

Old Barnard,

A Monkish Tale

By Mrs. Mary Robinson

OLD BARNARD was still a lusty hind,
Though his age was full fourscore;
And he us'd to go
Thro' hail and snow,
To a neighbring town,
With his old coat brown,
To beg, at his GRANDSON'S door!

OLD BARNARD briskly jogg'd along,
When the hail and snow did fall;
And, whatever the day,
He was always gay,
Did the broad Sun glow,
Or the keen wind blow,
While he begg'd in his GRANDSON'S Hall.

His GRANDSON was a Squire, and he
Had houses, and lands, and gold;
And a coach beside,
And horses to ride,
And a downy bed
To repose his head,
And he felt not the winter's cold.

Old BARNARD had neither house nor lands,
Nor gold to buy warm array;
Nor a coach to carry,
His old bones weary
Nor beds of feather
In freezing weather,
To sleep the long nights away.

But BARNARD a quiet conscience had,
No guile did his bosom know;
And when Ev'ning clos'd,
His old bones repos'd,
Tho' the wintry blast
O'er his hovel past,
And he slept, while the winds did blow!

But his GRANDSON, he could never sleep
'Till the Sun began to rise;
For a fev'rish pain
Oppress'd his brain,
And he fear'd some evil
And dream'd of the Devil,
Whenever he clos'd his eyes!

And whenever he feasted the rich and gay,
The Devil still had his joke;
For however rare
The sumptuous fare,
When the sparkling glass
Was seen to pass,—
He was fearful the draught would choke!

And whenever, in fine and costly geer,
The Squire went forth to ride:
The owl would cry,
And the raven fly
Across his road,
While the sluggish toad
Would crawl by his Palfry's side.

And he could not command the Sunny day,
For the rain would wet him through,
And the wind would blow
Where his nag did go,
And the thunder roar,
And the torrents pour,
And he felt the chill Evening dew.

And the cramp would wring his youthful bones,
And would make him groan aloud;
And the doctor's art
Could not cure the heart,
While the conscience still
Was o'ercharg'd with ill;
And he dream'd of the pick-axe and shroud.

And why could Old BARNARD sweetly sleep,
Since so poor, and so old was he?
Because he could say
At the close of day,
"I have done no wrong
"To the weak or strong,

“And so, Heaven look kind on me!”

One night, the GRANDSON hied him forth,
To a MONK, that liv'd hard by; .

“O! Father!” said he,
“I am come to thee,
“For I'm sick of sin,
“And would fain begin
To repent me, before I die!”

“I must pray for your Soul; the MONK replied,
“But will see you to-morrow, ere noon:
Then the MONK flew straight
To Old BARNARD'S gate,
And he bade him haste
O'er the dewy waste,
By the light of the waning Moon.

In the Monkish cell did old BARNARD wait,
And his GRANDSON went thither soon;
In a habit of grey
Ere the dawn of day,
With a cowl and cross,
On the sill of moss,
He knelt by the light of the Moon.

“O! shrive me, Father!” the GRANDSON cried,
“For the Devil is waiting for me!
“I have robb'd the poor,
“I have shut my door,
“And kept out the good
“When they wanted food,—
“And I come for my pardon, to Thee.”

“Get home young Sinner,” OLD BARNARD said,
“And your GRANDSIRE quickly see;
“*Give him half your store,*
“For he's old, and poor,
“And avert each evil
“And cheat the Devil,—
“By making him *rich as thee.*”

The SQUIRE obey'd; and Old BARNARD now
Is rescued from every evil:
For he fears no wrong,
From the weak or strong,

And the Squire can snore,
When the loud winds roar,
For he dreams no more of THE DEVIL!