



THE CAIRN OF THE LOVERS.

THE raven of Denmark stretched his broad wing,
And shot his dark flight o'er Moray's fair fields;
And Findhorn's wild echoes were heard to ring,
With ill-omened croak, and the clash of shields.
And the yelling shouts of the conflict broil,
As Dane and Scot met in mortal toil,—
And cruel and fierce was the battle tide
That raged on rocky Findhorn's side;
And red was his wave, as it wailed away,
By that plain where his slaughtered warriors
lay.

Yet stark stern in death was each hero's frown !
Each fell not till crushed by an hundred foes !
But, though hordes of Norsemen had borne them
down,

Dire vengeance had soothed their dying throes.
For the bloody fight had not been won,
Till droop'd to the west the slanting sun,
And his golden beams a bright glory shed
Around each dying hero's head,
And lighted his soul with a cheering ray,
E'er his dim eye closed on the parting day.

But Findhorn's dark heights, and his wizzard wave,
Were lighted anon by far fiercer rays,
Calling bosoms abroad, that beat warm and brave,
To muster around the tall beacon's blaze.

And now, as afar o'er the plains they look,
Where glistens with flame each winding
brook,
Red ruin enwraps both tower and town,
And wild Norsemen's shouts reach the bea-
con Doun ;
And by shrieks of woe their hearts are
wrung,
Till each Scottish breast to revenge is strung.

Whose steed-tramp resounds down the woody
glen ?

Who bears, as he rides, his proud crest so high,
His brow circled with gems, as chief of men,

And gold shining bright on his panoply ?

'Tis Fergus the King !—The broad signal
fire,

And the Norsemen's ravage, have roused
his ire ;

And, see, how his clustering horsemen sweep,
From the forest dark, and the dingle deep !

And, hark, to the tread of the many feet
That crowd to those heights where the waters
meet !

Full little does Sewyn, the Norse King, know,

As his ruthless Danes rifle the peaceful plain,
That the Pass of Dhuie conceals a foe

Of far other mould than the shepherd swain.

And far other herds, and far other flocks
Than shepherds may feed, lie hid by these
rocks.

He doubts not but all who a spear could
wield,

Have fall'n in the strife of one bloody field.

Onward he presses—and, blindly led,
Go his Norsemen, with hopes of plunder fed.

The current was rapid, the stream was deep,
And the cumbered waters foam'd high and
flash'd,

As horsemen and foot, from the shore so steep,
Through the Dhuie in thick confusion dash'd.

But scarce were they rid of the rushing tide,
Nor yet had they form'd on the meadow's
side,

When by bursting yells the skies were rent,
With the gleam of arms glow'd the firma-
ment,

And down, like the lightning's fiery shower,
Came King Fergus' force on King Sewyn's
power.

And quail'd the black raven of Denmark then,

And he cower'd his wing, and he croak'd his fear;
And wide with the eagle's scream rang the glen,
As eager she snuff'd up her feast so near;

And each Norseman's heart, though ne'er
so bold,

With panic-dread grew sick and cold,

Nor dared they abide the battle shock,
But fled away like some startled flock,
Or some scatter'd herd of timid deer,
When the howl of the gaunt mountain wolves
they hear.

The slaughter was wide, and the vengeance deep,
That the Moray-men took of their Danish foes ;
But yet deeper revenge did Findhorn reap,
As high, in his anger, his billows rose.

For he had wail'd that his wave before
The dye of his children's life's-blood bore ;
But now—full glutt'd with hostile dead—
He rear'd him aloft—shook his oak-crown'd
head,

And, roaring with fearful revelry,
He swept off his spoils to his kindred sea.

Who sits her and sighs on the castled isle
That on Loch-an-dorbe's dark breast doth float ?
And why lights her eye with a radiant smile
As the moonbeam falls soft on that little boat ?
A fairy thing it seems to be,
It glides o'er the wave so silently,

And like such sprites of witching power
It vanish'd beneath a shadowy tower,
As its slender side lost the moonbeam's ray,
Nor left it one trace of its liquid way.

That maiden who sat in the castled isle
Scann'd that little boat with no idle gaze ;
And I ween that her eyes with their radiant smile,
Had hope blent with love in their glowing rays.
Malvina she was that maiden fair,
King Fergus' daughter, who sat her there.
She's gone!—and her pulse may hardly beat,
As in silence move her trembling feet
To the dungeon where lonely her lover lies,
And wastes the night in despairing sighs,
The son of King Sewyn in battle ta'en,
The gallant Prince Harrold, the brave young
Dane.

She unlock'd the bolts with a master key,
And Prince Harrold sprang forth to his lady's
side.

“ Love favours our flight !” softly whispered she,
“ At the postern stairs doth the boat abide.”

Then they stole away by the shadowy wall.
Yet she sigh'd to quit her father's hall,
And her bosom heaved, and she dropp'd a
tear,
Whilst her lover essayed to hush her fear,
And she clung to his arm as the little boat
Did o'er the wide lake in silence float.

'Twas a right trusty page that gave them way,
And he landed them 'neath the greenwood tree,
Where tied to the oak was a courser grey,
Prince Harrold to saddle sprang merrily.
The fair Malvina behind him placed
With snow-white arms her lover embraced.
The sun rose to welcome the bonny bride,
As they fled them straight to the Findhorn's
side ;
But its stream was swollen and barr'd their
flight,
And drove them for refuge to Dulsie's height.

“ Go, bring me Prince Harrold,” King Fergus
cried,
His royal eyes sparkling with beams of joy,

“ My daughter Malvina shall be his bride,
And Moray be freed from the Dane’s annoy.
 Envoy to me hath King Sewyn sent,
 And peace shall their bridal knot cement.”
But Harrold was gone and Malvina fair !
Yet a sharp-witted page could teach him
 where,
And quick spoke the boy ; for the King
 had told
Such glad tidings, I ween, as made him bold.

“ To boat !” cried King Fergus, with eager haste,
And—“ To horse !” when he touched the farther shore,
And furious he spurr’d through the forest waste,
As to Findhorn’s stream his swift course he bore.

The lovers from Dulsie’s wooded height
Saw Moray’s Lord coming in kingly might.
’Twas better to tempt the swollen tide,
Than captive be torn from his bonny bride.
Harrold lifted Malvina to saddle again,
And down Dulsie’s slope urged his steed
 amain.

Oh, Findhorn shriek'd loud to warn them away !

But louder yet did the water-fiends yell.

Rebellious they laugh'd at his empty sway,

As vainly he strove their wild rage to quell.

And the sire's despairing cry was vain.

“ Malvina !—my child !—oh, turn again !”

But the lovers twined on the courser grey,

Were swept from his outstretch'd eyesaway,

And he smote his bosom and tore his hair,

As adown the big stream he sought the pair.

Why tarries the knight in his lonely way

At yon cairn on flowery Ferness holm ?

Why scans he yon pillar, so rough and grey,

That rises from out its rudely-heap'd dome ?

'Twas there the love-twined youth and maid

Unsever'd in death were sadly laid.

And there did King Fergus and Sewyn
weep,

When they found them lock'd in death's
cold sleep.

And Findhorn still lingers around their
grave,

And sighs for their fate with repentant wave.