

The Haunted Beach

By Mrs. Mary Robinson

Upon a lonely desert Beach
Where the white foam was scatter'd,
A little shed uprear'd its head
Though lofty Barks were shatter'd.
The Sea-weeds gath'ring near the door,
A sombre path display'd;
And, all around, the deafning roar,
Re-echo'd on the chalky shore,
By the green billows made.

Above, a jutting cliff was seen
Where Sea Birds hover'd, craving;
And all around, the craggs were bound
With weeds—for ever waving.
And here and there, a cavern wide
Its shad'wy jaws display'd;
And near the sands, at ebb of tide,
A shiver'd mast was seen to ride
Where the green billows stray'd.

And often, while the moaning wind
Stole o'er the Summer Ocean;
The moonlight scene, was all serene,
The waters scarce in motion:
Then, while the smoothly slanting sand
The tall cliff wrapp'd in shade,
The Fisherman beheld a band
Of Spectres, gliding hand in hand—
Where the green billows play'd.

And pale their faces were, as snow,
And sullenly they wander'd:
And to the skies with hollow eyes
They look'd as though they ponder'd.
And sometimes, from their hammock shroud,
They dismal howlings made,
And while the blast blew strong and loud
The clear moon mark'd the ghastly croud,
Where the green billows play'd!

And then, above the haunted hut

The Curlews screaming hover'd;
And the low door with furious roar
The frothy breakers cover'd.
For, in the Fisherman's lone shed
A MURDER'D MAN was laid,
With ten wide gashes in his head
And deep was made his sandy bed
Where the green billows play'd.

A Shipwreck'd Mariner was he,
Doom'd from his home to sever;
Who swore to be thro' wind and sea
Firm and undaunted ever!
And when the wave resistless roll'd,
About his arm he made
A packet rich of Spanish gold,
And, like a British sailor, bold,
Plung'd, where the billows play'd!

The Spectre band, his messmates brave
Sunk in the yawning ocean,
While to the mast he lash'd him fast
And brav'd the storm's commotion.
The winter moon, upon the sand
A silvry carpet made,
And mark'd the Sailor reach the land,
And mark'd his murd'rer wash his hand
Where the green billows play'd.

And since that hour the Fisherman
Has toil'd and toil'd in vain!
For all the night, the moony light
Gleams on the specter'd main!
And when the skies are veil'd in gloom,
The Murd'rer's liquid way
Bounds o'er the deeply yawning tomb,
And flashing fires the sands illumine,
Where the green billows play!

Full thirty years his task has been,
Day after day more weary;
For Heav'n design'd, his guilty mind
Should dwell on prospects dreary.
Bound by a strong and mystic chain,
He has not pow'r to stray;
But, destin'd mis'ry to sustain,

He wastes, in Solitude and Pain—
A loathsome life away.