

The Granny Grey,

A Love Tale.

By Mrs. Mary Robinson

DAME DOWSON, was a granny grey,
Who, three score years and ten,
Had pass'd her busy hours away,
In talking of the Men!

They were her theme, at home, abroad,
At wake, and by the winter fire,
Whether it froze, or blew, or thaw'd,
In sunshine or in shade, her ire
Was never calm'd; for still she made
Scandal her pleasure—and her trade!

A Grand-daughter DAME DOWSON had—
As fair, as fair could be
Lovely enough to make Men mad;
For, on her cheek's soft downy rose
LOVE seem'd in dimples to repose;
Her clear blue eyes look'd mildly bright
Like ether drops of liquid light,
Or sapphire gems,—which VENUS bore,
When, for the silver-sanded shore,
She left her native Sea!

ANNETTA, was the damsel's name
A pretty, soft, romantic sound;
Such as a lover's heart may wound;
And set his fancy in a flame:
For had the maid been christen'd JOAN,
Or DEBORAH, Or HESTER,—
The little God had coldly prest her,
Or, let her quite alone!
For magic is the silver sound—
Which, often, in a NAME is found!
ANNETTA was belov'd; and She
To WILLIAM gave her vows;
For WILLIAM was as brave a Youth,
As ever claim'd the meed of truth,
And, to reward such constancy,
Nature that meed allows.
But Old DAME DOWSON could not bear
A Youth so brave—a Maid so fair.

The GRANNY GREY, with maxims grave
Oft to ANNETTA lessons gave:
And still the burthen of the Tale
Was, “Keep the wicked Men away,
“For should their wily arts prevail
“You’ll surely rue the day!”
And credit was to GRANNY due,
The truth, she, by EXPERIENCE, knew!
ANNETTA blush’d, and promis’d She
Obedient to her will would be.
But Love, with cunning all his own,
Would never let the Maid alone:
And though she dar’d not see her Lover,
Lest GRANNY should the deed discover,
She, for a woman’s weapon, still,
From CUPID’S pinion pluck’d a quill:
And, with it, prov’d that human art
Cannot confine the Female Heart.

At length, an assignation She
With WILLIAM slyly made,
It was beneath an old Oak Tree,
Whose widely spreading shade
“The Moon’s soft beams contriv’d to break
For many a Village Lover’s sake,
But Envy has a Lynx’s eye
And GRANNY DOWSON cautious went
Before, to spoil their merriment,
Thinking no creature nigh.
Young WILLIAM came; but at the tree
The watchful GRANDAM found!
Straight to the Village hasten’d he
And summoning his neighbours round,
The Hedgerow’s tangled boughs among,
Conceal’d the list’ning wond’ring throng.
He told them that, for many a night,
An OLD GREY OWL was heard;
A fierce, ill-omen’d, crabbed Bird—
Who fill’d the village with affright.
He swore this Bird was large and keen,
With claws of fire, and eye-balls green;
That nothing rested, where she came;
That many pranks the monster play’d,
And many a timid trembling Maid
She brought to shame

For negligence, that was her own;
Turning the milk to water, clear,
And spilling from the cask, small-beer;
Pinching, like fairies, harmless lasses,
And shewing Imps, in looking-glasses;
Or, with heart-piercing groan,
Along the church-yard path, swift gliding,
Or, on a broomstick, witchlike, riding.
All listen'd trembling; For the Tale
Made cheeks of Oker, chalky pale;
The young a valiant doubt pretended;
The old believ'd, and all attended.

Now to DAME DOWSON he repairs
And in his arms, enfolds the Granny:
Kneels at her feet, and fondly swears
He will be true as any!
Caresses her with well feign'd bliss
And, *fearfully*, implores a Kiss—
On the green turf distracted lying,
He wastes his ardent breath, in sighing.
The DAME was silent; for the Lover
 Would, when she spoke,
 She fear'd, discover
 Her envious joke:
And she was too much charm'd to be
In haste,—to end the Comedy!

Now WILLIAM, weary of such wooing,
Began, with all his might, hollooming:—
When suddenly from ev'ry bush
The eager throngs impatient rush;
With shouting, and with boist'rous glee
 DAME DOWSON they pursue,
And from the broad Oak's canopy,
O'er moonlight fields of sparkling dew,
They bear in triumph the Old DAME,
Bawling, with loud Huzza's, her name;
"A witch, a witch!" the people cry,
A witch!" the echoing hills reply
'Till to her home the GRANNY came,
Where, to confirm the tale of shame,
Each rising day they went, in throngs,
With ribbald jests, and sportive songs,
'Till GRANNY of her spleen, repented;
And to young WILLIAM'S ardent pray'r,

To take, for life, ANNETTA fair,
At last,—CONSENTED.

And should this TALE, fall in the way
Of LOVERS cross'd, or GRANNIES GREY,—
Let them confess, 'tis made to prove—
The wisest heads,—TOO WEAK FOR LOVE!