

**A LEGEND OF
GLENDALOUGH
AND OTHER BALLADS**

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A legend of Glendalough and other ballads by Dora Sigerson Shorter

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DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

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A LEGEND OF
GLEN DALOUGH
AND OTHER BALLADS

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

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THE DEER-STONE

A LEGEND OF GLENDALOUGH

It was the bride of Colman Dhu
In Glendalough sat down,
She hushed the babe upon her breast
Beside the lake so brown.

The mountains steep about her rose
All glad in green and gold,
The hearts of all the waters deep
Again their glory hold.

Now had the bride of Colman Dhu
Looked long towards the west,
She there had seen the glowing sun
Slip slow towards his rest.

But had she looked towards the east,
A maid there was to see,
Who bore two daggers in her eyes—
Black hate and jealousy.

She did not look towards the east,
Nor looked she to the south,
But closed her two white lids in sleep,
A smile on her red mouth.

Oh, had she seen the evil maid
Who death so stealthy bore,
She had not closed her lashes long
She now would raise no more.

Slow crept the witch unto her side,
And saw with furious eye
The smiling two in slumber deep,
Who did so helpless lie.

“ And for the tears, O Colman proud,
That I have shed for you,
I'll drive a sorrow in your breast
To break your heart in two.

“ And for the words that you have said,
To crush me with disdain,
I'll hush the laughter on your lips
That shall not smile again.”

Within her hand a deadly draught
She raised a moment up,
“ And shall it be your little son
Who first must taste the cup ?

“ Ah, no ! For should your bride awake,
Her grief would mend your moan,
For you in pity at her tears
Would half forget your own.

“ But if death lies upon her heart,
The two are surely slain ;
The little babe must thirst and die,
And you are mine again.”

She looked upon each lovely face
That held a soul asleep;
"And one shall drink of deadly wine,
A draught both long and deep."

She looked upon the baby lips
That curling 'neath her eyes,
Sought some sweet fountain in his dreams,
And fed with gentle sighs;

Then with a frown and muttered groan
Quick to the other crept,
And raised the cup in her false hand,
To slay them while they slept.

Ah, gentle Nature, at the deed
You quenched within the west
Your golden lamp, so none might see
The murder stand confessed.

Then thrice upon the frightened air,
The dying lips drew breath,
Twice in they drew the wine of life,
And once the draught of death.

Now Colman, with his spear in hand,
Late coming from the chase,
Heard the low weeping of a child
Within a lonesome place.

"Oh, hard your mother's heart," he said,
"Your cries she will not hear!"
Quick from his steed he sprang, and saw
His wife and child so dear.

Soft came the weeping of the babe
Whose fount had grown so cold.
He flung himself upon the earth,
And did his wife enfold.

All silent was she to his cries,
Her cheek was cold as death,
And to his hot impassioned kiss
Came no responsive breath.

And when he saw that she was dead
He rose up to his feet,
And wrapped her in his hunting coat
To make her winding sheet.

"Mo Chree," he said, "your bed to-night
Will be both dark and cold,
On what new island will you wake,
Or what strange face behold ?

"Asthór," he said, "lest you should fear
To wander forth alone,
I'll follow through the gates of death
To claim you for my own."

Into his fond and loving heart
He drove his hunting knife,
And by his bride's chill side he lay,
And soon gave up his life.

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It was the good St. Kevin went,
All bowed and lost in prayer,
And as he paced his lonely path
The young witch met him there.

And in her gown the poison cup
She did most quickly hide,
But spoke the good saint unto her,
And would not be denied.

"What evil thing is **this**?" he said,
"That you must put away?
It is no gracious act indeed
That fears the light of day."

"It is but bread," the witch replied,
"From my small store I take,
To feed a poor deserted babe,
I go for pity sake."

"Now, be it bread," the priest replied,
"I pray it multiply;
But if it is an evil thing,
Full heavy may it lie."

And then the priest, all deep in prayer,
Went forth his lonely way,
While stood the witch upon the path
In wild and deep dismay.

For in her robe the poison cup
Did all so heavy grow,
She scarce could stand upon her feet,
And could but slowly go.

Now when she reached the rugged rock
That held her hidden home,
The waters threw their magic up
And blinded her with foam.