

Thomas Campbell (1777-1844)

8 *The Soldier's Dream*

Our bugles sang truce – for the night-cloud had lowered,
And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky;
And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered,
The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die.

When reposing that night on my pallet of straw, 5
By the wolf-scaring fagot that guarded the slain,
At the dead of the night a sweet vision I saw,
And thrice ere the morning I dreamt it again.

Methought from the battle-field's dreadful array
Far, far I had roamed on a desolate track: 10
'T was Autumn, – and sunshine arose on the way
To the home of my fathers, that welcomed me back.

I flew to the pleasant fields traversed so oft
In life's morning march, when my bosom was young;
I heard my own mountain-goats bleating aloft, 15
And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reapers sung.

Then pledged we the wine-cup, and fondly I swore
From my home and my weeping friends never to part[.]
My little ones kissed me a thousand times o'er,
And my wife sobbed aloud in her fulness of heart. 20

Stay, stay with us, – rest, thou art weary and worn!
And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay; –
But sorrow returned with the dawning of morn,
And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away.

1804

(From *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell*. Ed. Epes Sargent. Boston, 1854)