

CROMLET'S LILT.

The traditionary story connected with this song has been confusedly handed down to us ; but the facts probably were to the following general purport. Chisholm of Cromlecks, in Perthshire, was ardently attached to a daughter of Stirling of Ardoch, commonly called from her beauty *Fair Helen of Ardoch*. The pair lived during the reign of James VI. Obligated to go abroad for some years as a soldier of fortune, Cromlecks left a commission with a friend, for the conducting of a correspondence between himself and his mistress, who could not write ; and the natural result was, that the friend became himself the lover of Helen, and, when other means failed, possessed her with a belief that Cromlecks had forgot, or become indifferent to her ; so that she was induced to give an unwilling assent to the suit of the new lover.

After suffering much in spirit, Helen submitted to a marriage with the traitor, but had scarcely gone to bed that evening, when she started frantically from it, screaming out that, after three gentle taps on the wainscot at the bed-head, she had heard Cromlecks's voice crying, 'Helen, Helen, mind me !' Cromlecks soon after coming home, the treachery was discovered ; the marriage annulled ; and Helen became Lady Cromlecks.¹

Since all thy vows, false maid, Are blown to
air, And my poor heart betrayed To sad des-

¹ *Select Scottish Songs, with Critical Observations by Burns, i. So.*

pair, In - to some wil - der - ness, My grief I
will ex - press, And thy hard heart - ed - ness,
O cru - el fair!

Since all thy vows, false maid,
Are blown to air,
And my poor heart betrayed
To sad despair,
Into some wilderness,
My grief I will express,
And thy hard heartedness,
O cruel fair!

Have I not graven our loves
On every tree,
In yonder spreading groves,
Though false thou be?
Was not a solemn oath
Plighted betwixt us both,
Thou thy faith, I my troth,
Constant to be?

Some gloomy place I'll find,
Some doleful shade,
Where neither sun nor wind
E'er entrance had:

Into that hollow cave,
 There will I sigh and rave,
 Because thou dost behave
 So faithlessly.

Wild-fruit shall be my meat,
 I'll drink the spring ;
 Cold earth shall be my seat :
 For covering
 I'll have the starry sky,
 My head to canopy,
 Until my soul on high
 Shall spread its wing.

I'll have no funeral fire,
 Nor tears for me :
 No grave do I desire,
 Nor obsequies :
 The courteous redbreast, he
 With leaves will cover me,
 And sing my elegy,
 With doleful voice.

And when a ghost I am,
 I'll visit thee,
 O thou obdured dame,
 Whose cruelty
 Hath killed the kindest heart
 E'er pierced by Cupid's dart ;
 No grief my soul shall part
 From loving thee.

HER REPLY.

He whom I most affect
 Doth me disdain ;
 His causeless disrespect
 Makes me complain :

Wherefore I'll me address
Into some wilderness,
Where unheard I'll express
My anxious pain.

Did we not both conjure
By Stygian lake,
That sacred oath most pure
The gods did take,
That we should both prove true :
You to me, I to you,
By that most solemn vow
We both did make ?

But thou perfidiously
Didst violate
Thy promise made to me,
To my regret ;
For all the great respect,
Wherewith I thee affect,
Is paid with such neglect,
Love's turned to hate.

What tyrant e'er could hatch,
Though inhumane,
A torturing rack and match
To this my pain ?
O barbarous cruelty,
That I, for loving thee,
Should basely murdered be
By thy disdain !

I'll go find out a cell,
Where light ne'er shined :
There I'll resolve to dwell,
And be confined,

SONGS OF SCOTLAND.

Until it pleaseth thee
 With love to pity me,
 Forsake thy cruelty,
 And prove more kind.

In that dark vault I'll call
 For bats and owls ;
 The starth-owl, worst of all
 Prodigious fowls,
 Shall be my mate by day ;
 By night with her I'll stay,
 In dark and uncouth way,
 'Mongst wandering souls.

And in that strange exile
 I'll 'thee arrest,
 Amongst those monsters vile,
 To be my guest,
 Until that thou relent,
 And thy hard heart repent,
 Freely to give consent
 To my request.

No cloth shall deck my skin,
 No raiment soft,
 But haircloth rough and thin,
 That's comely wrought :
 No bed will I lie on,
 My pillow shall be a stone,
 Each accent prove a groan
 Repeated oft.

No dainty dish I'll eat,
 Composed by art,
 No sauces for my meat,
 Sweet, sour, or tart :

My food shall be wild-fruits,
Green herbs, and unboiled roots,
Such as poor hermits eat
 In wild deserts.

All solace, mirth, and game
 I will despise ;
A doleful mourning, then,
 With watery eyes,
Shall be my music sound,
Till all the hills resound,
And fill the valleys round
 With piteous cries.

Yet for all this I'll not
 Abandon thee,
Nor alter in a jot
 My first decree,
But, in despite of fate,
Thy griefs to aggravate,
I'll love thee, though thou hate,
 Until I die.

The first part of this song appeared in the *Orpheus Caledonius*, 1733, and has often been reprinted in our collections : the second part was given from an old broadside, by Mr James Maidment, in his *Scottish Songs and Ballads*, 1859.