

THE COW.

("Devant la blanche ferme.")

[XV., May, 1837.]

Before the farm where, o'er the porch, festoon  
Wild creepers red, and gaffer sits at noon,  
Whilst strutting fowl display their varied crests,  
And the old watchdog slumberously rests,  
They half-attentive to the clarion of their king,  
Resplendent in the sunshine op'ning wing--  
There stood a cow, with neck-bell jingling light,  
Superb, enormous, dappled red and white--  
Soft, gentle, patient as a hind unto its young,  
Letting the children swarm until they hung  
Around her, under--rustics with their teeth  
Whiter than marble their ripe lips beneath,  
And bushy hair fresh and more brown  
Than mossy walls at old gates of a town,  
Calling to one another with loud cries  
For younger imps to be in at the prize;  
Stealing without concern but tremulous with fear  
They glance around lest Doll the maid appear;--  
Their jolly lips--that haply cause some pain,

And all those busy fingers, pressing now and 'gain,  
The teeming udders whose small, thousand pores  
Gush out the nectar 'mid their laughing roars,  
While she, good mother, gives and gives in heaps,  
And never moves. Anon there creeps  
A vague soft shiver o'er the hide unmarred,  
As sharp they pull, she seems of stone most hard.  
Dreamy of large eye, seeks she no release,  
And shrinks not while there's one still to appease.  
Thus Nature--refuge 'gainst the slings of fate!  
Mother of all, indulgent as she's great!  
Lest us, the hungered of each age and rank,  
Shadow and milk seek in the eternal flank;  
Mystic and carnal, foolish, wise, repair,  
The souls retiring and those that dare,  
Sages with halos, poets laurel-crowned,  
All creep beneath or cluster close around,  
And with unending greed and joyous cries,  
From sources full, draw need's supplies,  
Quench hearty thirst, obtain what must eftsoun  
Form blood and mind, in freest boon,  
Respire at length thy sacred flaming light,  
From all that greets our ears, touch, scent or sight--  
Brown leaves, blue mountains, yellow gleams, green sod--  
Thou undistracted still dost dream of God.

TORU DUTT.