

A letter ... to Mr. Macpherson on his publication of Fingal and Temora. With a print of Cathmor's shield / [William Stukeley].

Contributors

Stukeley, William, 1687-1765.
Macpherson, Mr.

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THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

...will admit not to leave the other day ...
...making his approach to God's holy ...
...my beloved teacher, the great founder ...
...of our religion. I wish the flag of St. Luke the beloved ...
...physician. Remember we the leaders of our town College ...
...the good Linacre: as remarkable for his love of ...
...of his profession, and his zeal for the perfecting ...
...the faculty. He completed his illustrious character by en- ...
...into holy orders; and by the charity of the church ...
...the luminous of his elegant and of his ...
...and his labors upon the treatment of the excellent Will ...
...who frequented the public meetings, before he went ...
...to visit his patients; and left a fund to support that ...
...service, in St. Martin's church.

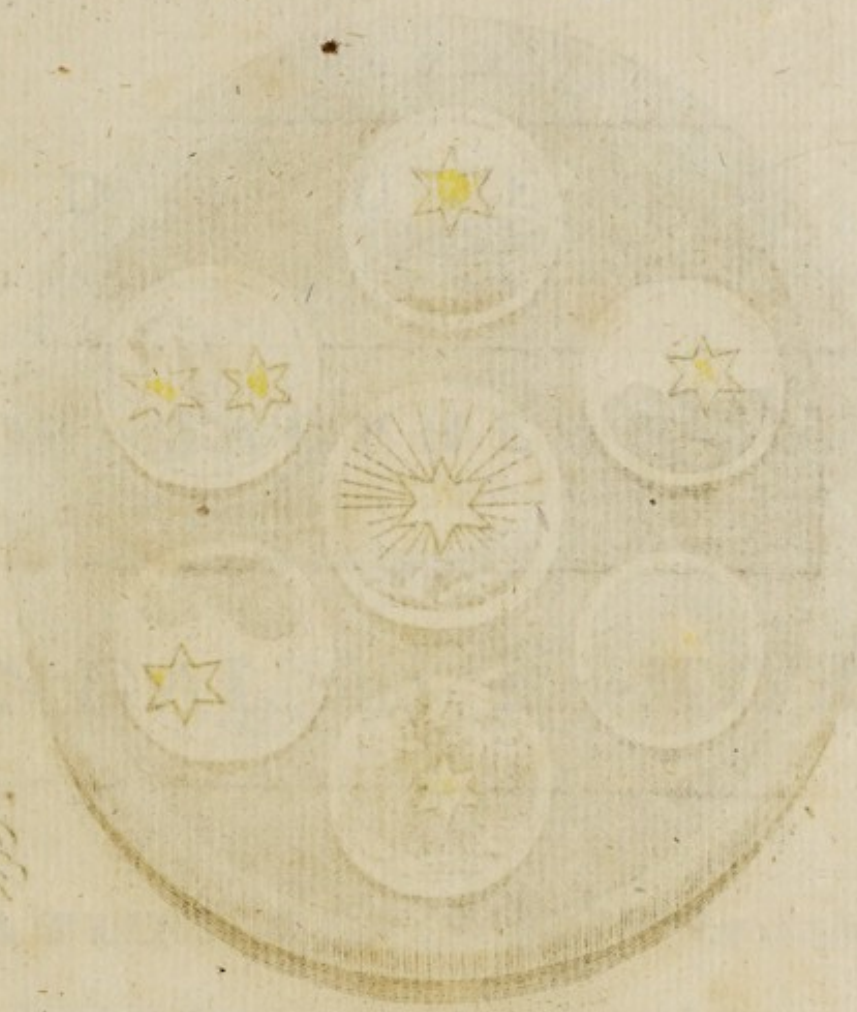
And with particular gratitude we commemorate the piety ...
...of the author of this day's solemnity, Dr. Coxe, whose ...
...religious donations were considered by his widow and ex- ...
...entire lady sister. Placed in the path of ...
...others our illustrious predecessors; and by your ...
...even remote posterity to know your examples; I but as the ...
...perfection of physics is justly to be ascribed to our own ...
...time, and country; we may not fail to render the ...
...contaminant, in spite of the truly christian ...

To Almighty God the giver of all good things, to our ...
...blessed Saviour the divine physician, to his most holy Spirit ...
...the illumination be ascribed, as is justly due, all ...
...renewing, strengthening power, and gifts, now and ...
...ever. Amen.

The use of the printed form of the Oration which came in with ...
...and was read at the College by ...
...of the year 1711. I give this ...

Printed by ...

THE GREAT BRITAIN



Colours
Red
White
Blue

Gold
Silver

Berlin
4th June 1792
John Galt

CATHERINE'S SHIELD

1792
John Galt

Berlin
4th June 1792
John Galt

John Galt

John Galt

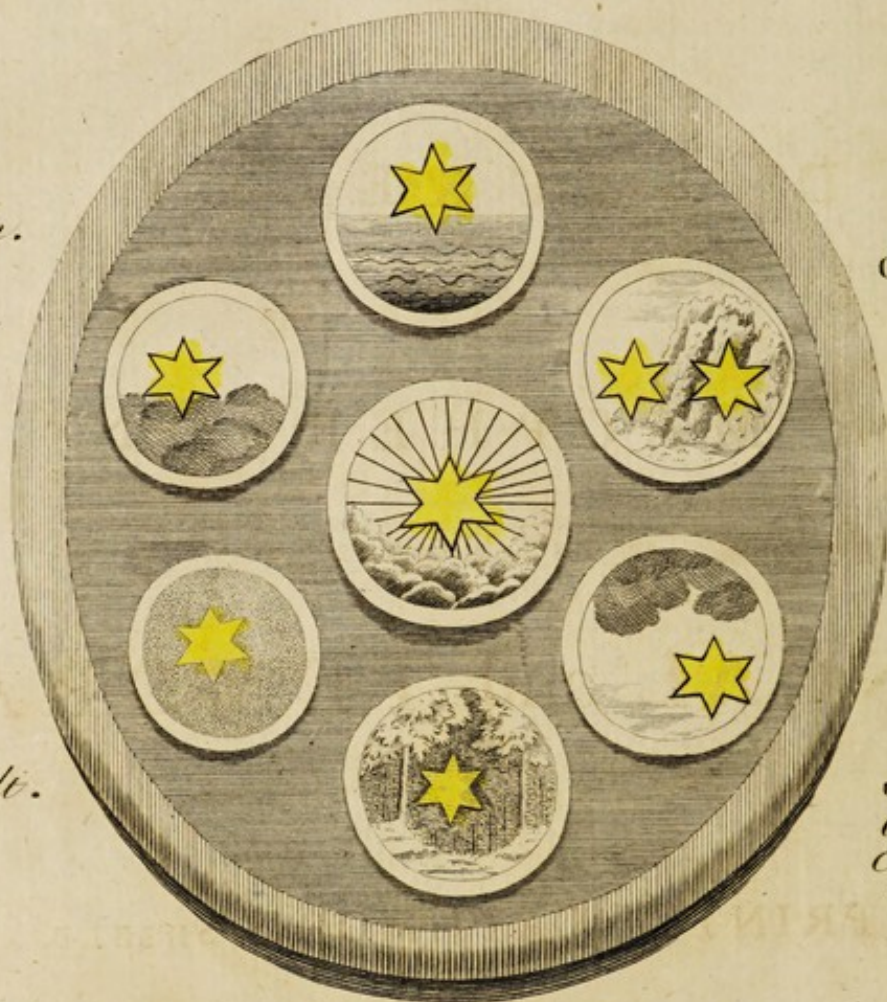
North.
1 Canmathon, the
head of the Bear.

2
Colderno,
Aldebaran.
East.
Vernal
Equinox.

6
Cathlin Laughin.
Castor and
Pollux.

3
Oloicho,
Orion's Belt.

5
Beldurath,
West
Arcturus,
Autumnal
Equinox.



Berthin,
4 the Hunters Star,
South. Sirius.

7. Tonthena, the Mariner's Star in the Center.

CATHMOR'S SHIELD.

A
L E T T E R

F R O M

D^R. S T U K E L E Y

T O

Mr. M A C P H E R S O N,

On his Publication of

F I N G A L and T E M O R A.

W I T H

A P R I N T of C A T H M O R ' S S H I E L D.

L O N D O N :

Printed by RICHARD HETT :

And Sold by J. BAILLIE, *in Great Wild-street.*

MDCCLXIII.

To the candid READER.

THE Publisher of this letter, having the leave of both partys concern'd, hoped it would not be unacceptable to the Public; to have the sentiments, of a person, well versed in antient learning, on a curious subject, which has been some matter of controversy.

The Editor of Fingal, wherein he hoped to oblige the Public, has certainly a thousand living evidences of the authenticity of the Work, in that part of Brittain, which is the scene of action; and wherein himself was born and educated. and the learned gentleman who wrote this letter, has satisfyed himself therein, from very many internal proofs of it.

The Publisher hopes, the Reader will not deprive himself of the plesure, of reading these excellent poems, this valuable piece of antiquity, by empty arguments of doubt and difficulty; nor depreciate so great an honor to his country: by such a prejudice, as party once before did, for some years, even to the Paradise Lost.

The shield of Cathmor being a curiosity, we have engrav'd it, from the Doctor's own design.

To

To the candid READER.

THE Publisher of this letter, having the honor of
both parts connected, hopes to receive not only
capable to the Editor, to draw the testimony of
a person, and which he thinks to be a person
subject, which has been matter of controversy.
The Editor of this paper, wishes he had to oblige

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The Publisher hopes, the Reader will not depart himself
of the pleasure of reading, which excellent course, this en-
riched piece of antiquity, by every argument of choice
and difficulty; and the Editor is great an honor to his
country: to such a pleasure, as every man before said
the same year, was in the year 1711.

The Editor of this paper, wishes he had to oblige
to

<https://archive.org/details/b30417119>

X.

TO MR. MACPHERSON.

12 May 1763.

S I R,

I Have for some years, omitted mixing in Companys, and concourse; therefore almost unknowing, and unknown. which is the reason, I have not had the opportunity of meeting with you; which I have often wished for. and *that* in order to give you my thanks, and acknowledgment, for the plesure, I have had in *Fingal*.

The bishop of St. *David's*, was pleased to send me your book, on account of *my Carausius*, as he term'd it; which I was much delighted with. I made a map of the place of action, between him and *Oscar*: having formerly printed a description of the Roman wall, there, built by *Agricola*, repair'd by *Antoninus*, and at last by *Carausius*. I wrote annotations on that poem. I lately had opportunity of being well acquainted with all the circumstances of *Carausius*, which we could collect from his coins, which I published: and from which only, we can obtain any degree of knowledg of his history.

At the same time, I was charm'd with *Ossian's* poem, incomparably beautiful: and for its authenticity, I was for that reason, better enabled to judg, than most people.

B

The

The conviction I had of the genuineness of the poems, in general; and their beautys grew upon me, in every page. and I must acknowledg, the world is highly oblig'd to you, for preserving so noble, so interesting a monument of high antiquity, belonging to Brittain.

You have indeed compleated the work, in giving us *Temora*, a poem admirable, and truly Epic. but neither *Ossian* nor you, Sir, need the little praises I can bestow. the Work sufficiently speaks for itself, to all judges of true taste and judgment. and when some suspicious critics pretend to doubt of it; they make you a much higher complement than they intended, or you desired. nor are your learned dissertations, and notes, less curious and instructing. *Ossian* was worthy of your care; and happy in his cloud, for the revival.

You was too modest in not continuing the quotations in *Temora*, out of an apprehension of some injudicious people, conceiting therefrom, an imitation.

I have for some time, amused myself, in considering the first planters of the Brittish islands: in a work I intend to publish, the *Medallic history of the first kings of Brittain*. what I propose to do is on the plan of their coins; whereof there are innumerable now left. coins are real monuments, and genuin testimonys. our business is to find out their meaning. very many I can with confidence explain; many more are reduc'd from them, to much probability.

The history of your hero's, has reviv'd in my mind, those ideas of the most antient Britons, which I had entertain'd of them; when in my younger years, I
studyed

studied their stupendous works still visible, Abury, Stonhenge and many more. your history has confirm'd my mature thoughts about them.

When I rode over the most delightful downs of Salisbury plain, and those of Dorsetshire, cover'd over with thousands of large barrows, or *tumuli*, the sepulchres of the first inhabitants of those beautiful regions; which the antient Greeks thought to be *Elysium*, the happy seat of the blessed, the fortunate island: I had then such notions of the antient Britons, as in great measure, reading *Ossian* has recall'd.

When I made innumerable drawings and admeasurements of their works, which I found to be done on the eastern cubit; when I dug into many of the barrows, finding in them, what your heroes deposited, and like considerations; I was capable of relishing *Fin-gal*, more than many readers, and consequently with more pleasure.

I could plainly discern, your heroes to be the last remains of the original Britons, the first inhabitants of Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, by long successions of ages, and mutations of people, and force of invaders, at last driven into the Caledonian highlands, and into Ireland; where you have reviv'd, and illustrated their story.

When I read of their care in raising their sepulture, the Bard singing their funeral Elegy, it reminded me, of the barrows abovemention'd, made with so much care, expence and elegance. the great number of them denotes, the long tract of years, of possession, by the same inhabitants.

It cannot be doubted, but colonys of people from the Continent, came hither, which we call *Celts*. the perpetual inquietudes there, wars, and depredations, must needs give them a desire, to try the security of a fertile island, blest with the profuse gifts of nature. the first we hear of, is that of the *Belgæ* under *Divitiacus*, who fixed his seat at the *Devizes*, so call'd from him. this was about 100 years before *Cæsar's* time. they held a good part of the southern country, to the sea side, especially Somersetshire : where somewhat of their dialect still remains.

These people were expelled Brittain and driven into Ireland, where they took possession of the south part of that island, under the name of *Firbolgs*; as you justly assert.

I apprehend, this expulsion was perform'd by the Brittainish king *ELI*; who on that account obtain'd the name of *Maur, the great*. he was son of *Mino-can* son of *Dunvallo*, the famous legislator; spoken of by our learned *Selden*.

Of these princes, we have coins remaining. I know, we have great numbers of Brittainish coins, of many preceding kings, and subsequent; in gold, *electrum*, silver and brass, to Roman times, and after. these are the materials of my Medallie history.

ELI maur was sole monarch, at least, of that part we call England. he dy'd a little before *Cæsar's* invasion. he, according to the impolitic custom of Brittainish kings, divided his kingdom between his three sons: which favor'd *Cæsar* in his enterprize.

In *Temora* are vestiges of the passage of the Belgæ, from the western parts of Brittain, into Ireland: *Inis buna*, *Cluda's bay*, the hill of *Lumon*, describ'd like *mount Ida* in *Homer*, cover'd with wood, 1000 streams running down its sides. *quere* whether this be *Plinlimmon*?

You very justly observe, Sir, *Temora* page 94. that the *Belgæ* differ'd in religion, from the Caledonians: I must add from all the antient Britons. I shall show sufficiently, that the religion of the Druids, was that most antient, and purely patriarchal. what invasions, and populations came from the Continent, brought a religion different.

Throughout *Fingal* and *Temora*, the same religion appears, as of the aboriginal Britons: tho' the Druids were then, for the most part, ceas'd; being, as I apprehend, become Christian.

I must beg leave, to differ from your exposition of the spirit of *Loda*: as if it meant *Woden*, or some idol of the Scandinavians. the poet means nothing more, than the aerial spirit of a deceased hero; founder of the circle of stones, or temple: who withstood *Fingal*, warring against one of his family.

I shall show very largely, that the first British colonys came hither by sea, in the early ages of the world, before Gaul was peopled: when idolatry was not known, or very little. The Arabians who brought them, were the immediate posterity of ABRAHAM; with the Phænician navigators. they came hither for Tyn, and gave the first name to our islands, the *Cassiterids*; from an oriental word *kastirah*, signifying Tyn.

The

The Arabians were the first traders; and Tyn is mention'd particularly, among the metals of the Midianites; the very nation who came hither, and first peopled Brittain. *Numbers xxxi. 22.*

The judicious *Tacitus de mor. Germ.* writes, anti-ently those that went in search of new habitations, travell'd not by land, but were carry'd in fleets; and into that mighty Ocean, so boundless.

I need not launch out into the numerous proofs, relative to this matter. they will appear in my Work. in the Collections which you have published, is a good deal of confirmation of my sentiments.

Such their inviolable faith given, hospitality, their general honesty, their heroism, love for after-fame, their care for the rites of sepulture, funeral *Elogium*, notions of a future state, rewards and punishments. *Temora* page 150.

Their talent at poetry, music, the harp, their honor toward the fair sex: their Clans. their family tribes are all symptoms of Oriental descent.

You observe, no traces of idolatry to the sun, the moon, the stars; in those most noble addressees of the poet *Ossian* to them; to the morning, the evening star, and the like. he concludes, they have a period.

Page 117. When *the gates of the west are closed, on the sun's eagle eye.* these gates are often mention'd by *Homer*, and by our poet. the former means Brittain, and in other passages I could recite. he means Brittain; tho' he knew not the name. he was well acquainted with Tyn; tho' he knew not the country it came from. *Herodotus* the like.

The

The fame of our old Britons was known, in horsemanship, and chariots: as well as their great pomp, in celebrating their high, religious festivals. all our old Brittish coins which are as old as the times we are speaking of, bear horses, and chariots, in reverse. all notoriously indicative of oriental, Phœnician, Arabian extraction: which coins were given, as rewards to the Victors, at the chariot races, on public, religious festivities.

These particulars are not observed on the Continent, who were generally barbarous, idolatrous.

Nor did we in old Brittain, take customs from the Greeks and Trojans. where there is any similitude, we took them from the same source as they; but before them, in time.

Such were these expressions, epithets, things; *Morni*, of the bounding steeds, the carborne heroes. *i. e.* charioteers, *Cucullin's* chariot, describ'd, the shield of *Cathmor*, the sword of *Luna*, fabricated by a magician; probably a Druid, eminent that way; like *Vulcan* of *Homer*. the Druids ever had a notion of Magic affix'd to them. and to this day, 'tis continued in all their numerous Temples, in our islands; as I could show, in many particular instances.

These and like matters, are not borrowed from *Homer*, no more than from *Milton*. they come from the east: and the poetical descriptions are produc'd by a similar genius.

'Tis a mean thought, derogatory to the honor of our country, to call it imitation: because excellent.

many genius's have arisen, many lost: you have saved one.

Homer, Virgil, Milton had learning and institution; *Virgil, Milton* had *Homer* before them. *Milton* had *Homer, Virgil*, and an infinity of great authors; he had the holy Scriptures, before him. all lived amidst a polite and learned people. how comes it about, that *Ossian*, in his separate poems, and in his Epics, comes not behind them: his Epic poems are artificially, and justly formed.

We cannot read *Toland's* history of the Druids, taken from his own knowledg, but we observe very many striking proofs, of the authenticity of your Collections. they have not sufficient taste, and judgment who affect to doubt about it: or do not relish their beautys. whilst others say, there's as much variety, elegance, and harmony, in them, as in *Homer*; quantity for quantity.

Kindred genius's we may assert them: invaluable remains of the learning and poetical spirit of the Druids: redeem'd by your care from longest obscurity; an honor to Brittain.

Some object to our poems, they must be compositions of late times, since the revival of learning. for say they, letters were not known in the highlands, at the time assign'd for *Ossian*.

I answer, for the highlands, and for the most antient Britons in general, for the Druids: *Cæsar* expressly informs us, the Druids used letters. he calls them Greek letters. indeed, they had them from Phænicia;

nicia ; whence the Greeks had them, by *Cadmus*. but our inhabitants here, are before that time.

Sir *Isaac Newton* takes notice, in his chronology, that the Midianites had the use of letters. they were the sons of ABRAHAM, by *Keturah*. they were the merchant men, traders, navigators, who first came hither for Tyn, and first peopled the island.

Pliny says, *Melcartus* or *Hercules* was he who first traded in Tyn. *Melcartus* is the pastor king in lower Egypt, mention'd by *Manetho*. he is HESCOL of *Moses*, confederate of ABRAHAM. he was called *Ogmios*, which means *litteratus* ; one who knew the alphabet way of writing, as Mr. *Toland* shows.

In Roman times, the Druids were driven, in great measure, into Ireland. it is well known, that after the Romans had left Brittain, Ireland was the most flourishing seat of learning, in Europe. the Druids carryed their letters thither. our Saxon historys tell us, kings and other great men went into Ireland, for sake of learning : and brought their letters thence. Bishop *Nicolson* in his Irish historical Library mentions from Archbishop *Usher*, Sir *James Ware*, *Toland* &c. innumerable books of the Druids, destroy'd in the first Christian times.

The Druids were driven likewise northward into Scotland, the highlands. and if we can suppose, they carryed not letters with them ; learning could not fail to make its way thither, from Ireland : when there was so strict a communication between the two nations.

That there is so little mention of religion in these poems, is owing to the institution of the Druids ; who

committed nothing of that kind to writing. the Bards, the Poets were an inferior Order to them, and not so strict in that point of discipline.

We cannot fail of discerning, in the *Fingalian* heroes, the evanescent pictures, the expiring remains of that very great people, who came from the east 3000 years ago, who introduc'd their horses and chariots from the southern parts of Egypt, and Arabia; to traverse the delightful plains of Dorset, and Wilts. this was at first, before idolatry: and before the children of Israel quitted Egypt, and during their sojourning there.

I shall take notice, on a passage in the beginning of the excellent VIIth book of the Epic poem, concerning *the lake of Lego, woodskirted, cover'd with mist; which occasioned diseases and death.*

Here was the residence of the ghosts of the deceased, during the interval between their death, and the pronouncing the funeral Elegy, by the Bard, over their *tumuli*. for it was not allowable without that ceremony perform'd, for the spirits of the dead, to accompany their ancestors in the airy hall: by which they meant the *Hades* of the antients. and it was the business of the spirit of the nearest relation of the deceased, in the mean while, to pour some of the mist, of the lake of *Lego*, over the grave.

I know, that among the Druids, was perform'd the ceremony of celebrating the mysterys of the antients. the thing was deriv'd from highest times, from the *Curetes*, *Dioscouri*, relations of *Melchisedec*, a race of Canaanites, before idolatry: who first cultivated ship-building, and navigation. to these our Arabian
bian

bian predeceffors were joined, in religion and occupation. they were all of the antient, patriarchal religion.

The fact is mention'd by *Artimedorus*, who lived in the time of *Augustus*. he fpeaks of a Brittish ifle, where the Samothracian myfterys (as he calls them) were performed with great folemnity. in the myfterys was celebrated the defcent into *Hades*. and one would be apt to imagin, that the ftory of *Ulyffes* in *Homer* going to confult the dead, is hither to be referr'd: for the poet fays, he was in the ocean.

And fo perhaps was the ifle of *Calypfo*, fhe being fome Brittish Druides he converfed with. for *Homer* makes it to be in the ocean. a report of *Ulyffes* being in the ocean, is mentioned by *Tacitus*, *de mor. Germ.* and by other old authors.

We can't but difcern the fimilitude between our report of the lake of *Lego*, of its inhabitants, and the other circumftances; and the ftate of the departed among the Egyptians, Greeks, and other antient nations: all which were certainly represented in the myfterys; and their ftate of revivifcence, new birth, and the like. indeed, at firft when celebrated by the *Di-ofcuro*, or fons of God, and by their difciples, our Druids, all patriarchal priefts; there was nothing of idolatry, or fuperftition. no doubt, but in time, at leaft, in other countrys, a hundred fpecies of corruption crept in. but we are to remark, that the pouring of mift on the *tumulus* from this lake, was the fymbol of regeneration, to a new and fpiritual life: which was done in the myfterys, by water.

St. *Paul* who was master of all learning, philosophy, theology, uses this same term, belonging to the mysterys. 1 *Corinth.* x. 2. the Israelites were baptised by *Moses*, in the cloud.

I remark'd a particular in the *Fingalian* astronomy, not to be pass'd over. page 255. a bard describing the night. *I see the trees ore turn'd, the shocks of corn on the plain; the wakeful hind on his way. a blast removes the cloud; he sees the starry plough of the north.*

By this is meant the constellation, we call the great bear; by our common people, the wain or wagon. our old Britons call'd it the *plough*. it means the plough of *Bootes* or *Arcturus*, *Arctophylax*, more rightly *Arcophylax*; meaning really, father *NOA*, who brought astronomy to the post-diluvian world.

The Scripture tells us, he *became an husbandman*. and in this character, posterity consecrated him, into this great asterism. he bears in his right hand, the goad, for that purpose, in his left a sickle. these stars would claim their attention, from the earliest times. for in Arabia, when the first star of *Aries* sets, this constellation, particularly the most conspicuous star thereof, *Arcturus* arises.

It shews them the time of the vernal Equinox: the great quarterly panegyre, or public sacrifice.

Hence this asterism of *NOA* was formed with a sheaf of corn, meaning the first fruits of harvest: according to patriarchal usage. this sheaf, the Alexandrian astronomers, many ages after, turn'd into *Coma Berenices*, in compliment to the Queen.

I thought

I thought it worth while, to give you this extract out of a Volume I have wrote on the antient, patriarchal astronomy.

In *Temora* page 118. you well observe, the description of *Cathmor's* shield, is a curious piece of antiquity : and a proof of the early knowledg of navigation, among the inhabitants of Brittain and Ireland.

Cathmor was a great navigator. his shield, as all those in our poems, as to the field, are generally blue. on it, rose seven bosses, enamell'd ; with seven principal stars, particularly observ'd by failors.

1. Thus he gives their names and descriptions. *Canmathon with unshorn beams.* which he explains from the name, *the head of the bear, star of the north.* he means the lesser bear. a star much observ'd by the Phænicians : near the Pole. therefore in the upper part of the shield. North.

N. B. The field of the shield is *azure* : the verge *gules* ; to speak in the heraldic way.

2. *Colderna, sharp beam, rising slaunt from the cloud.* this is the star eastward. star of the vernal Equinox. I take it to be that which astronomers call *Aldebaran*, or the bull's eye, rising above the *Pleiades*. crouded together, like a celestial cloud.

3. *Olricho robed in mist, ruler of night.* this is *Orion's* belt. a luminous part of the heaven there, like a celestial mist.

4. *Birthin, the red eye of Birthin, looks through a grove on the hunter, at his return by night, with the spoils of the bounding roe : fire of the hill.*

This

This is a description of the star in the lower part of the shield, the south, opposite to the northern bear. it means the great *Sirius*, which is the largest in appearance, of the fixt stars, and observed to be red in color. of which a paper of my friend Mr. Barker of Lyndon, Rutland, in the Philosophical Transactions. Vol. LI. II. page 498.

'Tis call'd the fire of the hill properly, being very low in the horizon, just above the earth; in the evening, when the hunters return home, they see it blazing thro' the wood; like the *Baaltien* fires of the Druids, raised on hill tops, on May day evening; in memory of Creation then compleated.

5. *Beldurath* in the western point of the shield, star of the autumnal Equinox; opposite to *Aldebaran*. *half sinks its western light*, says the poet; *star of the twilight*. this is a just description of that great star, we call *Arcturus*, mention'd by *Job* the Arabian. *star of the twilight*, appearing low in the heavens, and toward evening.

6. *Cathlin beam of the wave, glittering on a rock*, by reflection: *the soft beam*. on the water.

Laughin shining on the blue wave. as the sea appears, at night.

These are the brother stars of benign aspect; the *Castor and Pollux* of the Greeks, but in most antient Chaldean spheres, they represented the two patriarchs *JABAL* and *JUBAL* the original shepherds, and great improvers of astronomy, and inventors of music. these fill'd up the remaining part of the verge of *Cathmor's* shield.

7. Lastly.

7. Lastly. *Wide in the midst arose the cloudless beam of Tontbema; that star, which look'd by night, on the course of the sea-toss'd Larthon; a meteor of the waves. Larthon the first of Bolga's race, who travell'd on the winds.* a fine poetic expression, of an *Æolus*, an expert navigator.

This is the resplendent star in the center of the shield, *that* call'd the goat. and thus we compleat the orb of *Cathmor's* famous shield: containing many of the principal stars of antiquity, observ'd by sailors; the *Pleiades*, *Ilyades*, *Arcturus*, *Orion* mention'd in *Job*, the first writer; in *Isaiab*, in *Homer* and *Virgil*; such as chiefly in our country are visible. and here describ'd, as it were in a circle.

'Tis obvious to remark, the poets art in the choice; to procure a diversity in the description of each: he has, in miniature as it were, copyed the whole circuit of heaven, all its zones, quarters, seasons. 'tis worthy of admiration.

I do not pretend to write a comment on your two Volumes; but thus much I did, to testify my thankfulness for your care in preserving so valuable remains of our old Bards, and Druids.

W. Stukeley.

Explication of the Shield.

2. *Canmathon*, head of the bear. a calm sea. North.
2. *Colderno*, Aldebaran, rising. from a cloud. the vernal Equinox.
3. *Olricbo*, Orion's belt. in a mist.
4. *Berthin*. Sirius. the hunter's star thro' a wood. South.
5. *Beldurath*. Arcturus, the autumnal Equinox. star setting under a cloud. West.
6. *Catblin*. } Castor and Pollux, shining on a rock,
Laughin. } in the sea.
7. *Tonthema*, in the center, glorious. the Mariner's star. sea tempestuous. the goat.

Explication of the Shells

1. Cornucopia, head of the horn, a cornucopia. Horn.
2. Cithara, lyre, a cithara, a cithara, a cithara.
3. Obolus, a coin, a cithara, a cithara, a cithara.
4. Boreas, wind, the hunter's skin, a wood, a wood.
5. Libanus, Lebanon, the summit of Lebanon, a libanus.
6. Caduceus, a staff and a staff, a staff, a staff.
7. Phosphorus, a star, a star, a star, a star.

Explication of the State

1. Chapter, and of the ...

2. Chapter, and of the ...

3. Chapter, and of the ...

4. Chapter, and of the ...

5. Chapter, and of the ...

6. Chapter, and of the ...

7. Chapter, and of the ...

8. Chapter, and of the ...

9. Chapter, and of the ...

