

THE SHEFFIELD IRIS 1794-1796.

2 'Verses Dedicated to Hardy' *The Iris*, Issue 23, 05/12/1794

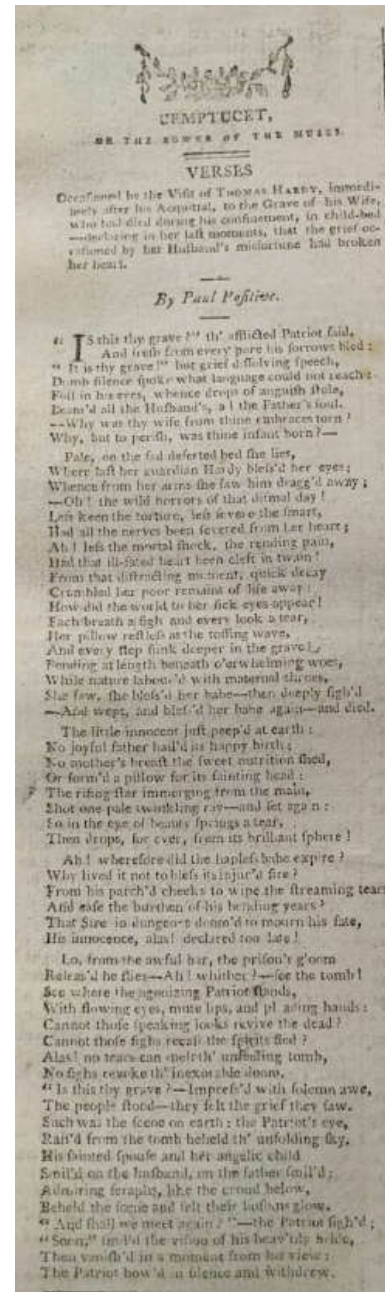
- Verses occasioned by the visit of Thomas Hardy immediately after his acquittal, to the Grave of his Wife, who had died during his confinement, in the child-bed - declaring in her last moments, that the grief occasioned by her husband's misfortune had broken her heart.

'Is this thy grave?' th' afflicted patriot said,
 And fresh from every pore his sorrows bled:
 'Is it thy grave!' but grief dissolving speed,
 Dumb silence spoke what language could not reach:
 Foil in his eyes, whence drops of anguish stole,
 Beam'd all the husband's, all the father's soul
 -- Why was thy wife from thine embraces torn?
 Why, but to perish, was thine infant born? -

Pale on the sad deserted bed she lies,
 Where last her guardian Hardy bless'd her eyes;
 Whence from her arms she saw him dragg'd away;
 --Oh! The wild horrors of that dismal day!
 Less keen the torture, less severe the smart,
 Had all the nerves been severed from her heart;
 Ah! Less the mortal shock, the rending pain,
 Had that ill-fated heart been cleft in twain!
 From that distracting moment, quick decay
 Crumbled her poor remains of life away:
 How did the world to her sick eyes appear!
 Each breath a sigh and every look a tear,
 Her pillow restless as the tossing wave,
 And every step sunk deeper in the grave!
 Bending at length beneath o'erwhelming woes,
 While nature labour'd with maternal throes,
 She saw, she bless'd her babe - then deeply sigh'd
 -- And wept, and bless'd her babe again -- and died.

The little innocent just peep'd at earth:
 No joyful father hail'd its happy birth;
 No mother's breast the sweet nutrition shed,
 Or form'd a pillow for its fainting head:
 The rising star immerging from the main,
 Shot one pale twinkling ray - and set again
 So in the eye of beauty springs a tear,

Transcriptions by James Earley.



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Then drops, for ever, from its brilliant sphere!

Ah! Wherefore did the hapless baby expire?
 Why lived it not to bless its injur'd fire?
 From his parch'd cheeks to wipe the streaming tears,
 Arid ease the burdens of his bending years?
 That sire in the dungeons doom'd to mourn his fate,
 His innocence, alas! Declared too late!

Lo, from the awful bar, the prison's gloom
 Releas'd he flies - Ah! Whither? - See the tomb!
 See where the agonizing patriot stands,
 With flowing eyes, mute lips, and pleading hands:
 Cannot those speaking looks revive the dead?
 Cannot those sighs recall the spirits fled?
 Alas! No tears can melt the unfeeling tomb,
 No sighs revoke th' inexorable doom.
 'Is this thy grave? - Impress'd with solemn awe,
 The people stood - they felt the grief they saw.
 Such was the scene on earth: The Patriot's eye,
 Rais'd from the tomb beheld th' unfolding sky
 His sainted spouse and her angelic child
 Smil'd on the husband, on the father smil'd
 Admiring seraphs, like the croud below,
 Beheld the scene and felt their bosoms glow.
 'And shall we meet again?' - The patriot sigh'd;
 'Soon,' smil'd the vision of his heav'nly bride,
 Then vanish'd in a moment from his view:
 The patriot bow'd in silence and withdrew.
 Paul Positive.