

VERSES WRITTEN IN FEBRUARY, 1827.

LIKE gleam of sunshine on the mountain's side,
 Fair, bright and beautiful, while all beside,
 Slope, cliff and pinnacle in shadow lie
 Beneath the awning of a wintry sky,
 Through loop-hole in its cloudy texture beaming
 A cataract of light, so softly streaming, —
 Shines one blest deed of ruth when war's grim form
 O'er a scourged nation guides his passing storm.

Like verdant islet-spots, that softly peer
 Through the dull mist, as morning breezes clear
 The brooding vapour from the wide-stretched vale,
 So in a land where Mammon's cares prevail,
 Do frequent deeds of gentle charity
 Refresh the moral gazer's mental eye.

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Britain, thou art in arms and commerce graced
 With many generous acts, that, fairly traced
 On thy long annals, give a lustre far
 Exceeding those of wealth or trophied war;
 And may we not say truthfully of thee,
 Thou art a land of mercy? — May it be!

What forms are those with lean galled sides? In

vain
 Their lax'd and ropy sinews sorely strain
 Heaped loads to draw with lash and goad urged on.
 They were in other days, but lately gone,
 The useful servants, dearly prized, of those
 Who to their failing age give no repose, —
 Of thankless, heartless owners. Then full oft
 Their arched graceful necks so sleek and soft
 Beneath a master's stroking hand would rear
 Right proudly, as they neighed his well-known
 voice to hear.
 But now how changed! — And what marred things
 are these,
 Starved, hooted, scarred, denied or food or ease;

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Whose humbled looks their bitter thralldom shew,
 Familiar with the kick, the pinch, the blow?
 Alas! in this sad fellowship are found
 The playful kitten and the faithful hound,
 The gallant cock that hailed the morning light,
 All now hard-fated mates in woeful plight.

Ah no! a land of mercy is a name
 Which thou in all thy glory mayest not claim!

But yet there dwell in thee the good, the bold,
 Who in thy streets, courts, senates bravely hold
 Contention with thy wayward cruelty,
 And shall subdue it ere this age glide by.
 Meantime as they their manly power exert,
 "Godspeed ye well!" bursts from each kindly heart.
 And they *will* speed; for this foul blot of shame
 Must be washed out from Britain's honoured name,
 And she among enlightened nations stand,
 A brave, a merciful and generous land.

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