



ALBIN and the DAUGHTER of MEY.

An old tale, translated from the Irish.

By the late Mr. JEROM STONE.

WHence come these dismal sounds that fill our ears !
 Why do the groves such lamentations send !
 Why sit the virgins on the hill of tears,
 While heavy sighs their tender bosoms rend !
 They weep for ALBIN with the flowing hair,
 Who perish'd by the cruelty of MEY ;
 A blameless hero, blooming, young, and fair ;
 Because he scorn'd her passion to obey.
 See on yon western hill the heap of stones,
 Which mourning friends have raised o'er his bones !

O woman ! bloody, bloody was thy deed ;
 The blackness of thy crime exceeds belief ;
 The story makes each heart but thine to bleed,
 And fills both men and maids with keenest grief !
 Behold thy daughter, beauteous as the sky,
 When early morn transcends yon eastern hills,
 She lov'd the youth who by thy guile did die,
 And now our ears with lamentations fills :

'Tis

'Tis she, who sad, and grov'ling on the ground,
Weeps o'er his grave, and makes the woods resound.

A thousand graces did the maid adorn :

Her looks were charming and her heart was kind ;
Her eyes were like the windows of the morn,

And Wisdom's habitation was her mind.

A hundred heroes try'd her love to gain :

She pity'd them, yet did their suits deny :

Young ALBIN only courted not in vain,

ALBIN alone was lovely in her eye :

Love fill'd their bosoms with a mutual flame ;

Their birth was equal, and their age the same.

Her mother MEY, a woman void of truth,

In practice of deceit and guile grown old,

Conceiv'd a guilty passion for the youth,

And in his ear the shameful story told :

But o'er his mind she never could prevail ;

For in his life no wickedness was found ;

With shame and rage he heard the horrid tale,

And shook with indignation at the sound :

He fled to shun her ; while with burning wrath

The monster, in revenge, decreed his death.

Amidst Lochmey, at distance from the shore,

On a green island, grew a stately tree,

With precious fruit each season cover'd o'er,

Delightful to the taste, and fair to see :

This fruit, more sweet than virgin honey found,
 Serv'd both alike for physic and for food ;
 It cur'd diseases, heal'd the bleeding wound,
 And hunger's rage for three long days withstood.
 But precious things are purchas'd still with pain,
 And thousands try'd to pluck it, but in vain.

For at the root of this delightful tree,
 A venomous and awful dragon lay,
 With watchful eyes, all horrible to see,
 Who drove th' affrighted passengers away.
 Worse than the viper's sting its teeth did wound,
 The wretch who felt it soon behov'd to die ;
 Nor could physician ever yet be found
 Who might a certain antidote apply :
 Ev'n they whose skill had sav'd a mighty host,
 Against its bite no remedy could boast.

Revengeful MEY, her fury to appease,
 And him destroy who durst her passion slight,
 Feign'd to be stricken with a dire disease,
 And call'd the hapless ALBIN to her sight :
 " Arise, young hero ! skill'd in feats of war,
 On yonder lake your dauntless courage prove ;
 To pull me of the fruit, now bravely dare,
 And save the mother of the maid you love.
 I die without its influence divine ;
 Nor will I taste it from a hand but thine."

With downcast-look the lovely youth reply'd,
 " Though yet my feats of valour have been few,
 My might in this adventure shall be try'd ;
 I go to pull the healing fruit for you."
 With stately steps approaching to the deep,
 The hardy hero swims the liquid tide ;
 With joy he finds the dragon fast asleep,
 Then pulls the fruit, and comes in safety back ;
 Then with a chearful countenance, and gay,
 He gives the present to the hands of MEY.

" Well have you done, to bring me of this fruit ;
 But greater signs of prowess must you give :
 Go pull the tree entirely by the root,
 And bring it hither, or I cease to live."
 Though hard the task, like lightning fast he flew,
 And nimbly glided o'er the yielding tide ;
 Then to the tree with manly steps he drew,
 And pull'd, and tugg'd it hard, from side to side :
 Its bursting roots his strength could not withstand ;
 He tears it up, and bears it in his hand.

But long, alas ! ere he could reach the shore,
 Or fix his footsteps on the solid sand,
 The monster follow'd with a hideous roar,
 And like a fury grasp'd him by the hand.
 Then, gracious God ! what dreadful struggling rose !
 He grasps the dragon by th' invenom'd jaws,
 In vain : for round the bloody current flows,
 While its fierce teeth his tender body gnaws.

He groans through anguish of the grievous wound,
And cries for help; but, ah! no help was found?

At length the maid, now wond'ring at his stay,
And rack'd with dread of some impending ill,
Swift to the lake, to meet him, bends her way;
And there beheld what might a virgin kill!
She saw her lover struggling on the flood,
The dreadful monster gnawing at his side;
She saw young ALBIN fainting, while his blood
With purple tincture dy'd the liquid tide!
Though pale with fear, she plunges in the wave,
And to the hero's hand a dagger gave!

Alas! too late; yet gath'ring all his force,
He drags, at last, his hissing foe to land.
Yet there the battle still grew worse and worse,
And long the conflict lasted on the strand.
At length he happily descry'd a part,
Just where the scaly neck and breast did meet;
Through this he drove a well-directed dart,
And laid the monster breathless at his feet.
The lovers shouted when they saw him dead,
While from his trunk they cut the bleeding head.

But soon the venom of his mortal bite
Within the hero's bosom spreads like flame;
His face grew pale, his strength forsook him quite,
And o'er his trembling limbs a numbness came.

Then fainting on the slimy shore he fell,
 And utter'd, with a heavy, dying groan,
 These tender words, " My lovely maid, farewell !
 Remember ALBIN ; for his life is gone !"
 These sounds, like thunder, all her sense oppress'd,
 And swooning down she fell upon his breast.

At last, the maid awak'ning as from sleep,
 Felt all her soul o'erwhelm'd in deep despair,
 Her eyes star'd wild, she rav'd, she could not weep,
 She beat her bosom, and she tore her hair !
 She look'd now on the ground, now on the skies,
 Now gaz'd around, like one imploring aid :
 But none was near in pity to her cries,
 No comfort came to sooth the hapless maid !
 Then grasping in her palm, that shone like snow,
 The youth's dead hand, she thus express'd her wo.

Burst, burst, my heart ! the lovely youth is dead,
 Who, like the dawn, was wont to bring me joy ;
 Now birds of prey will hover round his head,
 And wild beasts seek his carcase to destroy ;
 While I who lov'd him, and was lov'd again,
 With sighs and lamentable strains must tell,
 How by no hero's valour he was slain,
 But struggling with a beast inglorious fell !
 This makes my tears with double anguish flow,
 This adds affliction to my bitter woe !

Yet fame and dauntless valour he could boast ;
 With matchless strength his manly limbs were bound ;
 That force would have dismay'd a mighty host,
 He show'd, before the dragon could him wound.
 His curling locks, that wanton'd in the breeze,
 Were blacker than the raven's ebon wing ;
 His teeth were whiter than the fragrant trees,
 When blossoms clothe them in the days of spring ;
 A brighter red his glowing cheeks did stain,
 Than blood of tender heifer newly slain.

A purer azure sparkled in his eye,
 Than that of icy shoal in mountain found ;
 Whene'er he spoke, his voice was melody,
 And sweeter far than instrumental sound.
 O he was lovely ! fair as purest snow,
 Whose wreaths the tops of highest mountains crown ;
 His lips were radiant as the heav'nly bow ;
 His skin was softer than the softest down ;
 More sweet his breath than fragrant bloom, or rose,
 Or gale that crosses a flow'ry garden blows.

But when in battle with our foes he join'd,
 And fought the hottest dangers of the fight,
 The stoutest chiefs stood wond'ring far behind,
 And none durst try to rival him in might !
 His ample shield then seem'd a gate of brass,
 His awful sword did like the lightning shine !
 No force of steel could through his armour pass,
 His spear was like a mast, or mountain-pine !

Ev'n kings and heroes trembled at his name,
And conquest smil'd where-'er the warrior came !

Great was the strength of his unconquer'd hand,
Great was his swiftness in the rapid race ;
None could the valour of his arm withstand,
None could outstrip him in the days of chace.
Yet he was tender, merciful, and kind ;

His vanquish'd foes his clemency confess'd ;
No cruel purpose labour'd in his mind,

No thought of envy harbour'd in his breast.
He was all gracious, bounteous, and benign,
And in his soul superior to a king !

But now he's gone ! and nought remains but wo
For wretched me ; with him my joys are fled,
Around his tomb my tears shall ever flow,

The rock my dwelling, and the clay my bed !
Ye maids, and matrons, from your hills descend,
To join my moan, and answer tear for tear ;
With me the hero to his grave attend,

And sing the songs of mourning round his bier.
Through his own grove his praise we will proclaim,
And bid the place for ever bear his name.

