

Robert Stephen Hawker (1803-75)

1 *Annot of Benallay*

At lone midnight the death-bell tolled,  
To summon Annot's clay;  
For common eyes must not behold  
The griefs of Benallay.

Meek daughter of a haughty line, 5  
Was Lady Annot born:  
That light which was not long to shine,  
The sun that set at morn.

They shrouded her in maiden white,  
They buried her in pall; 10  
And the ring *He* gave her faith to plight  
Shines on her finger small.

The Curate reads the deadman's prayer,  
The sullen Leech stands by:  
The sob of voiceless love is there, 15  
And sorrow's vacant eye.

'Tis over! Two and two they tread  
The churchyard's homeward way:  
Farewell! farewell! thou lovely dead:  
Thou Flower of Benallay. 20

The sexton stalks with tottering limb  
Along the chancel floor:  
He waits, that old man grey and grim,  
To close the narrow door.

"Shame! Shame! these rings of stones and gold," 25  
The ghastly caitiff said,

“Better that living hands should hold  
Than glisten on the dead.”

The evil wish wrought evil deed,  
The pall is rent away: 30  
And lo! beneath the shatter'd lid,  
The Flower of Benallay!

But life gleams from those opening eyes!  
Blood thrills that lifted hand!  
And awful words are in her cries, 35  
Which none may understand!

Joy! 'tis the miracle of yore,  
Of the city callèd Nain: —  
Lo! glad feet throng the sculptur'd floor  
To hail their dead again! 40

Joy in the halls of Benallay!  
A stately feast is spread;  
Lord Harold is the bridegroom gay,  
The Bride th' arisen dead.

*1832*

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