

THE DEAD MOTHER'S RETURN.

FYTTE I.

Earl Christian sailed upon the sea,
 Dear to the blessed Saints was he.
 God's angels with their wings of white
 Guarded him both in storm and fight.
 For Christian's sword had dyed the flood
 As deep as hell with heathen blood.
 He slew the heathen young and old,
 And burnt their towns and took their gold.
 God gave good gifts to Christian then,
 A ship fleet-sailing, feared of men.
 A woman loving, gentle, fair,
 Of stately beauty past compare,
 The Lady Elinor, and three
 Fair daughters to her lord bare she.
 Three beds of gold the lady made—
 Those children there each night were laid;
 And night and morn she took good heed
 They had both ale and wine and bread.
 "My lot is blessed among men.
 What lack I yet?" said Christian then.
 That night his ship lay wrecked on shore,
 That night died lady Elinor.

FYTTE II.

Much of grief did Christian dree
 For that ship and that ladye.

FYTTE III.

The women of the South are fair,
 They have gray eyes and gold bright hair.
 And from the South a woman came
 Whose beauty shone on men like flame;
 On her white breast she bound a spell
 Which made Earl Christian love her well.
 She kissed Earl Christian tenderly
 That he might not hear his children cry.
 She spake love-tunes into his ear,
 That he might forget those children dear.
 Those three fair babes waxed thin and pale,
 Yet never she gave them bread or ale.
 Their white limbs shivered in the cold,
 For she took away their beds of gold;
 So that they cried to God full sore
 For their dead mother Elinor.
 "Oh would God give our mother back,
 Ale and bread we should not lack.

"Oh could our mother now behold,
 We should not shiver in the cold."

That mother heard her children cry,
 Though very far above the sky.

Before the throne of God she stood;
 She cried to Christ upon the rood:

"My little children cry for bread;
 Let me go to them from the dead."

"Because the little babes weep sore
 Thou mayest return one night—no more."

Swift sped her soul from heaven away
 To the grave yard where the body lay.

She passed through the dark church-yard
 alone,

She rent the grave and the marble stone.

She passed through the long white village
 street

With never a cloke but her winding-sheet.

Like tombs the houses towered on high,
 And the watch-dogs barked as the ghost
 went by.

She came where, by Earl Christian's door,
 Her eldest child sat weeping sore.

"My child, what dost thou here so late
 In wind and rain at thy father's gate?"

"Thy child! my mother's face I know,
 But thou art whiter than the snow."

"My mother's robes were silk and gold,
 But thine are grewsome to behold."

"Ah how can I be fair and red
 Who have so many a day been dead?"

"Ah how can I wear silk and gold
 Who lie all night in Church-yard mould?"

She passed the hall, she stood beside.
 The bed of Christian and his bride.

"Earl Christian you rest softly here,
 While I lie cold on my death bier."

"Fair lady you rest warm in bed
 While my children lack both ale and bread."

"I go but if I come again
 An evil weird I rede he then."

And folks have said how since that night
 That ghost was feared in the new wife's
 sight.

And whenever she heard the night-dogs
 wail,
 She gave those children both wine and ale.

C. P. M.