

Beauties of the Muses.

THE DISABLED SOLDIER.
THE THRESHER, THE STORM,
AND
THE HAPPY RETREAT.



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THE DISABLED SOLDIER.



THE sun was just retir'd, the dews of eve
Their glow-worm lustre scatter'd o'er the vale;
The lonely nightingale began to grieve,
Telling, with many a pause, her tender tale.

No clamours loud disturb'd the pensive hour,
And the young moon, yet fearful of the night,
Rear'd her pale crescent o'er the burnish'd tow'er,
That caught the parting orb's still ling'ring light.

'Twas then, where peasant footsteps mark'd the way
A wounded soldier feebly mov'd along;
Nor aught regarded he the soft'ning ray,
Nor the melodious bird's expressive song.

On crutches borne, his mangled limbs he drew,
 Unsightly remnants of the battle's rage ;
 While Pity, in his youthful form might view
 A helpless prematurity of age.

Then, as with strange contortions, lab'ring slow,
 He gain'd the summit of his native hill,
 And saw the well-known prospect spread below,
 The farm, the cot, the hamlet, and the mill.

In spite of fortitude, one struggling sigh
 Shook the firm texture of his tortur'd heart ;
 And from his hollow and dejected eye
 A trembling tear hung ready to depart.

' How chang'd,' he cry'd, ' is this fair scene to me,
 ' Since last across this narrow path I went !

' The soaring lark felt not superior glee,
 ' Nor any human breast more true content.

' When the fresh hay was o'er the meadow thrown,
 ' Amidst the busy throng I still appear'd :

' My prowess too at harvest-time was shown,
 ' While Lucy's carol ev'ry labor cheer'd.

- ‘ The burning rays I scarcely seem’d to feel,
 ‘ If the dear maiden near me chanc’d to rove,
 ‘ Or if she deign’d to share my frugal meal,
 ‘ It was a rich repast, a feast of love.
- ‘ And when at evening, with a rustic’s pride,
 ‘ I dar’d the sturdiest wrestler’s on the green,
 ‘ What joy was mine, to hear her, at my side,
 ‘ Extol my vigor and my manly mein.
- ‘ Ah! now no more the sprightly lass shall run
 ‘ To bid me welcome from the sultry plain ;
 ‘ But her averted eye my sight shall shun,
 ‘ And all our cherish’d fondest hopes be vain.
- ‘ Alas! my parents, must ye too endure
 ‘ That I for ever should destroy your mirth,
 ‘ Exist upon the pittance ye procure,
 ‘ And make ye curse the hour that gave me birth.
- ‘ O hapless day! when, at a neighb’ring wake,
 ‘ The gaudy serjeant caught my wond’ring eye,
 ‘ And, as his tongue of war and honor spake,
 ‘ I felt a wish—to conquer or to die!

‘ Then, while he bound the ribbands on my brow,
 ‘ He talk’d of captains kind and gen’rals good ;
 ‘ Said a whole nation would my fame avow,
 ‘ And *bounty* call’d the purchase of my blood.

‘ Yet I refus’d that bounty ; I disdain’d
 ‘ To sell my service in a righteous cause ;
 ‘ (And such to my dull sense it was explain’d)
 ‘ The cause of Monarchs, Justice, and the Laws.

‘ The rattling drums beat loud, the fifes began,
 ‘ My king and country seem’d to ask my aid ;
 ‘ Through ev’ry vein the thrilling ardour ran—
 ‘ I left my humble cot, my village maid !

Unhappy day ! torn from my Lucy’s charms,
 ‘ I thence was hurried to a scene of strife,
 To painful marches and the din of arms,
 ‘ The wreck of reason, and the waste of life.

In loathsome vessels now with crowds confin’d,
 ‘ Now led with hosts to slaughter in the field,
 Now backward driv’n, like leaves before the wind,
 ‘ Too weak to stand, and yet ashamed to yield ;

- ‘ Till oft repeated victories inspir’d
 ‘ With tenfold fury the indignant foe,
 ‘ Who ruthless, still advanc’d as we retir’d,
 ‘ And laid our boasted proudest honors low.

 ‘ Through frozen deserts then compell’d to fly,
 ‘ Our bravest legions moulder’d fast away ;
 ‘ Thousands of wounds and sickness let to die,
 ‘ While hov’ring ravens mark’d them for their

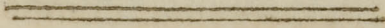
 ‘ Oh, be this warfare of the world accurs’d!—
 ‘ The son now weeps not o’er the father’s bier
 ‘ But grey-hair’d age (for nature is revers’d)
 ‘ Drops o’er his children’s grave an icy tear!

Thus having spoke, by varying passions tost,
 He reach’d the threshold of his parent’s sheet
 Who knew not of his fate, yet mourn’d him
 ‘ Amidst the number of the unnam’d dead!

Soon as they heard his well-remember’d voice,
 A ray of rapture chas’d habitual care ;
 ‘ Our Henry lives, we may again rejoice,
 And Lucy sweetly blush’d—for she was the



But when he enter'd in such horrid guise,
 His mother shriek'd, and dropp'd upon the floor:
 His father look'd to Heav'n with streaming eyes,
 And Lucy sunk, alas! to rise no more.



THE THRESHER.



BETWEEN the upright shafts of those tall elms
 We may discern the Thresher at his task.
 Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
 That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
 Full on the destin'd ear. Wide flies the chaff.
 The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
 Of atoms, sparkling in the noon-day beam.
 Come hither, ye that press your beds of down,
 And sleep not: see him sweating o'er his bread
 Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,
 But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge
 Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.



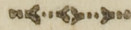
THE STORM.



So from the shore they launch'd,
Bound to no port, but destin'd on a cruise,
A morning's cruise for fish. Pleas'd was the
With utmost joy he saw the wood recede,
Beheld his cottage dwindled to a speck,
Observ'd the snow-white cliffs to right and left
Unfolding their wide barrier to his view,
And felt the boat bound quickly o'er the wave
Light as a cork. He took the helm, rejoic'd,
And right before the wind held on his course
Unheeding! 'Twas in vain his busy friends
Advis'd a diff'rent course, to gain with ease
The shore he left. He carelessly went on,
And never dream'd of danger and delay
Never experienced. Fast into the waves
Sinks the far distant shore. The lofty cliff
Stoops to the water, and his hoary brow
At ev'ry wave seems buried in the flood.
And now the gloomy clouds collect. A storm
Comes mutt'ring o'er the deep, and hides the sun

Hush'd is the breeze, and the high-lifted wave,
Portending speedy danger, to the shore,
In lurid silence rolls. In tenfold gloom
The stormy south is wrapt, and his grim frown
Imparts unusual horror to the deep.
Now to the shore too late young Gilbert turns.
The breeze is sunk, and o'er the mountain waves
Labours the bark in vain. To the stout oar
The fisher and his son repair, and pull,
Alarm'd for safety, 'till their flowing brows
Trickle with dew. And oft the anxious youth
Looks back amaz'd, and sees the lightning play,
And hears the thunder, and beholds a sea
Ready to burst upon him. Oft he thinks
Of Anna and Sophia, and of thee,
Much-lov'd Maria and thy aged sire,
Never perhaps again to walk with you,
To hear you speak, to live upon your smiles.
Ye hapless pair! what shall become of you,
No brother to defend you, and no father!

But fast the storm increases. The strong flash
Incessant gleams upon the curling wave.
Round his dark throne, in awful majesty,



The thunder marches ; his imperious roar
Shakes the proud arch of heav'n. And now the show
Begins to drop, and the unsteady gust
Sweeps to the shore, and stoops the flying boat
E'en to the brink. Small distance then, my friend
'Twixt life and death ; a mere hair's breadth. And
Far, very far, appears the wish-'d-for port.
And lo! between yon rocks now seen, now lost,
Buried in foam, and high the milky surge
Rolls its proud cataract along the shore,
Access denying. To the frowning cliff
Approach not. Mark the strong recoiling wave ;
E'en to the base of the high precipice
It plunges headlong, and the stedfast hill
Wears with eternal battery. No bark
Of forty times your strength, in such a sea
Could live a moment! 'Twere enough to wreck
A British navy, and her stoutest oak
Shiver to atoms.

THE HAPPY RETREAT.

HIGH o'er the winding of a clifty shore,
From whose worn steep the black'ning surges roar,
My friend (how blest!) in quiet plenty lives,
Rich in the unbought wealth which nature gives:
Unplanted groves rise round his shelter'd seat,
And self-sown flow'rs attract his wand'ring feet;
Lengths of wild garden his near views adorn,
And far seen fields wave with domestic corn.

The grateful herds, which his own pastures feed,
Pay their ask'd lives, and, in due tribute, bleed.
Here, in learn'd leisure, he relaxes life,
'Twixt prattling children and a smiling wife,
Here, on dependent want he sheds his care,
Moves amid smiles, and all he hears is—pray'r.
The world lies round him, like a subject soil,
Stor'd for his service, but beneath his toil.

Hence, in a morning walk, his piercing eye
Skims the green ocean to the circling sky ;
And marks, at distance, some returning sail,
Wing'd by the courtship of a flatt'ring gale.
The fearless crew, concluding danger o'er,
With gladd'ning shouts salute the op'ning shore ;
They think how best they may their gains employ,
And antedate their scenes of promis'd joy ;
Till a near quick-sand checks their shorten'd way,
And the sunk masts point through the rising spray,
Felix starts, sad ! revolves the changeful sight,
Where mis'ry can so soon succeed delight ;
Then shake's his head, in pity of their fate,
And, sweetly conscious, hugs his happier state.

