

HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

No II.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

ARMINIUS.

From craggy height to forest lone,
He cast his eagle eye,
And hailed upon her mountain throne
The genius—Liberty;
Through sombre woods and rocky caves,
The word of power went forth:
It trembled o'er the ocean waves,
And roused to arms the North—
Led on by him, who proudly rose
The avenger of his country's woes.

"Shall Rome," he cried, "forever bind
The prostrate world in chains?
On to the field! one freeborn mind
Her galling yoke disdains:
Strike! for the altar and the hearth,
Brave comrades, on with me!
Strike! for the land which gave us birth,
For home and liberty!
Who fears to fill a patriot's grave
Deserves to live and die a slave!"

Like rushings of the mountain blast,
The leafless forests through,
From man to man the summons passed,
Each chief his falchion drew;
And waving it aloft in air,
In hoarse, deep accents cried—
"Accursed be he! who would not dare
The combat by thy side;
Who would not venture life to claim
The guerdon of immortal fame!"

One chief, alone, in silence heard
The warrior's stern appeal,
No kindling hope his bosom stirr'd
With patriotic zeal;
His strength of arm had oft been proved
In battle's stormy day;
He marked the glorious scene unmoved,
And slowly strode away.
Yet on Arminius, as he pass'd,
One long and lingering look he cast:

Whose alter'd mien, and sudden start
Confessed the mute farewell;
And can they thus in manhood part,
In youth who loved so well?
One song had lulled them to repose,
One mother watched their rest,
And as their strength to manhood rose,
One father warmly bless'd,
And bade them in the battle field,
In freedom's cause the falchion wield.

Unmindful of that sire's command,
To Rome the traitor fled,
In arms against his native land,
Her boldest legions led,
And time had o'er those chieftains roll'd
His dark and sullen tide,
And many a daring deed was told,
On either foeman's side;

But fled forever is the glow
That kindled once the patriot's brow.

The wreck of every earthly hope,
Was dimly shadow'd there;
He with a world had dared to cope,
Yet yields to secret care.
The canker worm that gnaws that breast,
A tearless, voiceless pain,
In burning characters impress'd
Upon his heart and brain:
That grief from man so sternly sealed,
Is most apparent when concealed.

Than his—a braver heart or hand,
Did never falchion wield,
The champion of his bleeding land,
Her bulwark in the field.
His lofty spirit early caught
The bright inspiring flame:
Fresh o'er the burning tide of thought,
The light of freedom came;
The empress of the world in vain
Had bound that spirit in her chain.

His was a pride no power could quell,
The restless fire that glows
In ardent hearts, where madly dwell,
A prostrate country's woes;
Traced hopelessly through blighted years
Of life consuming pain,
Recorded in the bitter tears,
That never flow again—
Those flood-gates of the soul that sever,
In passion's tide, to part forever.

And where is she, who on that brow,
The beam of gladness shed?
Is that fair form for ever low,
And mouldering with the dead?
The star that shed its pensive light,
O'er battle's stormy tide,
Whose presence cheered him in the fight,
Whose love all change defied—
A Roman triumph to adorn,
Thusnelda from his arms was torn.

No tear from that fierce eye had burst,
No rising sigh confess'd
The mighty grief, the hero nurs'd,
In secret in his breast:
The curve of that proud lip, alone,
The cheek so meek and pale—
The sudden start—the absent tone,
Revealed the hidden tale:
That grief—the haughty soul could bow,
That yielded to no living foe.

The brothers met beside the stream—
The freeman and the slave!
Their figures in the noontide beam,
Reflected in the wave;
In rude barbaric spoils array'd,
The brave Arminius stood,
Awhile the rapid tide survey'd
In stern and ireful mood;
Whose sullen course can scarce oppose
A barrier to those kindred foes.

Arminius first the silence broke,
And sternly cried aloud—