

THE SEA-NYMPH.



Down, down a thousand fathom deep,
Among the sounding seas I go;
Play round the foot of every steep
Whose cliffs above the ocean grow.

There, within their secret caves,
I hear the mighty rivers roar;
And guide their streams through Neptune's waves
To bless the green earth's inmost shore:

And bid the freshen'd waters glide,
For fern-crown'd nymphs of lake, or brook,
Through winding woods and pastures wide,
And many a wild, romantic nook.

For this the nymphs, at fall of eve,
Oft dance upon the flow'ry banks,
And sing my name, and garlands weave
To bear beneath the wave their thanks,

In coral bow'rs I love to lie,
And hear the surges roll above,
And, through the waters, view on high
The proud ships sail, and gay clouds move.

And oft at midnight's stillest hour,
When summer seas the vessel lave,
I love to prove my charming pow'r
While floating on the moon-light wave.

And when deep sleep the crew has bound,
And the sad lover musing leans
O'er the ship's side, I breathe around
Such strains as speak no mortal means!

O'er the dim waves his searching eye
Sees but the vessel's lengthen'd shade ;
Above—the moon and azure sky ;
Entranc'd he hears, and half afraid !

Sometimes a single note I swell,
That, softly sweet, at distance dies ;
Then wake the magic of my shell,
And choral voices round me rise !

The trembling youth, charm'd by my strain,
Calls up the crew, who, silent, bend
O'er the high deck, but list in vain ;
My song is hush'd, my wonders end !

Within the mountain's woody bay,
Where the tall bark at anchor rides,
At twilight hour, with tritons gay,
I dance upon the lapsing tides .

And with my sister-nymphs I sport,
'Till the broad sun looks o'er the floods ;
Then, swift we seek our crystal court,
Deep in the wave, 'mid Neptune's woods.

In cool arcades and glassy halls
We pass the sultry hours of noon,
Beyond wherever sun-beam falls,
Weaving sea-flowers in gay festoon.

The while we chant our ditties sweet
To some soft shell that warbles near ;
Join'd by the murmuring currents, fleet,
That glide along our halls so clear.

There, the pale pearl and sapphire blue,
And ruby red, and em'rald green,
Dart from the domes a changing hue,
And sparry columns deck the scene.

When the dark storm scowls o'er the deep,
And long, long peals of thunder sound,
On some high cliff my watch I keep
O'er all the restless seas around :

'Till on the ridgy wave, afar,
Comes the lone vessel, labouring slow,
Spreading the white foam in the air,
With sail and topmast bending low.

Then, plunge I 'mid the ocean's roar,
My way by quiv'ring lightnings shewn,
To guide the bark to peaceful shore,
And hush the sailor's fearful groan.

And if too late I reach its side
To save it from the 'whelming surge,
I call my dolphins o'er the tide,
To bear the crew where isles emerge.

Their mournful spirits soon I cheer,
While round the desert coast I go,
With warbled songs they faintly hear,
Oft as the stormy gust sinks low.

My music leads to lofty groves,
That wild upon the sea-bank wave ;
Where sweet fruits bloom, and fresh spring roves,
And closing boughs the tempest brave.

The spirits of the air obey
My potent voice they love so well ;
And, on the clouds, paint visions gay,
While strains more sweet at distance swell.

And thus the lonely hours I cheat,
Soothing the ship-wreck'd sailor's heart,
'Till from the waves the storms retreat,
And o'er the east the day-beams dart.

Neptune for this oft binds me fast
To rocks below, with coral chain,
'Till all the tempest's over-past,
And drowning seamen cry in vain.

Whoe'er ye are that love my lay,
Come, when red sun-set tints the wave,
To the still sands, where fairies play ;
There, in cool seas, I love to lave.