The American Soldier

By Philip Freneau

A Picture from the Life
To serve with love,
And shed your blood,
    Approved may be above,
But here below
(Example shew,)
'Tis dangerous to be good.

--Lord Oxford

Deep in a vale, a stranger now to arms,
    Too poor to shine in courts, too proud to beg,
He, who once warred on Saratoga’s plains,
    Sits musing o’er his scars, and wooden leg.

Remembering still the toil of former days,
To other hands he sees his earnings paid;—
They share the due reward—he feeds on praise.
Lost in the abyss of want, misfortune’s shade.

Far, far from domes where splendid tapers glare,
'Tis his from dear bought peace no wealth to win,
Removed alike from courtly cringing 'squires,
The great-man’s Levee, and the proud man’s grin.

Sold are those arms which once on Britons blazed,
When, flushed with conquest, to the charge they came;
That power repelled, and Freedom's fabric raised,
She leaves her soldier—famine and a name!

Source: