

# The Forest Boy.

The trees have now hid, at the edge of the hurst,  
The spot where the ruins decay  
Of the cottage, where Will of the Woodland was nurs'd,  
And liv'd so belov'd, till the moment accurst  
When he went from the woodland away.

Among all the lads of the plough or the fold,  
Best esteem'd by the sober and good,  
Was Will of the woodlands; and often the old  
Would tell of his frolics, for active and bold  
Was William the boy of the wood.

Yet gentle was he as the breath of sweet May,  
And when sick and declining was laid  
The woodman his father, young William away  
Would go to the forest to labour all day,  
And perform his hard task in his stead.

And when his poor father the forester died,  
And his mother was sad and alone,  
He toiled from the dawn, and at evening he hied,  
In storm or in snow, or whatever might betide,  
To supply all her wants from the town.

One neighbour they had on the heath to the west,  
And no other <sup>the</sup> cottage was near  
But she would send Phoebe, the child she lov'd best,  
To stay with the widow, thus sad and distress'd,  
Her hours of dejection to cheer.

As the buds of the roses, the cheeks of the maid  
Were just tinted with youth's lovely hue;  
Her form, like the aspen, wild graces display'd,



And the eyes, over which her luxuriant locks strayed  
As the skies of the summer were blue.

Still labouring to live, yet reflecting the while,  
Young William considered his lot,  
'Twas hard, yet 'twas honest; and one tender smile  
From Phoebe at night overpaid all his toil,  
And then all his fatigues were forgot.

By the brook where it glides thro' the copse of oaks,  
When to eat his cold fare he reclined,  
Then soft from her home his sweet Phoebe would steal,  
And bring him wood strawberries to finish his meal,  
And would sit by his side while he dined.

And tho' when employed in the deep forest glade,  
His days have seemed slowly to move,  
Yet Phoebe going home, thro' the wood walk has strayed  
To bid him good night! - and whatever she said  
Was more sweet than the voice of the dove.

Fair Hope, that the lover so fondly believes,  
Then repeated each soul-soothing speech,  
And touch'd with illusion, that often deceives  
The future with light; as the sun thro' the leaves  
Illumines the boughs of the beech.

But once more the tempests of chill winter blow,  
To depress and disfigure the earth;  
And now, ere the dawn, the young woodman must go  
To work in the forest, half buried in snow,  
And at night bring home some wood for the hearth.

The bridge on the heath by the flood was wash'd down,  
And fast fell the sleet and the rain,  
The stream to a wide river was grown,  
And long might the widow sit sighing alone  
Ere sweet Phoebe could see her again.



At the town was a market - and now for supplies  
Such as needed her humble abode,

Young William went forth; and his mother with sighs  
Watch'd long at the window, with tears in her eyes,  
Till he turn'd thro' the fields to the road.

Then darkness came on; and she heard with affright  
The wind every moment more high;  
She look'd from the door - not a star lent its light,  
But the tempest redoubled the gloom of the night,  
And the rain pour'd in sheets from the sky.

The clock in her cottage now mournfully told  
The hours that went heavily on;  
'Twas midnight; her spirits sunk hopeless and cold,  
And it seem'd as each blast of wind fearfully told,  
That long, long would her William be gone!

Then heart-sick and faint to her sad bed she crept,  
Yet first made the fire in the room,  
To guide his dark steps; but she listen'd and wept,  
On if for a moment forgetful she slept,  
Soon she started! - and thought he was come.

'Twas morn; and the wind, with a hoarse sullen moan,  
Now seem'd dying away in the wood,  
When the poor wretched mother, still drooping alone,  
Beheld on the threshold a figure unknown,  
In gorgeous apparel who stood.

"Your son is a soldier," abruptly cried he,  
"And a place in our corps has obtained;  
Nay, be not cast down, you perhaps may soon see  
Your William a captain! he now sends by me  
The purse he already has gain'd."

So William entrapp'd, 'twixt persuasion and force,  
Is embark'd for the isles of the west,



But he seems to begin with ill omens his course,  
And felt recollection, regret, and remorse,  
Continually weigh on his breast.

With useless repentance he eagerly eyed  
The high coast as it faded from view,  
And saw the green hills, on whose northernmost side  
Was his own sylvan home, and he falter'd and cried,  
"Adieu! ah! forever adieu!"

"Who now, my poor mother, thy life shall sustain,  
Since thy son has thus left thee forlorn?  
Ah! canst thou forgive me! and not in the pain  
Of this cruel desertion of William complain,  
And lament that he ever was born?"

"Sweet Phoebe!—if ever thy lover was dear,  
Now forsake not the cottage of woe,  
But comfort my mother, and quiet her fear,  
And help her to dry up the vain fruitless tear  
That too long for my absence will flow.

"Yet what if my Phoebe another should wed,  
And lament her lost William no more?"  
The thought was too cruel; and anguish now led  
The dart of disease—with the brave numerous dead  
He has fallen on the plague-tainted shore.

On the lone village church-yard, the chancel-wall near,  
High grass now waves over the spot,  
Where the mother of William, unable to bear  
His loss, who to her widow'd heart was so dear,  
Has both him and her sorrows forgot.

By the brook where it winds thro' the wood of Arbecal,  
Or amid the deep forest to roam,  
The poor wandering Phoebe will silently steal;  
The pain of her bosom no reason can heal,  
And she loves to indulge it alone.



Her senses are injured; her eyes dim with tears;  
She sits by the river and weaves  
Reed garlands, against her dear William appears  
Then breathlessly listens, and fancies she hears  
His steps in the half-wither'd leaves.

Oh! such are the miseries to which ye give birth,  
Ye statesman! ne'er dreading a scar;  
Who, from pictur'd saloon, or the bright sculptur'd hearth,  
Disperse desolation and death thro' the earth,  
When ye let loose the demons of war.

## The Rejected.

Not have me! Not have me! Oh, what have I said?  
Sure never was lover so strangely misled.  
Rejected! and just when I hoped to be blessed!  
You can't be in earnest! It must be a jest.

Remember — remember how often I've knelt,  
Explicitly telling you all that I felt,  
And talked about poison in accents so wild,  
So very like torture, you started — and smiled.

Not have me! Not love me! Oh, what have I done?  
All natural nourishment did I not shun?  
My figure is wasted; my spirits are lost;  
And my eyes are deep sunk, like the eyes of a ghost.

Remember, remember — ay, madam, you must —  
I once was exceedingly stout and robust;  
I rode fby your palfrý I came at your call,  
And nightly went with you to banquet and ball.



Not have me! Not love me! Rejected! Refused!  
Sure never was lover so strangely ill used!  
Consider my presents—I don't mean to boast—  
But, madam, consider the money they cost!

Remember you've worn them; and just can it be  
To take all my trinkets, and not to take me?  
Nay, don't throw them at me!—You'll break—do not start  
I don't mean my gifts—but you will break my heart!

Not have me! Not love me! Not go to the church!  
Sure never was lover so left in the lurch!  
My brain is distracted, my feelings are hurt;  
Oh, madam, don't tempt me to call you a flirt.

Remember my letters; my passions they told;  
Yes, all sorts of letters, save letters of gold;  
The amount of my notes, too—the notes that I penned,  
Not bank notes—no, truly, I had none to send!

Not have me! Not love me! And is it, then, true  
That opulent age is the lover for you?  
'Gainst rivalry's bloom I would strive—'tis too much  
To yield to the terrors of rivalry's clutch.

Remember—remember I might call him out;  
But, madam, you are not worth fighting about;  
My sword shall be stainless in blade and in hilt;  
I thought you a jewel—I find you a gilt.