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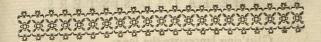
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Poems

Gray, Thomas London, 1770

The Fatal Sisters. An Ode.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-1552



THE

FATAL SISTERS.

AN ODE.

OW the florm begins to lower,

(Haste, the loom of Hell prepare,)

- 9 Iron-fleet of arrowy shower
- r Hurtles in the darken'd air.

Note—The Valkyriur were female Divinities, Servants of Odin (or Woden) in the Gothic mythology. Their name fignifies Chufers of the flain. They were mounted on fwift horses, with drawn swords in their hands; and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to Valkalla, the hall of Odin, or paradise of the Brave; where they attended the banquet, and served the departed Heroes with horns of mead and ale.

- 9 How quick they wheel'd; and flying, behind them shot Sharp sleet of arrowy shower— Milton's Paradife Regained.
- The noise of battle hurtled in the air. Shakespear's Jul. Cafar. Glitt'ring

80 THE FATAL SISTERS.

Glitt'ring lances are the loom,
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a Soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe, and Randver's bane.

See the griefly texture grow,

('Tis of human entrails made,)

And the weights, that play below,

Each a gasping Warriour's head.

Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along.
Sword, that once a Monarch bore,
Keep the tissue close and strong.

Mista

Mista black, terrific Maid,

Sangrida, and Hilda see,

Join the wayward work to aid:

'Tis the woof of victory.

Ere the ruddy fun be set,

Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,

Blade with clattering buckler meet,

Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimfon web of war)

Let us go, and let us fly,

Where our Friends the conflict share,

Where they triumph, where they die.

G

As

82 THE FATAL SISTERS.

As the paths of fate we tread,

Wading thro' th' enfanguin'd field:

Gondula, and Geira, spread

O'er the youthful King your shield.

We the reins to flaughter give,

Ours to kill, and ours to fpare:

Spite of danger he shall live.

(Weave the crimson web of war.)

They, whom once the defart-beach.

Pent within its bleak domain,

Soon their ample sway shall stretch

O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low

Low the dauntless Earl is laid,

Gor'd with many a gaping wound:

Fate demands a nobler head;

Soon a King shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Eirin weep,

Ne'er again his likeness see;

Long her strains in forrow steep,

Strains of Immortality!

Horror covers all the heath,

Clouds of carnage blot the fun.

Sifters, weave the web of death;

Sifters, cease, the work is done.

G 2

Hail

84 THE FATAL SISTERS.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!

Songs of joy and triumph sing!

Joy to the victorious bands;

Triumph to the younger King.

Mortal, thou that hear'st the tale,

Learn the tenour of our fong.

Scotland, thro' each winding vale

Far and wide the notes prolong.

Each her thundering faulchion wield;

Each bestride her sable steed.

Hurry, hurry to the field.

THE