

IX.

THOU askest, fair daughter of the isles ! whose memory is preserved in these tombs ? The memory of Ronnan the bold, and Connan the chief of men ; and of her, the fairest of maids, Rivine the lovely and the good. The wing of time is laden with care. Every moment hath woes of its own. Why seek we our grief from afar ? or give our tears to those of other times ? But thou commandest, and I obey, O fair daughter of the isles !

CONAR was mighty in war. Caul was the friend of strangers. His gates were open to all ; midnight darkened not on his barred door. Both lived upon the sons of the mountains. Their bow was the support of the poor.

F

CONNAN

CONNAN was the image of Conar's soul. Caul was renewed in Ronnan his son. Rivine the daughter of Conar was the love of Ronnan; her brother Connan was his friend. She was fair as the harvest-moon setting in the seas of Molo-chasquir. Her soul was settled on Ronnan; the youth was the dream of her nights.

RIVINE, my love! says Ronnan, I go to my king in Norway*. A year and a day shall bring me back. Wilt thou be true to Ronnan?

RONNAN! a year and a day I will spend in sorrow. Ronnan, behave like a man, and my soul shall exult in thy valour. Connan my friend, says Ronnan, wilt thou preserve Rivine thy sister? Durstan is in love with the maid;

* Supposed to be Fergus II. This fragment is reckoned not altogether so ancient as most of the rest.

and soon shall the sea bring the stranger to our coast.

RONNAN, I will defend: Do thou securely go.—He went. He returned on his day. But Durstan returned before him.

GIVE me thy daughter, Conar, says Durstan; or fear and feel my power.

HE who dares attempt my sister, says Connan, must meet this edge of steel. Unerring in battle is my arm: my sword, as the lightning of heaven.

RONNAN the warrior came; and much he threatened Durstan.

BUT, faith Euran the servant of gold, Ronnan! by the gate of the north shall Durstan this night carry thy fair-one away. Accursed, answers Ron-

nan, be this arm if death meet him not there.

CONNAN! faith Euran, this night shall the stranger carry thy sister away. My sword shall meet him, replies Connan, and he shall lie low on earth.

THE friends met by night, and they fought. Blood and sweat ran down their limbs as water on the mossy rock. Connan falls; and cries, O Durstan, be favourable to Rivine! — And is it my friend, cries Ronnan, I have slain? O Connan! I knew thee not.

HE went, and he fought with Durstan. Day began to rise on the combat, when fainting they fell, and expired. Rivine came out with the morn; and — — O what detains my Ronnan! — She saw him lying pale in his blood; and her brother lying pale by his side.

What

What could she say? what could she do? her complaints were many and vain. She opened this grave for the warriors; and fell into it herself, before it was closed; like the sun snatched away in a storm.

THOU hast heard this tale of grief,
O fair daughter of the isles! Rivine was
fair as thyself: shed on her grave a
tear.