

## FAIR ELEANOR.

THE bell struck one and shook the silent tower ;  
The graves give up their dead : fair Eleanor  
Walk'd by the castle-gate, and looked in :  
A hollow groan ran thro' the dreary vaults.

She shriek'd aloud, and sunk upon the steps,  
On the cold stone her pale cheek. Sickly smells  
Of death, issue as from a sepulchre,  
And all is silent but the sighing vaults.

Chill death withdraws his hand, and she revives ;  
Amazed she finds herself upon her feet,  
And, like a ghost, thro' narrow passages  
Walking, feeling the cold walls with her hands.

Fancy returns, and now she thinks of bones  
And grinning skulls, and corruptible death  
Wrapt in his shroud ; and now fancies she hears  
Deep sighs, and sees pale sickly ghosts gliding.

At length, no fancy, but reality  
Distracts her. A rushing sound, and the feet  
Of one that fled, approaches.—Ellen stood,  
Like a dumb statue, froze to stone with fear.

The wretch approaches, crying, “ The deed is done  
“ Take this, and send it by whom thou wilt send ;  
“ It is my life—send it to Eleanor :—  
“ He’s dead, and howling after me for blood !

“ Take this,” he cried ; and thrust into her arms  
A wet napkin, wrapt about ; then rush’d  
Past, howling : she received into her arms  
Pale death, and follow’d on the wings of fear.

They pass’d swift thro’ the outer gate ; the wretch,  
Howling, leap’d o’er the wall into the moat,  
Stifling in mud. Fair Ellen pass’d the bridge,  
And heard a gloomy voice cry, “ Is it done ?”

As the deer wounded Ellen flew over  
The pathless plain ; as the arrows that fly  
By night ; destruction flies, and strikes in darkness.  
She fled from fear, till at her house arrived.

Her maids await her ; on her bed she falls,  
That bed of joy where erst her lord hath press'd :  
“ Ah, woman's fear ! ” she cried, “ Ah, cursed duke !  
“ Ah, my dear lord ! ah, wretched Eleanor !

“ My lord was like a flower upon the brows  
“ Of lusty May ! Ah, life as frail as flower !  
“ O ghastly death ! withdraw thy cruel hand,  
“ Seek'st thou that flower to deck thy horrid temples ?

“ My lord was like a star in highest heaven  
“ Drawn down to earth by spells and wickedness ;  
“ My lord was like the opening eyes of day,  
“ When western winds creep softly o'er the flowers.

“ But he is darken'd ; like the summer's noon  
“ Clouded ; fall'n like the stately tree, cut down ;  
“ The breath of heaven dwelt among his leaves.  
“ O Eleanor, weak woman, fill'd with woe ! ”

Thus having spoke, she raised up her head,  
And saw the bloody napkin by her side,  
Which in her arms she brought ; and now, tenfold  
More terrified, saw it unfold itself.

Her eyes were fix'd ; the bloody cloth unfolds,  
Disclosing to her sight the murder'd head  
Of her dear lord, all ghastly pale, clotted  
With gory blood ; it groan'd, and thus it spake :

“ O Eleanor, behold thy husband's head  
“ Who, sleeping on the stones of yonder tower,  
“ Was 'reft of life by the accursed duke !  
“ A hired villain turn'd my sleep to death !

“ O Eleanor, beware the cursed duke,  
“ O give not him thy hand, now I am dead ;  
“ He seeks thy love ; who, coward, in the night,  
“ Hired a villain to bereave my life.”

She sat with dead cold limbs, stiffen'd to stone ;  
She took the gory head up in her arms ;  
She kiss'd the pale lips ; she had no tears to shed ;  
She hugg'd it to her breast, and groan'd her last.

