THE THREE WARNINGS: A TALE.

BY MRS. THRALE.

THE tree of deepeſt root is found
Leaſt willing ſtill to quit the ground;
'Twas therefore ſaid by antient ſages,
That love of life increas'd with years
So much, that in our latter ſtages,
When pains grow ſharp, and ſickneſs rages,
The greateſt love of life appears.

This great affection to believe,
Which all confeſs, but few perceive,
If old aſſertions can't prevail,
Be pleas'd to hear a modern tale.

When ſports went round, and all were gay
On neighbour Dobſon's wedding-day,
Death call'd aſide the jocund groom
With him into another room:
And looking grave, "You muſt, ſays he,
"Quit your ſweet bride, and come with me."
"With you, and quit my Suſan's ſide!
"With you! the hapleſs huſband cry'd:
"Young as I am! 'tis monſtrous hard!
"Beſides, in truth, I'm not prepar'd:

"My

" My thoughts on other matters go,
" This is my wedding-night, you know."
What more he urg'd I have not heard,
His reaſons could not well be ſtronger;
So Death the poor delinquent ſpar'd,
And left to live a little longer.
Yet calling up a ſerious look,
His hour-glaſs trembled while he ſpoke,
" Neighbour, he ſaid, farewell: No more
" Shall Death diſturb your mirthful hour;
" And further, to avoid all blame
" Of cruelty upon my name,
" To give you time for preparation,
" And fit you for your future ſtation,
" Three ſeveral Warnings you ſhall have,
" Before you're ſummon'd to the grave:
" Willing for once I'll quit my prey,
" And grant a kind reprieve;
" In hopes you'll have no more to ſay,
" But when I call again this way,
" Well-pleas'd the world will leave."

To theſe conditions both conſented,
And parted perfectly contented.

What next the hero of our tale befell,
How long he liv'd, how wiſe, how well,
How roundly he purſu'd his courſe,
And ſmok'd his pipe, and ſtrok'd his horſe,
The willing Muſe ſhall tell:

He chaffer'd then, he bought, he ſold,
Nor once perceiv'd his growing old,
Nor thought of Death as near ;
His friends not falſe, his wife no ſhrew,
Many his gains, his children few,
He paſs'd his hours in peace ;
But while he view'd his wealth increaſe,
While thus along Life's duſty road
The beaten track content he trod,
Old Time, whoſe haſte no mortal ſpares,
Uncall'd, unheeded, unawares,
Brought on his eightieth year.

And now one night in muſing mood,
As all alone he ſate,
Th' unwelcome meſſenger of Fate
Once more before him ſtood.

Half kill'd with anger and ſurprize,
" So ſoon return'd ! old Dobſon cries."
" So ſoon, d'ye call it ! Death replies :
" Surely, my friend, you're but in jeſt.
" Since I was here before,
" 'Tis ſix-and-thirty years at leaſt,
" And you are now fourſcore."
" So much the worſe, the Clown rejoin'd :
" To ſpare the aged would be kind :
" However, ſee your ſearch be legal ;
" And your authority——Is't regal ?
" Elſe you are come on a fool's errand,
" With but a ecretary's warrant.

" Beſides,

" Beſides, you promis'd me Three Warnings,
" Which I have look'd for nights and mornings.
" But for that loſs of time and eaſe,
" I can recover damages."
" I know, cries Death, that at the beſt,
" I ſeldom am a welcome gueſt;
" But don't be captious, friend, at leaſt;
" I little thought you'd ſtill be able
" To ſtump about your farm and ſtable;
" Your years have run to a great length,
" I wiſh you joy tho' of your ſtrength."
" Hold, ſays the Farmer, not ſo faſt,
" I have been lame theſe four years paſt."
" And no great wonder, Death replies,
" However, you ſtill keep your eyes;
" And ſure to ſee one's loves and friends,
" For legs and arms would make amends."
" Perhaps, ſays Dobſon, ſo it might,
" But latterly I've loſt my ſight."
" This is a ſhocking ſtory, faith,
" Yet there's ſome comfort ſtill, ſays Death;
" Each ſtrives your ſadneſs to amuſe;
" I warrant you hear all the news."
" There's none, cries he; and if there were,
" I'm grown ſo deaf I could not hear."
" Nay then, the ſpectre ſtern rejoin'd,
" Theſe are unjuſtifiable yearnings;
" If you are lame, and deaf, and blind,
" You've had your three ſufficient Warnings.

" So

" So come along, no more we'll part :"
He ſaid, and touch'd him with his dart ;
And now old Dobſon turning pale,
Yields to his fate——ſo ends my tale.

THE EXCURSION.

HAPPY thrice the harmleſs ſwain,
Tenant of the peaceful plain,
Far from buſineſs, noiſe and ſtrife,
Bleſt with every ſweet of life ;
Far from all the toil of ſtate,
All oppreſſions of the great ;
Dancing blythe his Nymph he leads
O'er the carpet of the meads ;
While his neighbour's pipe or horn
Lulls the night or cheers the morn :
Healthy joy from labour ſprings,
Healthy joy the wiſh of kings.
Here Providence in bounty flows,
And joys on every ſenſe beſtows ;
Here Earth affords her kind increaſe,
With virtue gain'd, enjoy'd in peace ;
The harveſt rich, the fruitage fair,
Repay the cultivator's care.
Hills where ſportive lambkins ſtray,
Flocks that fleecy tribute pay ;