

The Fire,

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AMONG the Perils that attend  
Our life, and oft produce its end,  
The Elements, each passing hour,  
Display their all-alarming power.  
—Fate waves his spear, th' infected air  
Fills wide-spread regions with despair;  
And Pestilence, with deadly breath,  
Makes them one dismal scene of death.  
—He strikes his foot, the groaning ground  
Strait trembles in the deep profound;  
Opes wide its vast and horrid womb,  
And to whole cities yields a tomb.  
—The Ocean to his will conforms,  
And rolls beneath the angry storms;  
In vain the Steersman rules the Helm,  
And waves the crouded Ship o'erwhelm.

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Let him go on with all his rigs :  
 We're safe. He'll only burn the pigs.



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—He lights his torch, the fatal fire  
Spreads far and near with ruin dire ;  
And Palaces and Temples lie  
A scene of splendid Misery.

No Summons left t' awake our care,  
Against the mischief to prepare ;  
As the Hawk pounces on its prey,  
These sudden evils ne'er betray  
Their fell approach, but strike the blow  
And leave the victims to their woe.

War, note of preparation gives,  
And threatens e'er the foe arrives.  
The Son of Mars, amid th' alarms  
Of contest fierce and clashing arms,  
Well knows he may be doom'd to feel  
The wounding force of hostile steel ;  
Nay, half expects that he may fall  
By bloody sword or flying ball :  
But still his prowess may sustain  
His life on the embattled plain,

And He may rest, when all is done,  
Beneath the Laurels he has won.

When PLENTY o'er the blighted fields  
No more her ready sickle wields ;  
When meadows lose their verdure green,  
Nor fruitage on the bough is seen ;  
When DEARTH in meagre form appears,  
We ope the hoards of former years ;  
And in our straiten'd state maintain  
Submission firm, till CERES reign,  
In its full bounty, smiles again.

The ROBBER may our house despoil  
By daring theft or crafty toil ;  
But though he makes our goods his prey,  
He cannot bear the House away :  
Takes what he can—but, coarsely kind,  
What he can't take, he leaves behind.  
Though 'tis a mischief all would shun,  
We may be robb'd, but not undone.  
—But when our house, or great or small,  
Whate'er it be, contains our all ;



A *Conflagration's* rapid power  
May prove our ruin in an hour.  
When we are robb'd we know the worst ;  
But Fire's an evil most accurst :  
Where it begins we may discover,  
But who can tell when 'twill be over.  
Though safe we think our treasure lies,  
And well secur'd from hands and eyes :  
The Flames may come, and, to our cost,  
It may be melted down and lost.  
Bolts, and Bars, and Barricadoes,  
May disappoint midnight Bravadoes ;  
But what can keep, we would enquire,  
A House from being set on Fire :  
Nay, should it be of Lath and Plaster,  
Nought could arrest the sad disaster ;  
And, if its roof be made of Thatch,  
They must be quick who lift the Latch.

Such was the case, as tells the tale,

In *Hernford's* distant shady vale.

—JOE JENKINS there free from alarm,

Rented a small but fruitful Farm :

Where he work'd hard, but liv'd content,  
 And never fail'd to pay his rent.  
 He had a wife and children three,  
 Maintain'd by cheerful Industry;  
 And by the names they both were known  
 Of honest JOE and smiling JOAN.  
 But she was good as she was fair,  
 And skill'd in ev'ry household care;  
 Nor were three finer bantlings seen,  
 'Mong those who play'd upon the Green.

One evening in the month of May,  
 When all was blooming, sweet and gay,  
 As JOAN wound, on the turning reel,  
 The labours of the spinning wheel,  
 She listened to the Blackbird's song,  
 Who tun'd his notes the Groves among;  
 And carroll'd with her voice so shrill  
 Of black-ey'd SUE and constant WILL.  
 At length JOE's daily labour o'er,  
 They eat their supper at the door,  
 And spar'd a morsel to the poor;



A part they never fail'd to give,  
Of what Heav'n pleas'd they should receive ;  
And, having bent in grateful prayer,  
To him who makes the good their care,  
Happy and in each other blest  
The faithful pair retir'd to rest,  
In hope to wake as free from sorrow,  
When the Sun shone upon to-morrow :  
But e'er the Sun in splendour rose  
They 'rose to view a scene of woes.  
For, e'er the midnight hour was past,  
They woke, and thought that hour their last,  
Around appear'd the blazing flames ;  
The Mother, with incessant screams,  
And almost mad from her alarms,  
Seizing the children in her arms,  
Fled from her home and sat her down  
Beside the Brook upon a stone.  
While JOE, and many a neighbour's care,  
Brought all the Flames were found to spare.  
—The Villagers ran to and fro  
To save what could be sav'd for JOE ;



And women, screaming with affright,  
 Encreas'd the horrors of the night.  
 The slumb'ring sheep by fear made bold,  
 Tumultuous grew and forc'd the fold ;  
 And bellowing loud, the herds were seen  
 Scouring in fury o'er the Green.

Among the rest a Shape appear'd :  
 In either hand a torch he rear'd,  
 And seem'd, as he was stalking on,  
 Proud of the mischief he had done.  
 The Sexton said, Death was his name :  
 He knew him well, and that he came  
 From church-yard nigh ; nay, that the Bell  
 Had of itself rung out a Knell,  
 For though, as was his foul intent,  
 They did no Christian's end lament,  
 Yet it was seen Death had been there,  
 As JOE's six pigs and founder'd mare  
 Lay dead in stable and in sty,  
 The work of the Incendiary.

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The House was down, of flames the prey ;  
And, as the smoking ruins lay,  
JOE wrung his hands and wip'd his eye,  
And thus talk'd o'er his destiny.

“ 'Twas in that House that I was born,

“ And Comfort smil'd but yester-morn ;

“ But now I've neither house nor home,

“ Nor what to do in time to come,

“ I cannot tell ; nor do I see

“ The end of my calamity.—

“ Alas, poor JOE, thy comfort's o'er,

“ And smiling JOAN will smile no more.”

“ Peace,” said good Farmer FREEMAN,

“ peace ;

“ And let these sad complainings cease.

“ We all are born, as you should know,

“ To meet misfortune here below ;

“ But then, my friend, it is as true,

“ That we should learn to bear it too.

“ Something is lost, but Heaven is kind ;

“ For something too is left behind.



“ Your hoarded treasure’s safe and sound,  
“ As a stray Donkey in a pound :  
“ The flames, at least, did not unlock it ;  
“ You have it close within your pocket.  
“ Your Barns, you see, unhurt remain,  
“ With all their last year’s stock of grain :  
“ Your Cow and Calf, and little Flock,  
“ Have only felt a sudden shock :  
“ Your Children too, have known no harm,  
“ They rest upon their Mother’s arm :  
“ They feel no loss, they know no pain ;  
“ JOAN sees they’re safe, and smiles again.  
“ In all the Hamlet’s ample bound,  
“ Aye, and in all the Country round,  
“ There’s not a heart that will not show  
“ Its kind regard to honest JOE.  
“ Besides your Landlord *Squire Bounty*,  
“ Known for good deeds, throughout the  
“ County,  
“ Will build, I doubt not, at his cost,  
“ A better house than you have lost :

“ But till that House is snug and tight,  
“ And honest JOE finds all things right;  
“ He and his Wife, and Children three,  
“ Shall come—aye come,—and LIVE WITH ME.”