

Beauties of the Muses.

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

PART II.

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SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

The virgin blush which spreads her cheek,
With nature's purest dye,
And all those dazzling beams which break,
Like morning, from her eye.

He view'd them all, and as he view'd
Drank deeply of delight ;
And still his raptur'd eye pursued,
And feasted in the sight.

With silent wonder long they gaz'd,
And neither silence broke ;
At length the smothered passion blaz'd,
Enamour'd Eldred spoke :

‘ O sacred virtue, heavenly power !
‘ Thy wonderous force I feel ;
‘ I gaze, I tremble, I adore,
‘ Yet die my love to tell.



'My scorn has oft the dart repell'd
 'Which guileful beauty threw
 'But goodness heard, and grace beheld,
 'Must every heart subdue,'

Quick on the ground her eyes were cast,
 And now as quickly rais'd :—
 Her father haply that way past,
 On whom she trembling gaz'd.

Good Ardolph's eye his Birtha meets
 With glances of delight ;
 And thus with courteous speech he greets
 The young and graceful knight :

'O gallant youth whoe'er thou art,
 'Thou art welcome to this place ;
 'There's something rises at my heart
 'Which says I've seen that face.'



‘Thou gen’rous knight,’ the youth rejoin’d,
 ‘Tho’ little known to fame,
 ‘I trust I bear a grateful mind——
 ‘Sir Eldred is my name.’

‘Sir Eldred?’—Ardolph loud exclaim’d,
 ‘Renown’d for worth and power?
 ‘For value and for virtue fam’d,
 ‘Sir Eldred of the Bower?’

‘Now make me grateful, righteous heaven,
 ‘As thou art good to me,
 ‘Since to my aged eyes ’tis given
 ‘Sir Eldred’s son to see!’

Then Ardolph caught him by the hand,
 And gaz’d upon his face,
 And to his aged bosom strain’d,
 With many a kind embrace.



Again he view'd him o'er and o'er,
 And doubted still the truth,
 And ask'd what he had ask'd before,
 Then thus address'd the youth :

'Come now beneath my roof I pray,
 'Some needful rest to take,
 'And with us many a cheerful day
 'Thy friendly sojourn make.'

He enter'd at the gate straightway
 Some needful rest to take ;
 And with them many a cheerful day
 Did friendly sojourn make.

ONCE—'twas upon a summer's walk,
 The gaudy day was fled ;
 They cheated time with cheerful talk,
 When thus Sir Ardolph said :



- ‘ Thy father was the firmest friend
‘ That e’er my being blest ;
‘ And every virtue heaven could send,
‘ Fast bound him to my breast.
- ‘ Together did we learn to bear
‘ The casque and ample shield ;
‘ Together learn’d in many a war,
‘ The deathful spear to wield.
- ‘ To make our union still more dear,
‘ We both were doom’d to prove
‘ What is most sweet and most severe
‘ In heart dissolving love.
- ‘ The daughter of a neighbouring knight
‘ Did my fond heart engage ;
‘ And ne’er did heaven the virtues write
‘ Upon a fairer page,



- ‘His bosom felt an equal wound,
‘ Nor sighed we long in vain ;
‘ One summer’s sun beheld us bound
‘ In hymen’s holy chain.
- ‘Thou wast Sir Eldred’s only child,
‘ Thy father’s darling joy ;
‘ On me a lovely daughter smil’d
‘ On me a blooming boy.
- ‘ But man has woes, has clouds of care,
‘ That dim his star of life—
‘ My arms receiv’d the little pair,
‘ The earth’s cold breast, my wife.
- ‘ Forgive thou gentle knight, forgive,
‘ Fond foolish tears will flow ;
‘ One day like mine thy heart may have,
‘ And mourn its lot of woe.

‘ But grant kind heav’n! thou ne’er may’st
know

‘ The pangs I now impart;
‘ Nor ever feel the deadly blow
‘ That rives a husband’s heart.

‘ Beside the blooming banks of Tay,
‘ My angel’s ashes sleep;
‘ And wherefore should her Ardolph stay,
‘ Except to watch and weep?

‘ I bore my beauteous babes away,
‘ With many a gushing tear,
‘ I left the blooming banks of Tay,
‘ And brought my darlings here.

‘ I watch’d my little household cares,
‘ And form’d their growing youth;
‘ And fondly train’d their infant years
‘ To love and cherish truth.’



‘Thy blooming Birtha here I see,’
 Sir Eldred straight rejoin’d ;
 ‘But why the son is not with thee,
 ‘Resolve my doubting mind.’

When Birtha did the question hear,
 She sigh’d but could not speak ;
 And many a soft and silent tear
 Stray’d down her damask cheek.

Then pass’d o’er good Sir Ardolph’s face
 A cast of deadly pale ;
 But soon compos’d with manly grace
 He thus renew’d his tale ;

‘For him my heart too much has bled,
 ‘For him, my darling son,
 ‘Has sorrow prest my hoary head ;
 ‘But heav’n’s high will be done ;

‘ Scarce eighteen winters had revolv’d,
‘ To crown the circling year,
‘ Before my valiant son resolv’d,
‘ The warrior’s lance to bear.

‘ Too high I priz’d my native land,
‘ Too dear his fame I held,
‘ T’ oppose a parent’s stern command,
‘ And keep him from the field.

‘ He left me—left his sister too,
‘ Yet tears bedew’d his face—
‘ What could a feeble old man do?
‘ He burst from my embrace.

‘ O thirst of glory fatal flame!
‘ O laurels dearly bought!
‘ Yet sweet is death when earn’d with fame:
‘ So virtuous Edwy thought.



' Full manfully the brave boy strove,
 ' Tho' pressing ranks oppose ;
 ' But weak the strongest arm must prove
 ' Against an host of foes.

' A deadly wound my son receives,
 ' A spear assails his side :
 ' Grief does not kill—for Ardolph lives
 ' To tell that Edwy died,

' His long lov'd mother died again
 ' In Edwy's parting groan ;
 ' I wept for her, yet wept in vain—
 ' I wept for both in one.

' I wou'd have died—I sought to die ;
 ' But Heaven restrain'd the thought,
 ' And to my passion-clouded eye
 ' My helpless Birtha brought.



‘ When lo! array’d in robes of light,
 ‘ A nymph celestial came ;
 ‘ She clear’d the mists that dimm’d my sight :
 ‘ Religion was her name.

‘ She prov’d the chastisement divine,
 ‘ And bade me kiss the rod ;
 ‘ She taught this rebel heart of mine
 ‘ Submission to its God.

‘ Religion taught me to sustain
 ‘ What nature bade me feel ;
 ‘ And piety reliev’d the pain
 ‘ Which time can never heal,

He ceas’d—with sorrow and delight
 The tale Sir Eldred hears,
 Then weeping cries—‘Thou noble knight,
 ‘ For thanks accept my tears.