

VII.

WHY openest thou afresh the spring of my grief, O son of Alpin, inquiring how Oſcur fell? My eyes are blind with tears ; but memory beams on my heart. How can I relate the mournful death of the head of the people ! Prince of the warriors, Oſcur my ſon, ſhall I ſee thee no more !

HE fell as the moon in a ſtorm ; as the ſun from the miſt of his courſe, when clouds riſe from the waſte of the waves, when the blackneſs of the ſtorm inwraps the rocks of Ardannider. I, like an ancient oak on Morven, I moulder alone in my place. The blaſt hath lopped my branches away ; and I tremble at the wings of the north. Prince of the warriors, Oſcur my ſon ! ſhall I ſee thee no more !

DERMID

DERMID and Oscur were one: They reaped the battle together. Their friendship was strong as their steel; and death walked between them to the field. They came on the foe like two rocks falling from the brows of Ardven. Their swords were stained with the blood of the valiant: warriors fainted at their names. Who was a match for Oscur, but Dermid? and who for Dermid, but Oscur?

THEY killed mighty Dargo in the field; Dargo before invincible. His daughter was fair as the morn; mild as the beam of night. Her eyes, like two stars in a shower: her breath, the gale of spring: her breasts, as the new-fallen snow floating on the moving heath. The warriors saw her, and loved; their souls were fixed on the maid. Each loved her, as his fame; each must possess her or die. But her soul was fixed
on

on Oſcur ; my ſon was the youth of her love. She forgot the blood of her father ; and loved the hand that flew him.

SON of Oſcian, ſaid Dermid, I love ; O Oſcur, I love this maid. But her ſoul cleaveth unto thee ; and nothing can heal Dermid. Here, pierce this boſom, Oſcur ; relieve me, my friend, with thy ſword.

My ſword, ſon of Mornny, ſhall never be ſtained with the blood of Dermid.

Who then is worthy to ſlay me, O Oſcur ſon of Oſcian ? Let not my life paſs away unknown. Let none but Oſcur ſlay me. Send me with honour to the grave, and let my death be renowned.

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DERMID,

DERMID, make use of thy sword;
 son of Morny, wield thy steel. Would
 that I fell with thee! that my death
 came from the hand of Dermid!

THEY fought by the brook of the
 mountain; by the streams of Branno.
 Blood tinged the silvery stream, and
 crudled round the mossy stones. Der-
 mid the graceful fell; fell, and smiled in
 death.

AND fallest thou, son of Morny;
 fallest thou by Oſcur's hand! Dermid
 invincible in war, thus do I ſee thee fall!
 —He went, and returned to the maid
 whom he loved; returned, but ſhe per-
 ceived his grief.

WHY that gloom, ſon of Oſcian?
 what ſhades thy mighty ſoul?

THOUGH once renowned for the bow,
 O

O maid, I have lost my fame. Fixed on a tree by the brook of the hill, is the shield of Gormur the brave, whom in battle I slew. I have wasted the day in vain, nor could my arrow pierce it.

LET me try, son of Ofcian, the skill of Dargo's daughter. My hands were taught the bow: my father delighted in my skill.

SHE went. He stood behind the shield. Her arrow flew and pierced his breast *.

* Nothing was held by the ancient Highlanders more essential to their glory, than to die by the hand of some person worthy or renowned. This was the occasion of Ofcur's contriving to be slain by his mistress, now that he was weary of life. In those early times suicide was utterly unknown among that people, and no traces of it are found in the old poetry. Whence the translator suspects the account that follows of the daughter of Dargo killing herself, to be the interpolation of some later Bard.

BLESSED be that hand of snow ; and
 blessed thy bow of yew ! I fall resolved
 on death : and who but the daughter of
 Dargo was worthy to slay me ? Lay me
 in the earth, my fair-one ; lay me by
 the side of Dermid.

OSCUR ! I have the blood, the soul
 of the mighty Dargo. Well pleased I
 can meet death. My sorrow I can end
 thus.—She pierced her white bosom
 with steel. She fell ; she trembled ; and
 died.

By the brook of the hill their graves
 are laid ; a birch's unequal shade covers
 their tomb. Often on their green earth-
 en tombs the branchy sons of the moun-
 tain feed, when mid-day is all in flames,
 and silence is over all the hills.