

THE BLOODY GARDENER'S TRAGEDY.

You constant lovers all, pray lend an ear
To this relation which I bring you here ;
'Tis of a maiden fair,
A Shepherd's daughter dear,
True love did prove her overthrow.
She was of beauty bright, both fair and clear,
And by a noble lord she courted was ;
She was too young, we find,
As yet *fond love to mind*,
But little Cupid her heart did ensnare.
His parents were very high now in degree,
They said, my son, she is no match for thee :
If you'd our blessing have,
Grant us but what we crave,
Pray wed none but to whom we shall agree.
For you, my son, I've chose a charming bride,
She's young, and rich, and beautiful beside ;
Of temper kind and free,
This match I choose for thee—
A shepherd's daughter's of so mean degree.
If that by us you'll not be rul'd or led,
From our presence you shall be banished ;
No more we will you own,
For to be our son ;
O ! let our will be done, or we'll end the strife.
Madam, if I a begging with you should go,
Contented should I be in doing so,
So that I could but have
The girl that I crave—
No cursed gold should part my love and me.
Was she as poor as Job, and I of royal line,
And lord of all the globe, she should be mine ;
His mother said in scorn,
My son is noble born,
And with a beggar's brat shall ne'er be join'd.
He hearing of his mother saying so,
Tears from his eyes in fountains did flow ;
A promise I have made,
Her heart I have betray'd
No other for my bride you e'er shall see.
A snare then for her precious life she laid,
And for to act the thing which she then did
With her gardener she agreed,
To do this bloody deed,
Her butcher for to be and dig her grave.
To the bloody gardener she gave eighty pound,
To murder her, and lay her under ground ;
All in a grave so deep,
In everlasting sleep,
That her fair body never might be found.
He wrote a letter and sent it with speed,
Saying, my dearest love, with haste proceed,
Meet me to-night, my dear,
Something I will declare :
Poor soul ! she little thinking of the deed.
She threw the letter down and run with speed,
Thinking to meet her own true love indeed ;
She search'd the garden round,
But no true-love she found :
At length the bloody gardener did appear.
What business have you here, madam, I pray ?
O, are you come to rob my garden gay ?
She said, no thief I am,
I wait for a young man,
Who did appoint this night to meet me here.
He nothing more did say, but took a knife,
And bade her straight prepare to lose her life :
She on her knees did fall,
And to heaven did call,
O ! welcome, welcome death, my fatal stroke.

Was this done, my dear, by you design'd ?
Or was it by your parents, most unkind,
My life is thus betray'd ?
Farewell ! fond love, she said,
I hope in heaven I soon a place shall find.
The bloody gardener found her life was gone,
Dead in the ground he laid her body down ;
With flowers fine and gay,
The grave did overlay,
Thinking her fair body never might be found.
This youthful lord, indeed, did little know,
Next day to see his own true love did go ;
No shepherdess was there,
All round the vallies fair,
The pretty lambs were wand'ring to and fro.
Lamenting for their tender shepherdess,
Then he laid him down upon the grass,
The heaven's he did implore,
That he might see her once more,
O ! then ye gods, says he, I shall be bless'd.
Where shall I go to find that angel bright ?
She is the pleasure of my heart's delight :
Oh ! if alive she be,
Once more let me her see,
Or else my soul shall quickly take its flight.
The woods and groves with him did seem to mourn,
The small birds they did sing a mournful tune,
Saying, your true love is gone,
And you are left alone :
Then on a mossy bank he laid him down.
He had no sooner clos'd his eyes to rest,
But a milk-white dove did hover on his breast ;
The fluttering wings did bear,
Which wak'd him from his sleep,
And then the dove took flight, and he was left.
Now wailing for his love, in sad despair,
To his mother's garden he then did repair,
Where the dove again he did see
Sitting on a myrtle tree,
With drooping wings it did sorrowful appear.
Thou dove so innocent, why did you come,
O have you lost your mate, as I have done ?
No shepherdess was there,
All round the vallies fair,
The pretty lambs were wand'ring to and fro.
And on the virgin did seem to go,
Out of her milk-white breast the blood did flow ;
To the place it did repair,
But no true-love was there ;
Then frighten'd to his mother he did go.
And told what unto him there did appear,
Saying, I fear you have kill'd my dear ;
For a dove, I do declare,
Did all in blood appear,
And if she is dead, I'll have my share.
His mother hearing of what he did say,
Did turn as pale as death and swoon'd away
She in distraction run,
And told him what she'd done,
And where the virgin's body it was laid.
He nothing more did say, but took a knife,
Farewell the joy and pleasure of my life :
He unto the garden flew,
And pierc'd his body through ;
It was cursed gold that caus'd the strife.
These lovers in one silent tomb were laid,
And many a briny tear for them was shed :
The gardener, as we hear,
Was apprehended there,
And now all three are in their silent grave.

