

The Toastmaster.

THE Dinner and its labours o'er,
Bacchus unfolds his various store,
The Ruby Juice, the mingled Bowl,
To drown the sorrows of the Soul.
—With ready step and blithsome air,
The grave Toastmaster takes the Chair :
The wine soon sparkled in the glass,
And gladness beam'd in ev'ry face :
When, to begin the scene of Glee,
The King was given, with three times three ;
And may he live was echoed round,
Till of high virtue may be found,
In every realm, on every throne,
Examples equal to his own.
Then the gay guests their Bumpers ply
To all the Royal Family.

Nor were the wooden walls forgot :
 That they might never go to pot,
 But still sustain the Nation's fame,
 And give new splendor to its name,
 Re-echoed round the Oaken Table,
 While any votive voice was able.
 To these were join'd the martial Bands,
 Who, when their Country's call commands,
 To seek the hostile plains prepare,
 And plant the British Laurel there.
 But while the festive Goblets crown
 The brave and virtuous with renown,
 And shouts attend on Wellington,
 The bumper Curses loudly wait
 On the subdued *Napoleon's* Fate,
 As the wide sea he passes o'er,
 To trouble Europe's peace no more.
 Of Beauties then the num'rous Line
 Sweetens the copious draughts of wine.
 —And now commanded by the power
 That rul'd the inebriating hour,

Silence prevail'd :—Amid the smoke
 Of fuming pipes the Chairman spoke :
 “ —My Friends, according to my thinking,
 “ No pleasure is in Life like drinking ;
 “ It is the bottle and the bowl,
 “ That gives true pleasure to the Soul,
 “ And drowns each sullen, meddling care
 “ That strives to take possession there.
 “ While thus I sit, I know no strife,
 “ Nor hear the Clamours of my Wife ;
 “ And, when our jovial Meeting's o'er,
 “ Fearless I'll ope my mansion door,
 “ And care not for the horrid din
 “ That waits me when I enter in ;
 “ Laugh at her noise, and put off sorrow
 “ To sober hours, and to-morrow.
 “ —The brave *Lieutenant*, who sits there,
 “ Forgets the unrewarded Scar,
 “ And the bluff *Major*, waxing gay,
 “ With Locks in toils of war grown grey,
 “ Heeds not the pittance of his pay.

“ —The *Squire*, who pours his Liquor out,
 “ Feels not he ever had the Gout,
 “ And laughs at all the tort’ring pain,
 “ Though it may threaten him again.
 “ While thus we quaff, and laugh and sing,
 “ Time flits with an unwearied wing ;
 “ But Bacchus every want supplies,
 “ And gilds each moment as it flies.
 “ And now a *Toast* I shall present,
 “ Or what is call’d a *Sentiment*,
 “ In which my Friends will all agree ;
 “ So fill each glass and drink with me.
 “ —May we enjoy the power of drinking
 “ Till we have lost the power of thinking !”

He strove his Goblet to prepare,
 But sunk down senseless from his chair.
 DEATH enter’d then with grimly grace,
 And occupied the vacant place.
 Some at the strange appearance star’d,
 While others by the Phantom scar’d,
 Let loose their Glass, but prov’d unable
 To hide their fears beneath the Table ;

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 stumbled and struggled

The Chairman gravel

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That's Drinking, Sir,

The Squire replied ; “

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Or, failing to find out the door,
Stumbled and struggled on the floor.

The Chairman gravely said, " I'm come
" To lead some of you safely home.
" But I propose one Bumper more,
" And then the jovial Meeting's o'er."
" The *End of Life's* the Toast I give:
" That's Drinking, Sir, as I conceive,"
The 'Squire replied; " so fill my Glass,
" And, prithee, let the Ladle pass.
" *The End of Life,*" the Toper cries,
Empties his brimming Cup,—and dies.