

## MALCOLM'S HEIR.

A TALE OF WONDER.

O, go not by Dunorloch's walls  
 When the moon is in the wane,  
 And cross not o'er Dunorloch's bridge,  
 The farther bank to gain !

For there the Lady of the Stream  
 In dripping robes you'll spy,  
 A-singing to her pale wan babe  
 An eldrich lullaby.

And stop not at the house of Merne,  
 On the eve of good Saint John ;  
 For then the swathed knight walks his rounds  
 With many a heavy moan.

## MALCOLM'S HEIR.

295

All swathed is he in coffin-weeds,  
And a wound is in his breast,  
And he points still to the gloomy vault,  
Where they say his corse doth rest.

'S HEIR.  
WONDER.

walls  
ne wane,  
loch's bridge,  
m!

But pass not near Glencroman's Tower,  
Though the sun shine e'er so bright ;  
More dreaded is that in the noon of day  
Than these in the noon of night !

Stream

spy,

babe

of Merne,  
John ;  
ht walks his rounds

The night-shade rank grows in the court,  
And snakes coil in the wall,  
And bats lodge in the rifted spire,  
And owls in the murky hall.

On it there shsine no cheerful light,  
But the deep-red setting sun  
Gleams bloody red on its battlements,  
When day's fair course is run.

And fearfully in night's pale beams,  
When the moon peers o'er the wood,  
Its shadow grim stretched on the ground  
Lies blackening many a rood.

'There rest  
By lord  
But the fo  
Rest hat

No sweet bird's chirping there is heard,  
No herd-boy's horn doth blow;  
But the owl hoots and the pent blast sobs,  
And loud croaks the carrion-crow.

“ Another  
As he tu  
And close  
And stan

No marvel! for within its walls  
Was done the deed unblest,  
And in its noisome vaults the bones  
Of a father's murderer rest.

“ Another  
I will no  
Though th  
And the

He laid his father in the tomb,  
With deep and solemn woe,  
As rumour tells, but righteous Heaven  
Would not be mocked so.

“ Your you  
And my  
And his ar  
And his

the wood,

the ground

There rest his bones in the mouldering earth,  
By lord and by carl forgot;  
But the foul, fell spirit, that in them dwelt,  
Rest hath it none, I wot !

s heard,

;

it blast sobs,

grow.

“ Another night,” quoth Malcolm’s heir,  
As he turned him fiercely round,  
And closely clenched his ireful hand,  
And stamped upon the ground ; —

“ Another night within your walls  
I will not lay my head,  
Though the clouds of Heaven my roof shall be,  
And the cold dank earth my bed.

“ Your younger son has now your love,  
And my stepdame false your ear ;  
And his are your hawks, and his are your hounds,  
And his are your dark-brown deer.

Heaven

“ To him you have given your noble steed,  
As fleet as the passing wind ;  
But me have you shamed before my friends,  
Like the son of a base-born hind.”

And his  
As tw  
And at l  
Ran S

Soft answer made the white-haired chief,  
Dim was his tearful eye, —  
“ Proud son, thy anger is all too keen,  
Thy spirit is all too high :

Loud ro  
With  
Till nig  
Had c

“ Yet rest this night beneath my roof,  
The wind blows cold and shrill,  
With to-morrow’s dawn, if it so must be,  
Even follow thy wayward will.”

Loud ro  
Keen  
And lon  
O'er

Yet nothing moved was Malcolm’s heir,  
And never a word did he say ;  
But cursed his father in his heart,  
And sternly strode away.

At leng  
A fla  
And th  
Glar

your noble steed,  
wind ;  
before my friends,  
-born hind."

And his coal-black steed he mounted straight,  
As twilight gathered round,  
And at his feet, with eager speed,  
Ran Swain, his faithful hound.

white-haired chief,  
—  
all too keen,  
rgh :

Loud rose the blast, yet nevertheless,  
With furious speed rode he,  
Till night, like the gloom of a caverned mine,  
Had closed o'er tower and tree.

neath my roof,  
nd shrill,  
if it so must be,  
ard will."

Loud rose the blast, thick fell the rain,  
Keen flashed the lightning red,  
And loud the awful thunder roared  
O'er his unsheltered head.

At length full close before him shot  
Malcolm's heir,  
he say;  
his heart,

A flash of sheeted light,  
And the high arched gate of Glencroman's Tower  
Glared on his dazzled sight.

His steed stood still, nor step would move,  
Up looked his faithful Swain,  
And wagged his tail, and feebly whined;  
He lighted down amain.

Through porch and court he passed, and still  
His listening ear he bowed,  
Till, beneath the hoofs of his trampling steed,  
The paved hall echoed loud.

And other echoes answer gave  
From arches wide and grand;  
Close to his horse and his faithful dog,  
He took his fearful stand.

The night-birds shrieked from the creviced roof,  
And the fitful wind sung shrill,  
Yet, ere the mid-watch of the night,  
Were all things hushed and still.

Heir would move,  
In, bly whined;

But in the mid-watch of the night,  
When hushed was every sound,  
Faint doleful music reached his ear,  
As if rising from the ground.

passed, and still  
,  
; trampling steed,  
d.

And loud and louder still it waxed,  
,  
And upward still it wore,  
Till it seemed at the end of the farthest aisle  
To enter the eastern door.

O! never did music of mortal make  
Such dismal sounds contain ;  
A horrid eldrich dirge it seemed,—  
A wild unearthly strain.

in the creviced roof,  
The yell of pain and the wail of woe,  
And the short, shrill shriek of fear,  
Through the winnowing sound of a furnace flame  
Confusedly struck his ear ;  
He night,  
D still.

And the serpent's hiss, and the tiger's growl,  
And the famished vulture's cry,  
Were mixed at times, as with measured skill,  
In this horrid harmony.

Up bristled the locks of Malcolm's heir,  
And his heart it quickly beat,  
And his trembling steed shook under his hand,  
And Swain cowered close to his feet.

When lo ! a faint light, through the porch,  
Still strong and stronger grew,  
And shed on the walls and the lofty roof  
Its wan and dismal hue.

And slowly entering then appeared,  
Approaching with soundless tread,  
A funeral band in dark array,  
As in honour of the dead.

the tiger's growl,  
's cry,

h measured skill,

The first that walked were torch-men ten  
To lighten their gloomy road,  
And each wore the face of an angry fiend,  
And on cloven goat's feet trod;

lcolm's heir,  
eat,  
ok under his hand,  
to his feet.

And the next that walked as mourners meet,  
Were murderers twain and twain,  
With bloody hands and surtout red,  
Befouled with many a stain;

ough the porch,  
rew,  
he lofty roof

Each with a cut cord round his neck,  
And redstrained starting een,  
Shewed that, upon the gibbet tree  
His earthly end had been;

peared,  
ss tread,

And after these in solemn state  
There came an open bier,  
Borne on black, shapeless, rampant forms,  
That did but half appear.

And on that bier a corse was laid,  
As corse could never lie,  
That did, by decent hands composed,  
In nature's struggles die.

Nor stretched, nor wound, but every limb  
In strong distortion lay, —  
As in the throes of a violent death,  
Is fixed the lifeless clay;

And in its breast was a broken knife,  
With the black-blood oozing slow;  
And its face was the face of an aged man,  
With locks of the winter snow:

Its features were fixed in horrid strength,  
And the glaze of its half-closed eye  
A last dread parting look expressed,  
Of woe and agony.

But oh  
Whi  
In fash  
Wha

In his l  
A br  
The ot  
Was

Ay; gr  
And  
Thou h  
With

But oh ! that horrid form to trace,  
        Which followed it close behind,  
        In fashion of the chief mourner,  
        What words shall minstrel find ?

        at every limb  
        en knife,  
        ng slow ;  
        an aged man,  
        now :

        In his lifted hand, with straining grasp,  
        A broken knife he prest,  
        The other half of the cursed blade  
        Was that in the corse's breast.

        en knife,  
        ng slow ;  
        an aged man,  
        now :

        And in his blasted, horrid face  
        Full strongly marked, I ween,  
        The features of the aged corse,  
        In life's full prime were seen.

        Ay ; gnash thy teeth and tear thy hair,  
        And roll thine eyeballs wild,  
        Thou horrible, accursed son,  
        With a father's blood defiled !

Back from the corse, with strong recoil,  
Still onward as they go,  
Doth he in vain his harrowed head  
And writhing body throw;

The mor  
On th  
But neit  
Could

For closing round, a band of fiends  
Full fiercely with him deal,  
And force him o'er the bier to bend,  
With their fangs of red-hot steel.

They so  
O'er h  
And me  
A cra

Still on they moved, and stopped at length  
In the midst of the trembling hall,  
When the dismal dirge from its loudest pitch,  
Sunk to a dying fall.

He will  
But t  
And aye  
He ha

But what of horror next ensued,  
No mortal tongue can tell,  
For the thrilled life paused in Malcolm's heir,  
In a death-like trance he fell.

T  
T  
In Miss  
is an asse

The morning rose with cheerful light  
On the country far and near,  
But neither in country, town, nor tower,  
Could they find Sir Malcolm's heir.

f fiends  
al,  
to bend,  
ot steel.

They sought him east, they sought him west,  
O'er hill and dale they ran,  
And met him at last on the blasted heath,  
A crazed and wretched man.

opped at length  
oling hall,  
n its loudest pitch,

He will to no one utter his tale,  
But the Priest of Saint Cuthbert's Cell,  
And aye, when the midnight warning sounds,  
He hastens his beads to tell.

sued,  
ll,  
in Malcolm's heir,  
in fell.

## Note.

The yell of pain, and the wail of woe,  
And the short, shrill shriek of fear,  
Through the winnowing sound of a furnace flame, &c.  
In Miss Holford's (now Mrs. Hodson) Margaret of Anjou, there  
is an assemblage of sounds, preceding a scene of terrific incan-

tation, which is finely imagined, and produces a powerful effect ; and this passage in the above ballad may, perhaps, lead the reader to suppose that I had that description in my mind when I wrote it. Had this been the case, I should have owned it readily. But the Ballad of Malcolm's Heir was written several years before the publication of that Poem ; and in the hands of the immediate friends of my own family ; though as no copy of it was ever given away, it was impossible it could ever reach further. I, therefore, claim it, though acknowledging great inferiority, as a coincidence of thought with that distinguished Author.

“ Their senses reeled, for every sound  
Which the ear loves not, filled the air ;  
Each din that reason might confound  
Echoed in ceaseless tumult there ;  
Swift whirling wheels,—the shriek intense  
Of one who dies by violence ;  
Yell, hoarse and deep, from blood-hound’s throat ;  
The night-crow’s evil-boding note ;  
Such wild and chattering sounds as throng  
Upon the moon-struck idiot’s tongue :  
The roar of bursting flames, the dash  
Of waters wildly swelling round,  
Which unrestrained by dyke or mound,  
Leap down at once with hideous crash.”

MARGARET OF ANJOU, Cant. VII.