

Thomas Hood (1799-1845)

11 *John Trot*

A Ballad

John Trot he was as tall a lad  
As York did ever rear —  
As his dear Granny used to say,  
He'd make a grenadier.

A serjeant soon came down to York, 5  
With ribbons and a frill;  
My lads, said he, let broadcast be,  
And come away to drill.

But when he wanted John to 'list, 10  
In war he saw no fun,  
Where what is called a raw recruit  
Gets often over-done.

Let others carry guns, said he,  
And go to war's alarms,  
But I have got a shoulder-knot 15  
Impos'd upon my arms.

For John he had a footman's place  
To wait on Lady Wye —  
She was a dumpy woman, tho'  
Her family was high. 20

Now when two years had past away,  
Her Lord took very ill,  
And left her to her widowhood,  
Of course more dumpy still.

Said John, I am a proper man, 25  
And very tall to see;  
Who knows, but now her Lord is low,  
She may look up to me?

A cunning woman told me once,  
Such fortune would turn up; 30  
She was a kind of sorceress,  
But studied in a cup!

So he walked up to Lady Wye,  
And took her quite amaz'd, —  
She thought, tho' John was tall enough, 35  
He wanted to be rais'd.

But John — for why? she was a dame  
Of such a dwarfish sort —  
Had only come to bid her make  
Her mourning very short. 40

Said he, your Lord is dead and cold,  
You only cry in vain;  
Not all the Cries of London now  
Could call him back again!

You'll soon have many a noble beau, 45  
To dry your noble tears —  
But just consider this, that I  
Have follow'd you for years.

And tho' you are above me far,  
What matters high degree, 50  
When you are only four foot nine,  
And I am six foot three!

For tho' you are of lofty race,  
And I'm a low-born elf;  
Yet none among your friends could say, 55  
You match'd beneath yourself.

Said she, such insolence as this  
Can be no common case;  
Tho' you are in my service, sir,  
Your love is out of place. 60

O Lady Wye! O Lady Wye!  
Consider what you do;  
How can you be so short with me,  
I am not so with you!

Then ringing for her serving men, 65  
They show'd him to the door:  
Said they, you turn out better now,  
Why didn't you before?

They stripp'd his coat, and gave him kicks 70  
For all his wages due;  
And off, instead of green and gold,  
He went in black and blue.

No family would take him in,  
Because of his discharge;  
So he made up his mind to serve 75  
The country all at large.

Huzza! the Serjeant cried, and put  
The money in his hand,  
And with a shilling cut him off  
From his paternal land. 80

For when his regiment went to fight  
At Saragossa town,  
A Frenchman thought he look'd too tall  
And so he cut him down!

1827

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