

These will we sip, and sip our fill,
Or on the flow'ry margin play.

I'll lead her to the thickest brake,
Impervious to the school-boy's eye;
For her the plaister'd nest I'll make, 35
And on her downy pinions lie.

When, prompted by a mother's care,
Her warmth shall form th' imprison'd young;
The pleasing task I'll gladly share,
Or cheer her labors with my song. 40

To bring her food I'll range the fields,
And cull the best of every kind;
Whatever nature's bounty yields,
And love's assiduous care can find.

And when my lovely mate would stray 45
To taste the summer sweets at large,
I'll wait at home the live-long day,
And tend with care our little charge.

Then prove with me the sweets of love,
With me divide the cares of life; 50
No bush shall boast in all the grove
So fond a mate, so blest a wife.

He ceas'd his song. The melting dame
With soft indulgence heard the strain;
She felt, she own'd a mutual flame, 55
And hasted to relieve his pain.

He led her to the nuptial bower,
And nestled closely to her side;
The fondest bridegroom of that hour,
And she, the most delighted bride. 60

Next morn he wak'd her with a song,
"Behold, he said, the new-born day!
The lark his matin peal has rung,
Arise, my love, and come away."•

Together through the fields they stray'd, 65
And to the murm'ring riv'let's side;
Renew'd their vows, and hopp'd and play'd,
With honest joy and decent pride.

When oh! with grief the Muse relates
The mournful sequel of my tale; 70
Sent by an order from the fates,
A gunner met them in the vale.

Alarm'd the lover cry'd, My dear,
Haste, haste away, from danger fly;
Here, gunner, point thy thunder here; 75
O spare my love, and let me die.

At him the gunner took his aim;
His aim, alas! was all too true:
O! had he chose some other game!
Or shot as he was wont to do! 80

Divided pair! forgive the wrong,
While I with tears your fate rehearse;
I'll join the widow's plaintive song,
And save the lover in my verse.

NOTES:

7 *blackbird* Common Eurasian thrush, noted for its melodious song (*OED*).

14 *Zephyr* The west wind.

29 *shews* Period spelling of *show*. • A *rill* is a small stream.

33 *brake* A thick stand of bushes or briars.

35 *plaistr'd* Period spelling of plastered.

36 *pinions* The terminal segment of a bird's wing, bearing the primary flight feathers (*OED*).

57 *bower* A term for abode or cottage.

63 *matin peal* • *Matin* is French for spring; *peal* is the ringing of a bell.

66 *rivulet* Rivulet, a small river or stream.

Source: *Bell's classical arrangement of fugitive poetry* (London, 1789), vol. VIII, pp. 103-106. [ECCO]

Edited by Phillip Barron