

THE
CROMLECH ON HOWTH.
A POEM.

By SAMUEL FERGUSON, Q.C. M.R.I.A.

With Illuminations
From the Books of Kells & of Durrow,

AND

DRAWINGS FROM NATURE

BY

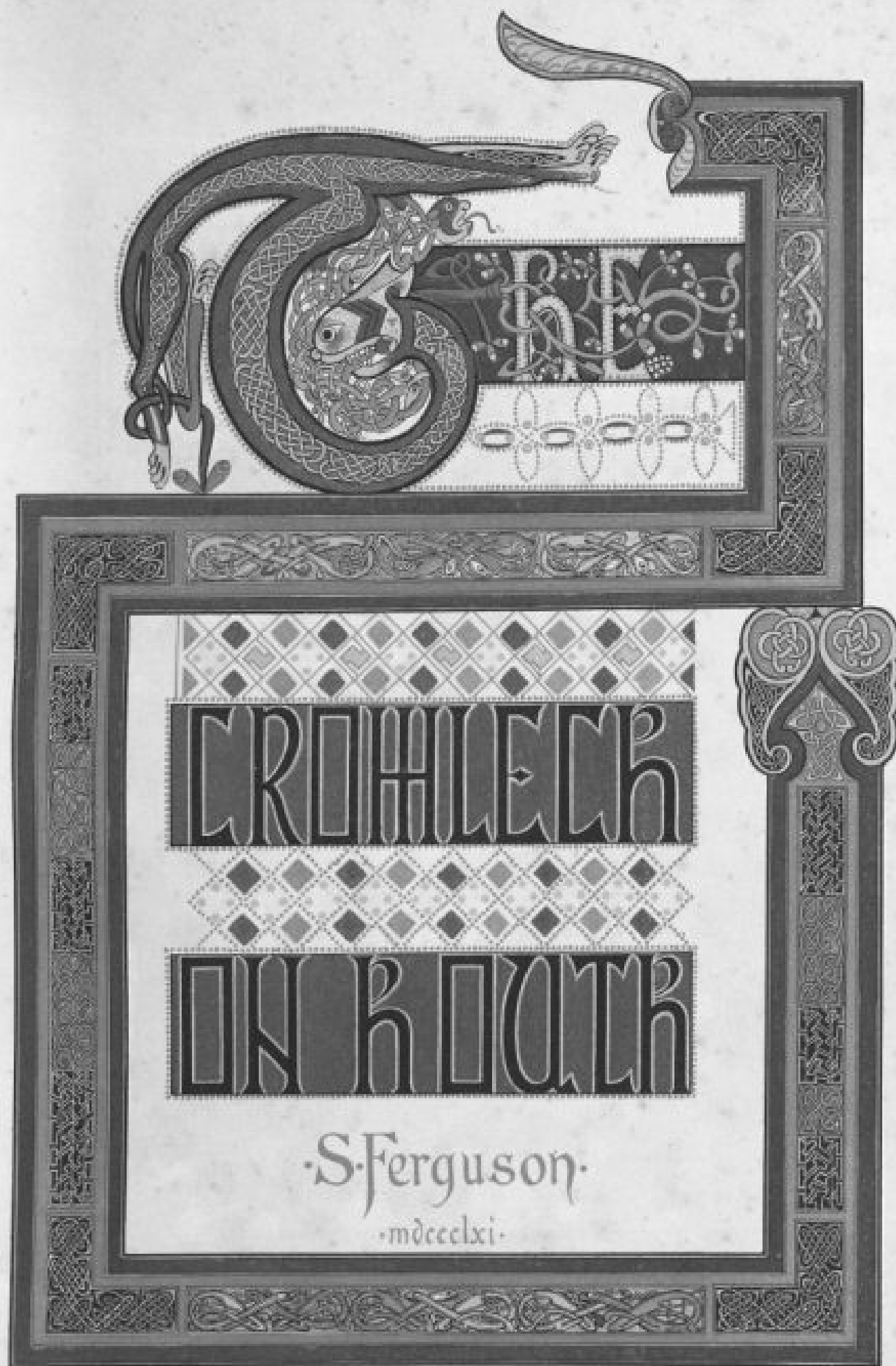


WITH NOTES ON CELTIC ORNAMENTAL ART,
REVISED BY GEORGE PETRIE, LL.D.

LONDON:

DAY & SON, Lithographers to the QUEEN, and to
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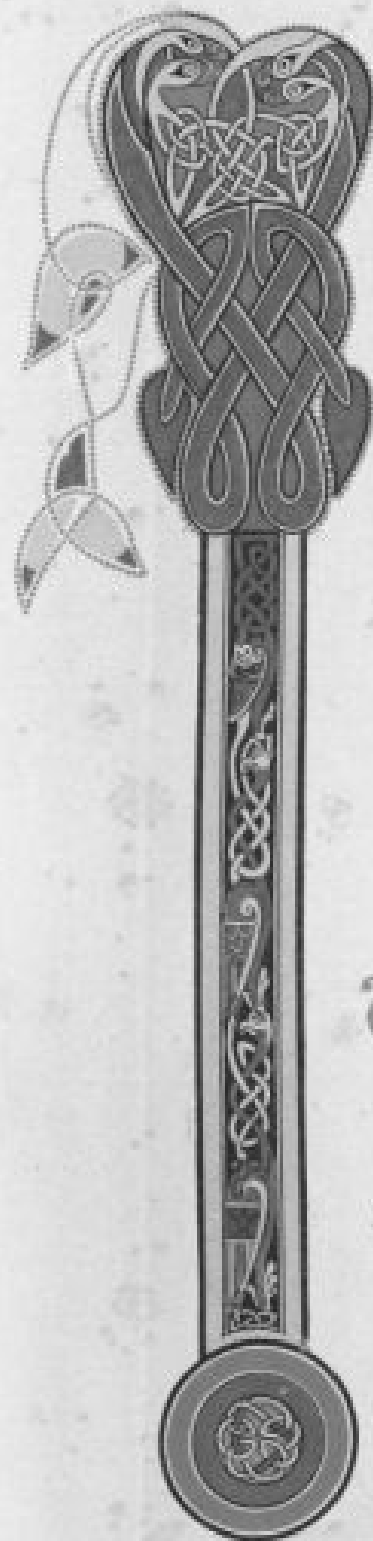
They heaved the stone; they heaped the cairn;
Said Ossian, In a queenly grave
We leave her; mono her fields of fern,
Between the cliff and wave.
The cliff behind stands clear and bare,
And bare above, the heathery steep
Scales the blue heaven's expanse to where
The Danaan druids sleep.
And all the sands that, left and right,
The grassy isthmus ridge confine,
In yellow bars lie bare and bright
Among the sparkling brine.




clear, pure air pervades the scene,
In loneliness and awe secure ;
Meet spot to sepulchre a queen
Who in her life was pure .
Here far from camp and chase removed,
Apart in nature's quiet room,
The music that alive she loved
Shall cheer her in the tomb .
The humming of the noontide bees,
The lark's loud carol all day long,
And borne on evenings salted breeze,
The clanking seabirds song.



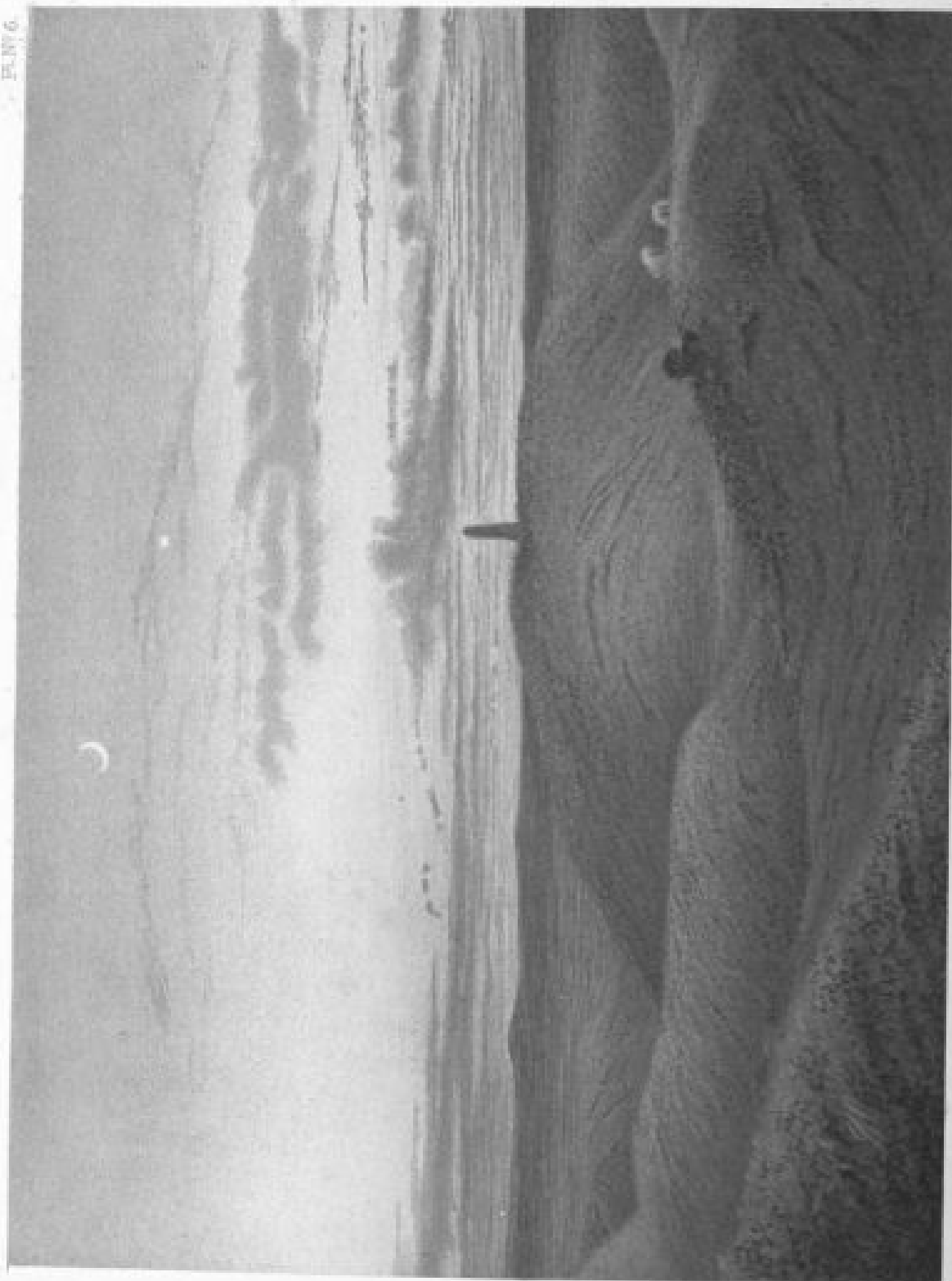
And duteous from the running brook
Drew water for the bath, nor deemed
A king did on her labour look,
And she a fairy seemed.
But when the wintry frosts begin,
And, in their longdrawn lofty flight,
The wild geese with their airy din
Distend the ear of night;
And when the weird De Danaan ghosts
At midnight from their peak come down,
And all around the enchanted coasts
Despairing strangers drown;



hen, mingling with the wreckful wail
From low Clontarf's wave-trampled floor,
Comes, booming up the burthened gale,
The anory sandbull's roar ;
Or anorier than the sea, the shout
Of Erin's hosts in wrath combined,
When terror heads oppression's rout
And freedom cheers behind :
Then, o'er our lady's placid dream
When safe from storms she sleeps, may steal
Such joy as will not misbeseem
A Queen of men to feel :



Such thrill of free, defiant pride
As rapt her in her battle car
At Gavra, when, by Oscars side,
She rode the ridge of war,
Exulting, down the shouting troops
And through the thick confronting kings;
With hands on all their javelin loops
And shafts on all their strings;
Ere closed the inseparable crowds,
No more to part for me, and show
As bursts the sun through hurrying clouds
My Oscar issuing so.



No more dispelling battles gloom
 Shall son for me from fight return;
 The great green rath's ten-acred tomb
 Lies heavy on his urn.
 A cup of bodkin-pencilled clay
 Holds Oscar, mighty heart and limb
 One handful now of ashes grey;
 And she has died for him.
 And here hard by her natal bower
 On lone Ben Adars' side we strive
 With lifted rock and sign of power,
 To keep her name alive.



That while from circling year to year
 The Ogham-lettered stone is seen,
 The Gael shall say Our Fenians here
 Entombed their loved Clideen.
 Her Ogham from her pillar-stone
 In tract of time shall wear away:
 Her name, at last, be only known
 In Ossian's echoed lay.
 The long-forgotten lay I sing
 May only ages hence revive,
 As Eagle with a wounded wing
 To soar again might strive,



perfect, in an alien speech,

When, wand'ring here, some child of chance

Through pangs of keen delight shall reach

The gift of utterance,

To speak the air, the sky to speak,

The freshness of the hill to tell;

Who roaming bare Ben Edar's peak

And Aideen's briary dell,

And gazing on the Cromlech vast,

And on the mountain and the sea,

Shall catch communion with the past

And mix himself with me.



Child of the future's doubtful night,
Whatever your speech, whoever your sires,
Sing while you may with frank delight
The song your hour inspires.
Sing while you may, nor grieve to know
The song you sing shall also die;
A tharna's lay has perished so,
Though once it thrilled the sky
Above us, from his rocky chair,
There, where Ben Adar's landward crest
O'er Eastern Bregia bends, to where
Dun Almon crowns the west;



And all that felt the fretted air
Throughout the song-distempered clime,
Did droop, till suppliant Leinster's prayer
Appeased the vengeful rhyme.
Ah me, or e'er the hour arrive
Shall bid my long-forgotten tones
Unknown one, on your lips revive
Here, by these moss-grown stones,
What change shall o'er the scene have crossed,
What conquering Lords anew have come,
What lore-armed mightier Druid host
From Gaul or distant Rome.



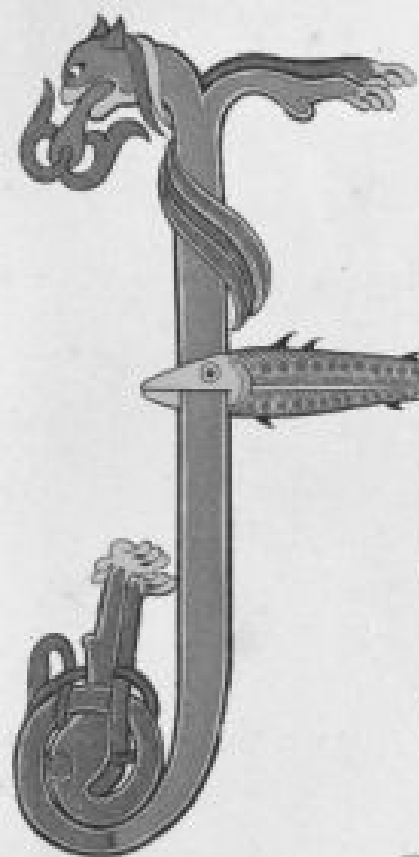
What arts of death, what ways of life,
What creeds unknown to bard or seer
Shall round your careless steps be rise
Who stand and ponder here;
Or, by you prostrate altar stone
Belike, shall kneel, and, free from blame,
Hear holy men with rites unknown
New names of God proclaim.
Let change as may the name of awe,
Let rite surcease and altar fall,
The same one God remains, a law
For ever, and for all.



et change as may the face of earth,

Let alter 'all the social frame,
For mortal men the ways of birth
And death are still the same.

And still as life and time wear on,
The children of the waning days,
Though strength be from their shoulders gone
To lift the loads we raise,
Shall weep to do the burial rites
Of lost ones loved, and fondly found
In shadow of the gathering nights,
The monumental mound.



Farewell; the strength of men is worn.
The night approaches dark and chill.
Sleep, till perchance an endless morn
Descend the glittering hill.
Of Oscar and Aídeén bereft,
So Ossian sang. The Fenians sped
Three mighty shouts to heaven: and left
Ben Édar to the dead.

