Taught by the awful voice of Truth,
Life's ſyren ſnares to fly,
By Reaſon's card conduct my youth,
And like my Sophron die!

IL BELLICOSO.

MDCCXLIV.

BY MR. MASON.

HENCE, dull lethargic Peace,
Born in ſome hoary Beadſman's cell obſcure;
Or in Circæan bower,
Where Manhood dies, and Reaſon's vigils ceaſe;
Hie to congenial climes,
Where ſome ſeraglio's downy tyrant reigns;
Or where Italian ſwains,
Midſt wavy ſhades, and myrtle-blooming bowers,
Lull their ambroſial hours,
And deck with languid trills their tinkling rhymes.
But rouſe, thou God by Furies dreſt,
In helm with Terror's plumed creſt,
In adamantine ſteel bedight,
Gliſtening formidably bright,
With ſtep unfix'd and aſpect wild;
Jealous Juno's raging child,
Who thee conceiv'd in Flora's bower,
By touch of rare Olenian flower:

Or

Oft the goddeſs ſigh'd in vain,
Envying Jove's prolific brain,
And oft ſhe ſtray'd Olympus round,
Till this ſpecific help ſhe found;
Then fruitful grown, ſhe quits the ſkies,
To Thracia's ſanguine plain ſhe hies,
There teems thee forth, of nervous mold,
Haughty, furious, ſwift and bold,
Names thee Mars, and bids thee call
The world from Pleaſure's flowery thrall.
Come then, Genius of the war,
Roll me in thy iron car;
And while thy courſers pierce the ſky,
Breathing fury as they fly,
Let Courage hurry ſwift before,
All ſtain'd around with purple gore,
And Victory follow cloſe behind,
With wreath of palm and laurel join'd,
While high above, fair Fame aſſumes
Her place, and waves her eagle plumes.
Then let the trumpet ſwell the note,
Roaring rough thro' brazen throat;
Let the drum ſonorous beat,
With thick vibrations hoarſely ſweet;
Boxen hautboys too be found,
Nor be miſs'd the fife's ſhrill ſound;
Nor yet the bagpipe's ſwelling ſtrain,
Solace ſweet to Highland ſwain,

Whether on ſome mountain's brow,
Now ſqueaking high, now droning low,
He plays deft lilts to Scottiſh laſs,
Tripping it o'er the pliant graſs,
Or whether in the battle's fray,
He lively pipes a bolder lay;
The bolder lay (ſuch magic reigns
In all its moving Phrygian ſtrains)
Diſperſes ſwift to all the train,
Fury ſtern, and pale Diſdain
Strikes every fire from every mind,
Nor leaves one latent ſpark behind.
Bear me now to tented ground,
Where gaudy ſtreamers wave around,
Where Britain's enſigns high diſplay'd,
Lend the earth a ſcarlet ſhade;
And pikes, and ſpears, and lances gay,
Glitter in the ſolar ray;
Here I'll join the hardy crowd,
As they ſport in gameſome mood,
Wreſtling on the circled ground,
Wreathing limbs with limbs around,
Or as they pitch the maſſy bar,
Or teach the diſk to whizz in air;
And when night returns, regale
With chat full blunt, and chirping ale;
While ſome voice of manly baſe
Sings my darling Chevy-Chace;

How the child that's yet unborn
May rue earl Percy's hound and horn;
How Witherington in doleful dumps,
Fought right valiant on his ſtumps;
And many a knight and 'ſquire full gay
At morn, at night were clad in clay;
While firſt and laſt we join and ſing,
"God proſper long our noble king!"
And when Midnight ſpreads around
Her ſable veſtments on the ground,
Hence I'll, for a ſtudious ſeat,
To ſome ſtrong citadel retreat,
By ditch and rampart high ypent,
And battery ſtrong and battlement!
There, in ſome ſtate-room richly dight
With maily coats and faulchions bright,
Emblazon'd ſhields of quaint impreſs,
And a whole army's glittering dreſs,
While the taper burneth blue,
(As Brutus erſt was wont to do)
Let me turn the ample page
Of ſome grave hiſtoric Sage;
Or in Homer's ſacred ſong,
Mix the Grecian bards among;
Neſtor wiſe with ſilver'd head,
And Ajax ſtern, and Diomed,
And many more, whoſe wonderous might
Could equal e'en the gods in fight;

Or liſt to Virgil's epic lyre,
Or lofty Lucan wrapp'd in fire;
But rather far let Shakeſpeare's Muſe
Her genuine Britiſh fires diffuſe;
And briſkly with her magic ſtrain
Hurry me to Gallic plain,
Juſt when each patriot Talbot bleeds,
Or when heaven-proſper'd Harry leads
His troops with ſeven-fold courage ſteel'd,
To Agincourt's immortal field.
But when th' imbattled troops advance,
O Mars, my every thought intrance!
Guide me, thundering martial god,
Guide thro' Glory's arduous road!
While hailing bullets round me fly,
And human thunders ſhake the ſky,
While crowds of heroes heap the ground,
And dying groans are heard around,
With armour clanking, clarions ſounding,
Cannons bellowing, ſhouts rebounding;
Guide me, thundering, martial god,
Guide thro' Glory's arduous road!
But ſhould on land thy triumphs ceaſe,
Still lead me far from hated Peace;
Me bear, dread Power, for warlike ſport,
To ſome wave-incircled fort;
Or (if it yield more open fight)
To ſome hoar promontory's height,

Whoſe high-arch'd brow o'erlooks the ſcene,
Where Tritons blue and Naiads green,
Sportive from their coral cave,
Through the fluid chryſtal lave;
There eagerly I ken from far
All the waſte of naval War,
And catch a ſympathetic rage,
While the numerous fleets engage,
And every diſtant ſhore rebounds
To the cannons rattling ſounds,
And the ſulphurous fire-ſhip rends,
And thouſand fates around her ſends,
And limbs diſſever'd hurl'd on high,
Smoke amid th' affrighted ſky.
Then let black clouds above my head,
With gleams of ſcarlet thick beſpread,
With lightning's flaſh and thunder's growl,
Suit the ſpleen that ſhades my ſoul.
There too let cranes, a numerous flight,
With beaks and claws rage bloody flight,
And airy knights from every cloud
Prick forth, their armour rattling loud;
With blazing ſwords and comets drear,
Dragging a trail of flaming hair;
Such as diffus'd their baneful gleam
Over beſieg'd Jeruſalem,
Or hung o'er Rome ere Julius fell,
And if old Sages rightly ſpell,
Were ever deemed to foreſhow
Changes in our realms below.

And when at length cold creeping Age
Freezes the torrent of my rage,
Let me live amongſt a crew
Of invalids, of kindred hue!
Of ſome main limb bereft by War,
Or bleſt with ſome deep glorious ſcar;
Scar, that endleſs glory draws
From Liberty and Albion's cauſe:
Then oft well pleas'd with them retire
To circle round a ſea-coal fire,
And all our paſt campaigns recite,
Of Vigo's ſack and Blenheim's fight;
How valiant Rooke majeſtic trod,
How Marlbro' thunder'd; half a god!
And then, with ſage prophetic eye,
In future battles to deſcry,
That Britain ſhall not fail to yield
Equal generals for the field;
That France again ſhall pour her blood,
And Danube roll a purpled flood.
And when my children round me throng,
The ſame grand theme ſhall grace my tongue;
To teach them, ſhould fair England need
Their blood, 'tis theirs to wiſh to bleed;
And, as I ſpeak, to mark with joy
New courage ſtart in every boy;
And gladſome read in all their eyes,
Each will a future hero riſe.
Theſe delights if Mars afford,
Mars, with thee I whet my ſword.