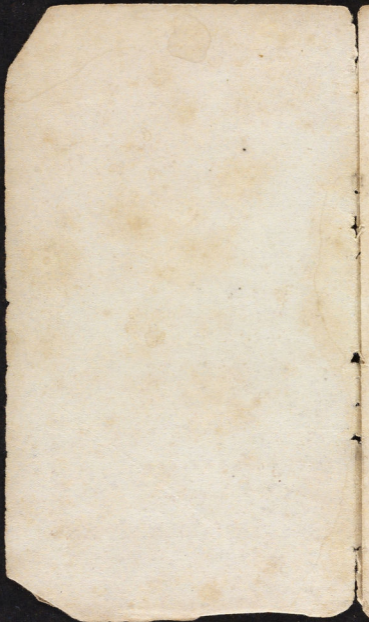


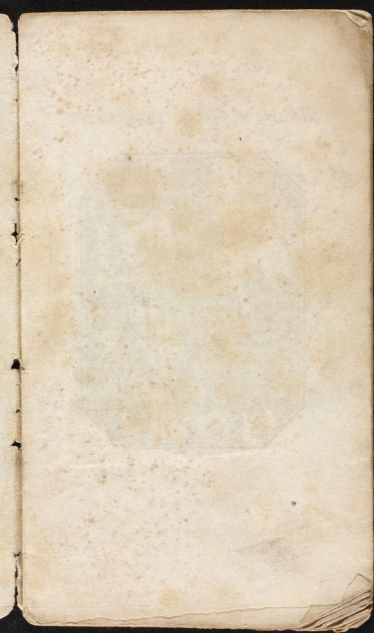
Farmer and Soldier.



GREENFIELD.

A. Phelps.







THE
FARMER AND SOLDIER.

BY MRS. SIGOURNEY.



GREENFIELD.

A. Phelps ...1844.

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THE
FARMER AND SOLDIER.

It was a cold evening in winter. A lamp cast its cheerful ray from the window of a small farm-house, in one of the villages of New England. A fire was burning brightly on the hearth, and two brothers sat near it. Several school books lay by them on the table,—from which they had been studying their lessons for the next day. Their parents had retired to rest, and the boys were conversing earnestly. The youngest who was about thirteen, said,

“John,—I mean to be a soldier.”

“Why so, James !”

“I have been reading the life of Alexander of Macedon,—and also a good deal about Napoleon Bonaparte. I think they

were the greatest men that ever lived.—
There is nothing in this world like the
glory of the warrior.”

“It does not seem to me glorious to
do so much harm. To destroy multitudes
of innocent men, and to make such
mourning in families, and so much pover-
ty and misery in the world,—is more
cruel than glorious.”

“O, but then, John, to be so hono-
and to have so many soldiers under your
command,—and the fame of such mighty
victories,—what glory is there, to be com-
pared with this?”

“James,—our good minister told us in
his sermon last Sunday, that the *end of
life was the test of its goodness.* Now



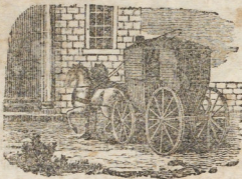


Alexander, that you call the Great, got intoxicated, and died like a madman, and Napoleon was imprisoned on a desolate island, like a chained wild beast, for all the world to gaze and wonder at. It was as necessary that he should be confined as that a ferocious monster should be put in a cage."

"John,—your ideas are very limited. You are not capable of admiring heroes. You are just fit to be a farmer. I dare say that to break a pair of steers is your

highest ambition,—and to spend your days in ploughing and reaping, would be glory enough for you.”

The voice of their father was now heard calling,—“ Boys,—go to bed.” So ended their conversation for that night.



Fifteen years passed away, and the same season again returned. From the same window a bright lamp gleamed, and on the same hearth was a cheerful fire. The building seemed unaltered, but among its inmates there were changes. The parents who had then retired to rest, had now laid

down in the deeper sleep of the grave.— They were pious, and among the little circle of their native village, their memory was held in sweet remembrance.

In the same chairs which they used to occupy, were seated their eldest son and his wife. A babe lay in the cradle, and two other little ones breathed sweetly from their trundle-bed, in the quiet sleep of childhood.

A blast with snow, came against the casement. “I always think said John, “a great deal about my poor brother, at this season of the year, and especially in stormy nights. But it is now so many years since we have heard from him, and his way of life exposed him to so much danger that I fear we have strong reason to believe him dead.

“What a pity,” replied the wife,— “that he would be a soldier.”

A faint knocking was heard at the door. It was opened,—a man entered wearily,— and leaning upon crutches. His clothes

sting of conscience. When I have lain perishing with hunger, and parching with thirst, a prisoner in the enemy's hands,—the image of my home, and of ingratitude, would be with me, when I lay down, and when I rose up. I would think I saw my mother bending tenderly over me,—as she used to, when I had only a head-ache,—



and my father with a Bible in his hand, out of which he read to us in the evening, before his prayer,—but when I have stretched out my hands to say, "Father, I am no more worthy to be called thy son,"—I would awake,—and it was all a dream. But *there* would still be the mem-

ory of my disobedience,—and how bitterly have I wept to think that the child of so many precepts had become a man of blood.”

His brother hastened to assure him of the perfect forgiveness of his parents,—and that daily and nightly he was mentioned in their supplications at the family altar, as their loved, and absent, and erring one.



“Yes—and those prayers followed me. But for them I should have been a reprobate. They plucked me as a brand from

the burning, when I thought myself forsaken both of God and man."

As his strength permitted, he told them the story of his wanderings and his sufferings. He had been in battles by sea and by land. He had heard the deep ocean echo with thunders of war, and seen the earth drink in the strange red shower from mangled and palpitating bosoms.—He had stood in the martial lists of Europe, and jeopard ed his life for a foreign power,—and he had pursued in his own land, the hunted Indian, flying at midnight, from his flaming hut. He had gone with the bravest, where dangers thickened, and had sought in every place for the glory of war, but had found only misery.

"That glory which dazzled me in my days of boyhood, and which I suppose was always the reward of the brave, continually eluded me. It is reserved for the successful leaders of armies. They alone, are the heroes,—while the poor soldiers, by whose toil these victories are



won,—endure the hardships, that others may reap the fame. Yet how light is all the boasted glory which was ever obtained by the greatest commander, compared with the good he forfeits and the sorrow that he inflicts in order to obtain it.

“ Sometimes when we were ready for a battle, and just before we rushed into it, I have felt a fearful shuddering,—an inexpressible horror at the thought of butchering my fellow-creatures. But in the heat of contest, such feelings vanished, and the madness and desperation of a demon possessed me. I cared neither for heaven nor hell.

“ You who dwell in the midst of the influences of mercy, and shrink to give pain even to an animal, can hardly imagine what hardness of heart comes with the life of a soldier,—deeds of cruelty are always before him, and he heeds neither the sufferings of the starving infant, nor the groans of its dying mother.



“ Of my own varieties of pain I will not speak. Yet when I have lain on the field of battle, unable to move from among the feet of trampling horses; when my wounds stiffened in the chilly night air, and no man cared for my soul, I have



thought it was no more than just, since my own hand had dealt the same violence to others, perhaps inflicted even keener anguish than that which was appointed to me.

“ But the greatest evil of a soldier’s life, is not the hardship to which he is exposed, or the wounds he may sustain, but the sin with which he is surrounded, and made familiar. Oaths, imprecations and contempt of every thing sacred, are the elements of his trade. All the sweet and

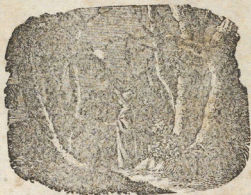
holy influences of the Sabbath, and the precepts of the gospel impressed upon his childhood, are swept away. But in this hardened career, though I exerted myself to appear bold and courageous, my heart constantly misgave me.—God grant that it may be purified by repentance and by the atonement of a Redeemer, before I am summoned to the dread bar of judgment.”

His friends flattered themselves that by medical skill and nursing, he might eventually be restored to health. But he said ;

“ It can never be. My vital energies are wasted. Even now, death standeth at my right hand. When I entered this peaceful valley, and my swollen limbs tot-



tered, and began to fail, I prayed to my God, O give them strength but a little longer, and hold thou me up till I reach the home where I was born ; that I may die there, and be buried by the side of my father and my mother, and I will ask no more."



The sick and penitent soldier, labored hard for the hope of salvation. He felt that there was much to be changed in his soul, ere it could be fitted for the holy enjoyments of a realm of purity and peace. He prayed, and wept, and stud-

ied the Scriptures, and conversed with good men.



“ Brother,” he would say, “ you have been a man of peace. In the quiet occupations of husbandry, you have served God and loved your neighbor. You have been merciful to the animal creation. You have taken the fleece, and saved the sheep alive. But I have wantonly defaced the image of God, and stopped that breath, which I never can restore. You have take the honey, and preserved the labor-

ing bee. But I have destroyed man and his habitation,—burned the hive, and spilled the honey on the ground. You cannot imagine how bitter is the warfare in my soul, with the “Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that ruleth in the children of disobedience.”

He declined rapidly. Death came on with hasty strides. Laying his cold hand upon the head of the eldest little boy, who had been much around his bed in his sickness,—he said, “Dear John, never be a soldier. Sister,—brother,—you have been as angels of mercy to me. The blessing of the God of peace, abide with you and upon your house.”

The venerable minister, who had instructed his childhood and laid his parents in the grave, and had oft-times visited him in this his affliction, stood by his side, as he went down into the valley of the shadow of death.

“My son,—look unto the Lamb of God.”

“Yes, father,—there is a fullness in him, for me, the chief of sinners.”

There was a short and solemn pause. Then he added “yet,—let no one sin against light and against love.”



The white haired man of God lifted up his fervent prayer for the departing soul. He commended it to the boundless riches of divine grace, and besought for it an easy passage to that world where there is no sin, neither sorrow nor crying.

He ceased,—and the eyes of the dying man had closed. There was no gasping,

or heaving of the breast, and they thought that the breath had quitted the clay.— They were about to speak of him as having passed where all tears are wiped away. But there was a faint sigh, and the pale lips slowly moved. Bowing down, they caught the whisper of his last words,—“Jesus,—thou, whose last gift was peace,—take a sinner unto Thee.”





DAILY PRAISE.

O LORD, my infant voice I raise.
Thy holy name to bless !
In daily songs of thanks and praise,
For mercies numberless.

For parents who have taught me right,
That thou art just and true ;
And though unseen by my weak sight,
Thou seest all I do.

Let all my thoughts, and actions rise
From innocence and truth ;
And thou, O God ! wilt not despise
The prayer of early youth.

Since through thy power I live and move,
And say " thy will be done,"
Perfect in mercy and in love
The work thou hast begun.

