

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.'

95

1839

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