

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

Within a very few miles of Edinburgh, there lives an old woman, known among her humble neighbours by the name of "Auld Susan." She was the daughter of a small farmer in the north of England, and in early life married a private soldier in a Scotch regiment, which happened to be quartered in the neighbourhood of her father's house. Having been on this account cast off and disowned by her parents, she followed her husband for many years during the early part of the last war, and in time became the mother of four sons, all of whom, as they grew up, attached themselves to the same regiment. After a long course of faithful service, Susan's husband was raised to the rank of serjeant; and as she was industrious and frugal, they contrived to make their situation more comfortable than that of a soldier's family generally is. Susan, however, had too much perilled upon the fortunes of war to continue long free from misery. She accompanied her husband and sons through the whole of the disastrous retreat of Sir John Moore. When the withdrawing army was finally engaged by the French at Corunna, she stood on a rising ground at no great distance from the field of action, ready to take charge of any of her family who might be obliged to retire disabled. While the fight was at the hottest, a wounded officer was borne past her, and on inquiring of the soldiers who carried him as to the fate of her husband and children, she was told that all, except one of the latter, were "down;" they had fallen in receiving a desperate charge of French cavalry. At this moment the tide of battle receded from the part of the field which it had hitherto chiefly occupied, and Susan rushed eagerly forward amidst the dead and dying, in the hope of finding her husband and sons, or at least some of them, still alive. The first sight which met her eyes was the prostrate body of the fourth son, who within the last few minutes had also been brought down, and was now, as she thought, on the point of expiring. Ere she could examine into the condition of the wounded lad, a large part of the enemy's cavalry swept across the field, in full retreat before the British, and she had only time to throw herself over the body of her son, in the desperate hope of protecting him from farther injury, when it swept over her like a whirlwind, leaving her with a broken leg and arm, and many severe bruises. In this helpless state she was found after the battle by a few survivors of the company to which she had belonged, and conveyed on board the transports along with the wrecks of the army. On inquiry, she found that the fate of her husband and three eldest sons was too fatally certain; that of the youngest was less so; his body had not been found, but there was little time for examination, and it seemed almost beyond a doubt that he had

also shared the fate of his father and brethren.

Upon her arrival in England, the poor woman was sent to the hospital until her wounds were cured, but after her recovery, was turned out desolate and destitute upon the world. A representation of her case to the War Office was unattended to; nor would her honest pride permit her to persist in importunity. The same independence of spirit forbade her seeking the assistance of her relatives. By means of a small subscription raised among her late husband's comrades, she travelled on foot to the place of his birth near Edinburgh, and with what was left she was enabled to put a few articles of furniture into a cottage which a worthy farmer rented to her for an almost nominal sum. The same kind friend afterwards procured her, although not without difficulty, a small weekly allowance—a mere pittance—from the parish funds, with which, and by means of knitting, spinning, rearing a few chickens, and the various other humble expedients of helpless poverty (for she was disabled from field-labour), she contrived to support existence in decency, if not in comfort.

Twelve years had passed away, and approaching age was gradually rendering the lonely widow less and less able to obtain the scanty means of sustenance, when one summer afternoon, as she sat knitting at the door of her cottage, a poor crippled object approached, dressed in rags, and weak from disease and fatigue. From the remnants of his tattered clothes, it was evident he had been a soldier, and the widow's heart warmed towards him, as, resigning to him her seat, she entered the cottage and brought him out a drink of meal and water, being all that her humble store enabled her to offer for his refreshment. The soldier looked wistfully at her as he took the bowl—the next moment it dropped from his hand.—"Mother!" he cried, and fell forward in the old woman's arms. It was her youngest son James, whom she thought she had left a corpse on the fatal field of Corunna. After mutually supposing each other to be dead for the long space of twelve years, these unfortunate beings were doomed to be re-united in this vale of sorrow, mutually helpless, feeble, and destitute. But the love of a mother never dies; the poor widow scrupled not to solicit those aids for her son which she never would have asked for herself, and the assistance of some compassionate friends procured her the means of restoring him to health, although he never regained his full strength.

James's story, from the time of their last parting, was a short and sad one. He had recovered from the temporary trance into which his wound had at first thrown him, had seen his mother's mangled and apparently senseless body lying beside him; and, concluding she was dead, had endeavoured to crawl out of the way of further danger, but

fell into the hands of a part of the enemy. He remained a prisoner in France for upwards of two years, when, an exchange having taken place, he was once more placed in the British ranks, and sent with his regiment to North America. He had served there during the whole war with the United States, and was subsequently transferred to West India station, where his wounds broke out afresh, and his health declined, in consequence of the heat of the climate. Those acquainted with military matters will understand, although the writer of these lines confesses his inability exactly to describe, how a British soldier may be deprived of the recompense to which his wounds and length of service legally and justly entitle him. The poor man we speak of met this unworthy fate—he had, at his earnest request, been transferred into a regiment ordered for England (seeing certain death before him in the tropics), which was disbanded the moment of their arrival, and he was thrown utterly destitute, and left to beg or starve, after all his hardships and meritorious services to his country. Being unable to work, he was compelled to assume the mendicant's degraded habit, and had begged his way down to his father's birth-place in Scotland, in the hope of finding some of his relatives alive, and able to shelter him, when he unexpectedly recognized his old mother in the manner described.

This humble narrative is now done. The widow and her son still reside together, supported by his earnings as a day-labourer, and concluding, in obscure penury, a life of hardship, exertion, and sorrow.

IRON MINE IN SWEDEN.

The following interesting description of the interior of an iron mine, is from the pen of a traveller who visited it.

For grandeur of effect, filling the mind of the spectator with a degree of wonder, which amounts to awe, there is no place where human labour is exhibited under circumstances more tremendously striking. As we draw near to the wide and open abyss, a vast and sudden prospect of yawning caverns and prodigious machinery prepared us for the descent. We approached the edge of the dreadful gulf, whence the ore is raised, and ventured to look down; standing on the verge of a sort of platform, constructed over it in such a manner as to command a view into the great opening, as far as the eye could penetrate amidst its gloomy depths; for, to the sight it is bottomless. Immense buckets, suspended by rattling chains, were passing up and down; and we could perceive ladders scaling all the inward precipices on which the work people, reduced by their distance to pigmies in size, were ascending and descending. Far below the most of these figures a deep and gaping gulf, the mouth of the lower-most pits, was by its