

OUTSIDE THE BALL-ROOM.

("Ainsi l'Hôtel de Ville illumine.")

[VI., May, 1833.]

Behold the ball-room flashing on the sight,
From step to cornice one grand glare of light;
The noise of mirth and revelry resounds,
Like fairy melody on haunted grounds.
But who demands this profuse, wanton glee,
These shouts prolonged and wild festivity--
Not sure our city--web, more woe than bliss,
In any hour, requiring aught but this!

Deaf is the ear of all that jewelled crowd
To sorrow's sob, although its call be loud.
Better than waste long nights in idle show,
To help the indigent and raise the low--
To train the wicked to forsake his way,
And find th' industrious work from day to day!
Better to charity those hours afford,
Which now are wasted at the festal board!

And ye, O high-born beauties! in whose soul

Virtue resides, and Vice has no control;
Ye whom prosperity forbids to sin,
So fair without--so chaste, so pure within--
Whose honor Want ne'er threatened to betray,
Whose eyes are joyous, and whose heart is gay;
Around whose modesty a hundred arms,
Aided by pride, protect a thousand charms;
For you this ball is pregnant with delight;
As glitt'ring planets cheer the gloomy night:--
But, O, ye wist not, while your souls are glad,
How millions wander, homeless, sick and sad!
Hazard has placed you in a happy sphere,
And like your own to you all lots appear;
For blinded by the sun of bliss your eyes
Can see no dark horizon to the skies.

Such is the chance of life! Each gallant thane,
Prince, peer, and noble, follow in your train;--
They praise your loveliness, and in your ear
They whisper pleasing things, but insincere;
Thus, as the moths enamoured of the light,
Ye seek these realms of revelry each night.
But as ye travel thither, did ye know
What wretches walk the streets through which you go.
Sisters, whose gewgaws glitter in the glare
Of your great lustre, all expectant there,

Watching the passing crowd with avid eye,
Till one their love, or lust, or shame may buy;
Or, with commingling jealousy and rage,
They mark the progress of your equipage;
And their deceitful life essays the while
To mask their woe beneath a sickly smile!

G.W.M. REYNOLDS.