

The poor, oppressed, honest man,  
Had never, sure, been born,  
Had there not been some recompense  
To comfort those that mourn!

O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,  
The kindest and the best!  
Welcome the hour my aged limbs  
Are laid with thee at rest!  
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,  
From pomp and pleasure torn;  
But, oh! a blest relief to those  
That weary-laden mourn!



—\*THE CHILDREN.\*—

BY CHARLES DICKENS.



WHEN the lessons and tasks are all ended,  
And the school for the day is dismissed,  
And the little ones gather around me,  
To bid the good-night and be kissed;  
Oh, the little white arms that encircle  
My neck in a tender embrace!  
Oh, the smiles that are halos of heaven,  
Shedding sunshine of love on my face!

And when they are gone I sit dreaming  
Of my childhood too lovely to last:  
Of love that my heart will remember,  
When it wakes to the pulse of the past,  
Ere the world and its wickedness made me  
A partner of sorrow and sin,  
When the glory of God was about me,  
And the glory of gladness within.

Oh, my heart grows weak as a woman's,  
And the fountains of feeling will flow,  
When I think of the paths, steep and stony,  
Where the feet of the dear ones must go;

Of the mountains of sin hanging o'er them,  
 Of the tempest of Fate blowing wild;  
 Oh! there is nothing on earth half so holy,  
 As the innocent heart of a child!

They are idols of hearts and of households,  
 They are angels of God in disguise;  
 His sunlight still sleeps in their tresses,  
 His glory still gleams in their eyes;  
 Oh! those truants from home and from heaven,  
 They have made me more manly and mild!  
 And I know how Jesus could liken  
 The Kingdom of God to a child.

Seek not a life for the dear ones,  
 All radiant as others have done,  
 But that life may have just enough shadow  
 To temper the glare of the sun;  
 I would pray God to guard them from evil,  
 But my prayer would bound back to myself.  
 Ah! a seraph may pray for a sinner,  
 But a sinner must pray for himself.

The twig is so easily bended,  
 I have banished the rule and the rod;  
 I have taught them the goodness of knowledge,  
 They have taught me the goodness of God;  
 My heart is a dungeon of darkness,  
 Where I shut them from breaking a rule:  
 My frown is sufficient correction;  
 My love is the law of the school.

I shall leave the old house in the autumn,  
 To traverse its threshold no more;  
 Ah! how I shall sigh for the dear ones,  
 That meet me each morn at the door!  
 I shall miss the "good-nights" and the kisses,  
 And the gush of their innocent glee,  
 The group on the green and the flowers  
 That are brought every morning to me.

I shall miss them at morn and at eve,  
 Their song in the school and the street:  
 I shall miss the low hum of their voices  
 And the tramp of their delicate feet.  
 When the lessons and tasks are all ended,  
 And death says, "The school is dismissed!"  
 May the little ones gather around me,  
 To bid me good-night and be kissed.





—\*HUNTING SONG.\*—

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

**W**AKEN, lords and ladies gay !  
On the mountain dawns the day;  
All the jolly chase is here,  
With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear;  
Hounds are in their couples yelling,  
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,  
Merrily, merrily mingle they,—  
“Waken, lords and ladies gay.”

Waken, lords and ladies gay !  
The mist has left the mountain gray,  
Springlets in the dawn are streaming,  
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming,  
And foresters have busy been  
To track the buck in thicket green;  
Now we come to chant our lay,—  
“Waken, lords and ladies gay.”

Waken, lords and ladies gay !  
To the greenwood haste away;  
We can show you where he lies,  
Fleet of foot, and tall of size;

(162)



“We can show you where he lies,  
Fleet of foot, and tall of size.”

We can show the marks he made  
When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed;  
You shall see him brought to bay;  
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay,  
"Waken, lords and ladies gay!"  
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee,  
Run a course as well as we;  
Time, stern huntsman! who can baulk,  
Stanch as hound and fleet as hawk;  
Think of this, and rise with day,  
Gentle lords and ladies gay!





→\*THE GREENWOOD SHRIFT.\*←

A SCENE IN WINDSOR FOREST, ENGLAND.

BY ROBERT SOUTHEY.



UTSTRETCHED beneath the leafy shade  
Of Windsor forest's deepest glade,  
A dying woman lay;  
Three little children round her stood,  
And there went up from the greenwood  
A woful wail that day.

"O mother!" was the mingled cry,  
"O mother, mother! do not die,  
And leave us all alone."  
"My blessed babes!" she tried to say,  
But the faint accents died away  
In a low sobbing moan.

And then, life struggling hard with death,  
And fast and strong she drew her breath,  
And up she raised her head;  
And, peering through the deep wood maze  
With a long, sharp, unearthly gaze,  
"Will she not come?" she said.

(164)

Just then the parting boughs between,  
A little maid's light form was seen,  
All breathless with her speed;  
And following close a man came on  
(A portly man to look upon,  
Who led a panting steed.

"Mother!" the little maiden cried,  
Or e'er she reached the woman's side,  
And kissed her clay-cold cheek,—  
"I have not idled in the town,  
But long went wandering up and down,  
The minister to seek.

"They told me here, they told me there,—  
I think they mocked me everywhere;  
And when I found his home,  
And begged him on my bended knee  
To bring his book and come with me,  
Mother! he would not come.

"I told him how you dying lay,  
And could not go in peace away  
Without the minister:  
I begged him, for dear Christ his sake,  
But O, my heart was fit to break,—  
Mother! he would not stir.

"So, though my tears were blinding me,  
I ran back, fast as fast could be,  
To come again to you;  
And here—close by—this squire I met,  
Who asked, so mild, what made me fret;  
And when I told him true,—

“I will go with you, child,’ he said,  
 ‘God sends me to this dying bed,—  
 Mother, he’s here, hard by.”  
 While thus the little maiden spoke,  
 The man, his back against an oak,  
 Looked on with glistening eye.

The bridle on his neck hung free,  
 With quivering flank and trembling knee,  
 Pressed close his bonny bay;  
 A statelier man, a statelier steed,  
 Never on greensward paced, I rede,  
 Than those stood there that day.

So, while the little maiden spoke,  
 The man, his back against an oak,  
 Looked on with glistening eye  
 And folded arms, and in his look  
 Something that, like a sermon-book,  
 Preached,—“All is vanity.”

But when the dying woman’s face  
 Turned toward him with a wishful gaze,  
 He stepped to where she lay;  
 And, kneeling down, bent over her,  
 Saying, “I am a minister,  
 My sister! let us pray.”

And well, withouten book or stole,  
 (God’s words were printed on his soul!)  
 Into the dying ear  
 He breathed, as ’twere an angel’s strain,  
 The things that unto life pertain,  
 And death’s dark shadows clear.

He spoke of sinners’ lost estate,  
 In Christ renewed, regenerate,—  
 Of God’s most blest decree,  
 That not a single soul should die  
 Who turns repentant, with the cry  
 “Be merciful to me.”

He spoke of trouble, pain, and toil,  
 Endured but for a little while  
 In patience, faith, and love,—  
 Sure, in God’s own good time, to be  
 Exchanged for an eternity  
 Of happiness above.

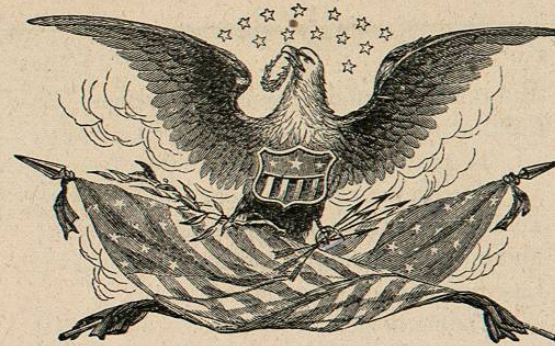
Then as the spirit ebbed away,  
 He raised his hands and eyes to pray  
 That peaceful it might pass;  
 And then—the orphan’s sobs alone  
 Were heard, and they knelt, every one  
 Close round on the green grass.

Such was the sight their wandering eyes  
 Beheld, in heart-struck, mute surprise,  
 Who reined their coursers back,  
 Just as they found the long astray,  
 Who, in the heat of chase that day,  
 Had wandered from their track.

But each man reined his pawing steed,  
 And lighted down, as if agreed,  
 In silence at his side,  
 And there, uncovered all, they stood,—  
 It was a wholesome sight and good  
 That day for mortal pride.

For of the noblest of the land  
 Was that deep-hushed, bareheaded band;  
 And central in the ring,  
 By that dead pauper on the ground,  
 Her ragged orphans clinging round,  
*Knelt their anointed king.\**

\*George III.



→\*THE+AMERICAN+FLAG.\*←

BY JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE.



WHEN Freedom, from her mountain height,  
 Unfurled her standard to the air,  
 She tore the azure robe of night,  
 And set the stars of glory there!  
 She mingled with its gorgeous dyes  
 The milky baldrick of the skies,  
 And striped its pure, celestial white  
 With streakings of the morning light,  
 Then, from his mansion in the sun,  
 She called her eagle-bearer down,  
 And gave into his mighty hand  
 The symbol of her chosen land!

Majestic monarch of the cloud!  
 Who rear'st aloft thy regal form,  
 To hear the tempest-trumpings loud,  
 And see the lightning lances driven,  
 When strive the warriors of the storm,