
The grinding shock of rock and sea,
And, by potent chemistry,
Forced to close embrace
Atoms elemental, wedded
In a marriage ne'er to sever,
Exhaustless parents of an endless race.
And first the vegetative cell was born.
And, in tender moisture bred,
On the rich air's nurture fed,
Quickly grew and multiplied :
The hollow brims of ocean lined ; —
Then timidly put forth its head,
The sands spread o'er, the rocks it climbed ;
Drank the gold sunlight and flashed green
From land to land, from naked isle to isle.

And amazement on the foe fell strange,
And awhile they stood apart and gazed on us unhindering,
Taken captive, though unwilling, by their joy :
And our powers unimpeded

Wrought in riot of creation ever fairer,
All the earth with beauty heaping,
Lovelier raiment ever weaving
For the giant frame, whose glory
We had built with mighty toil.

Oh! lovely grew the work beneath our hands,
As the sunrise chased the sunset round the world,
Striking splendour from the flashing wastes of ocean,
From the deeps unsounded to the shallows emerald-opal
That bask upon the golden sands ;—
To the many-coloured river jewel winding
Round the fruitfulness of plenteous lands.

From the mountains, on whose peaks the pure light
breaking,
In the morning's upward flight, or evening's downward,
Foamed in gold and rose and purple,
Like a river over cataract rocks exulting ;
As the headland torrent, streaming,
Into all the flowery hues of Iris shattered,
The inmost treasure of richest colour revealed
In the beam's white heart enchanted :
And the crags and slopes of snow far blazed their glory
Over lowly fruitful vale and pasture field.

And the clouds, that oft made dark the air's blue spaces,
Over springing blade and flowery bloom life-raining,
Bitter ocean's gentle children,

Change their frown of gloomy labour,
As they shake to earth their burden :
Shape they take and aspect fairest,
On the hill-tops rest, o'er plains go soaring, sailing ;
Their use henceforth for glory and for beauty ;
Till dying gorgeously, they swoon, resolving
Their being in the brightness of the sun.

But the sullen spite of the foe left many a mark
Of grievous ill on the frame, we had else made fair
In its every part ;
The burning desert, the hideous waste of the wintry
gloom ;—
The poison jungle, the plains frost-bitten ;—
The rain-drowned land and the tracts for ever athirst, —
These are the deeds of the Fohmor, the work of the
spirits accurst.

But there came to us a thought more wondrous,
As the bud of the world its second husk unfolded,
And the living things rose swarming,
Thrilling earth and air and water,
Moving, quivering, breathing :
And this marvel new beholding
From their slumbers sudden started
The foe to a new-plotted war.

Subtle and strange was the conflict then begun :
Into every thing that had life they entered :

No germ, the least that existed, but in its being
Face to face they met us and fought in endless war ;
No tissue of life, wherein for a moment slumbered
The infinite stress of the struggle.

Little by little we sought to raise to the stronger and
higher ;
They to degrade, little by little, to weakness and death :
Followed an endless ruin and waste of sorrow and pain :
For the only cure for the ill they wrought, was to end
the life
Their poison tainted : and thus it grew that, at last, in
all,
Though strong and beautiful, death with imperfect life
was twined :

What we by the paths of wisdom gently had guided
onward
From beauty to fairer beauty and from strength to higher
strength,
Lured by treacherous wiles into baffling by-paths wan-
dered,
Terribly sinking in sudden descents to death.
Beauty corrupted sank into hideousness, sickening the
earth.
Strength into monster shapes and lawless burgeoned
wildly :
Beasts, like limbs of a mountain, trampled the forests as
grass ;

And over them, serpents flying,
Flapping black tempest from wings unplumed,
Sky-swooping plagues, down on them crashed,
Roar and battle renewing the terror of ancient days,
When mountain-tossing earthquakes,
Earth then loosely compact,
Ruinous work of the Fohmor, rent in sunder her frame.

Nowhere was found a place for mild intelligence noble :
Fury and rage laid waste the desolate kingdom of mind,
And the seeds that were sowed of love were for ever
uprooted of hate ;
Life made prey upon life, and nourished in anger and
blood
Angrier grew ; and fiercer and sharper the claw and the
fang,
The deadlier poison, nature's energy drew and absorbed.

Plans we made as the sands in number,
The world was strewn with the cumber and wreck ;
But we spun thereof tissue of finer being,
And how oft soever the foe defeated us,
Fought with invention that never slept.
Age after age of our labours saved we a little ;
And surely laid the foundation,
Whereon life's palaces fairest should yet be securely
built.

We chose the weakest and gave them wisdom,
In shapes the meanest our might we hid ;

So veiled awhile from the Fohmor eyes,
Who thus the heart of our purpose missed,
While we a pretended war pursuing,
To their own undoing, allured them
To spend their forces on labours idle
Of useless and monstrous life,
By our skill undermined.

And they found themselves cheated at last, and in rage
abandoned the traps, whereby we had mocked them :
And left them to perish ;
For the life at once from them fled.
Earth with the giant ruin was shaken :
Whereof though rarely the signs remain.
To the men to come an amazement.

Those contests old are ended now ;
Ours at last the victory :
Wild rage and force to order bow ;
From wave they die, from wood they flee,
And yield the ghost up silently
Of the Fohmor spirit, that wrought in torment
And hateful troubles in earth and sea.

Embalmed in rock, that once was slime,
Sleeps the giant Saurian ;
All monsters of that earlier time,
Whereto life's stream misguided ran,
Have failed before the gentler clan :
And the fiercest of beasts is prisoned in beauty
Shall win him a tear for his fate from man.

Yet ended though that contest old
In its first violence, something still
Survives of it eternally :

One part of all the tumult power,
The wildest, toils beneath the earth confined ;
A lesser part the brute absorbs ;
And now, obedient to our plan,
To higher sphere the warfare rising,
Henceforth shall rage in the human will :
Thus the triple conflict doth unfold,
From the elements dark and blind,
Through the beast, into man.

I have ended, O Lu ; have obeyed
Thy call, and have told in my singing,
From the days of the misty beginning,
To the brink of the mighty to-morrow, what triumphs
the gods have gained.

I have sung but in brief : I have flown
From peak unto peak, in a moment
Crossing abysses and oceans
Of deeds, as the waves unnumbered, that now shall
remain untold.

On the peaks of the past, upon all,
As I touched them, a light I enkindled,
And, as if from a sun nigh risen,
Darkness in front of us flies, on the skies of the future is
dawn.

| Time is a brand that flames
At point of the present ;—behind it,
In region of limitless twilight,
Die the sparks it has kindled, the trail of its splendour
fails.

But the fuel, flame-feeding, grows,
As onward it rushes, and warmer
With sun-like visage and broader,
The brightness endures of its passage, the future in front
of it glows.

Now do the powers of the night
In threefold horror assemble,
To sunder the strand at the present,
That, the past in the dark may be swallowed, the future
no kindling find.

Tremble, ye powers of the gloom :
Shudder, ye legions of darkness :
We have weapons to scatter your armies ;
A sword that shall vex and divide you, a flame to pursue
and consume.

*LU, after a pause, rises and, at a wave of his hand, the
curtain of light divides, and the gods look out upon the
darkness.*

LU.

Hear ye the Fohmor wail ?

FINTAN.

This was the next that I beheld and heard.
I was alone with Lu, and thus he spake.
“ ’Tis well. One day is over : we have kept
The island safe and stedfast : fires have blazed
In vain : the earthquake rude has sought to shake
His rider from his back. Tempest has raged,
And giant-miened has threatened, with huge hands,
To hurl the ocean skywards over us.
But all is past, and the sweet silver moon
Beams on a peaceful sea and verdant earth
Unscorched, unsmirched. The forest oaks are green,
And fearless breathes the frailest violet.”

Then I, who spoke familiar with the god,
“ How hast thou wrought these wonders ? ” Answered he
Familiar with the mortal, “ Thou shalt hear.
Nor let remembrance fail. With seeming men
This land has long been peopled ;—some of the race
Of Light, some Fohmors, who, with subtle wile,
Have sought to counterwork us, in the guise

Of our own chosen shape and Danann name.
Of these were found the children of Turann,
Whose fierce hate, bursting unadvisedly
In murder of my human sire supposed,
Yielded them to my power. I sent them forth
In giant toil to wander through the world,
To win for me, in conflict with their kin,
Treasures and secrets of the elements
Still by the Fohmors jealously concealed.
Wherewith, as men, to meet Moytura's war.
But I will cast thee into sleep and make
These things in vision pass before thine eyes."

I saw the visions, heard the words, and write
The preparation for Moytura here.

*The vision first I saw was Tara's court :
 And there in aspect as of men most fair,
 Yet only men, were LU and NUADU ;
 THE DAGDA ; and TURANN'S three sons ; their names
 BRIAN, YUCHAR, YUCHARBA. Thus they spake.*

Lu. Princes De Danann, I have suffered wrong
 Most grievous : words will hardly utter it.
 Yet would I have you say what each would deem
 A fitting eric for a father slain.

All. None, none could be too great.

Nuadu. But dost thou say

Thy father hath been murdered ?

Lu. Doubt it not !

Vilely and horribly ;—his body bruised,
 Pounded to gory shreds with jagged stones,
 By fratricidal hands. The sickened earth
 Six times refused to hide the corpse, 'twas sought
 To bury in her bosom out of sight ;
 But the seventh time, wearied, refused no more,
 And trembling still and sickening, to mine ear
 Whispered the horrible tidings.

Nuadu.

Who hath done this ?

Lu. They are among us who have dared the crime.

[*The sons of Turann confer at the end of the hall.*

Brian. He knows us : 'tis but vainly we shall strive
To evade the Ildana's glance : let us confess
And pay the eric asked.

Yu and Yucharba.

Let it be so !

Brian. O Lu, we know thou layest upon us
This guilt, though wrongly : yet since hard it were
For us to clear ourselves, against thy word,
We offer eric, and whate'er is right,
Will pay.

Lu. Who will be bonds for this your payment ?

Nuadu. I and the princes all will be their bonds.

Lu. Hear my demand then, which if ye should deem
Too great, I will remit a part thereof ;—
A spear, a hound, three apples, and a word,
And three casts of a spear upon a hill.

The sons of Turann. That is indeed but little.

Lu.

Think ye so ?

Yet may ye deem it great. The apples, I seek,
Sons of Turann give ear, grow on no tree
In Eirë ; where they grow 'tis yours to find.
The fruits they are of healing and of life.
The virtues of all plants are less than theirs :
All maladies they cure, all wounds they heal :
And whoso tastes of them, how aged soe'er,
Becomes himself a plant that springs again,
With life for four new seasons. Precious these ;—

Not easily, I deem, will they be won.
Yet must ye gain them first, and then the hound,
That hath not sire nor offspring : chained he lies
In darkness sleeping, waiting for the hour
Of your approach, foretold : woe to you then,
If courage fail you or strength. He is but little,
Yet will no beast withstand him : easily
Ye will not leash him home to me, I deem.
Yet shall ye find him ere ye find the spear,
That ocean swallowed. Pressed beneath the weight
Of all that liquid cold, that cannot quench
Its fiery heat, it lies, slow smouldering.
Terrible powers around it watch unseen :
And, if ye should, in their despite, attain
To draw from the vast water-sheath, beware !
For there is peril lest the air of heaven
Catch from it fire and leaping into flame
Burn you and all to ashes. Such the spear.
Not easily your hands will wield it home.
These are the Fohmor treasures, which they hide,
Useless to them ; well knowing that to me
Weapons they are to tame the elements,
And all the rout of men and monsters fierce
Shall give me battle on Moytura's field.
Fohmor are ye three parts by blood, and thence
Can find, ye only, what the Fohmors hold
Hidden in secret regions of the earth.
Then shall ye seek out Balar on his hill,
Betwixt the wastes of snow and sullen fires ;—

Tell him that Lu is ready, and proclaim
Deadly defiance ; and, with three spears cast,
Smite through the fiery head, that tops the hill.
Think ye the eric little ? Are ye pale ?
I did not think such heroes could grow pale.
Your cheeks were ruddy when ye slaughtered Kian.
Keep your blood yet, till it shall ooze from you,
Drop after drop, through many a bitter wound.

[LU, NUADU *and the others rise and leave the hall.*
The sons of TURANN remain gazing at each other in silent
consternation.

*The vision changed, and I beheld the BOYNE'S fair
banks by ROSSNAREE. There stood TURANN, his daughter,
and his sons, and thus they spake.*

Ethnai. Your doom is grievous, brothers : not more
grievous
Than was the deed ; the punishment is just.
Alas ! I could not have believed it of you,
Were ye not self-accused, that in your souls
Caged horrors like to these lay quick for flight :
And those dear hands that have so oft caressed
Your Ethnai, were more fitted to achieve
The murder acts of wrath.

Brian. Oh ! speak not thus,
Sweet sister : heavy is our punishment ;
Add not thine anger's weight. Why we thus wrought
We know not. Some compulsion mastered us ;
Some overwhelming will that was not ours,
Flooded the channels of our souls, and surging
Far, far beyond the stream's accustomed bounds,
Behind it left this ruin and slimy scum ;
Now the shrunk flood views the foul work, dismayed.

Ethnai. Alas ! I fear the flood was all your own,
Your very stream, restrained a little while.
Yet why should I be harsh, since being your sister
Mine too must be the like unruliness.
We are but different stems on the one plant ;
And the same poison that hath made your fruit
So deadly, must be also found in me.
Well if the tasks th' Ildana lays on you,
Spending your bitterness to some sweet end,
Shall make thereof a medicine for the world.

Brian. Ethnai, wilt thou not aid us ?

Eth. How should I ?

Brian. Only by help of Lu can we perform
These tasks.

Eth. Then ask him humbly for his help.

Brian. Nay, but we know Lu looks on thee with love.

Eth. Stay ! say no more ; for I will ask for nought.
Yourselves must ask whate'er ye need. But he
Will not, I deem, be all unpitiful.

Brian. What were it good to ask of him ? the loan
Of Mananaun's swift steed or magic boat ?

Ethnai. Ask for the steed first. That will he refuse
The boat will grant, and that will serve you most.

Then Lu came by, stern-miened, and thus he spake :
Have ye not yet departed ? Had I laid
A heavier eric on you, ye had sped
Without delay upon the quest ; but now,
Since I am merciful, ye play on me,
And make no haste, no effort, but at ease

Lounge on this shore, while the unransomed blood
Of Kian exclaims against you. Get ye gone !

Brian. O glorious Lu, thou know'st the costly eric
Which thou demandest, never may be won,
Save with thy favour and consenting aid.

Lend then the wing-swift steed of Mananaun.

Lu. I may not lend the steed.

Brian. Deny not then
The boat called the wave-sweeper.

Lu. You shall have it.
'Tis moored in yonder reach upon the Boyne,
Beside the Dagda's dwelling. See, it comes,
Responsive to my thought, that summons it.

Eth. Brothers, make no delay.

The three (embarking). Sister, farewell !

Eth. Farewell, be brave ! Ye did an evil deed,
Your hands are miry. Wash them, if ye can,
Clean in the fount of glory ; then return.

Brian. Move on, swift boat, beneath us.

*The vision changed, and ere another came,
It seemed, when I beheld it, years had passed;
And then at Tara I beheld again*

THE DAGDA, NUADU, OGMAL, and many more
Princes De Danann ; and there entered then,
BRIAN, YUCHAR, YUCHARBA, and their sire,
And ETHNAL following, and 'twas thus they spake.

Nuadu. Welcome, sons of Turann ! of your great
deeds

We are not altogether ignorant.

Yet is our knowledge but confused or faint,
Since it has come to us from rumour's voice,
As of one speaking in a room apart,
This word heard clear, this other only a sound
Vague, inarticulate, or inaudible.

But never, since you left our Eirë's shores,
Have wonders ceased to be reported of you,
Roared from the east, or whispered from the west.
We have stood and watched the gulf wherein you
plunged,
Counted and marked the bubbles as they rose.

Tip-toe we've gazed from expectation's hill
Over the wide unknown, whereon you sailed.
We have seen your faces on the evening clouds
Painted in fire: have heard strange wails of pain
From broken, sad, defeated elements,
Wronged gods and vanquished men: but at the last
Lo! ye return among us, recognized
The same that ye departed, though your cheeks
Be scarred, and your brows furrowed, and on your heads
The snows have fallen, that no summer sun
Shall ever melt from off them. All the tale
Will ye recount in full, when unto Lu
Ye have transferred the fruits of your great toil,
And peace once more has healed De Danann strife.
'The eric, say—ye have brought it home in full?

Brian. Yes, we have brought the eric every part,
Apples and hound and spear. Into your hands,
Our sureties', we surrender it. We deem
That now the life of Kian is paid for well.

Nuadu. We take them. But we would that Lu were
here;

Hath no one sent him word? Let it be done.

Officer. He hath been told, O king! he signifies
That he with things of import is engaged,
Yet will make speed to come: he begs you take
The eric from the children of Turann.

Nuadu. Well, we have done so. (*To TURANN*). Father
of these brave sons,
Turann, rejoicest thou to see them home,

Clad in the brightness of these mighty deeds,
That, having all the former shame outblotted,
Leaves them a radiant superfluity
Of fame, to give thy glance, however far
It journey onward in the dark to come,
Light to perceive their names remembered still.

Turann. Yea, I rejoice, great king : but I am old,
And sorrow has pinched numb my feeble life :
Now she lets go, feeling scarcely returns.
Yet I rejoice and if my joy still fails,
Here is one younger, who hath joy for all,
My daughter Ethnai. Ah ! those rugged ones,
Her brothers,—lo ! I all but hated them,
When I beheld how grief for their rude deeds
Fell, like a rock, upon a tender plant,
On her young head, crushing the life and bloom.

Nuadu. Yet, the rock lifted, bravely she revives.
(*To Eth.*) Sweet maiden, thou hast sorrowed overmuch :
I am glad to see thee smile again.

Eth.

O King,

I fear my smiles are yet but makebelieves :
It is but slowly one resumes an art
So long unpractised.

Nuadu.

Not when skill like thine

Cometh by nature : but behold our Lu,
The lord of every art, to take his due.

[*LU salutes the assembly in silence, and takes his seat.*
Mighty Ildana, thou before thee seest,
From their long wanderings Turann's three sons

At length returned. They went away thy foes,
Burdened with obligation to achieve
An eric, such as never before was asked,
Nor will again, and seemed impossible.
Yet now behold them having no whit failed,
Enriched with all the treasures of the world,
Trusting to buy, not only, as is due,
Forgiveness for the old wrong, but thy full friendship,
That so De Danann feuds may find their end.

Lu. 'Tis good. Sons of Turann, I welcome you.
Ye have, then, brought the eric and in full?

Brian. Yea, all—the apples three, the hound, the
spear.

Lu. And there was something more, which doubtlessly
Is not forgotten. Have ye given my message
To Balar on his hill, and with your spears
Smitten the fiery head that tops the hill?

Brian. Oh! woe, my brothers, woe! the task forgot
Arises now to claim us.

Eth. What is this?
I cannot understand. I thought that all
This ill was over, crime and chastisement.

Lu. The last and heaviest stroke hath still to fall;
Crime's punishment is long. Well that it ends at all.

Eth. O sorrow, but our happiness was weak,
A champion poor in courage, void of strength,
That could so briefly hold our dwelling-place
Secure against thine arms and entrance dark.

Anadu. Ah! surely but this trouble is for nought.

Thou dost but try them, Lu? Thou hast thine eric,
If not in full, the precious heart thereof,
Thou wilt not ask for more?

Lu. Yea, I must ask.

Brian. Thou shalt have all; yet for a boon we crave.
Lend us the apples inexhaustible:
Lend us the spear: its cast is victory.
And we shall fail not to complete the task.
Which else, since we are worn with utter toil,
And wounds blood-wasting, we shall scarce achieve.

Lu. That which I hold secure must I keep fast.
Lightly ye ask for things, which ev'n yourselves
Knowing the value,—but to such as you
This were impossible,—from shame and awe
Had from your hands let fall, ev'n had ye dared
To touch them,—things, that are the mystic keys
Shall open doors to us from these low vaults,
Wherein we crouch in darkness, to the high halls
Of heaven and the light illimitable.

Eth. Have mercy, Lu. See, Ethnai kneels to thee.
Send them not forth, or if thou needs must send,
Take not from them those weapons, which their own
skill
And valour have won; for that were murderous.

Lu. Maiden, not even to thee can I grant this.

Brian. Thou wilt not? Then, De Dananns, hear
this thing.

'Tis by his own foul arts that we forgot.
Each object of the eric burnt as a star,

High in our memory's heaven, till one by one,
Daring we reached and plucked them down to us.
Apples and hound and spear : then suddenly
A mist arose and blotted out the rest.
Perplexed were we : was there not somewhat more ?
Each of the other asked : but even suspicion,
Shadow of recollection soon was lost.
We turned in confidence our faces home,
To find, when we were spoiled of our great spoil,
Which had assured our safety to the end,
The bitter treasure of our memory
Thrust on us by those hard vindictive hands
Of him, who surely counts among his crafts,
A more than cat-like skill of mousing play.

Lu. I do make no denial that my art
Caused your forgetfulness. It was my purpose
To bring these things desired to my possession,
Lest they be lost, when on your embassy
Ye went to Balar : all were fruitless then.
I do not love you, children of Turann,
Yet neither do I hate you any more.
Ye are somewhat purged : go forth and work the rest
Of your appointed task ; and, if ye draw
Your lives from this last furnace, doing it
By virtue only of your native strength,
Your souls shall after know the recompense.
To your De Danann wings ye have Fohmor feet,
That love to keep you paddling in the slime.
Let them lie cut from you that ye may soar.

Eth. O cruel and yet kind ! fail not my brothers !
Seize this chance too, for danger is the sun
That gives the jewel, courage, all its light.
Oh ! be yours thrust into its very heart,
Steeped in its fiery essence, till it blaze
As if with native flame unquenchable,
Paling all lights besides.

Brian. Sister, what word
Spake we, what token showed, that savoured fear ?
Yet speech of thine, though needless, being uttered
From such dear love, shall prove not profitless.
It shall surcharge our souls with overflow
Of daring ;—on this voyage storm our sails
To wreckage or to haven. Now, farewell !
Nuadu, and ye Danann lords, farewell !

Eth. Ah me ! and shall I never see them more ?

*The vision changed and I beheld and heard,
A boat alone on a calm dawn-streaked sea :
Therein TURANN'S three sons ;—the younger twain
Wound-prostrate stretched, but BRIAN still, though faint,
Bows not his weary head, and thus they speak.*

Brian. Brothers, we are near home. Not far I see,
Ben Edar's hill. Take heart and hold your lives
Close in the grip of courage, firm and strong :
Let nothing waste, and ye shall live to see
Our father and dear Ethnai, and the hills
That hold such memories of tenderness,
And the quick life of days, when life was strong
In our young breasts, 'twill be to plunge again
In a warm, medicinale healing bath,
To soothe your smarts, and yield you youth renewed.

Yuchar. Ah ! brother, but we shall not live till then ;
The vessel of our spirit leaks too fast.
There is but one hope only : hast thou force
To lift us, gaining for our eyes a glimpse
Of Eirë's shores—that cordial drop might keep
Our fainting strength alive, till the shore reached.
We could have draughts unstinted.

Brian.

I will try.

Feeble I am, yet something less than you.

(He raises them one in each arm, with an effort.)

The light grows more each moment. See, the sun
Is risen to help us, and the clear beam shows
Soft under cloud our lovely Ireland.

Yuchar. Ah! I am better.

Yucharba.

And my strength revives.

Brian. 'Tis good; now will the boat move swiftlier,
Relieved of corpse-like weight, intolerable
To frame ethereal, wont to bear but gods.
We shall not die before we reach the land.

*The vision changed: again I saw the Boyne,
And ETHNAI on the banks; her brothers three
Arriving in the boat, and thus they spake.*

Ethnai. Brothers, again safe-home.

Brian.

Ay, we are home,

But in what measure safe thou seest: we three
Have scarce amongst us left the life of one.
We cannot live but by the help of Lu.

Eth. Alas! and he not near. But I will call
Our father, who with me has here kept watch
Through all your days of absence, absent now
By strange mischance; he will send word to Lu,
Who will not, sure, delay to come to you.

Brian. Nay! tell him 'tis my thought we should be
borne

Ourselves unto Lu's presence;—that face to face
'Twere best we meet at Tara. Hardly there,
Though cruel-thoughted still, will he refuse
Before the princes to afford us help.
Them too I would not from mine own lips assure
Our task has been fulfilled;—they from their bonds
Released;—and, strength sufficing, would relate
Of our true story were it but a word
To float our names over oblivion's sea.
O sister, haste, or all will be too late.

*The vision changed to TARA. There I saw
TURANN and ETHNAI, and her brothers three,
LU, NUADU, and the DAGDA; thus they spake.*

Eth. He comes. Alas! not mercy do I see
In those most mild, most unrelenting eyes.

Brian. Lu, we have finished all, have giv'n thy
message
To Balar, on his hill, and with my spear
Have smit the fiery head. But we ourselves
Are faint with deadly wounds. Oh! let us eat
Of that life-giving and exhaustless fruit,
Which we did bring thee home, or else we die.

Lu. Ye may not have the fruit, for ye must die.

Brian. Bethink thee, Lu! What champions like to
us
Canst name of thy De Danann hosts? What deeds
Have any wrought that may compare with ours?

Lu. The deeds are great. I lessen not the praise,
Which should be great to balance with your crime.

Brian. Yet of the like once more thou may'st have
need.

Black to thy shores the Fohmor squadrons throng.
 The sun from his high station sees the advance,
 And day by day his journey circumscribes,
 Not daring 'lumine the forsaken north,
 He hides his head beneath an earlier cloud.

Lu. I know. We are already nigh the gloom.
 The shadow reaches to the plain of towers.
 But I have that will make it shrink from thence,
 Stung with the anguish of a deadly wound.

Brian. Perchance. Yet if to thee are all things
 known
 Save hope and fear, and mercy, their sweet child,
 Belike these other princes, who still keep
 Their hearts less sternly fixed in certitude,
 Would gladly hear the story of our deeds,
 Learn that our pledge has been fulfilled, and know
 What souls are theirs, whom thou dost doom to death,
 Pitiless Lu.

Lu. Speak on ; I hinder not.

Nuadu. And our hearts burn to hear.

Brian. My strength is small
 Even of our latest journey to relate
 The dreadful sights we saw, the words we heard.
 The boat sped northward to the chilly seas,
 Swiftly, yet, as we deemed, with course less swift
 Than when it darted southwards, when the waves
 Were warm and free. We wondered as we passed
 {The lines of glassy-floating, mountain isles,
 The spectral splendours of the ruined bergs,

Flying as if from warfare and defeat,
While on their pinnacles the sun still danced
In melting mockery. But now the sky
Grew dark ; and dismal was the land, whereon
The boat soon left us. Endless was the snow,
Save where the blackness of the barren rocks,
Swept bare by tempest gusts, showed hideously.
Far distant we descried the fiery hill,
With gleams of flame flitting about the top,
In cloud and smoke soon smothered from our sight.
Onward we pressed across the frightful land ;
We scaled the crags, we leaped the precipice,
Sank in the snow-gulfs and arose therefrom,
Upborne by energies, we knew not whence
Derived, save that, perchance, in former toils,
Some qualities we had won, or from the taste
Of that restoring fruit, whereby we healed
Full many a wound else deadly, had acquired
A strength more godlike that we knew was ours.
Howbeit, nought restrained us ; neither snow
Nor ice, nor precipice, nor gloom, nor all
The nameless terrors, hurrying ever by
Beyond our speed, unseen, but felt ; our blood,
Of all cold heedless else, froze as they passed.
Froze as they passed, then knew a different pain.
For many a fiery shadow flitted by,
And scorched us : yet the terrible light was good
To guide our steps ; and, many a time, the twain
The spirits of the ice and of the fire,

Against each other shocked with fearful woe.
For, tangled in the fire, the ice endured
Dissolving pangs ; and, quenched in cold, the flame
/ Hissing in miserable anguish died.

Thus through the midst of terror and of griefs
We reached and stormed the mountain, urging there
The double labour of the upward path,
On steeps impatient of our steps ; o'er chasms
More fearful ;—'mid a wilder swirl of snow,
The angry mountain shaking all its robe
To smother us,—to crush within its folds :—
In vain ; for our unconquerable strength
Still conquered : our resistless passion bore
Our bodies with the lightness of the bird,
With strength of iron ;—through the fire as ice,
Through ice as fire, still raging, till at last
We reached the spot whereon our steps were stayed.
For there the snow ceased, and the rocks grew fierce
With heat, and spurned us backwards ; and the light
Cast by the fiery shadows showed a gulf
Of precipice beneath it, and, below,
Some dim gigantic shapes, huddled in gloom.
We stood. Then from the mountain top no more
Flitted the gleams ; and utter darkness fell ;
And every sound of uproar and of wail
Grew silent, while the gulf sent forth these words.
“ Cloud vested shapes of night,—ye that scarce dare
Own to yourselves your horrors,—ignorant gods,

Who hate all knowledge, seeing that in your hands
Useless, your foes convert it to your bane ;
Who love no light, save the infernal fire's,
That lurid burns upon the volcan's crest,
Whereby our comrade spirits in bonds beneath
Ofttimes pour vengeance on their conquerors,
And cheer us by their aid ;—dread shapes, ye know
That, driv'n from fire and refuged in the frost,
We seized wide new dominions to the south,
And ruled by cold as once we ruled by fire ;
Also ye know too well the vast revolt,
That drove us melting northward and regained
To tender warmth and verdurous fruitfulness
Those lands, that we within the rigid gleam
Of snow-white icy death for ages held,
And, as we thought, should hold eternally ;
The chains we forged were broken : oh ! what pain
It was to see them from those lands uncoiled !
Yet had we joy thereof too :—such were the sores
They left behind upon the bruised earth's flesh,—
Mountains crushed, ground to fragments,—richest plains
O'erhower'd with lumps of desolating rock,
Huge as the heads of gods :—Oh ! how they wept,
The fair De Dananns when they saw that woe !
We lapped their tears rejoicing Then we strove,
Ere all remembrance of our rule should pass,
Ev'n from our own faint souls, to found again
A rival reign divided, till the whole
Should, as before, be ours. This we achieved.

We placed a yoke on the De Danann necks,
Galling, and yearly tribute took from them.
Soon they rebelled and slew our messengers,
Save some to bring us tidings of the shame ;
Whereat, we rousing no reluctant wrath,
Summoned forthwith our armies to our ships
Thus charged—"Blot out that island from the earth ;
Fold it once more close in the garb of ice ;—
Baffle the sunlight from it ; shield it well
From treacherous touches of the warmer gods :
So shall the bright ones cease to trouble us."
I shook my frozen shores : forth went our fleets,
| Our icebergs blue, that round them numbed the seas,
Laden with endless stores of hail and snow,
Enough we deemed to bury ten such isles
As Eirë"—here he stopped : and now the gleams
Shedding a feeble ray, we saw that one
Approached, to whom—like a resuming storm—
After a moment's calm he roared in rage,
"Speak, though it little needs that thou should'st speak ;
Shrunk image of disaster, in whose eyes
Thy message is apparent ;—yet speak, speak,
While any life is left to thee,—thy tidings,
How has our armament fared?" The answer this :—
"Wasted before the brightness of his face
Who erewhile vexed us." Then a different voice,
Crookèd-mouthed Kethlend's. "Yes, 'tis he again,
Son of thy daughter and mine, far-reaching Lu,
The Fohmor's doom. Had I persuaded thee

To slay thine offspring, he had ne'er been born.
But thou didst weakly spare, thinking thy towers
Sieged by the leaping sea would hold secure
In barren loneliness thy daughter's life,
Whose seed should be thy peril. Weak thou hast been,
And easily outwitted. Fohmor blood
Runs now in veins De Danann. They have won
The elemental might that else was ours,
Which wanting, long and vainly they had fought.
Full oft their skill has triumphed o'er our strength;
But now that they have stolen half our strength,
Where is our hope? The vast brute force, which we,
In rude and ineffectual clumsiness,
Brutally wielded, they against us turn,
With keenly-skilled, complete dexterity.
Woe, woe, for we are ruined." Then we heard
The voice of all most dreadful. "Cease thy wail!
Though all the Fohmors perish, I live on,
For ever to take vengeance." Few the words,
Yet all the north grew colder, and there fell
A silence and a shuddering on the host,
Which first the voice of Balar broke again.
"Not with impunity they steal our might.
For ofttimes in their veins it shall rebel,
Working wild crime; and uncontrollably
Burst into raging tumult, that shall tear
Their carefull'st toil in fragments; yea and again
Like lead about their hearts, it shall be coiled
In deadly chill obstructive,—next their souls

Sleep in lethargic cold.

But let us leave

These comforts to the future ! we shall now
Have joy of war, whose like has never yet
Made havoc of their peace. We shall arouse
All forms of battle : earth shall quake and heave.
The mountain belch its fires, the tempest plunge,
Like a huge monster into ocean's depths,
And splash th' abysses on the deluged land.
There shall be war of beasts : the monster forms,
They deemed they had laid low, shall wake again
With worse than ancient terrors. We will fight
Ev'n in the human shape, and to the heart
Of this their last creation strike such fear,
As ages yet unborn shall tremble with."

Then Kethlend answered crooked-mouthed and shrill :
" O words of Balar worthy ! Who is here,
That will not for such leader tax his might ?
Kings of the darkness, from your silences
Come forth and make your offers. Say what aid
Will each afford us in the war resolved."

Thereat arose such tumult, such wild storm
Of voices indistinguishable, of all
The evil powers of the ancient world,
That still endured, mighty, though in decay,
Proffering all their strength for Balar's war,
No uproar, when the waves defy the winds
To outroar them, in the winter's wildest dark,

Could equal that loud blast of clamours fell,
Promising stintless mischief and revenge.
But when it ceased, shrill Kethlend's voice resumed,
"Thus have the upper powers declared their hearts.
Spirit of fire beneath, what sayest thou?"
Then from the mountain top—Alas! my strength
Fails me—there rose a giant head of fire,
Blood-red; whose light showed us for many a league
Of Hecla's snows, the innumerable host
Of Fohmors, monstrous beasts, and gods deformed,
Close girdling that prodigious council round.
Then we, approaching near to the cliff's brink,
And grasping firm our spears, these words I spake:—
"Balar, by Lu's command, I bring thee word.
He is prepared, and bids thee not delay
To meet him at Moytura. He defies
Thy powers ungovernable; and as the sign,
We hurl our spears at yonder frightful head."
We hurled. Mine only struck; but from the wound
Outpoured a torrent of the fiery blood.
The astonished host burst into laughter loud,
Discordant, horrible; but while they laughed,
Down on them rolled the flood, and of their might
Consumed a third; while sank the fiery head
With groans amazing to his inward lair,
And darkness, banished for a while, returned.
And we beneath the rocks crouched low in fear,
Conscious of nought, save that around us raged
Worse tumult than if earth were burst in twain,

That dured how long we know not, till once more
The words of Balar over all we heard :
"Ye Fohmor remnants, are ye round me still?"
Whereto the answering acclamation rang,
"All, all!" and instant followed the command,
"Then on to Eirë."

We who have seen these things,
Have dared these things, O Danann princes, we
For life most idly have entreated Lu :
We beg no more. Judge ye, having thus heard
Our story, if the just reward be death.

Nuadu. Lu, thou art wise and mighty. Wilt thou
spare?

Lu. Not thus may ancient councils suffer change.
Think not that now we may endeavour to bend
To altered shapes the cast of destiny,
Nor break the whole. Would ye begin anew,
Return to chaos? Not for purposes
Like this, may that most precious fruit be used.
Nor life like ours, is their due recompense,
In whom, though half subdued, the foe still dwells,
But other dooms, and different rewards.

Ethnai. This then is not the end, though now they
die?

Lu. Thou speakest well. Before them still there lies
Much not entirely good, nor wholly ill ;—
But mingled pain and glory ; stormy joys,
And slow deliverance into light and peace.

Eth. Brothers, be comforted ! Ye hear his words.

He is not cruel, though he seems so stern.

Brian. Alas! we die. Oh, sister loved, farewell;
O, aged sire, farewell. One doom is ours.
Yucharba's light is out, and Yuchar's fails,
Mine flickers low to them.

*The vision changed. Again I stood alone
With LU upon the mountain top, and spake.*

Fintan. 'Tis morn, but what a morn! Such light
as is

Gleams from the west, pallid, as 'twere the ghost
Of yesterday's departed sun returned.

The plain with icy mist is rolled : the hills,
Twice piled with ebon darkness, from their brows
Send waves of darkness, horrible, like the frown
Of some vile living thing that crouched beneath.
Ah ! what is that ?

Lu. Fear not, 'tis he awakes,
The old dragon Balar, and yon scarlet lightning
Is but his lifted crest. If I should smite
That cloud in sunder now, thou would'st behold
Writhing confusion of the horrible brood,
(As when one lifts a stone, that long has lain
Untouched, and frightened from the unwelcome light,
The noisome crawling things uncovered flee.)

Fintan. But war they not in human shape to-day ?

Lu. In part they will ; but round them still shall cling
Their monster imperfections,—the fair shape
Divine degraded by some bestial twist,
The vile soul bending to its likeness vile ;—
Their closest imitations in such wise
With horror starred, that, did'st thou look too near,
Thy sense would not endure it, but would rend
The body from it to escape bolt-speed.
Therefore, of all that comes to pass to-day,
Thou shalt behold but little. Some few things,
Such as are nearest human, thou may'st see
In full. Of others thou shalt have report.
But I will dim thine eyes, will dull thine ears,
That of the horrible horror, the fearful fear
Thou may'st have nothing but a general sense,
That shall oppress and awe thee, but not slay.
Moreover to the fight I go not forth
Until mid-day. Against the southward foe,
By Orbsen's lake, Nuadu heads the war ;
Northward the Dagda and bright Ogmai lead
Where yonder cloud fronts thickest :—night by day
Sick-smitten, yet defiant. See, it moves
Towards us, that under shelter of the gloom
Accustomed, better may their armies war,
But ours the worse, confused. This shall not be.

[He takes off his helmet, and a burst of radiance streams on the advancing cloud, and causes it to shrink back to the mountain of Ben Gulban.]

Now shalt thou see beginning of the war ;

The first of battles, such as men shall fight,
Grievous with treachery, with blood, with pain.

[*The De Danann hosts are seen issuing from their tents, and pouring forth to meet the Fohmors, who in vast array move towards them. The Fohmors at first appear to gain the advantage; but the De Dananns pour on them an overwhelming shower of fiery darts, which checks their advance, and soon obliges them to retreat. This they do slowly, and from their mountain barrier a thick cloud comes down with snow and sleet, thunder and lightning, and darkness, and the De Dananns are obliged to withdraw.*

A messenger arrives.

Lu. What tidings dost thou bring? Ourselves have
seen

The sum; resolve thou the particulars.

Messenger. Thou saw'st at first we yielded to the foe.
Terrible was their onset: at their aspect
We reeled in terror. Some like, in the main,
Unto ourselves, were twice our stature and bulk,
And hideous-visaged, with perpetual change
Of horror sweeping o'er their features fierce,
Like waves, whose depth some raging monster hides,
As the malignant spirit worked within.
These were the least; for countless multitudes
Showed awful mimicry of our fair shapes;—
One-eyed, one-legged, one-handed some: others
Butted with monster heads of goats, and some
With horns of bulls, and some had serpent jaws

With poison teeth, and others on their hands
For fingers had long claws, sharper than knives.
These all had bodies something like to ours ;
But others had our heads, with bodies of beasts,
And rushed on us with weight of roaring bulls,
Leaped with the spring of lions : some had wings
Of frightful flesh unfeathered ; marvellest thou
We shrank from such ? Yet courage came to us,
And on them did we pour merciless rain
Of fire-tipped spears, that rushed with deadly life
Animate, failing none a prey to find.
So slaughtered horribly, their cries arose
For help to Balar, and he answered them,
And rolled a covering down of densest cloud,
From whose black womb fell, in thick blinding showers,
The white cold petrifying dust : our eyes
Were as they had not been, our feet were clogged ;
Our ears with crashing thunders stunned ; and when
This tempest ceased, and the mist cleared, no more
Saw we of those fell armies, save their dead ;
And from the mountain-rested cloud we heard,
The wails for their defeat, their moans of pain.

Fintan. Is all then over ?

Lu.

Hardly yet begun.

[*Ruadan approaches.*

Lu. Who art thou that dost dare, not being De Danann,
Into our camp ? Although thy Fohmor soul
Be masked full well it is not hid from me.

Ruadan. Let not thy wrath destroy me, mighty Lu,

Ere I have spoken ! vainly should I seek
 On thee to work deception. What I seem
 I am ; for I am Ruadan, son of Bress,
 And grandson of the Dagda. Therefore my face,
 Lies not, declaring me to be in part
 No Fohmor ; and on embassy I come,
 Chosen for the sake of my De Danann blood,
 To beg for peace ; which granted, from these shores
 Balar withdraws his hosts, and swears an oath,
 To vex them through all ages nevermore.

Lu. It seems ye soon grow weary of the war.

Ruadan. De Dananns grow more mighty day by day,
 But wearier ever are the Fohmor limbs,
 Laden with heavier fetters of old age,
 Viewless, but not by any art disforded.

Lu. Say for what reason should I grant this peace ?
 Why should I spare to slay you utterly,
 Being, as ye own, the stronger ?

Ruadan. For this cause.
 Perchance thou may'st not slay us utterly ;
 And greater profit for the feeble race
 Of men thou mightest win by compact made
 Granting us territories fixed ;—the rest
 Though less than universal, yet with bounds
 Inviolable secured, where men may dwell
 In peace that knows no trouble ; for thou know'st
 That else, they, living on the borderland
 Of being, shall for ever bear the brunt
 Of war between us, crushed and spoiled alike

By you, their friends, by us their enemies ;—
An evil destiny : release them from it,
By faithful peace to last for evermore.

Lu. And faithful peace with Fohmors who shall find ?
Small were our gain, and great the loss to yield
What now ye lack, title and claim assured
To even the pettiest province of the world ;
To cede the least part of our heritage
To your dominion ; nay ! for ye shall know
Yourselves intruders without claim or right ;
Shall feel the doom of banishment impend
Perpetually o'er your detested power :
Begone, before my wrath more fiercely blaze.

Ruadan. Hear from me this petition, then, O Lu !
Let me with the De Danann hosts abide.
Why should I perish with those armies doomed ?
Should not that part of me, which is De Danann,
Rather have power to save the Fohmor part,
Than suffer shame to be itself destroyed,
By that, which is the feeble and the vile.
Even thou thyself, 'tis said, hast Fohmor blood,
Thy mother being Balar's daughter, and yet
Art chief of the De Dananns. If in me
The baser part be more, let it not hinder
Among the lowliest of thy hosts to serve.

Lu. 'Tis true my mother gave me Fohmor blood,
And therewith many things ; whereof the least
Is not that I can pierce through Fohmor wiles,
And face soft arts with rock-built stubbornness ;

But in thy being's commonwealth I see
Thy fine De Danann skill a beaten slave,
To serve the purpose of the baser strength.
Thy grandsire was that Elathan, who drew,
With lavish gold and glitter-tinsel gifts,
The vainest of our maids to his embrace ;
His son, thy father Bress, by subtlety
Grasping rule over us, sought to make dull
With slow, cold wiles the brightness of our souls.
Each knowledge, one by one he sought to quench,
And ere we knew, to sleep eternal numb,
As frost-sleep lulls reluctant-willing limbs.
But we were roused and drove him out from us.
Yet thou for safety askest, born of traitors,
The hardest of all souls that be to save.

Ruadan. Yet for my parentage condemn me not.
No fault of mine that I am sprung from such.
No crime the nature I received at birth.

Lu. Though it be not thy fault, it is thy fate.
(Fierce beasts, that rend, and deadly things, that sting,
Choose not their nature, yet are slain for it.
Howbeit, for thine own doom thou workest. Stay.

Ruadan. O thou veiled radiance, accept my thanks.
This gracious boon more mild than are thy words
Now gives me chance to show my nature true.

Lu. And surely thou wilt show it. Leave my sight.
(*To a warrior*).

Follow and bring me word of the event.

'Twill not be long ere thou hast word to bring.

Now should we have some news of Nuadu.
The southern battle will be soonest o'er.
Which won, the seas of our De Danann might,
Reflooded by those absent tides, shall rise
Resistless ocean o'er the northward foe.

[NUADU, THE DAGDA, OGMAI *and a crowd of warriors*
approach.

Lu. Thou com'st expected, glorious Nuadu.

Nuadu. Leader of arms De Danann, Lord of light,
I bring thee tidings of full victory.
The dwarfish hosts are routed, spoiled and slain.

Lu. Words of the doer worthy. Thou hast achieved
The whole full sum of possibility.
Not less we looked for, nor could hope for more,
So well and swiftly has the task been wrought.

Nuadu. We drove them to the jaws of Oribsen,
Who swallowed multitudes, but holds a few
As islets in his lake, henceforth, in sign
Of this day's triumph. Some in terror found,
Like burrowing creatures, way to the mid earth,
Through sudden openings, riddling all the land.
Belgadan helped us, and the giant twelve
Of Bjola, who keep firm their mountain square
To every point of heaven, back to the lake
Shaking them, who had thought to climb and 'scape.
Thus did our waves and mountains keep the oath
They swore to aid us, well remembering
The age-long suffocation of the cold,
That caked their waters from the rippling winds,

The death-sheets white that wrapped the mountain sides,
The eating anguish of the icy teeth,
That carved their bones. Therefore for us they fought
Lest that chill rule oppress them once again.

Lu. But say what has befall'n thy valiant hand.

Nuadu. 'Twas wounded from me by a broad spear
stroke.

Thereat I sought the help of Dianket,
Our sage physician, and he made me this,
A silver hand, that with most cunning art
Joined to mine arm partakes the life and moves
Obedient supple fingers as the old.

Lu. Rare skill indeed ! Henceforth thy name shall be
Nuadu Argat-lawm ; thou shalt outstretch
A hand no more thy own, a silver sway
Mild and beloved, long ages to endure.

[*The messenger sent with Ruadan returns.*
What hast thou seen ?

Mess. Thy words' fulfilment swift.
I followed Ruadan. Leaving thy presence
Straightway he sought the forge with misty roof,
Deep in the hollow of the mountain glen,
And from the doorkeeper besought that now,
Being De Danann, he might pass within.
And see the wonders to his eyes yet new.
Permission giv'n he entered, and passed on,
I following, mid the piles of arms, wherein
The spirit of battle murmured, to the place
Where the three marvellous artificers.

Crednai, and Luchtinai, and Gobnïu,
Toiled with unwearied speed, unceasingly.
The last, the master-smith, the metal seized,
Wrought into instant shape by touches three,
The last a finish, and to Crednai passed,
Bronze-worker he, who likewise by three strokes,
The last a finish, riveted and passed
To Luchtinai, worker in wood, who wrought
The shaft with touches three, and by the third
Finished, gave on the work to women's hands,
Who bound in bundles, and upbuilt in piles,
That, while we watched a moment, mountains grew.
Then Ruadan to Gobnïu bending low
His head, as if in reverence, thus spake :
“ I pray thee, Gobnïu, and since I am
De Danann now, and have forsaken quite
The hated Fohmors doomed, refuse me not ;
Grant me that here my weapon I receive,
Straight from thy hands, that, honoured thus, my soul
May feel itself De Danann, and have strength
Assured on this the righteous side to war.”
Gobnïu, grimly silent, nodded assent ;
And by a woman was the spear last made
Given to Ruadan, who carefully
Held, and with loving glances gazed on it ;
Then, raising in his hand, as if to try
How best it should be poised, with sudden stroke
Treacherous, hurled it at the mighty smith ;
Whose breast it had transfixed, if he with hand

Alert had caught not, ere it touched his flesh,
And, quick as polished shield flings back the beam,
Re-hurled the dart upon the traitor, who fell
With instant sudden vengeance overwhelmed.

Lu. Behold ye now the Fohmor plot revealed.
Peace offered, ne'er intended ;—then the wile
Of Ruadan, dissembler vainly bold.
Thus from the Fohmor the De Dunann fails,
And all that ancient plot, whereby was won,
Through Elathan's deceit, our foolish maid,
Is brought to nought. Light shall no longer serve
To guide blind darkness on its deadly way.
And now already are the foe aware
What fate their crafty envoy hath befall'n ;
And like to waters, when the wind and frost
Contend, one rousing what the one would lull,
So fear and wrath are battling in their souls.
Now shall the sun come help the wind of wrath,
To draw them from their lurking. I will lift
My helmet. Once this day I lifted it,
Ere eve will lift again. (*Takes off his helmet.*)

Behold ye now

How my swift spears of light probe to the depths
Yon seas of cloud, and scatter them : the foe
Bared of their covering, the sharp stings feel,
And, roused to rage, roll down the mountain sides
Their frightful regiments, multitudinous.
The war regathers to its end. Go forth,
Ye triple leaders of the Dunann light,

King, bard, and warrior. Against you march
The hideous chiefs of darkness, triple too,
Indech deformer, and deceiver Bress,
And Tethra, great destroyer. One remains,
Yet from his lair unmoving to the last,
Balar, the deadly-eyed, my foe. Till he
Descends into the thick, must I still keep
My post wide-watchful here, above the noise
Of battle, and the densely rolling fume,
With ear discerning, and with eyes undimmed.

The Dagda. We hear thy words, great leader, and
obey.

The vision changed, and I beheld and heard.

[By a fountain near the lake, a large bronze vessel simmers slowly over a small fire. On one side stands DIANKET, the physician, on the other his daughter ARMEDDA, both having herbs in their hands. They walk round the cauldron, throwing in herbs from time to time.]

Dianket. In the fiery cauldron
Mix the sweet and bitter
Herbs, whose essence joining
Yields the drink life-giving.

Earth has forces deadly,
Hence the plant of poison,
Potent yet with virtue,—
Strong for self-destroying.

Armedda. Earth has powers benignant ;
They the deadly leading,
Force their strength unwilling
Into paths of healing.

Both. In the fiery cauldron
Mix the sweet and bitter
Herbs, whose essence joining
Yields the drink life-giving.

Dianket. Narrow is here the islet,
Peace, whereon we stand ;
War's waste waters roaring
Round our menaced land.
Why so loud their anger,
But because they know
This the rock we stand on
 Kin with rock below,
Is but eldest from their deeps in rising ?
 Many a peak they feel
 Cleaving through their wave,
 Heaving off the shallows ;
 Hence they rave.
Soon they know their powers will be banished ;
 Far and wide their rule shall fail and cease :
From the darkness of the waters barren,
 Rise the smiling continents of peace.

Armedda. Here shall come the warrior,
 From whose veins the strife
Drains his blood, to suckle
 At the breasts of life ;
Those that here renew not
 Strength and might shall fail :

Only those we succour,
Can at last prevail.
We shall teach our children to be valiant ;
We shall win for them the earth's increase ;
Till the war-beast, starved and famished,
Crouches conquered at the feet of peace.

[A number of De Dananns come in bearing bodies of their comrades, some wounded and some dead. DIANKET takes the fluid from the cauldron, and sprinkles the latter, and makes them drink, when they have revived. These presently return to the fight. More are brought in, and are treated in the same way, ARMEDDA assisting. At length DIANKET stops one about to return, saying ;—

Dianket. Three times hast thou been slain, three
times revived,
Most valorous De Danann : rest thee now,
Or all our skill may fail to heal again.
Rest thee and give us news how fares the war.

Soldier. Not well for us it fares. Confusions strange
Break the De Danann might, and work us woe.
With steadfast strength resistless fought we first,
Driving the foe before us : then we felt
Some sickly influence, the subtle breath
Of Indech, creeping o'er us like a mist,
Tainting our hearts with doubt that made us pause
To eye, with glance suspicious, each his fellow,
For each looked strange, so to the other it seemed.

Thus was our onset weakened ; yet no worse
At first befell ; the Dagda's mightier art
Kept check on those foul workings of the foe.
Thus equal was the battle poised awhile ;
Till came word suddenly "the Dagda's camp
Was plundered by the Fohmors, all its guard
First slaughtered." Swiftly from the fronting foe
Turned he, the minstrel god ; since from the hands
Of the abominable enemy
Forthwith must all his treasures rescued be.
Meantime the horror that ensued how tell ?
For now the arts of Indech wrought unchecked.
Over us rolled the dim, confusing mist ;—
Pernicious ; for the comrade by my side,
This moment godlike fair—was a monster
Nameless and loathsome, freezing me with fear.
Then frenzied into sudden rage, I sprang
With deadly leap on him, and through and through
His frightful body drove my sword, and turned
Thus on the next and next, fatal to all.
So raged I, heedless of the countless wounds
That ate my flesh from me, till, nothing left
Save gory bones, life failed me, and I fell.

Dianket. Wast thou the only one afflicted thus ?

Second Soldier. It was the same with me.

Third Soldier.

With me.

Fourth Soldier.

With me.

Fifth Soldier. I was with Nuadu, our glorious king,
Round whom a band not numerous escaped

The spells, and safe ourselves the horror saw.
One half the host grew monsters, like to those
We fought at morn ; and they, and all the rest
Fell on each other, as ye just have heard.
Imagine a vast pit, wherein were thrown
All earth's most deadly creatures ; those, whose claws
Plant themselves root-like in the living flesh,
Inseparable, while sword-sharp teeth devour :
The coiling python add, the poison-snake,
While mighty beasts that fight but in defence,
Then terribly, with arm of tusk and horn,
Stamp, roar, and rend : then to this hell of hate,
Blood, rage and death throw in the gentle things,
Defenceless save by flight, but flight is none ;
And ye may faintly dream what agony
Has passed this day upon the plain of towers.
But we, who knew from evil Indech's art
Flowed this foul mischief, strove amain to reach
The source to choke it : vainly strove, for still
Did he, the horrible, elude us, hiding
In cunning clouds, and urging all his craft
Us too, if it might be, within his power
To draw to our destruction, while around,
Our army, like the water in the cauldron
Lapped in the laving flame, more wildly boiled,
And hissed and bubbled into nothingness ;
Till thus a third of our De Danann host
Hath perished, self-consumed.

Dianket.

Beyond all words

Thy fearful meaning. Dark the danger now,
But where is Ogmai? Mighty strength is his.
Hath he no aid to lend to Nuadu?

Soldier. With Bress he closed in combat, and 'tis said
Drave headlong in pursuit, and vanished far,
None can tell where.

Armedda. Ah me! do ye behold,
How thick the darkness folds us. Hell comes nigh;
What faces on the gloom! The siabra,
Horrible phantoms; and more dreadful still,
See ye that giant shadow, and the gleam
Of that enormous sword, that seems to cleave
The heaven in twain, self-guided? nam'st thou that?

Dianket. Tethra that giant shadow, and the sword
His sword:—yet have no fear. The Dagda lives,
And valiant Ogmai surely; and above,
Throned in calm light, Lu sits upon the hill
High o'er this rage of darkness: lo! already
The light returns, the shadows come less thick,
Their leer less baleful;—Heard ye that sound?

Arm. We heard.

Dianket. But one thing in the world can yield that
sound,
The Dagda's harp touched by the Dagda's hand.

Arm. What can the meaning be?

Dianket. It cannot fail
Of import good for us:

[*Some wounded De Dananns are brought in, DIANKET
heals them. As they are about to depart he lays his hand
on one and stops him.*]

Dianket. Stay, stay ! thy news for us ! wounded are we
By tidings dolorous. Requite our skill,
Life-giving by thy tidings, which, we deem,
Life-giving to our fainting hearts shall prove.

Soldier. The deeds of the mighty Dagda—more are
they
Than hurried lips can now recount to thee.
He has restored our battle, rallied the whole,
And presses deadly on the yielding foe.

Dianket. Nay, but more fully must we hear the tale,
Else have no heart to heal the wounded more.

Soldier. Hear then in brief. Not long we fought, ere
word
Was to the Dagda brought, his camp to east
Was plundered by the Fohmors. Straight he turned
To succour, yet was late : the robber band
Had seized his harp, his chiefest treasure, and fled.
Swift as a storm-borne cloud was his pursuit.
The foe o'ertaken knew not he was near.
We found them camped upon the mountain slope.
And scattered in disorder, while they passed
From hand to hand profane the wondrous harp :
Each, in succession, striving to draw forth
Those sounds that are divine, being the echoes
Of thoughts, that wander through the soul divine
Of him, the great musician : but the harp,
Such were its master's spells, uttered no sound.
Then, fruitless finding it, they cried in rage,
“ Break it, lest e'er returning to his hands,

It yield that music it keeps dumb from us.”
“Come to me” said the god ; and from their grasp
The harp obedient flew, and on its way
Slew of the spoilers nine. He touched the strings,
And, straightway, all their hosts with idiot laughter
Convulsive cackled : when he touched again,
They groaned and wept : but, when, once more, he
played,
Charm-smitten into helpless sleep they fell.
“Now let us slay them” rose a general cry.
But he, our chief commanded “touch them not ;
Yonder is need more pressing.” O’er the ground
Close by, a thick cloud hovered : and we saw
Swifter than lightning, a gigantic sword,
Wielded by hands unseen, sweep to and fro
From heaven to earth incessant, dealing death,
To whom we knew not, though we guessed full well.
But underneath the darkness of that cloud
We found the plain strewn thick with senseless forms,
De Danann comrades, whom, by Ogmai led,
Bress had lured onward in his feigned retreat,
To this mephitic field, where soon they sank,
O’ercome by lethargy,—for Tethra’s sword
Victims, that took the stroke, nor turned away.
There too lay valiant Ogmai still unslain :
To whom the Dagda crying “waken thou,
Or sleep for ever,” sounded on his harp
One keen and vibrant note : and Ogmai rose,
And with him all his armies, like the waves,
When falls the tempest on the sleeping sea.

The vision changed, and I beheld and heard.

[*The Fohmor camp on Benbulbin. BALAR slumbering heavily.*

Kethlend. Arise, thou monster sluggard of the world !
The Fohmors perish and thou heedest not ;
Though trusting to thy valiant-sounding words,
They followed thee to battle, when secure
They might have dwelt among the crystal hills
That crown the world with death, proof against life.
Now they are slaughtered, and thou slumberest :
Wake, lift thy heavy eyelid, and let fly
The deadly beam it hides, and freeze this wave
Of Danann victory, that overwhelms
Elusive, subtle Indech, and the wiles
Of Bress, and washes them aside like weeds :—

Balar. Why this loud clamour ? Let me sleep in
peace !
I am deep-weary ; yet thou fill'st my dreams
With trouble of thy hollow warning words,
A-travel for long ages through my brain.
How many centuries have I slept ? Thou sayest
Indech and Bress fly ?

Keth.

Yea and much more !

Awake, and see, thyself, our mightiest
Crouching down, weaponless, in sullen woe !
How fare we, think'st thou, when the Danann strength
Can clutch the sword from Tethra's giant hands ?
While he the fearful one, who ne'er before
Knew fear, now trembles helpless ; rise, oh rise !
No weapon save thy deadly orb have we.

Balar. Yes ! but I shudder now the doom foretold
Gigantic tow'rs above me. I may slay
The lesser Dananns, yet remains there one,
The bright descendant of the Kings of night,
With delicate arms unerring. Wherefore toil
To win the petty, useless victory ;—
To climb the easy slope, above whose pent
The crags enormous, ready to be hurled,
Lean charged with vast, inevitable death,
If touched with gentlest finger. Death shall be
A dreadful thing to men, who dure an hour,
Mere midges of existence, misty swarms :
But unto gods, who from the first have been :—
Themselves the source of all things, one with all ;
To be thrust out from their own universe,
Or worse, consumed, devoured, their forces drained,
To know that slain, they feed their enemy,
And leave him lord eternal ;—Oh ! what pain !
What grief intolerable.

Keth.

At last awake,

Since thou canst groan enough to shake the earth.

Canst thou do nought besides? If 'tis our doom,
To fall our conquerors' prey, give them at least
Fresh cause to recollect thee. Stamp once more,
Our image on their hearts, deeper than ever
In night's original, intensest dyes;
Shadow them with thy terror once again;
That never to eternity's last end,
The darkness of the Fohmior fear may cease
To dim their souls.

Balar. I rise and I go forth.
Yet it is late to speak such words as these.
Shall I, thus old and weary, who am become
Negation merely, hope to work more woe,
Than in my strenuous prime of active force,
Aged evil pitted against youthful good?

Keth. Lie here, then, and be slain. Thou dost forget
Thy choice is narrow,—either to be slain
With some revenge, or none: why not choose some?
Sting thou, and leave the venom to create
What pangs thou knowest not; there must remain
Large potency of evil in thee still;
Keep'st thou no lurking thought to spare thyself?
A thrice decocted drop from thine old frame,
Diseased negation though thou be, may work
With subtlety of deadlier agony,
Than all the poison brewed by youthful force.
And if so be thou diest, then shall thy corpse
Cumber the plain, huge and immovable,
A mighty barrier, against pursuit,

To save thy flying kindred : for 'tis doomed
That o'er the corse of Balar none may pass,
Save he who hews therefrom a limb and hides,
Beneath all resurrection, deep in earth ;
A hard endeavour, for what mountain's weight
Shall trammel the least part of thee, though dead ?
Therefore delay no more, but forth and fight.

Balar. I go. Yet do I feel, I scarce have strength
To lift the heavy covering of mine eye.
Oh ! I am very weary, I am old.

Keth. Well : here is one will help thee mightily.
The swordless Tethra will uplift thy lid.
His hands are free, and surely they are strong.

Teth. Yea, I will help thee, and regaining thus
In part my terror, make more deadly thine.

FINTAN.

How shall I tell of that last battle I saw
Dim veiled in mist, myself safe on the hill?
Back did the rallying Fohmor armies roll
The erst victorious Dananns, overtower'd
By that huge shape of ancient brutish ill,
Balar, uproused at last in his despair.
His coming was as if the mountain rose,
And towards us moved; the winter round his head,
Laden with snow-clouds hung, and from the throats
Of crags roared thunder-threats of gust and storm.
Beside him stalked that ghastliness, whose rage
So for his lost sword burned, it all but made
His full shape visible, a fresh dismay.
Fled not at first the Dananns, fear-enthralled,
'Till came the dread ones nigh; then Balar sank
Groaning upon his knees, and o'er his head
Leaned Tethra, and the eyelid long unraised
Lifted, though ponderous, and the deadly beam
Leapt forth, and far in front the hapless foe
Stiffened to frosty statues on the plain,

Their life that moment gone for evermore,
So great the price Moytura cost the gods.
'Then fast fled those untouched. ' If some were saved,
The heavy stiffness of the monstrous limbs
Slow to o'ertake them saved ; and still they fled
And Tethra dropped the lid, when Balar rose,
Screaming with fury, as at first with joy.
So were the Dananns slain again, again ;
Their glorious Nuadu, who dared to turn
In strength heroic, and to hurl his spear
Full in the face of Balar—courage vain—
Thus also died ; and then the wilder fear
Hurried the Danann flight.

Then he arose,
The bright one, from his throne upon the hill
At last ; and something of a darkness fell
And dimmed his countenance ; since well he knew
Time now stood o'er him with resistless hands
To urge him face to face with that great power
Ancestral, doomed to slay him or be slain.
He rose, the wondrous weapon in his hand,
Turann's three sons had found with blood and pain,
And gliding, swift as sunlight, down the hill
With clear voice ringing stayed the headlong flight ;
And they, re-animate with courage, turned
And dared to gaze on Balar. I have seen
The mighty ebb and flow of those great tides,
That swept the early earth, when still the moon,
Scarce parted from her parent orb, glared near,

A tyrant power, that violently drew,
In infant sport, the waters round the world ;—
Here heaped in monstrous bulge, and there the gulfs
Sucked dry to bottoms of abysmal slime ;—
Their limits then no narrow marge of shore,
The islands were but pebbles in their path
Impetuous o'er midmost continents.
Twice daily, like to raging beasts of prey,
They rose, and having from the mountain peaks
Dislodged the clouds, back plunged with deadly speed
The ruthless roll of waters. Like to that
Vast ebb and flow, the ebb and flow this day
Of war between the gods. The land was then
Larger than now. A shadow but remains
Of those great mountains, of the plains that gave
Room spacious for the conflict.

There they stood,
Face to face at the last, Balar and Lu,
Within a spear's throw. Then on creaking knees
The giant evil bent, and leaning o'er,
The dim terrific, glaring, sought to lift
The lid : but Lu, anticipating, hurled
The spear. It, hovering at the dreadful gates,
Entered them opening, and, ere ought came forth
Of deadly, worked the death.

Down on the plain
Crashed the huge form. Earth quivered ; and the sound,
Rolled round from mountain unto mountain, swelled
To such reverberations, that my spirit

Shot back within its inmost lurking place,
And barred in darkness, saw no more nor heard.

I saw no more nor heard, till once again
The gods were gathered on the mountain top,
Clear splendours, from the darkness of the war
Emerged in joy of radiance undimmed.
To south and west, fair was the sky, washed clear
By floods of sunlight ; but around the hills
That skirt the bay's wide waters, from the slopes
Of long Ben Gulban, to the cliffs that front
Their ruddy scarps to winter-setting suns,
Slieve League, so named hereafter, still were piled
The Fohmor clouds, towering in angry gloom,
Moaning and muttering to themselves in pain
With mutual threats and accusations fierce
Retorted, till upon their ears there fell
The clear-toned triumph of the Danann song,
That drew their wrath against the gods once more,
With interruptions of fierce dissonance,
Roaring of rage and prophecies of revenge.
To whom, fit answer made the calm-souled gods ;
So sounded, through the heaven across these waves
Such dialogue, as seas shall hear no more ;
Whereof the first was this begun by Lu.

Lu. Moytura is won.

Rejoice ye powers of everlasting light,
For the strength of the Fohmor is broken.

The wide sky-covering tempest
No longer shall threaten
In darkness eternal to fold us.
Their armies shall ne'er re-unite :
They shall wander in troops :
As a lake that is drier into pools,
They shall shrink from the glimpse of the sun.
Triumphantly the triple war is ended ;
Peace assured for the earth tormented :
The reign and fierceness of the brute are o'er :
We have conquered in man's form, whose strength
ascendant,
Shall shape the world and guide it evermore.

Fohmor Voice. Ha, ha ! too soon secure !
Think ye this peace ye make shall long endure,
Think ye all earthquakes are too straightly bound
For even a little writhing,
Whose lightest motion shall in ruin confound
His brittle works, for whom is your contriving ?
Is every volcan's mouth so closely sealed
That none with fiery speech again shall fright you ?
Is all your world of beasts, that roam the field,
Purged clean of every creature fierce and foul ?
If ye know not, we rejoice
That, spite the lay your minstrel sang,
Still the tiger keeps his claws,
The serpent still his venom fang.

The Dagda. This know ye too, that round them both,
The coil of doom more closely draws.

Fohmors. But are ye sure beyond doubt,
Tiger and serpent, or worse than they
Refuge have not taken in his heart,
Who seems a man without,
Thence to poison, thence to prey.
Though now ye joy, ye shall not long forget,
That half this earth of yours is Fohmor yet :—

The Dagda. Half claim ye now, who sought to rule
the whole ?

That half we hold shall yield us full control,
To draw your substance to our radiance bright,
Till all the world be but Fohmorian might
Clothed in De Danann light :

Fohmors. Hurt will we yield for your scorn.
Though Balar dead on Moytura lies,
To your sorrow we soon shall return,
With a leader, who never dies.
We go to prepare new plagues ;
For each that your skill has abolished,
Behold we create you a hundred ;
Ye have wounded the Fohmor, have crushed ;
Ye have slain the old giant powers,
That were few, that were easily numbered ;
But out of their corpses shall rise,
Wind-blown, down the ways of the world,
Choking you, blinding you,
Clouds of an infinite dust ;—
Legions of troubles, loathsomest seeds of corruption.
And these shall interbreed with one another,

So that never shall there fail the novel kind ;
Ye may slay them till ye weary and discover,
Having slaughtered thrice a thousand, that as many are
the millions still behind.

Lu. Strength have we your wiles to meet.
We care not if ye fight in great or little :
Ye walk the ways ordained for your defeat,
Our plans fulfilling.
Your blind divided ranks shall never know
Whether ye war on us or on each other :
Though each shall be the deadliest foe
To work the ruin of his deadly brother :—

Fohmors. And ye pure, righteous ones—ha !
So sure of spirit, hating disorder,
Many a time, many a time
Shall ye be with us so commingled,
Confused and bewildered,
Ye shall not distinguish,
If good ye be, or if evil ;
If darkness or light be the side that ye war for.
Can ye keep us out of the soul of man ?
Provided for that in your plan ?
Ah ! we shall worm our way to the inmost part
Of the life-pulsing heart,
And thence, though sound be the body and fair,
Through every channel shall roll
The disease of the rotten soul.
And if strong be the soul, that we cannot enter,
We shall choose by its side in the body to dwell,

That wrapped in the flesh, as a garment of fire,
From passion and lust it may perish tormented.

Another Voice. The Fohmor blood shall fire the mortal
veins

With madness :

The Fohmor cunning twist his brains

To crooked paths of badness ;

The Fohmor jealousy with spite shall fill

His heart to make him spill

His brother's joy cup ere he drains

The gladness,

Lu. Boast not of these, your horrors intended.

Far better than yourselves do we foreknow them :

Alas ! ye exist already

In the stuff, whereof man is woven.

But even in that most anguish-riven heart

Your cruel power shall also be divided :

Cold hardness shall resist the subtle art,

Rage conquer rage, and passion baffle passion :

And when the anarch tumult has subsided,

The chaos of winds and waves,

'Then shall the clear intelligence resume

Full sway, and safely shall the bark be guided.

Fohmors. Ah ! but how oft shall ye grieve for the
doom

Of wreck for the ship, of death for the pilot ?

At the cost of a tempest, a score of them, cheap would

we reckon our joy

One single soul to destroy.

Lu. If indeed ye destroy it?
But your powers exhausted shall wane
Like a cloud that is emptied of rain :
And the strength, that ye waste to your bane
The De Dananns shall grasp and employ it.

Fohmors. But how oft shall it break in your hands,
Wounding you horribly, with inward torture :
How oft shall this being, ye create,
One with yourselves in spirit,
Delicate, wonderful fabric of nerve and brain,
Be nothing but an instrument for pain,
His lacerating discords to perform on?

Lu. And when to pain no more man bows his head,
Will not the last of all your powers be dead?
Away, ye horrors, away !
There arises one against you at my call,
Majestic, irresistible silence.
Her eyes shall overwhelm your rage with awe.
She to our smarting ears shall yield her balm ;
After the blustering storm,
The peace, the calm.

And the cruel tempest scream shall be reversed

When the breezes of music blow.

And utterly chase the dispersed,

Yet lingering, boastful foe :

Let the sweetness of song, O Dagda, come forth from
thy mouth once more.

The Dagda. Nay, nay !
Of the past I have sung,
I, a god, who am grey :
Here is a bard that is young
To chaunt futurity's lay :
My son, the beautiful Angus, shall sing
of the glories of men.

TETHRA, *roaring from the clouds opposite.*
Sing shall ye not, till ye give back my sword,
Then boast and chaunt as idly as ye may,
When I am free to roam your lovely world,
Hushing men's joy-songs with my roar as now.
Give back my weapon, ye most insolent !
Though all the plunder of the earth be yours,
That shall your hands not keep. It moans to come ;
My vacant hand aches with the hunger pain,
To clasp mine own again. Come, thou dear sword ;
Hew thy way out and let these proud ones know,
By slaughter of their greatest, thou art free
Beyond all Danann cunning to enslave.

[*The sword murmurs and seeks to escape.*

Ogmai. The hands, whose strength could wrench the
sword from thee,
Are strong to hold it, till they will to yield.

Tethra. Ye cannot hold it. 'Tis a primal power
Not to be robbed from me.

The Dagda. Perchance, because
Thou serv'st us, thinking but thyself to serve.

The Sword. Let me away !
For my master's voice
Is a rage within me :
Beware or I slay thee.

Oymai. Ha ! dost thou know him ? Is there life in
thee,
Death's minister, and living gift of speech ?

The Sword. Yes, and my speech thou shalt hear,
And it will not be sweet to thine ear ;
For I am the sword of Tethra, spirit of Tethra,
The power that slayeth unslain :
Wielded by hands unshapen,
I do the deeds that are hateful ;
Hateful to those of the light,
Lovely to us of the night.

I am the breath of Tethra, voice of Tethra,
The tongue of an utterance harsh :
I am the beat of the heart
Of the inmost darkness, that sends
Night to the world's far ends.

I am the raven of Tethra, mate of Tethra, slave of
Tethra :
My joy is the storm,
That strews the ground with the fruit
Half-living, bleeding and bruised
From life's tree shaken.
I desire the flame of the battle ;

I desire gore-spouting wounds :
Flanks that are gashed, trunks that are headless ;
Heads that are trunkless, in piles and in mounds :—
The warrior's death-glazed eye.
Mother of corpses I.

Do ye seek to bind me, ye gods,
And the deeds of me only beginning ?
Shall I gloat over triumphs achieved,
When the greatest remain for the winning ?
Though on many a full meal Tethra has gorged,
How coarse was the fare with the dainties compared
I shall heap on his table in future :—
Delicate spirits of men,
Deliciously flavoured with fear :—
Men, that shall know of me well ;—
That shall tremble before me and flee me,
Glad sport, but shall never escape.

Ye boast of this world, ye have made,
This corpse-built world ?
Show me one atom thereof,
That hath not suffered and struggled,
And yielded its life to Tethra ?
The rocks, they are built of the mould,
And the mould of the herb that was green,
And the beast from the herb,
And man from the beast,
And downward, in hurried confusion,

Through shapes that are loathsome,
Beast, man, worm, pell-mell,
What does it matter to me ?
All, that have lived, go back to the mould,
To stiffen perchance through ages of pain,
In the rock-rigid realms of death.

Ah, ah !
Loose me, ye gods !
I stifle, I faint in your hands :
Your presence benumbs me :
An effluence from you exhales,
Life deadly to death,
The poison whereof overcomes me,
And it is not my doom to perish ;
Gods ye have slain that were brave and mighty,
But Tethra ye never shall slay.

Lu. We will not loose thee till thou be subdued,
Thy venom quenched a little ;—till thy song
In milder music sheathe its jagged edge,
And choose a smoother speech that doth not rend.

The Sword. Ah ! Ah ! I gasp. Alas, alas !
That even of me should soft things be averred !
I am the song unheard,
Shall oftentimes lure men's falt'ring souls away :
Soft as from summer's eve the tender light
Stolen by northern night,
My gentle call they gladly shall obey :
From them regretful tears shall flow not,

But eyes shine bright with hope to see the land they
know not.

Loose me, loose me !

Ogmai. 'The sword has sung the unforgotten lay.
Now must the owner wield it once again.
Not ours to keep, it doth not yet return
Unchanged, since it has touched De Danann hands.
But who shall give it back? O master, say ;
I took it from the foe, the Dagda holds :
Must it not drink the influence supreme
Of thee, in whom all arts and every skill
Are centred, ere dark 'Tethra repossess.

Lu. Give it to me.

Tethra, I call to thee, receive thy sword.
Behold how the huge shapeless cloud uprears
Its bulk and blots the mountain, making thick
'The air that had grown clearer, and outstretching
O'er half the sky a threat'ning-greedy arm.
Approach no nearer, thou detested one :
Take what I throw thee doglike. Now behold !

[He throws the sword to the cloudy hand, which seizes it, and raises it as if to strike. But the sword remains fixed, and glows in the light from the face of LU like a rainbow of dazzling brilliancy, overarching the cloud.]

Lu. Thus amid darkness of fear and splendour of
hope,
Under the rainbow triumph of the sword,
Shall men that die pass to the larger realm,
That lies beyond this life.

The Dagda.

Oh ! wonderful !

Else had we heard reproaches from men's lips,
Who would not fear to say, in days to come,
"The sword of Tethra, wrested from his grasp,
A while ye kept it—had ye held for ever,
Men surely had lived immortal evermore
But ye gave back to him, and made this treaty—
To spare your own fair heads ;—to us, the weak,
Leaving it to endure the unutterable,
While ye in joyous life neglect our moan,
And Tethra, as of old, fulfils his pleasure."
Now shall their hopes rise ever o'er their fears,
Strong-winged to lift them from despair's black marsh,
Inspiring with a speech of sweeter strain :
And they shall love to chaunt for evermore
The names and deeds of the bright-countenanced gods,
Who broke the reign of the usurping night,
And gave the day to Eirë, and the world.

[*The clouds roll up slowly from the northern mountains,
glowing fiery red.*

Fohmor Voices. Alas ! the burning is on us,
The scorching reaches our souls ;
We are weak, we are humbled :
The eyes of the bright one upon us
Distress us, dissolve us.

The Dagda. The darkness with faint heart despairs.
And shrinks to flight :
The vanquished tempest wears
The livery of light.

Fohmor Voices. Alas for our minishing strength !
We are broken, we flee.
The land gives under our feet.
We are driven far out to the loose flat sea,
Where never a peak shall uplift a crest,
For us to take hold of and cling to,
And lean for a little in rest.
Clutch fast, clutch fast
To the hold that we have, 'tis our last.

Lu. Ye hear the dying wail :

Ye see them vanish from the fire-clear sky ;
As they from sight and hearing fail,

Evil and darkness from the world shall die.
Therefore 'tis time that men should enter now
To take from us the earth, to hear our words.

[*Three men, having the faces of the sons of TURANN, are led forward by the DAGDA before LU.*

The Dagda. O sons of men, ye race that long have
toiled,
Blinded of eye, and brutish in your hearts,
Moulded by us whereto ye did not know,
And slowly raised in body from the brute,
The soul meanwhile within you taking growth,—
Chastened by pain and labour,—urged along,
By nature's lash, to seek for things, whose worth
Was all concealed from you ;—open at last
Your eyes and see the gods, and from our hands
Take this our gift, the world ; for unto you,
Conscious henceforth, its governance we yield.

Men. Oh mighty ones, and have we sight indeed?
What we behold, as yet we little know.
Your brightness and the wonder of the world
Dazzle our eyes : the meaning of your gift
Forgive us, if too great to understand.

Lu. Long shall this be yours to seek ;
Nor with many words we teach you ;
Therefore heed the few we speak.

Through the ages we have toiled,
We have worked in light and darkness,
And the strength of night have foiled.

Now behold our part is done,
And 'tis yours henceforth to labour,
And complete the task begun.

Evil, yet not wholly dead,
Lives without and lives within you,
Though the doom be on its head.

Night still rules the half of time,
Years must pass the yoke of winter,
Storm still fret the fairest clime.

In the human heart, still rude,
Lurks the sullen force deceitful,
Half rebellious, half subdued.

Ye must struggle ; thus alone,
Ever fighting and prevailing,
Ye shall make our might your own.

Surest triumph would ye win,
Seek to crush the foe without you
Most by taming him within.

We are summoned now afar ;
There are mightier tasks before us,
In the next unordered star.

But we leave you not unaided
To the half-tamed earth and sea :
For we leave you helpers three ;—
Living gifts, that will not fail nor deceive you,
In the earth nor in the heavens above,
And the names of these three mighty ones, we leave
you,
Are Law, and Light, and Love.

Law, that shall hold the earthquake at your feet,
In chains, that earth be firm for ye to build,
Secure, the habitations of your peace.
Light, that shall wax intenser, piercing clear
To the inmost heart of all things, turning them
To its own nature, till the iron world
Be, to your eyes, a crystal to the core.
Love, that shall make things lovely, clothing them
With all-constraining beauty ;—hate shall die,
Finding no sustenance ;—and with bonds unseen
Enchained, shall all things, on the earth that breathe,
Be but one creature, marvellous, many-souled.

All minds shall know the thoughts of every mind,
All hearts with joy of every heart shall throb :
Yea, also, shall the seeming lifeless world
Quickened and ye shall love it. Ye shall share
The raptures of its mountains and its waves ;
And it will answer you with mighty love,
Transcendent, overmastering, as its power,
That pouring through your beings, upon its stream
Of life immeasurable, shall float your souls,
Filled with its ocean pulses ;—pouring through them,
Round them, and lending its unwearied strength,—
Blind force transmuted by the living power
To glowing spirit essence, that feels and knows ;—
For matter is the fuel, spirit the flame :—
Till all your thoughts be fervid as noon's fire,
And purer than the passion of the dawn.
So shall the mighty One from whom ye came,
Bring ye to look upon him, face to face.

FINTAN.

While thus he spoke the bright De Danann hosts
Rose in array resplendent from the plain,
Up the hill side, and passed the throne of Lu,
Each making reverence ;—then o'er the hill
Out on the western air they streamed afar ;
And high in heaven dividing equal ranks,
One phalanx northward wheeled, one south, and then,
Like clouds of fire intense with living light,
Descending, ranged on either side the sun.
When all had well nigh passed Lu spake again.

Lu. Yet these things are far hence. Now it is time,
Since near is our departure, ye should see
Their faces, in whose charge ye must abide.
Queens of this land henceforward, come ye nigh,
Fohla, Banba, and Eirë.

[The three approach, but EIRE presses on before the others, and arrives first; FOHLA and BANBA remaining a little way off, looking grave and displeased.]

Lu. Too eager Eirë, wherefore hast thou run
Before thy sisters? O disastrous haste!
How wilt appease them, how propitiate?
Thou hast broken the order and observance due.
Light cannot come, ere law prepare the ground;
Love should not enter, ere light show the way.
Woe, woe! This people that thou tak'st to thee,
Shall break in blossom in the winter air,
And know the sorrow of the blighted bud.
Shall clasp thy hand and strive to walk by it,
And stumbling o'er rough places in the dark,
In many a quagmire sink, much soiled, much bruised.
I would we took a different farewell:
Would that the tears, I now see dew thy cheek,
Were last of all thy sorrows, beauteous one.
Yet thou shalt love thy sons, they shall love thee.
Children of Miled, do ye deem her fair?
Are ye content to take her for your queen,
Goddess and mother, even as she weeps?

Sons of M. We are content. Fairest of all is she.

Eirë. Brave sons, I wept to think I brought ye woe:

I dry my tears, seeing such hearts are yours,
 As, like the diving sea-bird through its deeps,
 Can plunge in sorrow's floods and rise again,
 With livelier wings to dance against the blue
 Than those whose plumes ne'er touched the damping
 wave.

[*While they are speaking, LU and the other De Dananns vanish.*

Sons of Miled. Where are those bright, majestic
 presences,
 That here this moment were?

Eirë. Ah! they are gone.
 Yet left us not unwarned;—and see, the sun,
 Whose broad disc with unutterable splendour
 Touches the ocean's heave, the aspect wears
 Of the countenance of Lu.

Sons of M. 'Tis even so.
 Is that in promise he will yet return?

Eirë. Perchance. Yet listen, for my sister speaks.

Banba (singing). The younger gods abide with men;
 The older names decay;
 They never shall return again,
 Who once have passed away.

Eirë. Sad words she sings. And now the night falls
 chill,

And I must guide you downward to the plain,
 The fruitful, wooded land henceforth your home,
 Wherein your destiny must be fulfilled.
 Would ye had chosen first my sisters twain;

For very jealous and proud are they ; but I,
Not so, had ne'er forsaken them.
Long will they stand averse, unreconciled.
And now all pleading with them were but vain.
Yet neither will they fail us in the end.

[*They descend the hill, FOHLA and BANBA gazing after them till they are out of sight. Then BANBA makes as though she would follow, but is restrained by a gesture from FOHLA.*

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