

Thomas Hood (1799-1845)

17 *A Waterloo Ballad*

To Waterloo, with sad ado,  
And many a sigh and groan,  
Amongst the dead, came Patty Head  
To look for Peter Stone.

‘O prithee tell, good sentinel, 5  
If I shall find him here?  
I’m come to weep upon his corse,  
My Ninety-Second dear!

‘Into our town a serjeant came, 10  
With ribands all so fine  
A-flaunting in his cap — alas!  
His bow enlisted mine!

‘They taught him how to turn his toes,  
And stand as stiff as starch;  
I thought that it was love and May, 15  
But it was love and March!

‘A sorry March indeed to leave  
The friends he might have kep’, —  
No March of Intellect it was,  
But quite a foolish step. 20

‘O prithee tell, good sentinel,  
If hereabout he lies?  
I want a corpse with reddish hair,  
And very sweet blue eyes.’

Her sorrow on the sentinel 25  
Appear’d to deeply strike:  
‘Walk in,’ he said, ‘among the dead,  
And pick out which you like.’

And soon she pick'd out Peter Stone,  
Half turned into a corse; 30  
A cannon was his bolster, and  
His mattrass was a horse.

'O Peter Stone, O Peter Stone,  
Lord, here has been a skrimmage!  
What have they done to your poor breast, 35  
That used to hold my image?'

'O Patty Head, O Patty Head,  
You're come to my last kissing;  
Before I'm set in the Gazette  
As wounded, dead, and missing. 40

'Alas! a splinter of a shell  
Right in my stomach sticks;  
French mortars don't agree so well  
With stomachs as French bricks.

'This very night a merry dance 45  
At Brussels was to be; —  
Instead of opening a ball,  
A ball has open'd me.

'Tts billet every bullet has,  
And well does it fulfil it; — 50  
I wish mine hadn't come so straight,  
But been a 'crooked billet.'

'And then there came a cuirassier  
And cut me on the chest; —  
He had no pity in his heart, 55  
For he had *steel'd his breast*.

'Next thing a lancer, with his lance  
Began to thrust away;  
I call'd for quarter, but, alas!  
It was not Quarter-day. 60

'He ran his spear right through my arm,

Just here above the joint: —  
O Patty dear, it was no joke,  
Although it had a point.

‘With loss of blood I fainted off 65  
As dead as women do —  
But soon by charging over me,  
The *Coldstreams* brought me to.

‘With kicks and cuts, and balls and blows,  
I throb and ache all over; 70  
I’m quite convinc’d the field of Mars  
Is not a field of clover!

‘O why did I a soldier turn,  
For any royal Guelph?  
I might have been a butcher, and 75  
In business for myself!

‘O why did I the bounty take?  
(And here he gasp’d for breath)  
My shillingsworth of ’list is nail’d  
Upon the door of death. 80

‘Without a coffin I shall lie,  
And sleep my sleep eternal:  
Not ev’n a *shell* — my only chance  
Of being made a *Kernel!*

‘O Patty dear, our wedding bells, 85  
Will never ring at Chester!  
Here I must lie in Honour’s bed,  
That isn’t worth a *tester!*

‘Farewell, my regimental mates,  
With whom I used to dress! 90  
My corps is changed, so I am now,  
In quite another mess.

‘Farewell, my Patty dear, I have  
No dying consolations,

Except, when I am dead, you'll go  
And see th' Illuminations.'

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*1839*

(From *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hood*. Ed.  
with Notes by Walter Jerrold. Oxford UP, 1911)