

# The Deserted Cottage

By Mrs. Mary Robinson

Who dwelt in yonder lonely Cot,  
Why is it thus forsaken?  
It seems, by all the world forgot,  
Above its path the high grass grows,  
And through its thatch the northwind blows  
—Its thatch, by tempests shaken.

And yet, it tops a verdant bill  
By Summer gales surrounded:  
Beneath its door a shallow rill  
Runs brawling to the vale below,  
And near it sweetest flowrets grow  
By banks of willow bounded.

Then why is ev'ry casement dark?  
Why looks the Cot so cheerless?  
Ah! why does ruin seem to mark  
The calm retreat where LOVE should dwell,  
And FRIENDSHIP teach the heart to swell  
With rapture, pure and fearless?

There, far above the busy croud,  
Man may repose in quiet;  
There, smile, that he has left the proud,  
And blest with liberty, enjoy  
More than Ambition's gilded toy,  
Or Folly's sick'ning riot.

For there, the ever tranquil mind,  
On calm Religion resting,  
May in each lonely labyrinth find  
The DEITY, whose boundless pow'r  
Directs the blast, or tints the flow'r—  
No mortal foe molesting.

Stranger, yon spot was once the scene  
Where peace and joy resided:  
And oft the merry time has been  
When Love and Friendship warm'd the breast,  
And Freedom, making wealth a jest,  
The pride of Pomp derided.

Old JACOB was the Cottage Lord,  
His wide domain, surrounding,  
By Nature's treasure amply stor'd;  
He from his casement could behold  
The breezy mountain, ting'd with gold,  
The varied landscape bounding!

The coming morn, with lustre gay,  
Breath'd sweetly on his dwelling;  
The twilight veil of parting day  
Stole softly o'er his quiet shed,  
Hiding the mountain's misty head,  
Where the night-breeze was swelling.

One lovely Girl, Old JACOB rear'd  
And she was fair, and blooming;  
She, like the morning Star, appear'd,  
Swift gliding o'er the mountain's crest,  
While her blue eyes her soul confess'd,  
No borrow'd rays assuming.

'Twas her's, the vagrant lamb to lead,  
To watch the wild goat playing:  
To join the Shepherd's tuneful reed,  
And, when the sultry Sun rose high,  
To tend the Herds, deep-lowing nigh,  
Where the swift brook was straying.

One sturdy Boy, a younker bold,  
Ere they were doom'd to sever,  
Maintain'd poor JACOB, sick and old;  
But now, where yon tall poplars wave,  
Pale primroses adorn the grave—  
Where JACOB sleeps, for Ever

Young, in the wars, the brave Boy fell!  
His Sister died of sadness!  
But *one* remain'd their fate to tell;  
For JACOB now was left alone,  
And he, alas! was helpless grown,  
And pin'd in moody madness.

At night, by moonshine would he stray,  
Along the upland dreary;  
And, talking wildly all the way,

Would fancy, 'till the Sun uprose,  
That Heav'n, in pity, mark'd the woes—  
Of which his soul was weary.

One morn, upon the dewy grass  
Poor JACOB'S sorrows ended,  
The woodland's narrow winding pass  
Was his last scene of lonely care,  
For, gentle Stranger, lifeless there—  
Was JACOB'S form extended!

He lies beneath yon Poplar tree  
That tops the church-yard, sighing!  
For sighing oft it seems to be,  
And as its waving leaves, around,  
With morning's tears begem the ground  
The Zephyr trembles, flying!

And now behold yon little Cot  
All dreary and forsaken!  
And know, that soon 'twill be thy lot,  
To fall, like JACOB and his race,  
And leave on Time's swift wing no trace,  
Which way thy course is taken.

Yet, if for Truth and feeling known,  
Thou still shalt be lamented!  
For when thy parting sigh has flown,  
Fond MEM'RY on thy grave shall give  
*A tear*—to bid thy VIRTUES live!  
Then—Smile, AND BE CONTENTED