

**THE CELT'S
PARADISE,
IN FOUR DUANS**

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The Celt's paradise, in four duans by John Banim

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JOHN BANIM

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THE

CELT'S PARADISE

IN FOUR DUANS

BY JOHN BANIM.

Author of "Damon and Pythias."

What dreams may come!
Shakspeare.

LONDON

JOHN WARREN OLD BOND STREET

MDCCCXXII.

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Metrical dialogues, purporting to have occurred between Ossian or Ossin, and St. Patrick, are to this day recited by the old peasantry of the north and south of Ireland; and specimens of them have been for some time before the public, in Miss Brooks' translation of "Reliques of Irish Poetry." A recollection of one or other, or both of these circumstances, unconsciously suggested the opening situation of the following poem.

An illustrious Scots Poet, who condescended to bestow some flattering and advantageous criticism on the first manuscript of the "Celt's Paradise," thought the tale like "a tradition of the amour between the prophetic poet, Thomas the Rhymer, and the Queen of the Fairies." Such similarity will, of course, be apparent to the general reader; and the Author takes leave to

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mention it only for the purpose of saying, that the "Celt's Paradise" was written before he had ever heard of the story to which that illustrious Poet has done him the honour of alluding. He begs to add, that, though in the following pages Ossian appears surrounded with Irish connexions exclusively, and though the "hall of Allen" is substituted for that of "woody Morven," these and other accompaniments were adopted, rather for the sake of poetical consistency, than with any reference to the justice of their appropriation in a local or national point of view.

NOTES
TO THE
CELT'S PARADISE.

NOTES TO THE FIRST DUAN.

Page 2, line 12.

“Lead me to Slieve Gullian's breast.”

SLIEVE Gullian is a mountain in the county of Armagh, often mentioned in our old Irish poems, as the scene of many gallant and chivalrous exploits of Finn Mac Comhal, his sons Ossian and Fergus, and his grandson Oagur. Its scenery, and the traditions connected with it, render this celebrated mountain an object of classic interest to all lovers of national legend and antiquity. The following description of it (for which the author is indebted to Miss Brooks, and that lady to a correspondent) may not be amiss in this place :

"I am a tenant to a lady for Slieve Gulliau, and often visit it during the summer season to see my cattle. In July last (1788) I went over the extent of this mountain. From bottom to top it is reckoned two miles; on the summit there is a large heap of stones, which is called Cailbach Birn's House; in which it is said Finn Mac Comhal lies buried; and at a hundred paces distant, in nearly the same line, there is a circular lake, the diameter of which is about one hundred feet, and is about twenty deep; on one side of this lake another heap of stones is piled; and round it at all seasons is a beaten path, leading to the old lady's or witch's house. Lately some peasants expecting to find the old woman (who, however, has at no time thought proper to appear) threw down her house and came to a large cave, about twenty feet long, ten broad, and five deep, covered with flags, in which either the dame or money was expected, but only a few human bones were found. From the summit of this mountain, if the day happens to be fine, you command an extensive view of Lough Neagh, and all the circumjacent country."

The lake here described is rendered famous on account of an old poetical romance which details an interview on its margin, between the then resident enchantress of the place and the redoubtable Fian Mac Comhal, which terminated all but fatally, for (notwithstanding Messrs. Blair and Macpherson) that flower of Irish

chivalry. The enchantress was encountered by Finn in the shape of a beautiful woman, bewailing the loss of her favourite ring, which, as she avowed, had just dropped into the lake. Half urged by the lady's solicitude, half by his own gallantry, the hero dived after the ring, and owing to the supernatural influence of the enchanted waters, became immediately transformed from a hale, blooming chevalier, into a wrinkled, tottering, old man. Finn's myrmidons, however, coming soon after in pursuit of their chief, and justly suspecting that the enchantress of Slieve Gullian had something to do with his sudden disappearance, obliged her by threat and main force to restore him to his original shape. The cave which has been described by Miss Brook's correspondent, was at that time the known residence of the enchantress, and out of it she is made to issue in the romance alluded to at the command of Finn's companions in arms.

Page 2, line 18.

"Than those thy altar-bells are ringing."

Large bells to toll for church service are not here meant, but the little tinkling bells, at all times, as well as now, made use of in Roman Catholic churches during the celebration of the mass. They are alluded