

# THE SONG OF THE BRAT!

OR, A MOTHER'S MANIFOLD MISERIES.

*In Imitation of Hood's popular "Song of the Shirt."*

"Wouldest thou be a mother? Where to? That thou maist replenishe the world, as who say, the worlde coulde not be filled, except thou bringe forth a little beast or two: — — Peraventure thou woldest fayne see chyldren comen of thyne owne body, shal they be of any facion troweste thou than other children bee? — — Whereto haue you so greate a desyre of chyldren you women? For if the cares and sorowes, that chyldren cause vnto theyr mothers, were peinted you in a table, there is none of you so gredye of chylderen, but she wolde be as sore afrayed of them as of deathe: — — O vnkynd woman, that doest not reknowlage, how greate a benefytte thou haste hadde of god, that dyd neuer bere children."—The Instruction of a Christian Woman, 1557.

WITH limbs all weary and stiff,  
With eyes just ready to weep,  
A Mother tried, on a cold eventide,  
Her pet to get to sleep:  
Rock—rock—rock!  
In want, darkness, and dirt, she sat;  
And full near a flock that your nerves would shock,  
She sang '*The Song of the Brat*:'—

"Squall—squall—squall!  
While the sun is going his round;  
And squall—squall—squall!  
Till night's shades no more abound.  
Oh! better to be a slave—  
To belong to the tyrant Turk—  
(Where woman must suffer till in the grave)  
'Than at this fruitless work!

"Squall—squall—squall!  
Till the head's grown dull with pain;  
Squall—squall—squall!  
Till one is nearly insane!  
Scream, and blubber, and 'blare,'  
'Blare,' and blubber, and scream,—  
Till over the pest, through want of rest,  
I off in hysterics seem!

"Oh! Dolts, with Partners dear!  
Oh! Dolts, possess'd of Wives!  
They are no *blessing*, a lot of 'cubs,'—  
But the bane of people's lives!  
Up—up—up!  
'Mid toil, and want, and strife,  
They're brought;—perhaps, (for such constant care)  
To be the curse of your life!

"But why do I talk of Life—  
That scene (unto some!) of *bliss*;  
I hardly share its covetted things,—  
It seems I its joys so miss!  
It seems I its joys so miss,  
Because of the stock I rear:  
Oh, Fate! that brats should come so fast,  
While food and all's so dear!

"Wash—clothe—feed!  
My '*labour's*' ne'er got o'er;  
And what are its wages? A dress all torn,  
Full many 'pukes'—*and more!*  
A shatter'd frame—and this ghastly face—  
Much disease—unceasing care;  
And a breast so bad, advice must be had,  
For fear of a cancer there!

"Break—tear—spoil!  
From morning, noon, to night;  
Pain—vex—foil!  
As enemies do for spite!  
'Blare,' and blubber, and scream,  
Scream, and blubber, and 'blare,'  
Till the heart is sick, and the pulse throbs quick,  
As well as the body bare!

"Watch—teach—'baste!'  
As the dull imp larger grows,  
And debts—loss—waste!  
When Young Hopefull's beard more shows!  
While Fancy, to the mind,  
The joys of youth oft brings;  
As if to twit for one's want of wit,  
When cares were unknown things!

"O! again I'd know the hopes  
Of the maiden and future bride,—  
With health's bloom upon my cheek,  
And my lover by my side.  
For only one short hour,  
To feel as I used to feel,  
Before I knew the plague of brats,  
And the folly that costs—A DEAL!

"O! but for one short hour—  
A respite however brief;  
No blessed leisure for joy or hope,  
But only a relief!  
A little bright change might ease my heart,  
But doom'd I'm still to nurse:  
Health and all must go, for expenses, you know,  
Soon empty a parent's purse!!"

With limbs all weary and stiff,  
With eyes just ready to weep,  
A Mother tried, on a cold eventide,  
Her pet to get to sleep:  
Rock—rock—rock!  
In want, darkness, and dirt, she sat;  
And full near a flock that your nerves would shock,  
(Ne'er may such a stock all *your* efforts mock!)  
She sang this '*Song of the Brat*.'

**A MALTHUSIAN,  
ONE WHO HAS CONSIDERED BEARING  
IN ALL ITS BEARINGS!**