

# The Ladies' Garland.

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## THE REPOSITORY.

### MARY McCLEOD.

"O'er thee the sacred shaft  
That wastes at midnight, or the undreaded hour  
Of noon, flies harmless; and that very voice,  
Which thunders terror through the guilty heart,  
With tongues of seraphs whispers peace to thine!"

It was hardly possible to imagine the existence of a more amiable spirit, than that which actuated the conduct of the charming Mary McCleod. The circle of friends that had assembled at the house of her uncle, at Lubec, in the Danish Pomerania, was composed of rather a large family circle of the youths of both sexes, and they formed a constellation of no ordinary interest; for there was more than one youthful Tyro of the number, of acknowledged talents, and none, whose acquired principles, could render the fondest parent solicitous to prevent the object of their affections from being blasted by its contagious influence. Amid all their dancing revelry, in the deepest warmth of sparkling disputation, Mary McCleod always held the foremost rank, and without intruding herself as the arbitress of any other person's opinion, she in reality gave a tone to that of the whole—for those who could not be convinced by the strength of her reasoning, were always ready to admire the manner in which it was delivered, and were always willing to believe that her eyes said less than her arguments.

Boasting one evening, how little she was subject to the impressions of fear, it was resolved, by her thoughtless juvenile associates, that an attempt should be made to expose what they considered vanity in the extreme. With this view, after the consultation, they resolved to introduce into her bed a portion of an human skeleton, with its head reclining upon a pillow, imagining, that when the unfortunate subject of this memoir should undraw the curtains of her bed, an involuntary scream would expose that even her fears could be easily worked upon.—They listened, when she had retired from the dance, with no ordinary silence; but for such an exclamation they listened in vain; no scream, nor the least sound was heard; the light of the

lamp, too, was extinguished, after a seemingly long interval, and all was apparently buried in a profound, uninterrupted silence. Concluding, therefore, that the fearless maiden had seen the scull and removed it in silence, they retired with some little disappointment, at the ill success of the plan they had laid to alarm her. In truth Mary McCleod had not seen the horrid spectacle; she reposed in the same bed with a human scull, totally ignorant of the presence of so appalling a sight, and slept as sound as innocence always will, in peace, by its side. The moon, rising during the night, shed its rays through the window of her room, full upon the head of the skeleton, presenting an object barely visible to the eye, and for that reason, more horribly awful than language could attempt to describe; more especially as there were no objects distinctly present to the eye, which could dispel any dreadful illusion, which such a spectacle, under such circumstances, would give rise to. Upon this scene, arranged by an unfortunate occurrence of events, as if laid out by the hand of a demon, beamed the bright eye of Mary McCleod, as she awoke from a dream—fell like the sparkling eye of an angel hovering over chaos. The shock was too exquisitely horrible to be endured; her fine spirit could not withstand the blow; and a few minutes sufficed to convert the soaring spirit of her, whose wit had lately abashed even the most presumptuous, into that wild horror stricken essence, which directed the wild motions of a beautiful, unfortunate maniac.

"Listen," said the wife of the worthy host, to a physician of long practice in the most benevolent of the sciences; "listen to that curious, long continued laugh! it is surely the laugh of your favorite, Mary McCleod!" In a few minutes all the inmates of the house were assembled at the door of the room, which contained the beautiful form from which this wild laugh emanated; it paused for a moment, and then again proceeded—again it ceased, and all became as silent as the grave. Again the laugh went on—no entreaties could stop it—all questions passed away unheeded. "It sounds," said one of the servants, "as if it was approaching the window." This suggestion roused the weeping energy of the doctor; he hastily burst open the door, and rushed into the room; but his benevolence came too late, for the unfortunate object of the story had precipitated herself to the ground, and was borne back by her agonized companions more dead than alive. The doctor soon foresaw that the injury she had received would render all care useless—death had marked her for his own. The incessant care, however, which was bestowed upon her,

brought her from a state of torpor to some little feeling. Her half dead attendants had still a hope for the best; but death came on apace—no balm could cure an injured frame, whose angelic spirit was, if possible, still more dreadfully wounded. Her days of suffering were therefore few; and on the morning, in which she fled to the fields where folly never riots, the bright spark of reason returned to her once again—all the powers of her mind came back with renewed strength; and calling around her the weeping group, with whom she had parted but a few evenings before, she begged of them to forget her fate, as completely as she forgave those who were the unintentional cause of her death. "Do not imagine," said the retiring angel; "do not for one moment believe that I am sorry the period has come, when I shall be set free from a pilgrimage, which might, perhaps, have ended still more unfortunately, and might not have afforded so useful an example of the danger of working upon the fears of any one; nor should I have been so tried, had not my vanity laid claim to what no one ever possessed—a total absence of all fear. In all future periods, amid the gay scenes of life, when anger shall prompt you, may you recollect to forgive others, as Mary McCleod forgave you; and, if ever my spirit shall be deputed again to visit the earth, I shall, perhaps, be that very attendant spirit, who, at that very moment, will bring back to your recollection the fate of Mary McCleod."

FROM THE PHILADELPHIA ALBUM.

### THE MOTHER.

It was midnight! By a solitary lamp, a mother sat watching near the cradle of her only child, whose low moans pierced her very heart, and whose quick heaving breath seemed the prelude to approaching dissolution. No words can describe the anguish of the mother. This infant was her idol, and it was about to be taken from her—it was her *all*, and she must resign it. Now with clasped hands, and streaming eyes raised to heaven, now bending low that she might hear if it yet breathed, the miserable mother had passed many hours of intense agony. She dropped upon her knees and breathed forth a prayer to heaven—such a prayer as none but a mother's heart can inspire—that the God of Mercy would spare her child—that the terrible melody might be removed, and his lovely eyes once more open upon the light of day! The mother's prayer was heard. It was the will of God to restore the babe. The crisis of its illness was past, and the mother, wild with joy, and deeply impressed with gratitude, again looked on it with *hope*.

Years glided away—the boy grew in health